

# Commentary & Notes on Genesis

The commentary and notes below are adapted from the teaching materials of Annie Kartzian (1906-1989). In 1934 Annie became a missionary in China with OMS. During World War II she spent 21 months in a Japanese concentration camp as a prisoner. She was repatriated in 1943 and sailed on the famous vessel Gripsholm. In 1949 she made a miraculous last-minute escape from Beijing before it fell to Mao's Communists. When she could no longer enter China, Annie went to Taiwan. Annie and her family have been life-long friends of our family. In 1989, while pastoring with the United Armenian Congregational Church of Hollywood I had the honor of participating in her funeral. It was during those years in Los Angeles that Annie gave me her teaching notes (the commentary below) - laboriously typed on what is now yellowed paper with hand written marginal notes, many of which are in Chinese. - Pastor Steve

## INTRODUCTION

See "Commentary & Notes on Genesis - Introduction and Chapters 1-11" for an introduction to the Book of Genesis and background information on Moses.

## VI. ABRAHAM Chapters 12:1-25:10

At the close of the 11th chapter of Genesis a change is made in the subject of the Bible narrative. Thus far it has been the history of the entire race; but from this point to the close of Genesis a single family is brought into prominence, and the remaining tribes of men are referred to only incidentally. From Abraham was to spring a new nation from which, in the fullness of time, the great Deliverer Himself was to come.

Here starts the account of redemption which had been hinted at in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:15). It is four hundred years after the flood.

Ur was 125 miles southeast of Babylon; once a seaport at the mouth of the Euphrates River. It was a pre-flood city, destroyed by the flood; rebuilt just preceding the time of Abraham. It was then a most magnificent city, a center of manufacture, farming and shipping, in a land of great fertility and wealth. They sent caravans going in every direction to distant lands and ships sailing from the docks of Ur down to the Persian Gulf with cargoes of copper and hard stone. It was later eclipsed by Babylon but remained an important city down to the time of the Persian Empire. By that time the Gulf had receded and the Euphrates changed its course to ten miles to the east and Ur was abandoned to be buried by the sandstorms of the desert.

Abraham's countrymen were idolaters. His father was also an idolater (Joshua 24:2). There are legends about Abraham being persecuted for his refusal to worship idols. No doubt he knew about God by direct revelation. The people among whom he lived also had traditions about God's creation of man. He sought to build a nation free from idolatry. Out of the nations founded by him came the three great monotheistic religions of the world: Jewish, Christian, Mohammedan. Faith in one God, wherever it exists, may be traced back to Abraham.

Outstanding Scripture references to Abraham as the: 1) Father of the faithful: Romans 4:26-24; Galatians 3:7; Hebrews 11:8-19; and 2) Friend of God: James 2:23.

It is striking that in subsequent books of the Bible there are 10 references to Adam, 8 to Noah, and over 100 to Abraham. These are not merely historical allusions but refer to Abraham as the most prominent of all those who had a part in the covenant of grace.

## Overview Of The Life Of Abraham Genesis 11:27-25:11

1. First communication of Jehovah - Genesis 11:31; Acts 7:2,3  
Abraham is in Ur (Genesis 11:31)
2. Second communication of Jehovah - Genesis 12:1-6  
Abraham is 75 years old and in Haran (Genesis 12:4)
3. Third communication of Jehovah - Genesis 12:7-9  
Abraham is in Shechem (Genesis 12:6)
4. First failure of Abraham - Genesis 12:10-13:13
5. Fourth communication of Jehovah - Genesis 12:14-14:24  
Abraham is between Bethel and Ai (Genesis 13:3)
6. Fifth communication of Jehovah - Genesis 15  
Abraham is in Hebron (Genesis 13:18)
7. Second failure of Abraham - Genesis 16
8. Sixth communication of Jehovah - Genesis 17  
Abraham is in Hebron (Genesis 13:18; 18:1)
9. Seventh communication of Jehovah - Genesis 18  
Abraham is in Hebron (Genesis 18:1)
10. Parenthesis - Genesis 19  
The account of Lot
11. Third failure of Abraham - Genesis 20
12. Birth of Isaac- Genesis 21
13. Eighth communication of Jehovah - Genesis 22  
Abraham is on Mount Moriah (Genesis 22:2)
14. Abraham's last days - Genesis 23-25

## Chapters 12-14

Verses 1-6: Second communication of Jehovah - at Haran. The first communication of Jehovah was at Ur (Genesis 11:31; Acts 7:2,3). Terah, Abraham's father, was born about 200 years after the flood (Genesis 15:7; Nehemiah 9:7). It seems that he left his country after a divine revelation made to Abraham (Acts 7:2,3). Idolatry was very general at this period for both Terah and his family had served other gods before this call (Joshua 24:2). Terah was very ready to obey the call and active in making the move. This appears to have been a movement of faith because it was in the right direction, although not far enough in the right direction. They stopped in Haran. Haran was well known in history and seems to have been named for Terah's deceased son, the father of Lot (Genesis 11:27,28).

After Terah's death, God repeated His call to Abraham. This time it was:

1. A more personal call: It was to Abraham personally and made it necessary for him to sever all ties with his family, that is, his father's house. Nahor was probably left behind (Genesis 11:29; 24:10-15; 28:2,10). Henceforth Abraham was to be governed by God's will alone.
2. More definite than the first: *"Unto a land that I will show thee"* - God does not tell him just where it will be so that he may still walk by faith and not by sight. He knows that he is to go to Canaan (Genesis 11:31) but does not know his permanent dwelling (Hebrews 11:8).
3. It was a revelation of God's purpose: God reveals His purpose in six promises: 1) *"I will make of thee a great nation"*; 2) *"I will bless thee"*; 3) *"I will make thy name great"*; 4) *"Thou shalt be a blessing"*; 5) *"I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thee"*; and 6) *"In thee shall all the families of earth be blest."*

*"And the souls they had gotten in Haran"* - 1) the persons who were employed in the service of Abraham, and 2) those who had been converted to the knowledge of the true God; thus it is understood that Abraham was a man of wealth and that he proselytized in Haran.

Verses 7-9: Third communication of Jehovah - at Shechem. Having such a definite and high call, one would expect that Abraham would have been introduced to Canaan with honor and respect, and that the kings of Canaan would immediately have surrendered to him. It was not so, for he came to the land having only the sure promise. God said, *"This is the land,"* which was more definite than the previous call, but the Canaanite was in the land.

*"To thy seed"* - Abraham was not destined to receive the land. Abraham himself only possessed a burial ground. He needed faith to see the future. Where Abraham had a tent, there God had an altar. His allegiance to Jehovah was definite and unmistakable.

Verses 12:10-13:13: The first failure of Abraham

Abraham was in the land of Canaan; between Bethel and Ai. He had built an altar. Then journeying south he came into a famine area (Genesis 12:8,9). He was still a stranger in the land, living in a tent. This was a sore trial for God had asked him to come to this place. Furthermore this was to be the land of the wonderful promise. Nothing short of the strongest faith could keep God in His place at a time like this. Let it be said to Abraham's credit that he did not go back to his old home; but he did go down into Egypt. It does not appear that he asked or received special counsel from God. Abraham attempted to make personal arrangements for his own safety by going down into Egypt.

Approaching Egypt, he was filled with fear (Isaiah 28:11) on account of Sarah (Genesis 12:12). Again he attempted to use his own way of securing her safety as well as his own. His fear caused him to forget entirely God's promise concerning the future (*"I will make of thee a great nation"* - Genesis 12:2,3). He decided to declare Sarah to be his sister which was, actually, a half truth (Genesis 20:12). What he said though partly true was said to deceive; it was therefore a lie. Not only did he and Sarah share in this untruth, but probably all his attendants had to do the same also.

The immediate result of this falsehood was that the chosen mother of the promised Seed was put into the harem of Pharaoh (Genesis 12:15).

Jehovah, however, guarded the issue of His own purpose against the mistakes and failures of Abraham. He wrought deliverance by plaguing the house of Pharaoh. The final result of this sad account is that of Abraham, the chosen of God, being rebuked by a pagan king for his dishonesty. His reproof was just.

Now we see the victory of faith over failure. Although he had turned aside from the path of obedience, he dared to go back to the place from where he had come. God knew this to be a sin that came out of weakness and not from the love of sin. Although he had tried to be the architect of his future, God sent him back to the place of His choosing. God showed that He can take better care of His people than they can themselves. Though He overruled, yet the erring one did not escape rebuke.

It was at this crisis of his return from Egypt that the separation between Abraham and Lot took place. The choice of the two men reveals their character. Lot made the choice of a man attempting compromise. Abraham showed himself to be one who could trust his future to God, even though he had just failed along that very line.

And now we see Lot and Abraham in differing circumstances resulting from the choices that they had made and the principles upon which they had acted. Lot had chosen upon the principle of compromise. Abraham had accepted the choice of God. Lot was in trouble through his association. He had first pitched his tent toward Sodom; later he had moved into Sodom. As he took the privileges of Sodom, he had become a sharer in Sodom's peril. The man for whom God had chosen was living in a place of separation in a quiet and prosperity.

Verses 13:14-14:24: Fourth communication of Jehovah - between Bethel and Ai

This communication sets Abraham in direct contrast to Lot in every way. Lot had selfishly chosen for himself; now Jehovah declared His choice for Abraham. Lot had chosen by sight; Abraham chose by faith and left himself entirely to the direction of Jehovah. Now Jehovah brought him to a place of sight as a result of his faith. Lot had lifted up his eyes in answer to his own desires; now Jehovah commanded Abraham to lift up his eyes. Lot chose and obtained immediately, but was unable to possess; Abraham, trusting God, was given the title-deeds to all the land, even that which Lot had chosen for himself.

In verse 14 Abraham is now commanded to look. This communication must have come to him during the daylight hours when he could take a view of the length and breadth of the land. In Genesis 15:5, the revelation was evidently at night for then he was called to number the stars. Here he is called upon to number the dust of the earth (Genesis 13:16) which could not be seen but in the daylight.

In verses 15 and 16 the promise is twofold: 1) He was to possess the land; and 2) His seed was to be multiplied. This land was the gift of God to Abraham in behalf of his seed. He never lived to see the promise fulfilled. He was but a wanderer there. *"The meek shall inherit the earth"* (Psalm 37:11).

In verse 18 Abraham immediately moves his tent and pitches it in Hebron, and there built an altar to Jehovah. His faith again triumphed over the appearances as he moved farther into the land which was not merely possessed by the Canaanite but part of which had also become a possession of Lot's.

The first wars on record are those mentioned in Genesis 14. Five Canaanite kings had been subdued by Chedorlaomer, and were obligated to pay him tribute. Thus they did for twelve years (Genesis 14:4), rebelling in the thirteenth year. In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer, with three vassal kings, invaded Canaan and conquered kings of five cities.

Abraham went to the rescue of his nephew and brought him back. This first blow to Sodom should have been a warning to Lot to quit the place forever, but it did not help. His heart was so much set on the things of Sodom that he went back again and lived there. The deterioration in Lot's character is also seen in that no word of thanks spoken by Lot is recorded in the passage. The king of Sodom expressed his thanks. (Genesis 14:22-24).

