THE
DISCIPLESHIP
PLACE

Genesis

CLT Bible Study

GENESIS

Dr. Daryll Stanton, editor
Nataliia Skyba, contributing editor
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Continuing Lay Training
17001 Prairie Star Parkway
Lenexa, Kansas 66220 USA

GENESIS

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SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

Welcome to the Continuing Lay Ministries series of Bible studies. You are engaged in a study venture that will be both helpful and enjoyable. Here are a few suggestions that will make this Bible study the most beneficial to you.

1. Since this is a Bible study, have your Bible near you at all times. This study outline is only designed to help you read the Bible.

2. The Bible version used for this study is the New International Version (NIV). The editor primarily used the language of the NIV to prepare the lessons. You may use other versions of the Bible if you choose. While the language may be different, the meaning will be the same.

3. Before you begin each section, read the entire Scripture passage. This is very important. The study outline will help you understand the particular Bible verses, but it does not tell what they say.

4. IMPORTANT: Note that scriptures from the books of Leviticus and Numbers may not have the book's name. In sections referring specifically to the Book of Leviticus, if the Bible reference is (1:6-8), you will find these verses (6-8) in the first chapter of Leviticus. Whereas, in sections referring specifically to the Book of Numbers, if the Bible reference is (1:6-8), you will find these verses (6-8) in the first chapter of Numbers. Other books of the Bible will include the name in the reference, for example, Isaiah 53:1 and John 17:1.

5. Go through the study outline carefully. Take time to look up all the Scripture verses in the outline.

6. You may want to mark your study Bible as you go. Marking your Bible will help the words become more and more your own. It will be well if you have colored pencils at hand to mark the Bible as you go along. A simple system is to mark promises in blue and warnings in red. But, however you do it, mark your Bible and it will become more and more your very own.

7. Finally, read the Bible passage again to better understand its meaning. Perhaps you may benefit of listening to the reading of the Books of Leviticus and Numbers.

8. The editor has also included how to pronounce some of the more difficult proper names and other important words. The first time the word is introduced, the pronunciation will follow the word. At the end of each chapter, you will find a list of the words in the order in which they were introduced. Additionally, at the end of the document, all of the words and pronunciations will be listed alphabetically. For pronunciation of additional terms and their definitions, please refer to A Dictionary of the Bible & Christian Doctrine in Everyday English (Eby et al., 2004).

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

If a family or a few friends decide to take this study together, here are two suggestions:

1. Have one person read the Bible passage and another person read the Continuing Lay Ministries outline.
2. Then discuss the Scripture and outline. Ask questions of each other to help clarify the meaning of the Scripture.

Continuing Lay Training
17701 Prairie Star Parkway
Lenexa, Kansas 66220
888-243-2767
913-577-2811

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

NOTES

The first book of the Bible gets its name from its opening word in an ancient translation into Greek: Genesis [JEH-nuh-suhs] - "the beginnings." The title is appropriate, for the Book of Genesis recounts the beginnings of the earth, of man, of sin, of the family, of God's redemptive plan, and of the chosen people whose history takes up most of the 38 books of the Old Testament that follow.

A. AUTHORSHIP

Genesis is the first of five books that make up what the Jews called the *Torah* [TAW-ruh] or Law, and that is more familiarly known as the Pentateuch [PEN-tuh-tewk] or "the five rolls" or "five books." No authorship is indicated within the text of the books themselves, but Hebrew tradition has firmly attached the name of Moses to them. They are spoken of as "the law of Moses," "the book of Moses," "the book of the law of Moses," and "the books of the law of the Lord by the hand of Moses."

The events described in the Book of Genesis took place long before Moses was born. But, there is no reason to question the knowledge of names and facts passed down orally before the invention of writing and in written form thereafter. Writing is now known to have been practiced centuries before Abraham left Ur [erh] of the Chaldees [KAL-dees] and long before the Israelites [IZ-ruh-lyts] settled in Egypt.
What is important is to recognize the integrity and Mosaic authority of this portion of the Bible, and the genuineness of its contents. All facts discovered about the writings from centuries of careful study can be understood in this light. Genesis, like all the rest of Scripture, is given by inspiration [in-spruh-AY-shun] of God: "God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

B. THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

A unique feature of the Genesis record is the repetition of the phrase, "This is the account of" (NIV) or "These are the generations of" (KJV). There are 10 sections or divisions, although of quite unequal length, that are introduced with this formula:

1. "The generations of the heavens and of the earth" (2:4)
2. "The generations of Adam" (5:1)
3. "The generations of Noah" (6:9)
4. "The generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth" (10:1)
5. "The generations of Shem" (11:10)
6. "The generations of Terah" (11:27)
7. "The generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son" (25:12)

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8. "The generations of Isaac, Abraham's son" (25:19)
9. "The generations of Esau" (36:1, 9)
10. "The generations of Jacob" (37:2)

C. SPIRITUAL VALUES

There are many inspiring stories in the Book of Genesis. We would be much poorer in both understanding and example if we were without the record of Enoch's walk with God, Noah's obedient faith, Abraham's love for God, and Joseph's sturdy and uncompromising purity. Yet, the book is very realistic. The shadows are pictured along with the highlights: the tragic fall of Adam and Eve, the murder of Abel, the wickedness that provoked the Flood, Jacob's early deceitfulness, and Judah's moral weakness.

Many of the deepest and most profound truths of the entire revelation of God in the Bible are found in seed form in Genesis. The need for atonement, the sacrificial altar, the promise of the coming Savior, the foundations of home and the family, and the basic principles of salvation by faith all find expression in the types and stories in this great first book of the Bible. It is a book to be read with interest and studied with care. We can begin with it and go on to the unfolding story of redemption through the balance of the Bible. But, we will want to come back to it often to sound its depths again and learn from it the holiness of God and the sinfulness and need of man.

Genesis [JEH-nuh-suhs]
Torah [TAW-ruh]
Pentateuch [PEN-tuh-tewk]
Ur [erh]
Chaldees [KAL-dees]
Israelites [IZ-ruh-liets]
inspiration [in-spruh-AY-shun]

CHAPTER 2. CREATION AND THE FIRST FAMILY (1:1 - 4:26)

Section 2.1 The Destruction of Edom (1 - 14)

NOTES

The early chapters of Genesis give us a record of unequaled scope and penetration. The most fundamental problems of theology and philosophy are dealt with in the space of a few pages. We have noted the meaning of "Genesis," the beginnings. In the first four chapters, we have the beginnings of the universe, the solar system, plant and animal life, man, the Sabbath, the family, sin, labor and suffering, the promise of redemption, religious worship, and the deep cleavage of humanity into those who would serve the Lord and those who despise his law.

A. CREATION (1:1 - 2:25)

The story of creation is told in two chapters. The first account, from 1:1 - 2:3, tells in swift strokes the origin of the entire created order, including mankind, male and female. The second, 2:4-25, is a flashback that dwells more in detail on the creation of man and his position in his earliest home.

1. The Poem of the Dawn (1:1-2:3)
Dr. H. Orton Wiley called this "an inspired Psalm." It is sometimes known as "The Hymn of Creation" or "The Poem of the Dawn". It sets forth the most profound truth in the simplest terms. There are three points of particular importance:

a. *The existence of all things is traced to the creative will of the Supreme Being*, God. God is not otherwise defined, nor is his existence proved any more than an author would seek to prove his own existence in a book he would produce.

But, it is impossible to escape the fact that, if anything now is, something always was. It is inconceivable that something should arise out of nothing. The Bible stands squarely on the side of the conviction that the most reasonable and satisfactory explanation of origins is belief in an eternal, sovereign, personal Creator who had no beginning and who shall never cease to be.

b. *God's activity in bringing the universe into existence is described in two ways.* Three times, Genesis 1 uses the terms "create" or "created." To create is to bring into being that which previously had no existence. It is a word the Old Testament uses only for the activity of God. God created the material universe (1:1), conscious animal life (1:21), and humans in his own image (1:27).

The other way the origins of things are described is by using the term "made" or "formed." This term means to give a new form to what already existed. What is known as "secondary creation" is described in such words as "Let there be," "Let the earth bring forth," and "Let the waters bring forth."

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c. The creative process took place in the form of time. That an infinite God could have called a fully-fashioned universe into being in a moment cannot be denied. That He did not choose to do so is equally clear.

The term "day" is used to describe the divine work in the first chapter of Genesis. Six days were occupied with the creation or formation of successive stages of existence. The length of these days is not a proper matter for discussion here. It is enough to notice that the original Hebrew term yom is elsewhere translated as several other English words in the Old Testament: *age*, *time*, *life*, *forever*, *continually*, *and perpetually.* Its original meaning was not a 24-hour revolution of the earth in relation to the sun but a specific period of time, whether long or short. Thus, the entire process covered in Chapter 1 is described in Genesis 2:4 as a single "yom." God's judgments of time are quite different from ours, as we see in Psalm 90:4, where "a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night [three hours]." Hebrews 11:3 uses a term for the "worlds ... framed by the word of God" that means "age-old worlds" (*aionas*, or simply "ages").

Endless debates have gone on over the centuries about the relationship between the Genesis account and various scientific theories of the origin of the universe. It is imperative, at least, to note that when any theory attempts to account for all that now is in terms of purely natural forces, it is not science at all but a philosophy - and a highly debatable philosophy at that. Since Genesis deals not with the processes of creation but the purposes of the Creator, it is quite impossible for any established scientific fact to contradict a reasonable understanding of the Scripture.

2. The Creation of Man (2:4-25)

As we have already seen, Genesis 2:4-25 is an enlargement and explanation of the creation of humankind first described in 1:26-30. Furthermore, Genesis 2:4 introduces us to "the LORD (Hebrew Yahweh) [YAH-way] God" as our Creator. While the Old Testament does not clearly reveal the triune [TRAI-oon] nature of God as Father, Son, and Spirit, the Hebrew plural form of a general term for "God" (Hebrew El) is also used: "Then *Elohim* [uh-LOW-heem] said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness.'" (1:26) Yahweh is the personal name Israel ascribed to God. However, many Jews read "Lord" when they come to *Yahweh* in Scripture. Thus, some translations and English versions read "Lord" or "LORD" instead of *Yahweh*.

The "image" of God is not physical form, for while God permits us to understand him better by speaking of his arm, his hand, his face, and his voice (ways of speaking known as "anthropomorphisms" [an-throh-poh-MOHR-fismz] or "in human form"), we are also told that "God is a Spirit" (John 4:24), not limited to a single space but present everywhere He wishes (1 Kings 8:27; Psalm 139:7-12). The image of God in humans is reason, self-awareness, the power of choice, and endless existence. In the case of Adam and Eve, it also included initial righteousness and holiness that permitted fellowship and communion with the Lord God himself. Man was to share God's dominion over the earthly created order. This dominion was only partly realized because of sin (28; Hebrews 2:8-9).

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God formed the human body from the elements that make up the dust of the ground. But, the essence of the divine image was the breath of life by which Adam "became a living being" (2:7).

Adam's first home was a garden in Eden (2:8), located as nearly as we can tell in what is now Asia Minor. It was a rich paradise, in which the fruit of every tree was given for food except "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil'' (2:17). Though Adam was at first alone, God gave him a wife, whom Adam recognized as "bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" (1:23). Adam, whose own name comes from the word "earth" and which means "man" in Hebrew, later called his wife Eve, meaning "life" - because she was the mother of all living" (3:20).

B. THE FALL (3:1-24)

How long the innocence and serenity of the Garden in Eden lasted we cannot know, because we have no time indicators to measure by. But, it came to a dramatic and bitter end. Untested holiness could become truly moral only in the fact of choice. While the actuality of sin was not necessary to finite moral personality, the possibility of sin was present in the very statement of the divine will, "you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." (2:17).

1. The Temptation (3:1-6)

The temptation came to Eve through the evil suggestion of a malicious creature known here only as "the serpent" but identified elsewhere in Scripture as Satan [SAY-tuhn] (2 Corinthians 11:3, 14) and "the Devil ... who leads the whole world astray" (Revelation 12:9; 20:2). The origin of Satan is but hinted at in the Bible.

He would appear to have been an archangel who, before the dawn of human history, rebelled against God and with his coconspirators, was cast out of heaven to become the personification of evil and the adversary of both God and man (Matthew 25:41; Luke 10:18; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6).

The serpent's approach was twofold: to cast doubt on the truthfulness and goodness of God (3:4-5) and to stress the desirability of the fruit to make Eve and her husband "like god" or "as God." When the woman exposed herself to the appeal of the aroma and beauty of the fruit, she "took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it." (3:6)

2. Results of the Fall (3:7-21)

The effect of this sin was immediate. Disobedience to the command of God both disrupted the relationship of man and wife and brought a sense of estrangement from God. The couple became aware of their nakedness and hid themselves when God came to the Garden in the cool of the day (3:7-8).

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When God confronted the pair with the fact of their guilt, Adam attempted to pass responsibility to his wife, and Eve attempted to pass it to the serpent. But God spoke the word of guilt and judgment to each in turn.

The serpent was told that a descendant of the woman, at the cost of suffering to himself, would trample and crush the tempter (3:15). This is the first promise of the Savior in the Bible, and the victory over Satan won at Calvary (Colossians 2:14-15) is to be shared by those who follow Christ (Romans 16:20). Eve would be subject to her husband and bear her children in sorrow (3:16), and Adam would be forced to sustain his life by the sweat of his brow in a world very different from the Eden he had enjoyed until his body returned to the dust from which it came (3:17-19).

3. Paradise Lost (3:22-24)

Lest Adam and Eve eat of "the tree of life" and perpetuate their sinful and fleshly state "forever" (3:22), the couple, clothed with the skins of animals provided for them by the Lord (3:21), were sent forth from the Garden. Their return was barred by a flaming sword (3:23-24).

C. ADAM'S FAMILY (4:1-26)

1. The First Sacrifice (4:1-7)

The story of Adam's immediate family is told in Genesis 4. Two sons were born to Adam and Eve: Cain, "a tiller of the ground," and Abel, "a keeper of sheep." Where the English version reads "in the course of time" (4:3), the Hebrew says, "at the appointed time," both sons offered sacrifices. By what means the time was appointed or in what way the requirements of acceptable sacrifice were made known, we are not told. But Abel's sacrifice of an animal from his flock was accepted, and Cain's (bloodless) offering of "some fruits of the soil" was refused. Sin is pictured to Cain as a wild beast waiting (crouching at your door) to spring on the unwary (4:7).

2. The Exile of Cain (4:8-24)

Cain's jealous reaction to the rejection of his offering was to await the opportunity to murder his brother, perhaps in the false belief that no one would know. But God called him to account. Because of his sin, he would be a wanderer, fleeing in fear for his life (4:14). Cain left the vicinity of Eden and went eastward to territory known simply as "the land of Nod" ("land of wandering"). There, his offspring began to multiply, and the major distinctions in human occupations began to develop (4:16-22). Cain's wife (4:17) was undoubtedly his sister, for Adam "begat sons and daughters" (5:5) in addition to the sons whose names are given. With the original biological soundness, there would be no physical ill effects on the children of such a union.

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3. The Birth of Seth (4:25-26)

Abel's place in Adam's family was taken by Seth (4:25). The chapter closes with the significant remark that in Seth's line and from his day, "men began to call on the name of the LORD" (4:26). The families of Cain and Seth symbolize the sharp division between those who go "out from the presence of the LORD" (4:16) and those who "call upon the name of the LORD."

Triune [TRAI-oon]
Yahweh [YAH-way]
Elohim [uh-LOW-heem]
anthropomorphisms [an-throh-poh-MOHR-fismz]
Satan [SAY-tuhn]

CHAPTER 3. THE WORLD BEFORE ABRAHAM (5:1 - 11:26)

NOTES

Genesis 5:1 begins with the second structural division of the book, "the book of the generations of Adam." It actually follows the line of Adam's descendants only through Seth. We hear no more directly of Cain and his offspring except the reference to "the daughters of men" in 6:1. All were destroyed in the Flood. Cain is mentioned in the New Testament only as the first murderer (1 John 3:12) and as the symbol of false religion (Jude 11).

A. THE EARLY PATRIARCHS [PAY-tree-aarks] (5:1-32)

In contrast to his own creation "in the likeness of God" (5:1), Adam "had a son in his own likeness, in his own image" (5:3). The shift in the language is significant. Adam had been created in holiness. But, his sin and that of his wife destroyed that initial holiness and marred the entire image of God. Adam's sons and daughters were, therefore, born deprived of the lost righteousness and with the resulting evil inclinations about which we shall read in 6:5.

The extreme ages of men before the Flood have often been discussed. It is not at all strange that the lifespan would be longer before the cumulative effects of generation after generation of sinful living began to take its toll. It is noteworthy that the ages given in Chapter 5 range from 777 for Lamech [luh-MEK] to 969 for Methuselah [muh-THOO-suh-luh]. Enoch, at 365, was an exception since he "walked with God; then he was no more because God took him away" (5:24) to God's presence without passing through the experience of death (like Elijah). Lifetimes drop from the 400's to the 200's and less for the descendants of Shem in chapter 11.