The man of faith is now refreshed by the appearance of Melchizedek (Genesis 14:17-20). He was the priest-king of Jerusalem and was already in the land when Abraham came. Abraham recognized him as the priest of God and paid him tithes. This is the first time we have the word "priest" in the Bible. The patriarchs seemed to have no other priests than the head of the family. But here was one designated a special priests and empowered to bless Abraham.

The legends about Melchizedek are many. Hebrew tradition says that he was Shem, survivor of the flood, who was still alive and earth's oldest man. Some say he was an angel, some an incarnation of God, some the Messiah. He was a picture and type of Christ. A thousand years later a few more words bring him into sight again (Psalm 110:4); another thousand years later Hebrew Christians were taught to see in him proof that it was the purpose of God to abolish the Levitical priesthood (Hebrews 5:6; 6:20; 7:1-3).

Melchizedek brought out bread and wine and ministered to Abraham who had just returned from a conflict. Also Melchizedek pronounced the blessing of God Most High. That was all Abraham desired, for he refused the rewards offered him by the king of Sodom. In doing so he quoted the very words of Melchizedek, "*God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth*" (Genesis 14:19,22).

## Chapter 15

Verse 1: Here, at Hebron, begins the fifth communication of Jehovah. This is the first place where God is represented as revealing Himself by His word.

*"After these things"* - the events just considered make the graciousness of this message even more apparent. Abraham had just passed through two conflicts - the first with kings and the second with the suggestion of enrichment from the treasures of Sodom. He had been victorious in both; here we find the secret of his victory. *"I am thy shield"* - in the day of conflict, Jehovah is a shield to the man of faith. *"I am thy exceeding great reward"* - the man of faith had lost nothing when he had refused the reward of the king of Sodom.

Verse 2: It had been ten years since Abraham left his homeland. The hopes with which he entered Canaan seemed as far away as ever. Eliezer may be the same man as mentioned in Genesis 24:2.

Verse 3: His servants were for the present instead of his sons. God had already told him he would make of him a great nation, but He had not stated whether it should be his seed adopted or begotten.

Verse 4: Jehovah now definitely declared that Eliezer was not to be his heir. He was

equally definite that a son should be given to him.

Verse 5: The point of the illustration here is to be found in the words, "*If thou are able to tell them.*" Abraham could not do so, but Jehovah could. So, Abraham could not see his seed, but Jehovah could. Note the three metaphors: 1) Dust of the earth (Genesis 13:16); 2) Stars of the heavens (Genesis 15:5); and 3) Sand of the beaches (Genesis 22:17).

Verse 6: This is one of the most important passages in the entire Old Testament. It presents the doctrine of justification by faith... "*Abraham believed in Jehovah.*" - literally "*he built on Him.*" This is the first time in the Bible that the word for "believe" is used. In Hebrew it is "aman" from which comes "amen." Abraham's faith involved no act except that of the mind and heart - no work of any kind - hence, justification by faith without any merit of works.

Verse 8: This is not the asking of unbelief, not a demand of doubt. This was a request following the exercise of genuine faith and his acceptance. Signs are never granted to unbelief. They are granted to faith not faithlessness. Here, a desire for confirmation (cf. Luke 1:18,20,34). The case of the virgin compares with that of Abraham - a sign asked in humble yearning for further assurance not in order to believe but on account of believing.

Verse 9: Every animal allowed or commanded to be sacrificed under the Mosaic law is to be found in this list. God was now giving to Abraham an epitome of the law and its sacrifices which He intended to more fully reveal to Moses.

Verse 12: "*A deep sleep*" - the same word used in Genesis 2:21 in the case of Adam. This experience was expressive of the affliction and misery into which his seed should be brought during the 400 years of their bondage in Egypt. The knowledge of future events, if attainable, would seldom add to our comfort.

Verse 16: We must abide God's time in forbearance.

Verse 17: "*A smoking furnace and a burning lamp*" - the prophecy just given was followed by this vision. The furnace was symbolical of the trial to come (Deuteronomy 4:20; 1 Kings 8:51). The light was symbolical of the days of affliction (Psalm 119:105).

Verse 18: Jehovah made a covenant with His servant in which He declared that He had given him the land. Note the sign of the covenant is circumcision (Genesis 17:11) verses uncircumcision.

## **Chapter 16**

Chapter 16 records the second failure of Abraham. Years had passed since God promised Abraham a son in whom he should become the father of a great nation, but no children had been given him. Hagar was an Egyptian woman who was probably one of the maid-servants whom the king of Egypt had bestowed upon Abraham (Genesis 12:16). Sarah, childless and getting old, thought it necessary to secure the inheritance by such means as were in her power. She therefore gave her slave to Abraham that she might have children by her.

Waiting is very difficult for the human heart. It was one thing to believe the promise when it was originally given, but it was another thing to wait patiently for its accomplishment. Here the patience of faith was lacking. Thus, Abraham, at the instigation of Sarah, sought

to realize the purposes of God by human contrivance. God had not as yet told him how he was to have an heir. The promise simply stated, "*He that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir*" (Genesis 15:4). Abraham could refuse graft (Genesis 14:23) but under Sarah's persuasion he made a move without asking counsel of God. Like Adam, he sinned by listening to the voice of his wife. Satan often tempts us by our nearest and dearest relations. The temptation is most dangerous when sent by the hand of one least suspected.

The far reaching result of the failure of Abraham can only be known by a study of the subsequent history. The posterity of Ishmael became a cause of perpetual trouble to the posterity of Isaac. They have fostered Mohammedanism, Christianity's most powerful enemy. Thus from Abraham sprang Christianity and that religion which is still its most formidable rival. From the beginning to the present day the Arabs have maintained their independence, and God preserves them as a lasting monument of His providential care.

Verse 6: Immediately there was bitterness in the household. Always the instruments of our wrongdoing become the instruments that trouble us; so in the case of Hagar and Sarah. As a result, Hagar fled for Sarah dealt harshly with her (Genesis 16:6). Thus do people often try to get rid of the trials brought upon them by their own impatience.

Verse 7: An appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ before His incarnation is recorded in Genesis 16:7, "*And the Angel of the Lord found her (Hagar) by a fountain of water in the wilderness,*" and the Angel told her what to do.

Verse 10: The words of verse 10 indicate the deity of this Angel. The multiplied descendants of Ishmael possessed land from east to west: From Havilah on the Euphrates, near its junction with the Tigris, to the desert of Shur east of Egypt; extends along the isthmus of Suez which separates the Red Sea from the Mediterranean (cf. Genesis 17:20; 25:12-16)

Verse 12: He promises Hagar a posterity - a "*wild donkey of a man*" - meaning not submitting to the yoke. To Ishmael the Arabs proudly trace their ancestry.

The Jews and the Arabs are the only peoples who have subsisted as a distinct people from the beginning, and in some respects they very much resemble each other.

1. They are both descended from Abraham and both boast of their descent from the father of the faithful.
2. They are both circumcised and both profess to have derived this ceremony from Abraham.
3. They both had originally twelve patriarchs, who were their princes or governors.
4. They both marry among themselves and in their own tribes.
5. They are standing monuments to all ages of the exactness of Divine predictions and of the veracity of Scripture history.

Verse 13: We discover that this Angel was God Himself, therefore the Lord Jesus Christ in a preincarnate appearance. "*And she called the name of the Lord that spoke to her, Thou God seest me.*" Even back there in the wilderness, the Second Person of the Trinity appeared in human form to an Egyptian slave woman.

## **Chapter 17**

Verse 1: Here, at Hebron, begins the sixth communication of Jehovah. Thirteen years

had passed since the birth of Ishmael (Genesis 16:16). During this period there is no mention of the Lord appearing to Abraham. It may have been a time of spiritual barrenness.

*"I am the Almighty God"* - the first time this title is used in Genesis. This is the Hebrew "El Shaddai" meaning "Strong, Eternal One"; but it declares not so much the might of God as His resources: God All-Sufficient. He is the One from Whom all supplies for the sustenance of life are gained, as a babe is strengthened and nourished from his mother's breast. He is the Strengthener, the Nourisher, and the Satisfier of His people and, in Abraham's case, the One strengthens to the state of fruitfulness.

By this name He chose to make Himself known to Abraham, rather than by the name Jehovah (Exodus 6:3). He used it to Jacob (Genesis 35:11). Jehovah is more frequently used by Moses, but this very frequently.

*"Be thou perfect"* - It is in the strength of the resources of God that Abraham is to walk before God and be perfect.

Verse 2: *"I will make my covenant"* (cf. Genesis 15:18). The word "make" is more correctly "give". This covenant concerned the seed.

Verse 3: An attitude of worship.

Verses 4-8: A more detailed declaration concerning the covenant. His life was to be enlarged and that enlargement was signified by the change of his name to a form which, at every utterance, would remind him of the great promise of his God.

Abram means "exalted father". Abraham means "father of a multitude". The covenant was to be continuous, established between God and the seed of Abraham throughout their generations.

The land (verse 8) is that which had been promised (Genesis 12:7; 15:18). Twenty-five years have passed and still there is no possession of the land.

Verse 9: Jehovah now charged His servant that he and his seed must also be true throughout their generations.

Verses 10-14: This covenant was to be sealed by the symbol of circumcision which was to be the outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible relationship. This custom was very ancient, but with the Hebrews became a sign of the covenant.

1. This is called the covenant of circumcision (Acts 7:8).
2. It is called a sign and a seal (Jeremiah 4:4; Romans 4:11).
3. It was to be a constant reminder to Abraham and his seed that God's part of the covenant would be kept.
4. It was a bloody ordinance, for all things were purged with blood under the law (Exodus 24:8; Hebrews 9:22). But, the blood of Christ being shed all bloody ordinances were abolished (Romans 2:29; Colossians 2:11).
5. It was observed by the males only because man is the head of the woman. Thus the women were also included.
6. The ordinance was administered to children when eight days old so that at least one Sabbath might pass over them.
7. It was emphatic for all born in the house as well as those bought with money.



8. The uncircumcised were to be cut off from God's people (Exodus 12:15,19; Numbers 9:13; 19:13). A sentence of death was added at times (Exodus 31:14; Leviticus 20:1-6; Numbers 15:30-36).

Verses 15,16: Jehovah changed Sarai's name to Sarah. The meaning of the first was uncertain. The second signifies a "princess" because she was to become the mother of nations. In the original the change in the names of Abram and Sarai are both made by the insertion of a single letter and that letter was the same in both cases. This was one of the letters of God's own name. Thus a special dignity was added to both names (Jehovah). Note: "daughters of Sarah" (Galatians 4:22,26; 1 Peter 3:6).

Verse 17: Abraham fell on his face in an attitude of worship, while in his heart he laughed to express his wonder at the promise made. There is no evidence that the laughter was that of unbelief as it was in Sarah's case (Genesis 18:12). His laughter was that of a great gladness at the idea. And, even if questions he asked seemed to suggest doubt, the fact that he was asking them on his face before God in an attitude of worship gives evidence of the triumph of his faith (Romans 4:19,20).

Verses 18-21: Abraham's prayer for Ishmael was answered but not in the way he expected (Genesis 25:12-16). God never allows the man of faith to have his own way when it is not God's way. Abraham loved his thirteen year old son and so he seeks God's favor for Ishmael too. Abraham does not ask for Ishmael to be preferred but asks that he many not be abandoned. The new son was to be called "Isaac" - the name means "he shall laugh". Sarah's son is the son of promise. Temporal good things are promised to Ishmael but the covenant is to be established with Isaac.

Verse 22: This gave Abraham fullest proof that the One who had spoken to him was no human being or earthly messenger. He ascends before him.

Verse 23-27: Abraham acted immediately in obedience in the circumcision of Ishmael and all his household, those born in the house and those bought with money. The head of the household was thus made responsible for the religious training and instruction of those committed to his charge, both children and servants.

## **Chapter 18**

Verse 1: Here, in Hebron, is the seventh communication of Jehovah. Here it is expressly stated that "*Jehovah appeared to Abraham.*" The manner of His appearance is afterwards related... He sat in the door of his tent to catch the cooling breeze in the heat of the day. This is not a vision (Genesis 15:1) or merely a word or message (Genesis 17). But a conversation with a guest full of friendship and fellowship (James 2:23).

Verse 2: Two of these appear to be created angels, but the Third was the Angel of Jehovah (Genesis 18:22), the Son of God. Note in verse 22 the distinction between "the men" "the Lord". Note in Genesis 19:1 that the two angels went to Sodom.

Verses 4,5: A picture of the primitive Oriental hospitality: First, washing the feet; Second, rest in the shade; and Third, bread for the hungry traveler - the intimacy of contact made over a meal.

Verses 9-11: Care is taken that Sarah should be within hearing. She must conceive by faith, therefore the promise had to be made to her too (Hebrews 11:11). Women did not eat with men at that time, at least not with strangers. Sarah was in her own apartment -

out of sight, but not out of hearing.

Verses 12,13: This was not a laugh of faith and the angel reproves her distrust. The heart-searching God saw the inner expression of unbelief (see Genesis 21:6).

Verse 14: To strengthen her faith, God spoke these words. Where nature ceases to be an agent, God can still work. God can produce as well without means and with means.

Verses 17-19: God gives two reasons for admitting Abraham into His council: 1) Because all nations were to be blessed in him and it was, therefore, fitting that he should know the meaning of the divine dealing with Sodom; and 2) His children would know through him that the destruction of Sodom was no mere incident but the distinct punishment of the unrighteous. Abraham thus provided with an explanation of something about to happen which would enable him to use it as a warning.

Verse 22: The two angels who accompanied Jehovah were now sent toward Sodom (Genesis 19:1). The Third, who is called Jehovah, remained with Abraham.

Verses 23-32: This is the first solemn prayer we have on record in the Bible. This intercession was based not so much on the desire to save Lot as it was to vindicate the character of God among the nations. *“Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”* Knowing that true religion was professed in the family of Lot, Abraham could not suppose that there would be less than ten persons in the city who were righteous. Not a soul seems to have been won over to the worship of Jehovah by Lot’s residence there (Genesis 19:9,14). God graciously listened to the prayer and answered it. Note that God does not directly say that He would destroy these cities. God went beyond Abraham’s intercession and saved the two or three in whom any trace of the worship of God was found.

## Chapter 19

Chapter 19 is a parenthesis in the account of Abraham which here focuses on Lot. The destruction of Sodom is the most conspicuous instance of the divine judgment upon sin recorded in the Bible - referred to some twenty times. It is not as significant to the history of Israel so much as it is a lesson for all future generations (Jude 7).

Verse 1: The “two angels” are those referred to in Genesis 18:22.

*“Lot sat in the gate”* - Jewish commentators understand Lot’s presence at the gate as implying that he held some office, such as that of a magistrate (Genesis 13;11,12; 19:9) and yet now has no interest in the outcome of the city.

Verse 5: The vile men of Sodom surrounded that house that night. The foul crime of self abuse derives its name from the name of this city (Deuteronomy 23:17). The practice of this sin was one of the main reasons for the extermination of the Canaanite nations. It was the curse of heathenism even in the best days of Rome (Romans 1:24-27).

Verse 7: Lot risked his life to keep these men away from the visitors. He knew their sin and, although not sharing in it, he had lived among them as one of them.

Verse 8: He would rather be a poor father than a poor host, substituting the smaller for the greater evil. He gained nothing by violating one duty to maintain another. He tried to avoid sin by sin.

Verse 9: The men of Sodom had not been influenced by him toward goodness, and therefore anger was aroused against him. This man who had attempted to compromise with principle was hated of Sodom, had lost his personal peace; his testimony was paralyzed and he was utterly unable to influence the city toward righteousness.

Verses 10,11: “They” - The visitors now showed themselves to be more than men. “Blindness” by definition means “disturbance of vision”. The angels, by the power of God, deprived these men of the proper and regular use of their sight, so as to either totally deprive them of it or to render it so confused that they could no longer distinguish objects. They caused such a deep darkness to take place that they could not find Lot’s door.

Verse 13: This is the first execution of this kind to be carried out by angels according to the Bible record.

Verse 14: He had not only lost his influence with those in the city, but with the members of his own family. He had given his children in marriage to the sons of Sodom, but his warning was not accepted by them.

Verse 17: “*Look not behind thee*” - in a total abandonment of heart and will. “*Escape to the mountain*” - God’s directions were clear.

Verse 19: He feared death in the very place to which God was sending him.

Verse 20: An attempt to make his own arrangements for the future. Zoar means “tiny place”

Verses 21,22: His request was granted. Notwithstanding all his failure, Lot was described as a righteous man (2 Peter 2:7). His failure was due to his attempt at compromise. Later he left Zoar (Genesis 19:30).

Verse 24: The Lord’s hand wrought punishment. This is the third one Who appeared to Abraham and before Whom Abraham had interceded for Lot. Many understand this to be a volcanic eruption. All the powers of nature are in God’s hand. This, perhaps, was not entirely due to natural causes. “All the plain” - only Sodom and Gomorrah are mentioned but Admah and Zeboiim were also involved (Genesis 14:2; Deuteronomy 29:23; Hosea 11:8). Zoar was spared.

Verse 25: This forms what is called the Dead Sea or Salt Sea. It was about seventy miles in length and eighteen in breadth. The ruins of the ancient cities indicate that destruction came by conflagration of great intensity.

Verse 26: “*She looked back*” - This showed an inclination to go back. Perhaps there was also unbelief at the back of it. Some think she actually attempted to return (Luke 9:62; 17:31,32). Perhaps she was a native of Sodom, as nothing is said of Lot having a wife when with Abraham. About twenty years had passed from the time Lot went to Sodom.

It is possible that she was behind Lot. Lot and his daughters did not see this at the time. They did not look back. Of the group, she alone was overtaken by the fiery destruction raining down.

“*She became a pillar of salt*” - There are three suggestions of what this may mean: 1) She was struck lightning and enveloped in salt. The region of these ancient cities abound in salt and salt cones of great height are common. There are many pillars of salt at the

south end of the Dead Sea which have borne the name of "Lot's Wife"; 2) By the miraculous power of God she was changed into a mass of rock salt, probably retaining the human figure; and 3) Metaphorical - She was struck dead and consumed, this judgement being an imperishable memorial of the fact.

Verses 27-29: Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had interceded for Lot. "*God remembered Abraham*" - thus the deliverance of Lot was not due to anything in his own life, but to the prevailing intercession of the man of faith. For Abraham's sake all those who could be called righteous were spared. Also for his sake salvation was offered to the entire family of Lot although neither his sons-in-law nor his own wife (ultimately) profited by it.

Verse 30: What hindered Lot's return to Abraham? No doubt his herdsmen as well as his herds had perished. Abraham would have received him.

Verses 31-36: Once Lot was ready to hand over his daughters to evil men; now they betray him. The daughters had accepted the morals of Sodom. He had side-stepped the will of God; now he was a widower in the mountains and his own daughters were the authors of his shame.

Verses 37,38: The "*children of Lot*" are Moab and Ammon (Numbers 21:29; 22; 25:1-3; Judges 3:14; 11:4,24; Deuteronomy 23:3,4; Psalm 83:8). Lot's last days were spent among the Moabites and Ammonites.

## **Chapter 20**

Chapter 20 is the third failure of Abraham.

Verses 1,2: Abraham journeyed south and took up his abode in Gerar. This was the center of the warlike men who were afterwards to become known as the Philistines. Gerar may have been their capital city. As Abraham approached, an old fear took possession of him again, leading him to act in unbelief. Thus, we see, that we are never absolutely safe from the invasion of a temptation that formerly vanquished us. Twenty years have elapsed since the experience in Egypt (Genesis 12:14; 17:1).

Verses 2-13: Through a dream God warned Abimelech of his peril. From the way he speaks it is evident that he was influenced by the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah: "*Lord, wilt Thou slay also a righteous nation*" (Genesis 20:4)? God spared him and told him how to proceed. Thus we again have the picture of a pagan king rebuking this man of faith. The nobility of Abraham is manifested in his open confession of what he had done earlier (Genesis 20:11,13).

Verses 14-18: The account closes with the gifts of Abimelech to Abraham and the prayer of Abraham offered for Abimelech.

These defections from the pathway of a simple and obedient faith in the life of Abraham did not occur in the greater things of his life, but rather in the application of the principle of faith to the smaller details thereof. This was the second time that Abraham attempted in his own wisdom to steer clear of the danger which he feared; and on each occasion he ran upon the very rocks he dreaded. It is the man of supreme faith who waits for God in the commonplace as well as in the crisis - G. Campbell Morgan.

## Chapter 21

Verses 1-7: It is now twenty-five years since Abraham left Ur.

Isaac means “laughter” (Genesis 21:3).

“Laugh” (Genesis 21:6) - Sarah refers to circumstances in Genesis 18:12 (Hebrews 11:11). She had laughed before and been rebuked for unbelief. Now as she laughed, she knew it was of God. Such faith-inspired laughter is contagious - *“Every one that heareth will laugh with me.”*

Isaac’s birth foreshadowed Christ’s birth: 1) He was the promised seed and son (Genesis 3:15; 17:16; Isaiah 7:14); 2) There was a long interval between the promise and its fulfillment; 3) His mother asked how it could be (Genesis 18:13; Luke 1:34,37); 4) His name was specified before birth (Genesis 17:19; Matthew 1:21); 5) His birth was at the appointed time (Genesis 21:2; Galatians 4:4); 6) A miracle was required to bring it about; and 7) The name was given by Abraham, not Sarah (Matthew 1:21).