Only in the case of Enoch is there direct mention of the worship of the true God. But, we may suppose that most, if not all, of these men cherished the memory of Seth and called on the name of the Lord. The truth was passed along from generation to generation until the time of Noah. Great overlapping in generations was possible by the extreme ages of the patriarchs. Methuselah died in the year of the Flood, and Noah was 84 years old when Enos, son of Seth, died. This gave abundant opportunity for preserving the knowledge of the true God.

B. THE FLOOD (6:1 - 9:29)

1. Conditions before the Flood (6:1-7)

The first two verses of this chapter have caused much discussion. Some have supposed that "the sons of God" in 6:2 were fallen angels. While angels are sometimes referred to in the Old Testament as sons of God, the title is never given to demonic beings. It is much more reasonable to suppose that "the sons of God" is a phrase descriptive of descendants of the godly line of Seth, and the "daughters of men" speaks of the descendants of the line of Cain.

NOTES

God gave warning that his Spirit would not always contend with or "abide in" people (6:3). The accumulating wickedness of the race was brought about in part by the fact that "every imagination (Hebrew yetzer, or propensity, tendency) of the thoughts" of one's heart was only evil continually (6:5). This created a society ripe for extreme judgment. "The LORD was grieved" (6:6) that He had "made them" (6:7). This is not to be confused with human repentance (see Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29). The meaning is a change in the manner of God's dealings with people.

2. The Preparation (6:8 - 7:6)

One man only had "found favor in the eyes of the LORD" (6:8). Verse 9 introduces the third structural division in Genesis, "the generations of Noah," who is described as "righteous, blameless" in his generation and one who "walked with God" (6:9). To this man God gave instructions to build an "ark," a huge, barge-like structure to be made of "gopher" (perhaps a variety of cedar) wood. The vessel was to be approximately 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet from top to bottom, with three decks provided. The purpose of the ark was to save Noah and his family, together with representative "kinds" of animal and bird life, from destruction in the coming flood.

3. The Deluge (7: 7-8: 19)

A week after Noah and his family took the animals into the ark as directed, "were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened" (7:11). In the vast cataclysm [KA-tuh-kli-zuhm] that followed, all life was destroyed except Noah and the occupants of the ark.

Seven months later, as the water abated, the ark came to rest "on the mountains of Ararat" (8: 4) in what is now east of modern Turkey. Almost two months after that, the earth was sufficiently dried so that Noah, his family, and the animals could leave the ark.

4. The Covenant [KUH-vuh-nuhnt] (8:20 - 9:17)

Noah's first act upon leaving the ark was to build an altar and offer sacrifices to God. In turn, the Lord established with him the covenant that had been promised before the Flood (6:18). This is the first use of the very important Bible term "covenant," whereby God promises to help and be a Friend to all those who obey him. The earth would never again be destroyed by floods of water. Human life was declared sacred because of God's image.

The token of the covenant was to be the rainbow so that it might properly be said the last word does not lie with the waters of the Flood but with the rainbow of promise. In contrast to later covenants, for example, with Abraham (see Genesis 15 and 17) and with David (see 2 Samuel 7), the covenant with Noah included all mankind since all who live are descendants of Noah, "the second father of the race."

NOTES

5. Noah and Canaan [KAY-nun] (9:18-29)

The story of Noah ends on a somber note. The Bible is the most realistic of books. It relates the bad as well as the good without attempting to cover up or make excuses. At some undated time after the Flood, Noah became intoxicated by wine from a vineyard he had planted. It has been suggested that changed conditions on earth after the Flood could account both for the first appearance of the rainbow (or it may be that just its meaning was revealed in 9:13-16) and the fermentation of the wine. Noah, therefore, might have been unprepared for the effects of the wine he drank. In any case, his son Ham saw him lying naked in his tent, and instead of covering his father, told the brothers, who showed their respect for Noah by covering him during his stupor.

Canaan was one of Ham's sons, and we are not told what he did to justify the curse pronounced upon him. He may have rudely and disrespectfully called Ham's attention to his grandfather's condition. This curse has nothing whatsoever to do with race or the supposed inferiority of some other race of people. Noah lived 350 years after the Flood to become the second oldest man, missing Methuselah's record by only 19 years.

C. THE TABLE OF THE NATIONS (10:1-32)

The fourth structural division of Genesis includes what has been called "the table of the nations." It traces the distribution throughout the earth of the families descended from the three sons of Noah. The sons of Japheth migrated chiefly north and west and became the progenitors of the so-called Aryan divisions of the human family. The sons of Ham and the sons of Shem together occupied the rest of the inhabited world and ultimately became the most widely dispersed. It is not possible now to trace to specific locations all the place-names listed here.

D. THE TOWER OF BABEL (11:1-9)

As would be expected, human language was but one dialect in the earliest days of the human race. The rather unified migration reported in 11:2 obviously took place before the widespread dispersion described in Chapter 10. On a plain "in the land of Shinar [SHAI-nahr]," the lush eastern end of the "fertile crescent" near the head of the Persian Gulf, the pride of man set out to build a city and a tower "that reaches to the heavens" (11:4). This was in clear defiance of God's command to the human race to populate the whole earth and was an expression of man's idolatry [ai-DAA-luh-tree]. God stepped in to "confuse" their language and "scattered them .... over all the earth" (11:7, 9). The scattering naturally amplified the differences in the languages. The result was "Babel" (from balal, a Hebrew word meaning "confused"), and the city later became known as Babylon and the country Babylonia.

NOTES

E. THE SEMITIC LINE (11:10-26)

"The generations of Shem" begin in 11:10 and give the origins of what are now known as the Semites or Semitic peoples. It is possible that the name "Hebrew" comes from the name of the great-grandson of Shem, Eber, although other sources of the name are suggested. The biblical writer is quite clearly interested in the oldest son of the last generation listed, Abram by name.

Patriarchs [PAY-tree-aarks]
Lamech [luh-MEK]
Methuselah [muh-THOO-suh-luh]
cataclysm [KA-tuh-kli-zuhm]
covenant [KUH-vuh-nuhnt]
Canaan [KAY-nun]
Shinar [SHAI-nahr]
idolatry [ai-DAA-luh-tree]

CHAPTER 4. THE FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL (11:27 - 23:20)

NOTES

The story of Abram, or Abraham as he was later known, occupies 12 chapters in the Book of Genesis. In a very real sense, the Judeo-Christian faith goes back beyond Moses to Abraham and the promises he received from the Lord.

The account is introduced as "the generations of Terah" (11:27), but the two other sons of Terah, Nahor and Haran, are dismissed with just a few words (see 22:20-24). Haran died in Ur, where the family originated, the same fertile plain on which the Tower of Babel had been built. Soon after Haran's death, Terah, with Abram and Lot, the son of Haran, and their families migrated northwest to an area they named Haran after the son who had died.

A. THE CALL OF ABRAHAM (11:27 - 12:20)

The migrating family apparently was already bound for Canaan or Palestine [PAL-us-tien] (11:31) when they stopped in Haran. Here Terah remained and later died. God spoke to Abraham and called him to leave his father's house to go into a land the Lord would show him. At the age of 75, taking his wife, Sarai, and his nephew Lot, he left Haran and journeyed southwest into Canaan. Acts 7:4 states that Terah was dead when Abraham's journey to Palestine began. Genesis 11:26 would thus mean that Nahor and perhaps Haran were older than Abraham since Terah died at the age of 205 years.

Abraham's quest took him from Ur to Haran and on to Canaan. But it did not stop there. Canaan, dependent on rainfall, was in the grip of drought and, therefore, famine. But Egypt, irrigated by the Nile River, was still fruitful, and Abraham continued on southwest to the land of the Pharaohs [FEH-rowz].

Knowing well the tendencies and powers of such an absolute ruler as the Pharaoh, Abraham arranged with Sarai (a name better known in its later form, Sarah) to pass herself off as his sister - fearing that the Egyptians would kill him in order to take his beautiful wife. This is an instance of lying with a half-truth since Sarah was indeed a half-sister (20:12). We find it difficult to excuse Abraham for this and a similar deception later (see 20:1-13), but probably should not judge him entirely by New Testament standards or even those of the later Old Testament (see Exodus 20:16). When the deception was discovered, Abraham was rebuked and sent away from Egypt. The use of the term "Pharaoh" for the ruler of Egypt throughout many generations shows it to have been the title of the office rather than a personal name.

NOTES

B. THE RESCUE OF LOT (13:1 - 14:24)

Abraham's return to Canaan was the occasion of a quarrel between his servants and those of his nephew Lot. Actually, the combined flocks and herds of the two families were so large that there was insufficient pasture for all. The result was contention and strife between the retainers of the two men.