Verses 8-21: Ishmael was about sixteen years of age. Abraham’s separation from his son, caused him grief for he loved him. God’s care for Hagar and her son shows His tenderness. He did not forget His promise although Hagar seems to have despaired of it (Genesis 21:16). Ishmael set out to an inheritance far richer as to this world than ever fell to Isaac and his sons. His descendants are the Bedouin Arabs - roving hunters. His mother took him a wife out of Egypt (Genesis 21:12-18,21).

Verses 22-33: It seems that notwithstanding the previous failure of Abraham’s faith (Genesis 20) the deeper fact of the existence of his faith in God and influenced this man and brought him into covenant relationship with God through Abraham. “The Everlasting God” (Genesis 21:33) - This is a new name for Jehovah, appearing in but one other place (Isaiah 40:28). Paul uses the Greek equivalent in Romans 16:26. The name indicates an attribute of God - His eternal duration.

## Chapter 22

Here at Mount Moriah is the eighth communication of Jehovah with Abraham. This is the highest peak in the history of Abraham’s faith, for this was a trial without apparent reason, coming suddenly, and without explanation and of the most desolating nature. His faith was put to the most tremendous strain and he triumphed.

Ishmael had been sent and the last hope for the realization of the divine purpose, apart from Isaac, was gone. This fact made the test more severe. Isaac was at least twenty-five years of age at this time.

Verse 1: *“God did tempt Abraham”* - “tempt” is literally “prove”. The word tempt as now used means incitement to sin. In this sense God does not tempt us (James 1:13). The word used here is the same as in 1 Kings 10:1, *“The Queen of Sheba came to prove Solomon.”*

The fact that God did prove Abraham is suggestive. It is an honor to be proven of God. He did not prove Lot because Sodom did that. God proves the man who is proof against Sodom. (G. Campbell Morgan)

Verse 2: "*Moriah*" - This is supposed to mean all the mountains or Jerusalem including Calvary and Mount Sion. Mount Calvary is the highest ground to the west and the mount of the Temple is the lowest of the mounts (2 Samuel 24:18-25; 2 Chronicles 3:1).

Objections might have been raised. 1) This was against the law of God which forbids murder. 2) This was against the law of parenthood. 3) God gave him no explanation for this course of action. 4) This was seemingly against the promise which God had given. 5) There would be no way of explaining to Sarah, members of his family, and to those who would hear of it. 6) It would seem to be no different from the practice of offering children to the false gods of the heathen.

Verse 3: "*Abraham rose up early in the morning*" - His obedience was active, ready, and quick, showing that his faith was absolute.

Verse 5: "*Go...will worship...will come again*" - All these verbs are first person plural. Hebrews 11:19 gives the explanation of this word of faith addressed to the young men. Abraham believed that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead. He had no precedent when the promise of the son was given. His faith was supreme for there is no trace of reluctance on his part.

Verse 8: "*God will provide Himself a lamb*" - The words more literally read "*God will see to it for Himself a lamb.*" Jesus spoke of this to the Jews when He said, "*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day and he saw it and was glad*" (John 8:56). On this occasion Abraham was given to see that all this was but a picture of that which was to be fulfilled in Christ, the Seed. His answer shows considerate love and the anticipation of faith.

Verse 9: Isaac knew he was the promised seed, yet without complaint he was "*led as a lamb to the slaughter*" - a picture of the unresisting Son of God, the true lamb (John 1:29). In this was Isaac's faith proved. His is a mighty act of faith.

Verse 12: The offering was actually made in the will and purpose of Abraham even though his hand was arrested by the angel of Jehovah. God spared Abraham the heart pang which He did not spare Himself, for "*He spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all*" (Romans 8:32).

The obedience of Abraham was shown as much in the fact that he did not slay his son as in his willingness to do so.

Verse 13: "*In the stead of his son*" - This shows clearly the substitutionary character of animal sacrifices.

Verse 14: "*Jehovah-Jireh*" - Here is a fresh discovery of the character of God as a result of the trial of his faith. "*The Lord who provides*" - "*The Lord will see*" (literally "*God will provide because the want He sees*") - His hand is ever ready and able to provide.

Verses 16,17: A blessing is now pronounced upon Abraham. This is the last recorded utterance to Abraham. He lived on in peace for fifty years. God swore by Himself not because it was necessary but to give assurance to Abraham (God's oaths: Psalms 89:35; 95:11; Isaiah 62:8; Luke 1:73; Hebrews 3:11; 6:17).

Aside from the typical teaching, there are two points to be noticed: 1) the astonishing faith and prompt obedience of the father, and 2) the filial respect and passive submission of the

son.

A picture prophecy of the death of Christ: 1) a father offering his son; 2) the son dead for three days in Abraham's mind (Genesis 22:4); 3) a substitution; 4) an actual sacrifice; and 5) On Mount Moriah - the place where 2,000 years later Jesus was crucified

Verses 20-24: News from relatives.

## **Chapter 23**

Chapter 23 to 25:11 focus on Abraham's last days. Chapter 23 gives us the events of the death and burial of Sarah.

Verses 1,2: Sarah is the only woman in the Bible whose age, death, and burial are distinctly noted. With her, promise of the incarnation began terminating with Mary. She is the mother of believers (1 Peter 3:6). Upon Sarah and Mary, God seems to have put more honor than upon any other woman. Sarah lived to 127 years, 37 years after Isaac's birth (Genesis 17:17; 21:5).

These are the first recorded tears. Faith never kills affection.

Verse 4: His action was inspired by faith. He did not take Sarah back to Ur, but buried her in the land which God had given him. Although heir of the whole land by divine promise, Abraham is now obliged to ask for a burial plot. He was still a pilgrim and stranger in the land and Sarah's death raised a question of the legal title to even a small bit of it.

Verse 6: They had no idea he was looking forward to the possession of the land. Abraham was prepared to purchase the land, awaiting God's time and manner of fulfilling the promise.

Verse 13: The land was a gift to him from God, but he would not receive part of God's gift as a gift from the sons of Heth.

Verse 18: There he buried Sarah, and thus his first actual possession in the land was a grave. This is the first grave recorded in the Bible. Also buried there are Abraham (Genesis 25:9,10), Isaac (Genesis 35:27,28), Rebekah and Leah (Genesis 49:31), and Jacob (Genesis 50:13). Rachel is buried in Bethlehem (Genesis 35:16-20).

## **Chapter 24**

Chapter 24 focuses on the securing of a wife for Isaac according to the leading of God.

Verse 1: Isaac was about forty years of age (Genesis 25:20) and it had been customary with his ancestors to marry at thirty, or sooner (Genesis 11:14,18,22,24). Abraham believed the promise that God would build up his family, therefore he did not make haste.

Verse 2: There can be no reasonable doubt that Eliezer of Damascus was the servant employed on this occasion (Genesis 15:2). About sixty years had passed since Abraham had spoken of him as the steward of his house. The oath which is taken (Genesis 24:2,9) occurs in only one other place in the Bible. In Genesis 47:29 it concerns the burial of Jacob in Canaan and is a very solemn occasion.

Verses 3,4: In the choosing of a bride for his son, Abraham again acted out of his faith. It was very important that he should not marry a Canaanite. Such a marriage would have meant an alliance which would have given him a human right in the land; but faith declined to use man's way of obtaining the fulfillment of God's promise.

Verse 8: It was necessary that she be willing to act on faith too by leaving her kindred and jointing the family of faith in the far country.

Verses 10-15: See notes on Genesis 11:29; 28:2,10. Verse 14 reveals the character desired for Isaac's wife: Hospitality, simplicity, and humility.

Verse 22: This is in accord with Eastern custom.

Verse 24: See notes on Genesis 11:29; 24:10,15.

## **Chapter 25**

Chapter 25:1-11 is the final record of Abraham.

Verses 1-4: The children of Keturah. From them came the Midianites and other neighboring people. Five hundred years later it was a Midianite woman that Moses married (Exodus 2:16-21).

Verses 5,6: He separated Isaac from all other of his descendants. This he did by bestowing all his possessions upon Isaac, with the exception of the gifts which he gave to the others upon sending them away into the east country.

Verse 7: He died just one hundred years after he came to Canaan (Genesis 12:4). All this time he was a sojourner in a strange country.

He died with no possession other than a grave and with no further sign of his own posterity than that of his son Isaac, and his two grandsons, Esau and Jacob, who at this time were about fifteen years of age.

Verse 8: Yet he died "*full of years*" meaning "*satisfied in years*" or "*saturated with all good*." Four others in the Old Testament are said to have died "full of years": Isaac (Genesis 35:29), David (1 Chronicles 29:28), Jehoida (2 Chronicles 24:15), and Job (Job 42:17).

Verse 9: Isaac and Ishmael buried him. Apparently they had maintained friendly relations up to this time, though it was many years since Ishmael's expulsion.

## **VII.ISAAC Chapters 25:11-27:46**

Verses 12-18: Ishmael's posterity is highlighted. The second half of Genesis contains the generations of Ishmael (Genesis 25:12-18), of Isaac (Genesis 25:19-35:29), of Esau (Genesis 36:1-43), and Jacob (Genesis 37:2-50:26). There is a brief record given of Ishmael and Esau which indicates that the purpose of Genesis to record the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham and the development of His purpose of redemption (Genesis 3:15).

Descendants of Ishmael possessed land from east to west: From Havilah on the



Euphrates, near its junction with the Tigris, to the desert of Shur east of Egypt; extends along the isthmus of Suez which separates the Red Sea from the Mediterranean.

Concerning these ancient tribes mentioned (Genesis 17:20; 25:12-16), or elsewhere in the Pentateuch, little is known; nor have we more certain information of their places of settlement. On this subject many learned men have toiled hard with little fruit of their labor (Adam Clarke).

Verses 21-26: We are given the account of the births of Esau and Jacob. Of Abraham's sons all were eliminated except Isaac. Of Isaac's sons Esau was eliminated, and Jacob was chosen. With Jacob, the eliminating process stopped. All of Jacob's descendants were to be included. It has been 20 years since Isaac's marriage.

Before their birth Jehovah made a distinct communication to their mother of the fact that the elder would become the servant of the younger.

Verses 29-34: Here Esau sells his birthright. Which, on the part of Jacob, was not a valid purchase because it was already his. On the part of Esau was not a valid sale because it was not his to sell.

It appears that the following rights were attached to the first-born:

1. The first-born were peculiarly consecrated to God (Exodus 22:29).
2. They were next in honor to their parents (Genesis 49:3).
3. They had a double portion of their father's goods (Deuteronomy 21:17; 1 Chronicles 5:1,2).
4. They succeeded their father in the government of the family or the kingdom (Genesis 27:29; 2 Chronicles 21:3).
5. They had the sole right of conducting the service of God, both at the Tabernacle and the Temple. Hence the tribe of Levi was taken in lieu of the first-born and had the sole right of administration in the service of God (Numbers 8:14-18). Hence we presume that the first-born had the right to the priesthood before the giving of the law.

The birth-right was a matter of great importance. This case seems to prove also that it was transferable.