1. Lot's Choice (13:1-18)

By every right, preference in the choice of territory belonged to Abraham. He, however, offered Lot first choice. Attracted by the well-watered plain of the Jordan Valley, Lot chose what appeared to him to be the best land "and pitched his tents near Sodom" (13:12). Left to Abraham were the less inviting and more sparsely favored plateau lands of central Palestine. Lot, it has been said, chose grass; Abraham chose grace. The difference was indeed great. But, God came again with reassurance to his servant Abraham and promised him possession of the entire land and descendants in number as the dust of the earth (13:14-18).

2. Lot's Capture and Release (14:1-24)

Lot did not have long to enjoy uninterrupted prosperity. A coalition of eastern kings put the Jordan [JOHR-dihn] valley under tribute. When the people at length revolted, the invaders attacked the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, stripped them of their wealth, and carried away Lot and his goods in captivity. When Abraham heard, he quickly armed his servants, pursued the retreating enemy force, and in a swift night attack, defeated the invading army and rescued Lot and his possessions together with other hostages and the plundered wealth of Sodom. Refusing reward for himself, Abraham restored the plunder to its owners, allowing compensation only for some of the Canaanites who had rallied with him.

It was at the close of this battle that Melchizedek [mel-KIZ-uh-dek] appeared as a "priest of the most high God" (14:18) and offered Abraham his blessing. In turn, Abraham gave Melchizedek "a tenth of everything" (14:20), the first mention of tithing in the Bible. Melchizedek is regarded in the New Testament as a type of Christ, the great High Priest of the new covenant (Hebrews 5:5-10; 7:1-28).

C. THE PROMISE OF A SON (15:1 - 17:27)

God again appeared to Abraham in a vision and renewed the promise of many descendants. Since Sarah was childless, Abraham questioned the way the promise was to be fulfilled. The assurance that his progeny would be his very own came to him in a "smoking firepot with a blazing torch" (15:17), passing between the pieces of a sacrifice he offered at God's command.

NOTES

Because Sarah had been unable to have children, she decided to take advantage of a custom of the times and of the neighboring peoples. She persuaded Abraham to take Hagar [HAY-gahr], her Egyptian maid, as a secondary wife. Any children born to such a union would be reckoned as belonging to Sarah. The result was the birth of Ishmael [ISH-may-ul], but the insolence of Hagar and the jealousy of Sarah made for anything but a happy relationship.

The Lord appeared to Abraham again and once more affirmed the covenant and the promise He had made. This time, the rite of circumcision [SER-kum-si-zhun] was introduced as a covenant sign to be borne by all the males of Abraham's family.

The promise of a son was made specific, and Sarai's name was changed to Sarah because she was to be "the mother of nations" (17:15).

Since Abraham was then 100 years old and Sarah was 90, the patriarch found it hard to believe that they could have a child. Again, the promise was made that Sarah should bear a son whose name was to be Isaac - derived, incidentally, from the Hebrew term "to laugh" and a reference to the astonishment of both Abraham (17:17) and Sarah (18:12-15).

D. THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM (18:1 - 19:38)

When the Lord appeared to Abraham the next time, it was for a double purpose. The promise of a son to be born to Sarah was repeated, and the impending destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was made known. Fearing for the life of his nephew. Abraham made his famous intercession for the cities of the plain. If 50, or 45, or 40 - even down to 10 - righteous persons could be found, the cities would be spared. Apparently, not even 10 righteous souls lived in the two cities.

Two angels then came to Sodom as evening approached. They were met by Lot and given hospitality for the night. That Abraham's nephew was seated at "the gate of Sodom" (19:1) shows that he had gained some prominence there since this was where the "city fathers" gathered.

A vivid illustration of the wickedness of Sodom's inhabitants occurred, and the angels urged Lot to take his family and leave the doomed city. When his sons-in-law refused to take him seriously, the angelic visitants urgently took them by the hand. Lot, his wife, and two unmarried daughters were led out of the city. Even Lot's wife lost her life by a lingering and longing to look back toward the smoking ruins.

When he realized the extent of the wrath of God against the cities of the plain, Lot forsook his temporary haven in little Zoar and took refuge in a mountain cave. The story of Lot, like that of Noah, ends sadly in drunkenness - and, in Lot's case, incest. From his daughters' faithless conniving came the Moabites and the Ammonites, destined to become bitter enemies of Israel in later years.

NOTES

E. ABRAHAM IN PHILISTIA (20:1-18)

It was probably the constant search for adequate pasture that led Abraham to migrate toward the Philistine country along the coastal plains of Palestine. Here, the deception that had been practiced in Egypt many years before took place again, this time with Abimelech [ah-BEE-meh-lek]. From the meaning of the name "Abimelech" ("my father the king") and its recurrence in chapter 26, it is possible that Abimelech, like Pharaoh, was the title of the office rather than the name of the man. Again, Abraham escaped with a rebuke.

F. THE BIRTH OF ISAAC (21:1-33)

At last, the promise was fulfilled, and Isaac was born. The birth of a natural son to Abraham and Sarah brought the tension with Hagar and Ishmael to a head. With obvious reluctance, Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael away, consoled only by God's promise that Ishmael also would be the father of many children. Further trouble between Abimelech and Abraham occurred and was settled by a covenant between the two men.

G. THE TESTING OF ABRAHAM (22:1-24)

There is no time indicator to tell us how long after Isaac's birth and infancy Abraham's supreme test came. From the fact that Isaac could carry the wood for the proposed sacrifice (22:6), he must have been at least in his teens. "God tested Abraham" (22:1) should be translated, "God did test Abraham" in harmony with James 1:13. The father was to take his son into "the region of Moriah" and offer him for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains there. 2 Chronicles 3:1 tells us that it was on "Mount Moriah" that the Temple was later built, and on "one of the mountains" of Moriah the only begotten Son of God himself was offered. The Apostle Paul almost certainly had this scene in mind when he wrote, "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also along with him graciously give us all things?" (Romans 8:32).

Abraham's intended obedience, the substitution of the ram, and God's later enlarged blessing provide one of the most vivid Old Testament pictures both of the divine atonement [uh-TOWN-muhnt] and of human consecration [kaan-suh-KRAY-shn] that we have. The promise earlier hinted at was made definite: "through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed" (22:18), a promise fulfilled, said St. Paul, by the multitude of Gentiles who would believe and be saved through Christ, Abraham's seed (Romans 4).

NOTES

H. THE DEATH OF SARAH (23:1-20)

Chapter 23 tells of the death of Sarah and her burial in a cave near Hebron [HEH-bruhn] in southern Palestine. “Abraham went to mourn for Sarah” (23:2) should be translated as “Abraham came in (from the fields, or into the tent] to mourn for Sarah.” But, the need for a burial place for his wife of many years led to the purchase of the field in which the desired burial cave was located - the only bit of Canaan definitely and permanently owned by Abraham himself. The death of Abraham and his burial beside Sarah are not described until 25:1-10.

Palestine [PAL-us-tien]
Pharaohs [FEH-rowz]
Jordan [JOHR-dihn]
Melchizedek [mel-KIZ-uh-dek]
Hagar [HAY-gahr]
Ishmael [ISH-may-ul]
circumcision [SER-kum-si-zhun]
Abimelech [ah-BEE-meh-lek]
atonement [uh-TOWN-muhnt]
consecration [kaan-suh-KRAY-shn]
Hebron [HEH-bruhn

CHAPTER 5. ISAAC (24:1 - 26:35)

NOTES

Isaac tends to be overshadowed by the greatness of his father and the turbulence of his son. But he represents a great host of people who serve God faithfully but unobtrusively. He was one of "the quiet people." That God is often spoken of as "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" means, as Dr. H. Orton Wiley used to say, "He is the God of the great, of the humble, and of the troubled."

A. A WIFE FOR ISAAC (24:1-67)

One of Abraham's chief concerns as he grew older was that Isaac should have a suitable wife, one who was not from among the neighboring idol-worshiping Canaanites. Some three years after the death of Sarah, Abraham extracted a promise from "the chief servant of his household, the one in charge of all that he had" (24:2, unnamed here, but probably the "Eliezer of Damascus" mentioned in 15:2) to the effect that he would not take for Isaac a wife who would be one of the daughters of the Canaanites, but would go to his kindred in Mesopotamia [meh-suh-puh-TAY-mee-uh, where the family of Abraham's brother Nahor lived.

Thus commissioned, the servant took a rather sizable caravan loaded with gifts and necessary supplies for the journey and set out northeast toward Haran. Committing his cause to the guidance of the Lord, the servant was led to Rebekah, daughter of Abraham's nephew Bethuel. The girl's father is mentioned only once (24:50). The negotiations were apparently carried on with her brother Laban (24:29) and her mother (24:55).

The servant of Abraham described in detail the purpose of his coming, the way in which he had been led to Rebekah and his request that she be allowed to return with him to become the wife of Isaac. Refusing delay, and with Rebekah's consent, the party returned to the southern plains of Palestine - now known as the Negev [NEH-gev]. The wedding was consummated, and "Isaac was comforted after his mother's death" (24:67).

Many have seen a beautiful symbolism in this charming story from an ancient past. Abraham is an impressive type of God the Father. The servant represents the Holy Spirit in search of a bride for the Son. Rebekah represents the Church, sought and wooed by the Servant, and consenting to leave all behind to go to the Beloved.

B. THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER (25:1-11)

The marriage of Abraham to Keturah may have been a secondary marriage entered into years before the events described in chapters 17 - 24. Keturah is called a concubine in 1 Chronicles 1:32, and the implication is clear that Isaac's birth was a supernatural event both for Sarah and for Abraham (Romans 4:18-21). The marriage with Keturah is described here in order to emphasize the primacy of Isaac both in Abraham's affection and in God's plan.

NOTES

While monogamy (the marriage of one man and one woman for life) is clearly the biblical ideal, polygamy (the marriage of one man to more than one woman) was permitted and practiced in Old Testament times.

Abraham lived to the age of 175 years (25:7), and when he died, was buried by his sons Isaac and Ishmael in the cave of Machpelah [mak-PEE-lah] beside Sarah, his first and fully recognized wife. At that time, Ishmael was 89 years of age, and Isaac was 75.

C. THE FAMILY OF HIS BROTHER (25:12-18)

The mention of Ishmael in connection with the burial of Abraham is the reason for the introduction of "the generations of Ishmael" (25:12) at this point. This is the seventh in the divisions of Genesis by "generation" (see Introduction). The descendants of Ishmael became the wide-ranging Arabian nomads who moved about throughout the middle Arabian [uh-RAY-bee-uhn] Peninsula from the borders of Egypt to the Persian Gulf.

D. ISAAC'S FAMILY (25:19-34)

Following immediately after "the generations of Ishmael," we find "the generations of Isaac" (25:19). Like her husband's mother before her, Rebekah was unable to have children during the first 20 years of her marriage to Isaac (25:20, 26). When Isaac prayed, God heard, and Rebekah conceived and gave birth to twins. Even before the children were born, Rebekah was told that from her womb would come the progenitors of two different nations and two different kinds of people. When the boys were born, the older was covered with red hair and was named Esau ("hairy") and later Edam (25:30, "red"). The younger brother convulsively grasped the other baby's heel and was named Jacob ("heel grasper, supplanter").

The predicted differences between the twins quickly developed in their lives. Esau became a man of the field and a cunning hunter (25:27), and Jacob was "a plain man, dwelling in tents." Partiality between the parents also developed. Esau became his father's favorite, while Rebekah favored Jacob. Also predictive of events to come was Esau's disgraceful bargain to surrender his birthright to Jacob, an act of which the author says, "So Esau despised his birthright." (25:34). This episode is applied in Hebrews 12:14-17 to the Christian's attitude toward the birthright of holiness.

E. ISAAC IN PHILISTIA (26:1-35)

The account of Isaac closes with an episode strangely similar to two in the life of Abraham many years before. Famine forced Isaac and his family to leave the Negev for the coastal plain along the Mediterranean [MED-uh-tuh-RAY-nee-un] settled by the Philistines. Here, Isaac passed off Rebekah as his sister. When the true relationship was discovered, Isaac was also sharply rebuked, but unlike his father before him, he was allowed to remain in the land. It was the conspicuous blessing of God upon Isaac that provoked Abimelech (or "the Abimelech," see comments on 20:1-17) to send him away.

NOTES

Moving southeastward, Isaac paused in the area of Gerar. Contention with the inhabitants of the valley caused the peace-loving Isaac to move on until he came at last to Beersheba [beer-SHEE-buh] on the borders of the land given to Abraham. Here, the Lord appeared to Isaac with reassurance, and here, Abimelech and two of his leaders came seeking a covenant of peace. About this time, Esau, by now 40 years of age, took two wives from the neighboring Hittite people, which were "a source of grief" ("made life bitter") for Isaac and Rebekah (26:35).

Mesopotamia [meh-suh-puh-TAY-mee-uh
Negev [NEH-gev]
Machpelah [mak-PEE-lah]
Arabian [uh-RAY-bee-uhn]
Mediterranean [MED-uh-tuh-RAY-nee-un]
Beersheba [beer-SHEE-buh]

CHAPTER 6. JACOB AND HIS SONS (27:1 - 36:37)

NOTES

As was true in the case of Abraham and Isaac, the center of interest in the Bible story shifts from father to son before the death of the father. Jacob, the younger twin son of Isaac and Rebekah (who apparently had no other children), now takes the spotlight.

A. JACOB AND THE BIRTHRIGHT (27:1-46)

We have already been introduced to the tension between Jacob and Esau with respect to the birthright. In the custom of the day, the oldest son inherited a "double portion" of the father's goods and, in addition, was vested with the spiritual leadership of the clan. Esau seemed perfectly willing to receive the material goods but had been described as despising the birthright- probably in its spiritual dimension (25:34; see also Hebrews 12:16-17). God's purpose had already been indicated to Rebekah and, through her no doubt to Jacob, that "the elder shall serve the younger" (25:23), which was understood to involve the birthright blessing.

1. The Plot of Rebekah and Jacob (27:1-29)

Old and half-blind, Isaac requested Esau to hunt venison and fix for him "tasty food I like" (27:4). The meal was to be the occasion for the giving of the blessing of the father to the oldest son. Overhearing the conversation, Rebekah quickly schemed with Jacob to deceive Isaac and secure the blessing for himself. He had already teased Esau into verbally surrendering his rights (25:29-34), but this in itself was not enough.

Jacob hurried to follow his mother's advice. With the meal prepared, dressed in Esau's clothing and with the skins of young goats on the backs of his hands and on his neck, Jacob took the meat to his father. Although he was suspicious both because of the speed with which the meat had been prepared and the difference in voices, Isaac was convinced by the feel of hair on the skins on Jacob's hands. "The voice is Jacob's voice," he said, "but the hands are the hands of Esau" (27:22). What conclusively settled the matter was the smell of the field on the garments Jacob wore. Finally persuaded, Isaac conveyed the birthright blessing to Jacob in solemn words.

2. Esau's Anger (27:30-46)

Scarcely had Jacob left before Esau entered to claim the blessing, bringing the meat he had prepared. When he learned the blessings had already been given to his brother, the bitterness of Esau's soul boiled to the surface. Although granted a secondary blessing by his remorseful father, "Esau hated Jacob" (27:41) and planned to kill him as soon as Isaac was dead. An unwritten sidelight is a fact that it was not Isaac who died soon after, but Rebekah and Isaac lived for almost 40 years longer.

NOTES

Rebekah's conniving with her son was to be costly to her. Learning of Esau's determination to kill the "supplanter" (27:36), the mother arranged with Isaac to send Jacob to Haran [HEH-ruhn], where Laban, her brother, lived, with the thought that there he would find a wife from among his own people. Although Rebekah anticipated that the interval would be comparatively "a few days" (27:44), it turned out to be 20 years, and she was never to see her favorite son on earth again.

B. JACOB IN PADDAN ARAM [PAH-dan-ay-ram] (28:1 - 30:43)

1. Jacob's Vision of God (28:1-22)

Isaac followed Rebekah's advice and sent Jacob northeast to the ancestral home to find "a wife from there of the daughters of Laban – Jacob's "mother's brother" (28:2). Seeing that his Hittite [hi-TYT] wives displeased Isaac, Esau in turn sought another wife from a clan more closely related and chose a daughter of Ishmael - scarcely, we should think, more pleasant to his parents than the first two.

Meanwhile, Jacob journeyed northward. When he had reached a point on the Judean plateau some 75 miles from home, night overtook him at a place then known as Luz. Here, as he slept in the open with a stone for a pillow, he dreamed of a ladder set up on earth reaching into the heavens with the angels of God ascending and descending. The LORD stood above it and spoke to Jacob, giving him a promise that, in line with the pledge to Abraham, the whole land would be his and that he would be kept wherever he should go.

Awed by the experience, Jacob arose in the morning and set up a stone pillar, calling it Bethel [BEH-thul] or "house of God" – for he said, "This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven." (28:17) Bethel later became one of the prominent shrines for Israel and continued to be a place of religious worship even after Jerusalem had been appointed as the site for God's Temple. Like his grandfather, Jacob recognized the tithe of his income as belonging to the Lord 600 years before tithing was specifically commanded in the law of Moses (28:22).

2. Rachel and Leah (29:1-30)

Continuing toward his destination, Jacob first contacted shepherds from Haran, who, upon his inquiry, told him of their acquaintance with Laban. Even as they talked, Rachel, Laban's daughter, came with a band of Laban's sheep to be watered at a well protected by a large stone cover. When Jacob identified himself, Rachel ran to get her father, and Laban brought the traveler into his household.