Neither Jacob nor Esau is to be admired in this matter. The one was profane in that he allowed the lower side of his nature to master him and sold his birthright in order to appease his physical hunger. The other was mean in that he took advantage of that hunger to obtain his birthright.

It is possible that they may have had discussions about this matter before. Jacob, who was not fully confident of God's method of arriving at a goal, may have been waiting for his opportunity.

## **Chapter 26**

Isaac lived the longest of all the patriarchs. But, less is recorded of him. Only one chapter is devoted entirely to his life.

Verse 1: This was probably not the same Abimelech.

Verse 2: As Abraham had taken refuge in Egypt (Genesis 12:10), so Isaac was probably

preparing to go there. This is the occasion of the Lord's first communication with him.  
Verses 3,4: Gerar was the borderland midway between Canaan and Egypt. A declaration of the continuity of the covenant made with his father, Abraham.

Verse 5: This looks very much like Biblical evidence that the beginnings of God's written Word were already existent in Abraham's day.

Verses 6-11: Although saved by divine communication from going into Egypt as his father had, still he made the same mistake and had the same failure. This Abimelech is probably the son of the one with whom his father had made a covenant. As in the case of his father, Isaac was rebuked by the man outside the covenant.

Verses 12-14: Isaac's prosperity excited the envy and jealousy of the Philistines.

Verse 15: This was an effectual method of showing enmity, for the flocks would die without water. This conduct was a direct infringement of the covenant which Abraham had made with Abimelech (Genesis 21:22).

Verse 18: To name a well, denoted a property right (Numbers 20:17-19; 21:17). Isaac gave them the names given by his father.

Verses 19-22: Isaac showed himself to be a patient man, also one who loved peace. *"Made room for us" - literally, "God will find us room."*

Verses 23,24: As soon as Isaac returned to Beersheba, Jehovah made the second communication with him. This seems to have been the result of his return to the proper place (cf. Genesis 21:11).

Verse 25: Thus Isaac indicated this willingness to act on the principle of faith.

Verses 26-33: Again the man of faith leaves a testimony for righteousness when he leaves the place of his failure. He made a covenant with Abimelech.

Verses 34-36: The marriage of Esau.

## **Chapter 27**

Verse 1: Isaac was old and apparently suffering from some affliction which had affected his senses. At this point Isaac is about 137 years old. Jacob is about 77 years old. Ishmael had died at 137 years of age, 14 years earlier (Genesis 25:17).

Verse 4: It was apparently customary to bind a covenant after the two parties had eaten together.

Verses 5,6: God required no cunning of Rebekah or Jacob to help Him out. God is not unable to carry out His purposes.

Verse 10: This clever plan deceived Isaac, but Jacob received more than the blessing. He had to flee from his father's house and his uncle Laban deceived him as he had deceived his father. Then he had hard servitude for twenty-one years and was finally obliged to leave.

Verses 19,20,24: It is hard to tell just one lie. Three lies came in rapid succession. Verse

20 is perhaps the most flagrant instance of the abuse of the divine name recorded in Scripture.

Verse 33: Isaac refused to change what he had done, or to unsay what he had said. Therein his faith was shown (Hebrews 11:20). Through failure of the faith he had tried to place the covenant blessing upon Esau. But when he discovered what had really happened, in faith he yielded to the clear over-ruling of God.

Verse 41: The enmity which Esau felt against his brother Jacob seems to have been transmitted to his posterity. A perpetual enmity was kept up between the descendants of both families, the Edomites and Israelites.

Verses 42-45: Jacob had to leave home - this quiet man (Genesis 25:27), a dweller in tents, to whom home meant much paid this price for his deceit. He never saw his mother again. He was deceived by his sons. He was deceived by Laban. As a man of means he was reduced to 21 years of hard labor. Rebekah's plan was that he should tarry with his uncle a few days for she said she would send for him again. Although her death and burial are not recorded, she probably never saw him again (cf. Genesis 49:31).

## **VIII. JACOB      Chapters 28-36**

Chapters 28 to 36 focus on Jacob. A brief outline of God's communication with Jacob:

1. First communication of Jehovah - Genesis 28:13-15  
At Bethel - fleeing from Esau to Haran
2. Second communication of Jehovah - Genesis 31:3,13  
At Haran - ready to leave Laban
3. Third communication of Jehovah - 32:24-30  
At Peniel - fearing to meet Esau
4. Fourth communication of Jehovah - Genesis 35:1  
At Shechem (Genesis 33:18) - after punishing the Shechemites
5. Fifth communication of Jehovah - Genesis 35:9-12  
At Bethel - obeying God
6. Sixth communication of Jehovah - Genesis 46:2-4  
At Beersheba - told to go to Joseph in Egypt

### **Chapter 28**

Verses 1, 2: Isaac sent Jacob from home to his uncle's where he was to get a wife of his own people.

Verses 3,4: Here the heir of the promise was a wanderer on the face of the earth.

Verse 12: From the point where Jacob's head lay, the ladder extended to heaven. Though an exile from home, he saw that he could always be in contact with God for the space between heaven and earth was bridged.

Verses 13-15: Here is Jehovah's first communication to Jacob. God confirmed the blessing of Abraham which Isaac had prayed for in verses 3,4.

Verses 16,17: In the place where Jacob did not expect to find God, he saw His manifestation.

Verse 19: Bethel - "the house of God" - this was not the first time this name was given, but it now became Bethel to Jacob himself (Genesis 12:8; 13:3).

Verses 20-22: It was probably according to instructions received from God that both Abraham and Jacob offered the tenth to God (Genesis 14:20).

## **Chapter 29**

Chapters 29 to 31 cover 20 years of Jacob's life (Genesis 31:38). Since Bethel, Jacob has now been in the school of experience.

Verse 2: The well was a natural meeting place (Genesis 24:12).

Verses 5,6: God had led Jacob's steps. Laban, son of Bethuel the Aramean (Genesis 28:5) is named.

Verses 18,19: Jacob proposes 7 years service for Rachel. Laban was shrewd and could see how much he would gain from the services of Jacob.

Verses 23,24: It was evening and she was no doubt veiled.

Verse 25: Laban's true nature was manifested in this deceit after Jacob's seven years of faithful labor... Jacob no doubt now recalled how he had placed himself in the place of Esau whom Isaac loved.

Verses 26-28: The marriage feast lasted 7 days. Jacob married Rachel a week after his marriage with Leah, though he did serve another 7 years for her.

Verse 31: Rachel was barren. For the third time, in the line of Abraham, barrenness occurs.

Verses 32-35: Leah's sons" Reuben - "See, a son"; Simeon - "Hearing"; Levi - "Joined"; Judah - "Praise".

## **Chapter 30**

Verses 1-3: Verses 1 to 24 are the account of the birth of Jacob's eleven sons and one daughter. Isaac' example should have taught Jacob what to do (Genesis 25:21). Jacob knew about Abraham and Hagar.

Verses 14-16: Leah and Rachel quarrel. The root or berries of mandrake were regarded as promoting fertility. Reuben was too small to know this. He just brought them to his mother.

Verse 21: Jacob had other daughters (Genesis 37:35; 46:7;15b). Dinah is mentioned specifically because of events in chapter 34.

Verse 24: The birth of Rachel's son is a turning point in the account. Jacob now desires to return to his own country.

Verses 25,26: Jacob now had his wives and children, but no other possessions. He desired now to return to his home.

Verses 27,28: Laban knew that Jacob's years with him had brought him great gain; and for selfish reasons he was anxious to retain him.

Verses 31,32: Sheep in the east are generally white. Goats are rarely speckled, usually black. Laban was glad to have the speckled culled out.

Verses 35-43: How far the results were due to Jacob's method we cannot say. Perhaps God intervened in Jacob's behalf because he had been defrauded (Genesis 31:7-9,12b,41).

This procedure is not admirable on either side. Comparing Jacob through all his history with Abraham, it is perfectly clear that the faith of the former moved on a much lower level than that of the latter. Abraham had been content to let the scheming Lot choose, and to give him all the advantage. Jacob, while always believing in God, was not willing to commit these matters of worldly possessions to Him.

## **Chapter 31**

Verses 1,2: Laban and his sons were unable to prevent the success of Jacob. Now they were angry and Jacob was able to sense and see it.

Verse 3: Verses 3 to 13 are Jehovah's second communication to Jacob. It is a striking fact that in all we are told of Jacob's twenty years in Haran, there is not a word of his having any special dealings with God. There is no mention of altar or prayer. If Jacob had well nigh forgotten God, God had not forgotten him.

With the shadow of the dissatisfaction of his uncle resting upon him, God spoke again. It was in a command to return to his fathers, accompanied by the gracious promise, "*I will be with thee.*"

Verses 4-16: Jacob told his wives the message he had received from God and also that their father did not look upon him with favor. Both of them agreed with Jacob in his plan to leave Haran.

Verse 19: Rachel had an opportunity to steal the household images. No doubt they had been made for idolatrous or superstitious purposes, but it is not clear what Rachel's purpose was in taking them. Some think that Rachel took the images to keep her father from inquiring of them regarding the fleeing party; or she may have intended to use them herself. Later they became a snare to Jacob's family (Genesis 35:2,4).

Verses 20,21: The same streak of cunning which had been manifested in Jacob's nature was seen in the stealth with which he broke away from Laban.

Verse 24: As Laban pursued Jacob, God spoke to him. God's words to him meant, "*Do not begin with 'Peace be unto thee' and then proceed to injurious language and acts of violence.*" "*Speak neither for or against his going*" is the same Hebraism in 24:50.

Verses 34,35: Through Rachel's deceit, Laban did not find the images which Jacob did not know were in his party. He was sincere in his remarks about them and, from this point on, he seems to act honestly.

Verses 44-50: The covenant was entered into: The pillar is a symbol of the Lord watching between 2 parties of a covenant, lest either breaks it. The heap of stones was an emblem of suspicion and the indication of the fact that there was to be no further dealings between them. This is a monument of separation. Two men called upon God, not to ratify a comradeship, but to watch over each on behalf of the other, as a policeman watches a thief. God was to stand as on a watchtower, to prevent either of them from trenching on the conditions of their covenant.

Verse 55: Laban does not again appear in the history. This is the last sight we have of him.

## **Chapter 32**

In the events in this chapter we find the turning point in Jacob's life. We have noted his constant attempts at self-deliverance. There was no real humility, resignation to God's will or trust in His leadings.

Verse 1: For what purpose the angels of God met Jacob, does not appear from the text; probably it was intended to show him that he and his company were under the care of an especial providence and thus to confirm his trust and confidence in God.

Verse 2: The two hosts - the angels formed one and Jacob and his company formed the other. How and by what way this manifestation came we do not know. Jacob had proof of Divine leading and call. He knew of God's purpose to be accomplished (Genesis 28:15). He had seen angels of God at Bethel and Heron (Genesis 28:12; 31:11).

Verse 3: Jacob sent messengers ahead with a message to Esau. Rebekah had said that she would send for him when Esau's wrath was gone (Genesis 27:44,45). She never sent for him, so he did not know what to expect.

Verse 6: They came back with the alarming report that Esau was on his way to meet Jacob with four hundred men.

Verses 7,8: Jacob was fearful. His first thought was to resort again to his own plans. We have no evidence that Esau was hostile. Jacob's own conscience made him interpret the news in that way.

Verses 9-12: Jacob's second thought was dependence upon God in prayer. He urged seven arguments as to why God should undertake on his behalf. It was a prayer of faith in which he pleaded the promises of God.

Verses 13-21: Jacob again resumed his planning and a great present was sent on to Esau.

Verse 24: Jacob was now left alone. Here One wrestled with him. He was called a man, but in verse 30 He is called God. Hosea calls Him "*Jehovah, the God of Hosts*" (Hosea 12:3-6). This was doubtless the Lord Jesus Christ, Who, among the patriarchs, assumed that human form which in the fullness of time He really took of a woman in which He dwelt thirty-three years among man. Note: Angel of the Covenant (Malachi 3:1).

Verse 25: God demonstrated to Jacob his own weakness. He had to see what a weak creature he was. Because Jacob held out in his own strength, the Angel had to touch him physically. It would not have been difficult for the Angel to have overcome immediately the resisting strength of Jacob. But, it was when Jacob was stripped of his strength that he yielded to that power and, in yielding, he won his victory. He became conscious of the superiority of the power of the Angel.

Verses 27,28: This is the third communication of Jehovah. In that victory a new name was given to him. He was no longer Jacob, a supplanter (Genesis 27:36), but Israel, prince of God ("He will rule as God"). "*Seeing thou hast been powerful with the Almighty, surely thou shalt prevail over mortals.*" Seeing himself as weak, he became mighty with God. After Peniel the name Jacob is used 45 times and the name Israel is used only 23 times. Israel is first used in Genesis 35:21. There are other significant name changes in Scripture: Abram to Abraham; Saul to Paul; Simon to Peter. In the cases of Abraham and Paul, their old names were never used again.

Verse 29: He refuses to give Himself any name, yet shows Himself to be the true God. Jacob however wished to hear from His own lips that name by which He desire to be invoked and worshipped (Genesis 35:11,12).

Verse 30: The place was called Peniel ("the face of God") between Jabbok (Genesis 32:22) and Succoth (Genesis 33:17).

Verses 31,32: Israel limped and carried this token away with him that it was a reality and not a dream. To this day the Jews do not eat this part of the animal. The preparation of a hind quarter for food therefore requires a skilled hand.

### **Chapter 33**

In 32:28 we read how Jacob had power with God and prevailed. Here we find what power he had with men. "*When a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be a peace with him*" (Proverbs 16:7).

Verse 1: It has been generally supported that Esau came with an intention of destroying his brother. There is nothing in the text to warrant this, but it certainly could have been so.

Verse 2: Apparently Jacob was still fearful. All his preparations would have been of no avail had not God worked. Joseph was perhaps 6 years old at this time.

Verse 3: Jacob bowed seven times to the ground even though the birthright was now his. This shows humility.

Verse 4: Instead of an angry man, Jacob met a brother. God had intervened Himself.

Verses 10,11: Jacob could not be certain that he had found favor with Esau unless the present had been received. According to custom, one can rely on the friendship of those who accept gifts.

Verses 17,18: Jacob went from Succoth to Shechem in the land of Canaan.

Verse 20: One hundred eighty-five years before Abraham had built here (Shechem) the first altar built in the land (Genesis 12:6,7). Jacob now consecrated himself anew to God. He called the later El-Elohe-Israel, using his new name for the first time in association with

the name of God.

## Chapter 34

Here begins the account of Jacob's greatest affliction in the story of his children.

Verse 1: As far as we know Dinah was Jacob's only daughter. It is supposed that she was about 14 or 15 years of age. Josephus says it was on the occasion of a festival that she went to see the daughters of the land. Was this curiosity?

Verses 2,3: Probably an act of violence.

Verses 13,14: The uncircumcised were not in the covenant of God, therefore they made this demand so that the prince would be eligible to marry this daughter of the promised people. Thus far the sons of Jacob were right. But to make this a cover for their deceit was evil and wicked. Deceit had been the sin of their father too. They were stressing only the outward sign and not the circumcision of the heart.

Verse 25: Simeon and Levi, sons of Leah, were brothers to Dinah by the whole blood (Genesis 29:32-34; 30:20,21).

Verses 27-29: The punishment was against all in the city. This was certainly a blot on Jacob's family history.

Verse 30: The fruits of his own sins are repeated in the account of his family. Jacob is fearful. Sin always brings fear. We read nothing more about Dinah.

Verse 31: Simeon and Levi have the last word. Later Jacob speaks again: "*Cursed be their anger*" (Genesis 49:5-7). This bloody act cost Simeon and Levi the birthright. They were second and third in line after Reuben (Genesis 29:32,34; 49:5-7).

## Chapter 35

Verse 1: The fourth communication of Jehovah. It was thirty years since Jacob experienced the vision of the ladder. He then was in Bethel, "the house of God" - but now his house was defiled by idols.

Verse 2: The strange gods were probably: 1) Those which belonged to his servants for they were all Syrians addicted to idolatry and superstition; or 2) The gods which Rachel had stolen; or 3) Images of silver and gold found among the spoils of the city of Shechem (Genesis 34:29).

Verse 3: Jacob declares his purpose to fully obey the Lord.

Verse 7: Formerly the place impressed Jacob; now it was the God of the place (Genesis 28:16,17).

Verse 8: This incident would suggest that Rebekah was dead before Jacob returned into the land, and that on his return he was joined by Deborah for the sake of his mother (Genesis 49:31).

Verse 9: The fifth communication of Jehovah. In this hour of obedience God's fifth and final communication came to Jacob. This had to do with his personal history. God spoke



to him again but the word had special reference to his sons.

Verse 10: God renewed the name “Israel” to Jacob. It would seem as though Jacob had never really entered fully into the experience which his new name brought to him.

Verses 11,12: Immediately the divine promise was also repeated (Genesis 28:13-15). God ratified the covenant with the ratification of His special name: El Shaddai. He had first used it to Abraham when his name was changed (Genesis 17:1ff). In the night of wrestling the name of Jacob had been changed. But when he asked the name of God, he was not answered (Genesis 32:29). Now in the pathway of obedience the name which signifies the absolute sufficiency of God was that by which He declared Himself to him.

Verse 14: This is the first mention of a drink-offering. It is not listed in the Levitical offerings (Leviticus 1-7) but is included in instructions for sacrifice in the land (Numbers 15:5-7).

Verse 15: Probably the name Bethel was definitely given here; or confirmed after having been given in Genesis 28:19.

Verse 18: This is the first record in the Bible of a mother dying in child-birth. Rachel’s son was given two names - by his mother “son of my sorrow” and by his father “son of the right hand”.

Verse 21: The first time the new name Israel is used.

Verse 22: Reuben’s sin: Bilhah was Rachel’s handmaid (Genesis 29:29). Jewish historians say that he only overthrew the bed of Bilhah because he found her preferred after the death of Rachel instead of his mother Leah. Reuben was the first-born, but lost his birthright to Joseph (Genesis 49:3,4; 1 Chronicles 5:1,2). The priesthood was given to Levi and the authority to Judah. The full number of his sons was completed before the death of his father, Isaac.

Verses 23-26: This is the first time we have the names of these heads of the twelve tribes together. They are listed according to their mothers and not according to their ages. Afterward we find them often, even to the end of the Bible (Revelation 7:4ff; 21:12).

Verses 28,29: Isaac’s death did not occur for another 12 years. He lived to witness Jacob’s grief over Joseph.

## **Chapter 36**

Chapter 36 focuses on Esau’s posterity and the fulfilling of the blessing given to Esau (Genesis 27:39,40). Faster than the seed of promise the sons of the flesh multiplied. The descendants of Esau occupied Edom and were known as Edomites (Genesis 36:43). Edom is a rocky range of mountains south of the Dead Sea. It was well-watered and abounding in pasturage. The Amalekites (Genesis 36:12) were one branch of the family. They were the first to attack Israel after the exodus from Egypt and were among the oppressors of Israel in the time of the Judges. They suffered terrific defeats at the hands of Saul, David, and Hezekiah. They have now disappeared from history.

The Edomites refused passage to Moses (Numbers 20:14; 21:4). They were always bitter enemies of the Jews, perpetuating the enmity of Esau toward Jacob (Genesis 25:23; 27:41). They never missed an opportunity to aid an attacking army. Sela, or Petra,

carved in a perpendicular cliff was their capital. They would go out on raiding expeditions and then retreat to their impregnable strongholds high up in the rocky gorges.

Verse 34: Jobab - some think this was Job of the book of Job. Eliphaz and Teman (Genesis 34:10,11) occur in the book of Job too. There is no proof of this and some reasons against it.

## **IX. JOSEPH Chapters 37-50**

Here begins the account of Joseph (Genesis 37-50) who, in every subsequent chapter but one (chapter 38), is the main figure. His account is so remarkably divided between his humiliation and his exaltation that we cannot avoid seeing something of Christ in it.

The “coat of many colors” was a badge of favoritism, possibly indicating his fathers’ intention to make Joseph heir to the birthright. Rueben, Jacob’s firstborn, was natural heir to the birthright; but he was disavowed because of his illicit relation with one of his father’s concubines (Genesis 35:22; 49:3,4; 1 Chronicles 5:1,2). Simeon and Levi, second and third in line of succession (Genesis 29:31-35) were passed up because of their crime of violence at Shechem (Genesis 34:25-30; 49:5-7). Judah, the fourth son, was next in line; and it was probably generally expected in family circles that the birthright would fall to him. But Joseph, though he was Jacob’s eleventh son, was Rachel’s first-born. Rachel was Jacob’s best loved wife; and Joseph was his favorite son (Genesis 37:3). So the “coat” looked suspicious; and Joseph’s dreams of his own ascendancy (Genesis 37:5-10) aggravated the situation. Thus Judah and Joseph appear to have been rivals for the birthright. This may explain Judah’s active part in selling Joseph into slavery (Genesis 37:26,27). The rivalry between Judah and Joseph passed to their descendants and persisted throughout Israel’s history. The tribes of Judah and Ephraim (Joseph’s son) were continually contenders for supremacy. Judah took the lead under David and Solomon; then under the leadership of Ephraim, the ten tribes seceded (Genesis 48; 50:25,26). See Henry H. Halley.

Verse 2: We do not know what this “evil report” was, but it increased his brothers’ hatred of him. Probably this was no idle talk for we have proof that Joseph knew how to hold his tongue. In view of what we know of the brothers, their lives may have been notorious in the neighborhood.

Verse 3: He was preferred above his brothers. Such a coat was worn by those exempt from manual labor as it was a full-length garment. The working man’s dress was a little below the knees in length, with sleeves only to the elbows. It was a coat of extremities.

Verse 5: From the rest of the account we judge that Joseph did not tell this dream with pride. Dreams play an important role in the history of Joseph’s people at this time. However, these dreams were primarily for Joseph.