While arrangements were being worked out for Jacob to stay, he confessed his love for Rachel and offered to work seven years to secure her hand in marriage. The writer comments, "they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her" (29:20).

NOTES

At the end of the seven years when Jacob claimed his bride, his prospective father-in-law paid him with some of the "coin" of deceit Jacob had so freely given his father and Esau. Instead of Rachel, his bride turned out to be her older sister, Leah.

Laban excused his deceit with the plea that the custom of the country required the marriage of an older sister before one younger. However, for seven more years of service, Jacob might also have Rachel. And, so, it was arranged. After the week of wedding feasts for Leah, Jacob married Rachel and began an additional seven years of labor.

3. Jacob's Family (29:31 - 30:24)

The next paragraphs describe the tensions that developed in this polygamous household, as they almost inevitably did in Old Testament homelife when there was more than one wife. Leah had children, but Rachel was barren for some time. Leah's hope that her husband would love her for the sons she bore and Rachel's jealousy of her more favored sister are pathetic insights into the results of multiple marriages, even when permitted at the time by Old Testament custom and law.

Four sons were born to Leah in those first years: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah. When Rachel still had no children, she resorted to the device Sarah had employed years before and arranged for Jacob to take her servant maid, Bilhah, as a concubine or secondary wife. To this union was born another son, Dan, claimed by Rachel as her own. A second son, Naphtali, also came. In her turn, Leah gave Jacob her maid Zilpah, and two more sons, Gad and Asher, were born.

By this time, Reuben was able to work in the fields. One day, he found the fruit of an eastern plant called a mandrake and brought it home to his mother, Leah. Popular superstition associated the mandrake with fertility, and Rachel arranged to get the fruit for herself—but without benefit. Leah then had two more sons, whom she called Issachar and Zebulun, and a daughter, Dinah. Finally, Rachel gave birth to Joseph. Jacob's family was almost complete.

4. Jacob and Laban (30:25-43)

For 14 years Jacob had lived with and worked for Laban, his father-in-law. Now, he wished to leave and return to Palestine. Laban, however, was reluctant to see him go. He had found that the LORD was blessing the household because of Jacob's presence there. So, it was arranged that Jacob's service would continue, and his pay would be that portion of the cattle, sheep, and goats that were marked with variant markings or colors.

True to his nature, Jacob contrived a scheme to get the better of Laban in the arrangement he had made. His scheming probably had nothing whatever to do with the results, as Jacob himself later admitted when he said, "God has taken away your father's livestock, and has given them to me" (31:9). But, affairs were obviously coming to a crisis between the two men and their respective interests.

NOTES

C. RETURN TO PALESTINE (31:1 - 33:20)

1. The Parting with Laban (31:1-55)

What promised to be a very dangerous situation turned out to be an amicable departure of Jacob and his numerous family from the land where he had spent 20 years in all. Sensing the jealousy of Laban and his sons and directed by the Lord, Jacob called Rachel and Leah to the field where he was caring for the livestock. Reminding them of the increasingly strained relations that existed, he told them of God's command to return to the land of his nativity. Without hesitation, the women agreed to go with him, and the entire group, with their large holdings of cattle, sheep, and goats, set off southwestward toward Palestine without so much as a farewell to Laban.

It was three days before Laban learned of Jacob's departure. He gathered his clan and set out in hot pursuit. But, in the night, God appeared to Laban in a dream and strictly charged him not to interfere with Jacob's leaving. The older man overtook Jacob at Mount Gilead [GI-lee-uhd] on the extreme northeast border of Canaan. Reproving Jacob for stealing away without the customary festivities, Laban complained particularly about the theft of his household gods (called teraphim or images), which had been taken by Rachel, quite unknown to her husband. To this, Jacob responded: "But if you find anyone who has your gods, he shall not live." (31:32) Jacob also explained the fear that had caused him to leave as he had - a fear that would probably have been well-founded had not God given warning to Laban. When the idols were not found, Jacob poured out his pent-up irritation at the way he had been treated. Laban, on his part, offered to make a covenant symbolized by a stone pillar that came to be called Mizpah [MIHZ-paa] from the parting words of Laban, "May the LORD keep watch between you and me when we are away from each other." (31:49) The pillar would also serve as a boundary beyond which neither would pass to work the other harm. Jacob offered a sacrifice, and the next morning, Laban kissed them all goodbye and returned to Paddan Aram.

2. Jacob at Peniel (32:1-32)

a. Fearful preparations (32:1-23). Jacob had yet a major hurdle to face. He had no idea how Esau was feeling toward him by that time and suspected that the smoldering anger had increased across the two decades of separation. Encouraged by a meeting with a band of angels, Jacob sent messengers to his brother to tell him of the events of the years they had been apart and to prepare the way hopefully for a reconciliation [reh-kuhn-si-lee-AY-shn]. The messengers returned with the chilling news that Esau had started north to meet Jacob's party with 400 men in his company.

Greatly frightened, Jacob divided his company into two groups in the hope that if one was attacked and destroyed, the other would be spared. With a humble but urgent prayer for God's help, Jacob sent liberal gifts ahead to appease his brother's anger. As night drew near, the company reached a ford on the Jabbok River. Jacob sent his two wives and their servant women with his 11 sons across the ford while he tarried alone on the north bank of the river.

NOTES

b. Jacob Becomes Israel (32:24-32). One of the most striking encounters of the human with the divine took place that night as Jacob wrestled there with a heavenly visitor until almost daybreak. The visitor is identified as an angel who actually represented God himself in a very direct and immediate way (32:30; see also Hosea 12:3-5). When the angel sought to disengage himself, Jacob vowed, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." (32:26). But, this was not to be until Jacob confessed his name, "the supplanter." Then the word came, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel (IZ-ree-uhl] because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome." (31:28) Thus is introduced the most typical name for the people of God in the Bible, "the children" or "sons of Israel" or simply "Israel."

It would be presumption to read back into the life of Jacob the full meaning of the New Testament gospel. But, it is of more than passing interest that Jacob first met God 20 years before this event - at Bethel, where he entered into a personal covenant with the Lord. In this second meeting at the place Jacob called "Peniel" ("the face of God"), he became no longer the "supplanter" but a prince having power with both God and man. And, as Jacob left Peniel to rejoin his family, "the sun rose above him" (32:31).

3. Reconciliation with Esau (33:1-20)

The meeting Jacob so much feared turned out to be more in the nature of a joyful reunion. The years had drained away Esau's anger. He had himself prospered in material things (33:9). He was now making his home in Seir [SEE-uhr], to be named Edom [EE-duhm] for him in later years. This was the widespread but then more fertile area between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba [AA-kuh-buh]. On Jacob's urging, Esau accepted his gift, and the two parted Esau to return to Seir and Jacob to make his temporary home at Shechem [SHECK-um], due west across the Jordan in the heart of the Palestinian highlands. The brothers were to meet again at the burial of their father, Isaac, some 20 years later (35:29).

D. TRAGEDY AT SHECHEM (34:1-31)

Jacob seems to have planned to settle at Shechem. But, acts of lust and violence brought his stay there to an abrupt end. A young Hivite [hi-VYT] noble, also named Shechem, was attracted to Dinah, the only daughter of Jacob mentioned in the biblical record. Watching his opportunity, he seized the maiden, ravished her, and carried her off to his house (34:26). Jacob's hotheaded sons were enraged. The Shechemites attempted to placate them. Their males accepted circumcision in order to clear the way for marriages and trade between the two groups. But, Simeon and Levi suddenly attacked the town while the men were still incapacitated and killed them - aided in the plunder by Jacob's other sons. Jacob weakly rebuked Simeon and Levi, and his fear of reprisal from Shechem's neighbors and kindred clans made him more than receptive to the move the Lord next directed.

E. AT BETHEL AND ON TO HEBRON (35:1-29)

1. An Altar at Bethel (35:1-15)

NOTES

God commanded Jacob to return to Bethel, where he had encamped on his way to Paddan Aram more than twenty years before. In preparation for the visit to what was to Jacob a very sacred spot, the patriarch commanded all his household to put away all idols (including, presumably, those Rachel had taken from her father) and all their earrings, which Jacob proceeded to bury under an ancient oak near Shechem.

At Bethel, Jacob built an altar and erected another pillar, and God Almighty (35:11) appeared to him, reminding him of his change of name and renewing the promises made to Abraham and to Isaac.

2. Journey to Hebron (35:16-29)

Moving southward again, the clan came to Ephrath [EH-frath], later to be known as Bethlehem {BETH-luh-hem], the birthplace of the Savior. Here, Rachel died in childbirth, naming the son Benoni ("son of sorrow") just before she died. Jacob, however, called the baby Benjamin, "son of my right hand." The journey south brought other sorrow when Reuben, the firstborn, was guilty of incest with Bilhah, his father's concubine.