Verse 8: His brothers rightly interpreted the dream, though they hated the interpretation.

Verse 9: He dreamed another dream and told it also. In the fulfillment of this dream the events which his brothers feared did not take place (Genesis 42). They thought he would rule over them by succeeding to their father’s inheritance. Joseph’s position in Egypt next to Pharaoh never entered their wildest imaginations.

Verses 11-21: His brothers’ hatred led to their murderous plan to get rid of this dreamer. Shechem is about 60 miles from Hebron.

Verse 22: This pit was a cistern of which there were many empty ones. These were narrow at the top and wide below, making a prison from which escape was impossible.

Verses 27,28: Ishmaelites - Midianites: A caravan composed of different tribes. In the Chaldee they were called Arabians which means to "mingle". The word Arabians comprehends a vast number of clans or tribes of people. "A caravan of Ishmaelite Arabs came" - Ishmael was a son of Abraham by Hagar (Genesis 16:11,12). Midian was the son of Abraham by Keturah (Genesis 25:2). For twenty pieces of silver Joseph was sold. Later the crime of stealing and selling was made punishable by death (Exodus 21:16).

Verses 31-33: The brothers endeavored to send convincing proof to Jacob of the death of his son, Joseph. Could this have been something of retribution for the deceptions he had practiced upon Esau? This cruel deception caused him many years of mourning.

## **Chapter 38**

This chapter was probably inserted because Judah was progenitor of the Messiah; and it was in accord with Old Testament purpose to preserve family registers all along the line of succession.

Verse 2: It was forbidden to marry a Canaanite, although it was apparently permitted if the woman became a worshipper of Jehovah.

Verses 3-5: She bare Judah three sons.

Verses 6,7: Tamar became the wife of the firstborn. For what wickedness God slew him we do not know.

Verses 8-10: The second son married the widow according to the custom of that time, but he refused to raise seed to this brother. The children produced by this second marriage would have been considered as the children of the first husband and in consequence inherited his possessions. This custom of marrying a brother's widow was afterward made a part of the Mosaic law (Deuteronomy 25:5; Ruth 4:5). This son was also slain of the Lord.

Verse 11: Instead of giving Tamar the third son, Judah sent her to her father's house, saying he would wait until the son was of marriageable age. However, he feared this son would die also. Judah acts with deception.

Verses 12-26: Through deceit Tamar became the mother of the twin sons of Judah.

Verse 28: The binding of the scarlet thread around the wrist of the child whose arm appeared first in the birth shows how carefully the privileges of the birthright were preserved.

Verses 29,30: One of the children born of Judah's union with his daughter-in-law (posing as a prostitute) was the ancestor of the Messiah. Divine grace is seen triumphing over sin as our Lord sprang out of the house of Judah (Matthew 1:3; Luke 3:33; Hebrews 7:14).

## **Chapter 39**

It is important for God to get the chosen family out of Canaan until they are able to drive out the Canaanites. In Egypt they are shut off by themselves in Goshen by Egyptian

scruples. Joseph was brought into Egypt soon after he was seventeen years of age (Genesis 37:2). He was 13 years in Potiphar's house and in prison. At thirty he became ruler of Egypt second only to Pharaoh himself (Genesis 41:46).

Verse 1: From being the favorite of his father, Joseph descended to a place as slave in Egypt.

Verse 2: He was blessed of God even serving as a slave.

Verses 4-6: Potiphar put everything in Joseph's charge. So great was his confidence in Joseph that he did not insist on a personal knowledge of his own affairs. Here Joseph became familiar with Egyptian life and methods of business administration.

Verses 8,9: In this position great temptation came to him, but he steadfastly refused to yield. He gave two reasons to Potiphar's wife for refusing her advances: 1) Gratitude to his master to whom he owed all that he had, and 2) His fear of God in Whose sight such action would be a sin calling for punishment.

Verse 12: He fled temptation. Flight is sometimes more honorable and more difficult than heroic deeds. It is important to know when to stand still and fight and when to run.

Verses 17-20: Potiphar's wife lied to her husband and he believed her. Joseph is put into prison. However, to be cast into prison was a relatively light penalty. The penalty for a slave in adultery was instant execution. Did this mean that his master truly believed his wife's story? He could not disrespect her. Yet, it seems he had compassion on Joseph.

Verses 21-23: As before, the Lord was with Joseph. As a result, he was given high position in the prison - everything was entrusted to him. Again, he learned methods of administration.

## **Chapter 40**

Verse 1: The chief butler and the baker were thrown into prison.

Verse 4: Joseph had charge of them as the trusted one in the prison.

Verse 8: Joseph was to be God's mouthpiece to them. These interpretations could not have been guesswork.

Verses 10-13: Joseph gave a favorable interpretation to the butler. Notice that while he foresaw the immediate delivery of the butler, he did not know the time of his own (Psalm 105:19).

Verse 19: Bitter truth must also be spoken by the servant of God.

Verse 23: Human nature is prone to forget and neglect in prosperity those who have been a help in adversity. But God does not forget. His purpose required Joseph to be delivered in another way, at another time, and by another means. He was left two years longer in prison.

## **Chapter 41**

God is bringing about two things in the account of Joseph: 1) The advancement of

Joseph; and 2) The maintenance of Jacob and his family in the time of famine.

*“Though men may be utterly unconscious of it, the Divine purpose is being wrought out through human history; and all forces - material, mental, and moral - are being compelled to contribute toward the consummation upon which the heart of God is set.” - G. Campbell Morgan.*

Verse 1: God’s providence works slowly but so different the outcome from that resulting from man’s pushing ahead! From a shepherd boy to a position second to Pharaoh in 13 years (Genesis 41:46).

Verses 2-8: It was no accident that Pharaoh had this dream (Proverbs 21:1). Pharaoh was helpless before this dream which troubled him.

Verses 15,16: Joseph maintained an attitude of dependence upon God even in the presence of the king. He was unelated by Pharaoh’s praise and disclaimed any skill of his own. No man is fit to declare the councils of God unless he is deeply sensible to his own unfitness apart from divine illumination.

Verse 25: Joseph showed the Egyptian king that though the ordinary cause of plenty or want was the river Nile, yet it was under the direction of God. The fertility of Egypt was entirely the work of Jehovah.

Verses 28:32: Joseph spoke with certainty of what God was about to do.

Verses 33-36: Joseph advised the king how he was to act. This plan of procedure was flashed into his mind by the Spirit which gave him the interpretation of the dream. Pharaoh was to take up as a tax, one-fifth of the produce of all the land during the seven years of plenty.

Verse 39: Pharaoh recognized the hand of God in all this. Such wisdom comes only from God’s Spirit (Matthew 7:28,29; 13:54; John 7:46; James 1:5).

Verses 40-43: Joseph was given a place of power second to the king himself.

Verse 45: He was given a new name - “a revealer of secrets” or “the man to whom secrets are revealed”.

Verse 46: He was thirty years of age when this promotion came.

Verses 51-52: Both his sons were given Hebrew names: Manasseh “forgetting”; Ephraim “fruitful”. The God who kept him from sin, disbelief, and despair during his humiliation now preserved him from pride and from falling into heathenism during his exaltation.

## **Chapter 48**

Joseph meets his brethren after more than twenty years. This is the account of their first visit to Egypt when ten of them were sent by their father; nine of them returned to Jacob.

Verse 6: In the foregoing chapters we have the fulfillment of the dreams Joseph interpreted for others. Now we have the fulfillment of the dreams he dreamed. As his brothers bowed down before him they did not have the proud and hateful look which they had when the interpreted his dreams (Genesis 37:7,8).

Verse 7: It seems strange that during the twenty years he had been in Egypt, especially the last seven years, Joseph had never sent word to let his father know of his circumstances. He must have been restrained of God or he would have made the excursion to Canaan as he traveled (Genesis 41:45,46).

Verse 11-13: "*Sons of one man*" - to prove that they were not a group of spies with plans to attempt a hostile move against the kingdom.

Verses 15,16: Joseph required proof of them by requesting that they bring their youngest brother.

Verses 21-23: After three days in prison the consciences of the brothers began to detect the fruit of their own wrongdoings. Not knowing that Joseph understood their language, they spoke of their sin in his presence. Thus he heard the confession of what they had done and for the first time he learned of the part Reuben had played. The influence of the conscience is here seen. It was nearly twenty-two years since they sold their brother and their consciences may have been lulled to sleep; but God combined circumstances which forced them to heed its voice.

Verse 24: Through all the years and in spite of high position, Joseph had kept a tender and responsive heart. The memory of the injury done him brought tears to his eyes; a work of the Spirit of God. Simeon was kept as a hostage.

Verse 35: They returned and told their father all that had taken place. As they found their money in their sacks they were frightened.

Verse 36: "*All these things are against me*" - This was not the language of faith. Not so had Abraham spoken when God commanded him to offer up his only son. Actually all these things were for him. God was working to preserve his family and himself; also to fulfill his promise to Abraham.

Verse 38: Jacob's love for Rachel is shown as through the years in the love for the sons she bore him.

## **Chapter 43**

Verses 1-11: The continuing famine (year two) made it necessary for Jacob to send his sons again to Egypt. They refused to go without Benjamin, so Jacob finally was forced to permit him to go. He also sent a present to the lord of Egypt.

Verse 12: He returned the money which had been returned in the sack the first time his sons went down to Egypt.

Verse 18: The men were afraid when they saw that they were being taken to Joseph's house. They had been afraid when he was severe and now were afraid of his invitation.

Verses 21,22: They told the steward of the money which they had found in their sacks.

Verse 23: This proves that there was the knowledge of the true God in Egypt. Some feel that the steward himself was a Hebrew and that Joseph had told him of the truth in this case. While he could not reveal the truth, he did speak to assure these frightened brethren.

Verses 29,30: They were probably brought into his presence one at a time, the youngest last. Joseph was moved to tears. Benjamin was perhaps a year old when Joseph had last seen him. He is now 22 years old.

Verse 32: There were three tables: one for Joseph, one for the Egyptians, and one for the brothers. There might have been political reasons why they could not eat at one table. Or, it may have been that the Hebrews who sacrificed animals which were sacred to the Egyptians could not be permitted to eat with them (Genesis 46:34). We are informed that the Egyptians would not use the knife of a Greek because it might have cut the flesh of animals sacred to them.

Verse 33: This was a surprise. How could the Egyptian know their ages?

Verse 34: Joseph showed special honor to Benjamin. He purposefully shows this preference to test the brother's attitude to him. He finds no evidence of jealousy now. The brothers have changed. They were concerned about their father's grief and about the welfare of his favorite son. They would not abandon him (Genesis 44:16).

## **Chapter 44**

Verses 1-3: Joseph's cup was put into the mouth of Benjamin's sack; also the money of each was restored before they left to return to Canaan.

Verse 5: There is a tradition in the east of a cup which had passed from the potentate; it possessed the strange property of representing in it the whole world and all things happening at the time... The Egyptians probably had such superstitions also; so it was easy for the brothers to think this story plausible, although Joseph would not have made such use of a cup.