At last, the long exile ended, and Jacob came to his father at Hebron, where Isaac and Abraham had dwelt for so long. Almost twenty years passed in silence until Isaac died at the age of 180 and was buried by Esau and Jacob.

F. THE FAMILY OF ESAU (36:1-43)

As before with Ishmael, the author takes advantage of the mention of Esau at the burial of Isaac to summarize his descendants in an unusually long passage headed "the generations of Esau" (36:1, 9). The passage lists several Edomite chiefs and kings. Esau is recorded as "the father of the Edomites" (36:43).

Haran [HEH-ruhn]
Paddan Aram [PAH-dan-ay-ram]
Hittite [hi-TYT]
Bethel [BEH-thul]
Gilead [GI-lee-uhd]
Mizpah [MIHZ-paa]
reconciliation [reh-kuhn-si-lee-AY-shn]
Israel (IZ-ree-uhl]
Seir [SEE-uhr]
Edom [EE-duhm
Aqaba [AA-kuh-buh]
Shechem [SHECK-um]
Hivite [hi-VYT]
Ephrath [EH-frath]
Bethlehem {BETH-luh-hem]

CHAPTER 7. THE EPIC OF JOSEPH (37:1 - 50:26)

NOTES

The last quarter of the Book of Genesis centers around Joseph, next to the youngest son of Israel and a man about whom no evil report is brought. The section is headed with the last reference to "generations" – "the generations of Jacob" (37:2).

A. JOSEPH BETRAYED (37:1-36)

1. Family Jealousy (37:1-11)

Problems arising from the multiple marriages of the Old Testament are mentioned time and again. Jacob's obvious favoritism toward Joseph and Benjamin, the sons of his best-loved Rachel, aroused jealousy and hatred among the remaining brothers. Joseph, in his turn, however innocently, fed the fires of their animosity by relating dreams he had that rather clearly predicted his later preeminence in the family.

2. Sold into Slavery (37:12-36)

When the brothers moved their flocks north to better pasture near Shechem, Jacob sent Joseph from Hebron to see how they fared. Jacob had good reason to fear for the safety of his sons in the vicinity of the town they had so brutally attacked some years before.

Not finding the older brothers at Shechem, Joseph was directed on to Dothan, some 12 to 14 miles farther north. When his brothers saw him coming, they conspired to kill him, prevented only by Reuben, who persuaded them instead to put him in an empty cistern - planning to return later and free the boy. But, while Reuben was gone, the other brothers sold Joseph as a slave to a passing caravan of Midianite [mid-ee-uh-NYT] or Ishmaelite [ISH-may-lyt] merchants on the way to Egypt.

To cover their sin, the brothers took Joseph's distinctive "coat of many colors" (37:3, 32), dipped it in the blood of a young goat, and carried it back to Jacob. Jacob's grief was a terrible thing to behold, and he still carried it years later when he finally discovered that Joseph was alive. In the meantime, the caravan arrived in Egypt, and Joseph was sold again to the captain of the Pharaoh's guard, Potiphar [PAA-tuh-fur], by name.

B. HIS BROTHER JUDAH (38:1-30)

The story of Joseph is interrupted to relate a sad incident in the life of one of the older brothers, Judah. Judah had three sons. Two were wicked men and died under the hand of God. Er, the oldest, had married a woman named Tamar. A prevailing custom of the times is called "the levirate law". In Deuteronomy 25:5-10, this became part of the law of Israel. It required a brother or next of kin to marry the widow of a man who died childless.

NOTES

The first son of the union was to be considered the son of the deceased. Tamar, therefore, should have been married to Shelah, the youngest son of Judah.

When Tamar saw that Judah was not going to fulfill the requirements of the levirate law, she arranged to involve Judah himself with her and became pregnant as a result. Judah learned of the pregnancy, not suspecting the identity of the father. He who was so short on justice when it was due Tamar was disposed to place the full weight of the law on her now. The narrative dramatically recounts how Judah was compelled to recognize Tamar's legitimate claim, and her sons were reckoned as the sons of his firstborn (see Ruth 4:12, 18-22).

C. JOSEPH'S RISE TO FORTUNE (39:1 - 41:57)

1. In Potiphar's House (39:1-20)

The narrative returns to Joseph's fortunes in Egypt. The young Hebrew was first sold as a slave to Potiphar, one of the leading officers of the Pharaoh and captain of the palace guard. The young man's talents and the blessing of the Lord upon him were so obvious that he was soon put in charge of the entire household. When Joseph, however, resisted the advances of Potiphar's wife, he was quickly deposed and placed in the prison where the king's political prisoners were kept. That Potiphar may not have been entirely persuaded by the wife's story is indicated by the fact that he did not have Joseph immediately put to death, as would normally have been his fate.

2. In Prison (39:21 - 40:23)

The story of Joseph's advancement as a trusty in the prison is almost a repetition of his prior promotion in Potiphar's household. When two political prisoners had strange and puzzling dreams, Joseph was able to interpret them accurately. The one man whose dream had been an omen of good fortune and restoration, however, promptly forgot Joseph until the Pharaoh himself dreamed a strange dream some two years later.

3. Before Pharaoh (41:1-45)

When the magicians and wise men failed to decipher the Pharaoh's strange and mystic dream, the "butler" or cupbearer of the king, whose position had been restored, suddenly remembered Joseph. He told his master of the prison dreams, and Joseph was immediately summoned. Modestly giving God the honor for his ability to interpret dreams, Joseph predicted seven years of bumper crops throughout the land of Egypt, followed by seven years of famine. His air of confidence in the interpretation of the dream and his obviously sensible advice to Pharaoh resulted in Joseph's elevation to a position second in command to the king himself.

Contemporary archaeological evidence shows that Egypt was ruled by the so-called Hyksos [HIKS-sos] Pharaohs at the time. These rulers were of Semitic [suh-MI-tuhk] origin and would, therefore, have been much friendlier to foreigners than native kings.

NOTES

The Pharaoh, who "knew not Joseph" (Exodus 1:8), was one of the restored native dynasties that succeeded in driving out the Hyksos around 1550 B.C.

4. Joseph as Prime Minister (41:46-57)

Joseph's age is put at 30 when he interpreted Pharaoh's dreams (41:46). He would, therefore, have been in Egypt some 13 or 14 years by that time. Marrying the daughter of an Egyptian priest, Joseph had two sons before the years of famine set in. He named them Manasseh and Ephraim, names later prominent in Hebrew history. By the time the famine began, Joseph was firmly engaged in directing Egypt's economic affairs.

D. THE BROTHERS COME TO EGYPT (42:1 - 45:28)

1. The First Trip (42:1-38)
The famine, apparently caused by widespread drought, affected a large area throughout the Near East, including Palestine. When food began to get scarce, Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to buy grain, keeping only Benjamin, Rachel's remaining son, at home with him. When the 10 Hebrews presented themselves, Joseph recognized them at once. The changes that came with his growth to full maturity and his completely Egyptian attire and bearing kept them from realizing who he was.

With great skill, Joseph contrived a test of the sincerity of his brothers and a way to know their present attitudes in comparison with their attitude at the time they had sold him into slavery. They were given the grain they sought. Their money was returned in each sack. And, they were charged not to come again without their youngest brother, Benjamin.

2. The Reconciliation (43:1 - 45:15)

As the famine deepened, Jacob was at last driven in desperation to send Benjamin on the second trip. In great fear, the brothers came again. Their reception was strange, and their fears seemed quite justified when Benjamin was charged with the theft of Joseph's silver cup.

When Judah rose to reveal a noble concern for his father, Joseph could stand it no more. He broke down and revealed his identity to his brothers. The account makes it clear that they were stricken by the memory of their guilty betrayal many years before and feared a well-deserved reprisal. But Joseph assured them that the hand of God had been in it all and that he did not hold their sin against them.

3. Jacob Hears the News (45:16-28)

When the news reached the Pharaoh, he authorized Joseph to send for his father and the entire household. The brothers were sent back with abundant provisions for the journey and return. At first, Jacob could not believe the good news. His happiness must have been unbounded when he finally said, "My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die." (45:28)

NOTES

E. JACOB MOVES TO EGYPT (46:1 - 47:31)

The caravan bearing Jacob and his entire household back to Egypt paused to offer sacrifices at Beersheba, a place hallowed by the long residence of Abraham and Isaac. Here, God again appeared to Jacob and reassured him concerning the migration to the land of the Nile. The number directly descending from Jacob, excluding the wives of his sons and grandsons, totaled 70. They were to become a great nation (46:3) during their stay in Egypt.