Verse 12: The cup was found in Benjamin's sack.

Verse 13: They rent their clothes. Joseph was trying to find out how much they loved their father and brother. Were they jealous of Benjamin? Were they as heartless as they had been when they conspired to kill Joseph?

Verse 16: No doubt they thought Benjamin had stolen the cup; or at least they did not dare argue in his favor. He had had the most honorable mess at the banquet the evening before so it was possible that this cup had also been placed before him.

They now proved themselves to be different men. They were now one family and this calamity fell not on one of them but on all of them. They had no desire to get rid of their father's favorite. They could not even give him up to the punishment which he seemed to deserve.

It had taken twenty years for Judah to come to this point of confession.

Verses 18-34: Judah's plea for Benjamin is eloquent. Judah's faithful adherence to Benjamin is recompensed long after by the adherence of the tribe of Benjamin to Judah when all others had deserted.

## **Chapter 45**

Verse 2: Seven times we read of the tears of Joseph. He was a man of compassion.

Verse 3: All along Joseph had been addressed and spoken of by his Egyptian name or by the titles of his office (Genesis 41:45). The historian uses his name but the brethren had never heard that name before from any person in Egypt. It is almost impossible to realize how they felt at that moment.

Verses 4-8: Joseph not only forgives and forgets but he wishes even those who have wronged him to forget the injury they have done. The chief value for us is to be found in his recognition of the government of God in the history of the past. One of the surest signs of great faith is the capacity for ignoring secondary causes. Recognizing the divine overruling, Joseph was able to forget the action of his brethren when they sold him into slavery; but one cannot do this unless there is a recognition of the divine overruling. Joseph's affirmation of God's work verses the work of his brothers is repeated in Genesis 50:20. Paul did this too when, as a prisoner of Nero, he described himself as a prisoner of the Lord.

*"Father to Pharaoh"* is either a title of his position or a testimony to the fact that he had been an author of life to Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

Verses 9-13: He sends a message to his father which included his plans for the future. Probably Goshen had been allotted to Joseph by the king of Egypt, or else he could not have promised it so positively. The brothers had offered Jacob "evidence" of Joseph's death (Genesis 37:32). The brothers now needed to offer Jacob evidence that Joseph lived.

Verse 15: His love set them free from fear and made communion possible.

Verses 17-20: Pharaoh had left all business to Joseph but here he interposed and gave even more generous orders about Jacob. No mention has been made before this of horses but it is probable that these wagons were drawn by horses (Genesis 47:17; Deuteronomy 17:16).

Verse 24: He did not want his brethren to accuse each other for having sold him. Nor did he wish them to envy Benjamin for the greater favors shown him.

Verse 26: *"His heart remained cold"* - Jacob had had too much experience with deceit to be quick to believe such a story.

Verses 27,28: He was moved not because of Joseph's position in Egypt, but that he was still alive.

## **Chapter 46**

We are now entering the second stage of covenant history. God had up to this time been dealing with individuals. We now approach the time when the family was to be raised up to a nation. As a nation they were to return to the promised land. Under the discipline of affliction the family was consolidated into a nation. Egypt, the strongest nation at the time became the instrument for the severe affliction of the people, bringing them to the point of full submission to God as a nation. God planned that His nation should be nurtured in Egypt, the most advanced civilization of that day.

Verse 1: Perhaps Jacob chose Beersheba because it was the last place in Canaan which he was now leaving never to see again. Beersheba is significant in the life of the patriarchs Abraham (Genesis 21:33; 22:19), Isaac (Genesis 26:25), and Jacob (Genesis



28:10).

Verses 3,4: Jacob's migration to Egypt was prophesied (Genesis 15:13). He may have feared to go because: 1) God had forbidden his father Isaac to go in time of famine (Genesis 26:1-3); 2) He may have had some intimation of the prophecy delivered to his grandfather Abraham that in Egypt his seed should be afflicted (Genesis 15:13,14); and 3) He knew that in Canaan, not Egypt, was to be the inheritance of his family.

God made him a threefold promise: 1) *"I will there make of thee a great nation"*; 2) *"I will go down with thee"*; and 3) *"I will also surely bring thee up again."*

Verses 8-25: A full list of those who went down into Egypt with Jacob.

Verses 26,27: Verse 26 states: *"All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives....were threescore and six"* (66). Verse 27 states, *"All the souls of the house of Jacob which came into Egypt were threescore and ten"* (70). Acts 7:14 states: *"Jacob and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls."* (75).

To the 66 in verse 26 should be added Jacob, Joseph and his two sons, making 70 as in verse 27. Add to this the nine living wives of Jacob's sons (Judah's wife died [Genesis 38:12] and Simeon's also because his youngest son Shaul was by a Canaanitess (10), and Joseph's wife was already in Egypt) and the total is 75 as in Acts 7:14. See also Exodus 1:5 and Deuteronomy 10:22 which list the total as 70.

Verses 31-34: Joseph's charge to his brethren was most careful. They were to declare themselves to Pharaoh as shepherds. This would insure the maintenance of the line of separation between the Egyptians and the Hebrews. The promise to Abraham that his posterity was to have Canaan could not be performed until the family was grown strong. The Egyptians were forbidden in all fellowship with strangers especially with shepherds. So Israel remained there unmixed while she grew into a nation.

## **Chapter 47**

Verses 1-4: Joseph presented his father and brothers to Pharaoh.

Verse 9: Jacob spoke of his life as a pilgrimage, showing that he was looking forward to another country (Hebrews 11:9,13). He had always lived a wondering life, scarcely ever at rest.

Verses 13-26: A record of Joseph's administration during the famine years. He bought at low rates during the years of plenty. Then he sold at famine prices. Thus giving the government a high rate of interest.

Verse 22: He did not buy the land of the priests for that had been given them by Pharaoh. This is the earliest record of an established religion supported by the state.

Verses 27,28: Jacob had seventeen years of plenty in Egypt. Seventeen years he had nourished Joseph in Canaan before he was sold into slavery (Genesis 37:2) and now Joseph nourished him for the same period of time.

Verses 29,30: Jacob's request to be buried in Canaan evidenced his belief in God's promise that Canaan was to be the possession of his descendants.

## Chapter 48

Verse 1: Joseph hastened to the failing Jacob with his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

Verse 5: Jacob took these two grandsons (Ezekiel 47:13) into his own family. By genealogy they are Joseph's. By Inheritance they are Jacob's. Considering Joseph's rank and prospects in Egypt, this remote inheritance among Jacob's sons may have seemed a very small matter and of no great consequence. The acceptance of this place among the inheritors of Canaan shows the faith of Joseph and his sons who were about twenty-one years of age at this time.

Verses 8-10: According to verse 10, Jacob's sight was failing. He could see Manasseh and Ephraim, but could not tell who they were.

Verse 13: Joseph led his elder son, Manasseh, to the place where Jacob could place his right hand upon his head. The right hand was considered as the most noble and the instrument of conferring the highest dignities and honors. Even in the heavens we speak of the right hand of God as the place of the most exalted dignity.

Verse 14: Israel laid his right hand on the head of the younger, Ephraim, by crossing his hands. This is the first time in the Scriptures where we find the laying on of hands mentioned. We often read of it later.

Verse 15,16: Israel blessed Joseph.

Verses 17,18: Joseph supposed his father had made a mistake.

Verses 19,20: Jacob blessed them prophetically, the younger above the elder; Ephraim above Manasseh. The tribe of Ephraim became the head of the Northern Kingdom of the tribes, representing them all in itself. In the wilderness, Ephraim was more numerous than Manasseh and had the standard of the squadron (Numbers 1:32,33,35; 2:18,20). Joshua and Jeroboam come from Ephraim.

Verse 21: Jacob's seed should again come to Canaan.

Verse 22: Joseph was given the double portion that belonged to the firstborn.

## Chapter 49

This chapter is a prophecy similar to Noah's (Genesis 9:25). This is not an expression of Jacob's private affection, resentment, or partiality. God's Spirit put these words into his mouth as he gave his dying blessing to his sons.

Verse 1: *"In the last days"* - literally, *"sequel of days"*, meaning the time to come.

Verses 3,4: Rueben - *"Thou shalt not excel"* - as a firstborn he had a right to a double portion of all that the father had (Deuteronomy 21:17). The tribe descending from Rueben did not excel and sank into insignificance. It was one of the first to be led into captivity.

Verses 5-7: Simeon and Levi - By the time of the conquest of Canaan (Numbers 26:14) Simeon had become the weakest of the tribes and in the blessing of Moses they are not mentioned (Deuteronomy 33). When the land was distributed among the twelve tribes, Simeon received no territory of his own, but a portion of Judah's.

The most distinguished son of the house of Levi was Moses, but he was shut out from the land of Canaan too.

Verses 8-12: Judah - "*the lion*" (Revelation 5:5) - the type of the kingship. The kings came from Judah, but only as at type of the Messiah who is the lion of the tribe of Judah. The Risen Lord is now their King, but is yet to be recognized.

Verse 13: Zebulun - commercial supremacy.

Verses 14,15: Issachar - laborious, hardy, valiant tribe; patient in labor and invincible in war (1 Chronicles 7:1-5).

Verses 16,17: Dan - the judgeship was seen (Judges 13:2; 15:20).

Verse 19: Gad - oppressed but victorious.

Verse 20: Asher - the fertility of his lot.

Verse 21: Naphtali

Verses 22-26: Joseph - fruitfulness in spite of the great persecution through which he passed.

Verse 27: Benjamin - martial disposition (Judges 3:15; 20:16; 1 Chronicles 12:1,2).

Verse 29: His dying charge was to bury him with his people. See verse 31 for those already buried there.

## **Chapter 50**

Had Jacob merely followed the dictates of human affection, he would have chosen to be buried with Rachel; but his faith counted it of more value to be buried with Abraham and Isaac.

Verse 2: Jacob and Joseph are the only Israelites mentioned as being embalmed (Genesis 50:26).

Verses 6-13: This long procession carrying the body of Jacob back to Canaan was a presignal of the future return of the living Israel to Canaan. The funeral march was more than 200 miles long. This is without parallel in human history.

The story of Jacob's life reveals little to his credit, but much to the glory of the grace of God.

Verses 15-21: The brothers thought Joseph might have refrained from punishing them because of their father; now they feared him again. This shows their sense of guilt and also their lack of confidence in Joseph.

Joseph again ignores the secondary cause and testifies to God's overruling power (Genesis 45:8). The transgression was between his brothers and God and not between Joseph and them.

Verses 25,26: Hebrews 11:22 - by this commandment Joseph expressed his faith in the

promise of God. Joseph had been 93 years in Egypt. Moses took care when the departure from Egypt was undertaken to carry up Joseph's body with him (Exodus 13:19). Later he was buried in Shechem (Joshua 24:32).

Under Joseph the seed had been placed in a large fertile region under Egyptian protection. There they grew into a nation. When the Exodus account opens, they had already multiplied into a people so vast that the Egyptians were afraid of them.