Because the Hebrews were cattlemen and shepherds, Joseph directed them to Goshen [GOW-shun], the northeast corner of Egypt and an area rich in pastureland. Joseph introduced some of his brothers to Pharaoh and presented his aged father to the king. With Pharaoh's consent, Goshen also known as "the land of Rameses" (47:11)—became the new home of the sons of Israel and their families.

As the famine grew progressively worse, Joseph administered relief supplies in such a way as to bring the entire country under Pharaoh's ownership and control, exempting only the property of the priests. Meanwhile, in Goshen, Jacob's people prospered as the patriarch himself gradually grew more feeble with age.

F. JOSEPH AND HIS FATHER (48:1 - 50:26)

1. The Blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh (48:1-22)

When Joseph heard of his father's failing strength, he took his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, and hastened to Goshen. In a touching scene, the dying Jacob gave his blessing to Joseph and, more particularly, to Joseph's sons. Joseph had placed his sons so that Jacob's right hand would naturally fall on the head of Manasseh, the oldest, and the left hand on the head of Ephraim. Jacob, however, reversed his hands, and when Joseph protested, Jacob explained that the younger was destined to become the greater - as had indeed been the case with Jacob himself in relation to his older twin, Esau.

2. The Blessing of the Tribes (49:1-27)

Taking advantage of the presence of Joseph, the father gathered all his sons together for the final patriarchal blessing. With the spirit of prophecy upon him, he spoke of each and told something of what the future held. The most noteworthy prediction was made in the case of Judah. In a rather clear prediction of the coming of the Messiah [muh-SIE-uh], Jacob said, "The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his." (49:10) He will enjoy tranquility and rest.

In verse 18, Jacob paused for a brief prayer: "I look for your deliverance, O LORD."

NOTES

3. The Death of Jacob (49:28-33)

When Jacob concluded his words of blessing, he charged his sons to bury him in a cave at Machpelah, where Abraham and Isaac, Sarah and Rebekah were buried, and where he had buried Leah.

4. The Burial of Jacob (50:1-13)

When Jacob died, his body was embalmed by the Egyptian embalmers. With the completion of the prescribed days of mourning, Joseph sought permission to carry out his father's last wish concerning the burial. A large entourage of both Egyptians and Hebrews made the last journey with Jacob's remains. With seven days of mourning the burial rites were carried out.

5. Joseph's Last Days (50:14-26)

With Jacob dead, the brothers feared retaliation from Joseph because of their betrayal many years before. They sent a humble message to him and came themselves seeking forgiveness when their messenger reported Joseph's tender reaction to their first appeal.

In noble words of forgiveness, Joseph said, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." (50:19-21) It is with good reason that Joseph has been called the most Christlike man before Jesus himself.

Joseph lived approximately 40 years after the death of his father, reaching the age of 110 and experiencing the joy of seeing his great-great-grandchildren. When the time of his death drew near, he secured the promise that the people of Israel would return his body to the Promised Land when they would go back - as both Jacob and Joseph had predicted they would. Exodus 13:19 records the fulfillment of his request.

G. CONCLUSION

We have come to the end of what is, in some ways, the most remarkable book in the Old Testament. It is a book of history. But even more, it is a book about God and mankind, about sin and salvation. Without it, students of the Bible would be like children trying to piece together a jigsaw puzzle with many of the most crucial pieces missing.

Yet Genesis by itself is an incomplete book. The story it begins is not finished until the last chapters of Revelation in the New Testament. There, in God's heavenly paradise, the tree of life is restored, the curse is lifted, and sin is forever banished. And, of the redeemed, it is said, "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, mourning, or crying pain, for the old order of things has passed away. He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new." (Revelation 21:4-5)

NOTES

Midianite [mid-ee-uh-NYT]
Ishmaelite [ISH-may-lyt]
Potiphar [PAA-tuh-fur]
Hyksos [HIKS-sos]
Semitic [suh-MI-tuhk]
Goshen [GOW-shun]
Messiah [muh-SIE-uh]

Study Questions

Chapter 1. Introduction to Genesis

1. According to Hebrew tradition, the writer of Genesis was:
A. Abraham
B. Isaac
C. Moses
D. Joseph

2. Its title is appropriate since the Book of Genesis recounts
A. the beginnings of the earth
B. the beginnings of God's redemptive plan
C. the beginnings of God's chosen people
D. all of these

3. Genesis is the first of five books that make up what is called
A. the Torah
B. the Law
C. the Pentateuch
D. all of these

4. The events described in the Book of Genesis took place long before Moses was born.
A. true
B. false

5. Genesis, like all the rest of Scripture, is given by inspiration of God.
A. true
B. false

6. Among the many inspiring stories in the Book of Genesis is:
A. Enoch's walk with God
B. Noah's obedient faith
C. Abraham's love for God
D. all of these

NOTES

7. Among the deepest and most profound truths of the entire revelation of God in Genesis is:
A. the need for atonement
B. the sacrificial altar
C. the promise of the coming Savior
D. all of these

8. Genesis does not deal with the holiness of God and the sinfulness and need of man.
A. true
B. false

Chapter 2. Creation and the First Family (1:1 - 4:26)

9. The early chapters of Genesis give us a record of unequaled scope and penetration
A. true
B. false

10. Genesis does not deal with the fundamental problems of theology and philosophy.
A. true
B. false

11. What is true of the story of creation in Genesis?
A. It is told in two chapters.
B. Genesis 1:1 - 2:3 tells in swift strokes the origin of the entire created order.
C. Genesis 2:4-25 is a flashback that dwells more in detail.
D. all of these

12. In Genesis 1:1 – 2:3, the existence of all things is traced to the creative will of the Supreme Being, God.
A. True
B. False

13. Genesis 1 uses the terms “create” or “created” 30 times.
A. True
B. False

14. One of the ways the origins of things are described in Genesis 1 is by the use of the term “made” or “formed.”
A. True
B. False

15. Genesis 1 shows that the creative process took place under the form of time.
A. True
B. False

NOTES

16. What is not true of the original Hebrew term yom?
A. It is elsewhere translated as several English words in the Old Testament in addition to "day."
B. Its original meaning was a specific period of time, whether long or short.
C. Its only meaning was a 24-hour revolution of the earth in relation to the sun.
D. The entire process covered in Chapter 1 is described in Genesis 2:4 as a single "yom."

17. Genesis 2:4 introduces us to the LORD (Yahweh) as our Creator.
A. True
B. False

18. The Old Testament clearly reveals the triune nature of God as Father, Son, and Spirit.
A. True
B. False

19. What is true of when God permits us to understand him better by speaking of his arm, his hand, his face, and his voice?
A. These are known as "unbiblical expressions."
B. These are known as "theological misrepresentations."
C. These are known as "anthropomorphisms."
D. These are known as "philosophical misrepresentations."

20. The essence of the divine image was the breath of life by which Adam "became a living being" (2:7).
A. True
B. False

21. Adam was never alone; God gave him a wife, whom Adam recognized as "bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" (1:23).
A. True
B. False

22. The innocence and serenity of the Garden in Eden lasted until Cain killed Abel.
A. True
B. False

23. What is not true of the results of the Fall (3:7-21)?
A. The effect of Adam and Eve's sin was immediate.
B. Disobedience to the command of God brought a sense of estrangement from God.
C. Disobedience to the command of God did not disrupt the relationship of the husband and wife.
D. God confronted Adam and Eve with the fact of their guilt.

NOTES

24. What is true of the story of Adam's immediate family?
A. It is told in Genesis 4.
B. Adam and Eve had only 2 sons.
C. Adam and Eve had only 2 daughters.
D. Cain's wife was an angel.

Chapter 3. The World Before Abraham (5:1 - 11:26)

25. What is not true of Adam's descendants after Genesis 5:1?
A. It actually follows the line of Adam's descendants only through Seth.
B. We hear nothing more directly about Cain.
C. Abel is the main focus.
D. 1 John 3:12 remembers Cain as the first murderer.

26. Angels are sometimes referred to in the Old Testament as sons of God, especially to demonic beings.
A. True
B. False

27. Who "found favor in the eyes of the LORD" in Genesis 6:8?
A. Adam
B. Eve
C. Noah
D. Cain

28. What is true of the events of the flood in Genesis 7?
A. All the fountains of the great deep broke up.
B. The windows of heaven were opened.
C. All of life was destroyed except for the occupants of the ark.
D. all of these

29. What is not true of the covenant with Noah after the flood?
A. It assured that the earth would not be destroyed again by a great flood.
B. Human life was declared sacred because of God's image.
C. The token of the covenant was the cross.
D. It included all mankind.

30. What is true of the events around the tower of Babel in Genesis 11?
A. It was an expression of true worship of God.
B. It was in obedience to God's command to fill the earth.
C. The pride of mankind set out to build a city and a tower "that reaches the heavens."
D. God ignored those who built the tower.

NOTES

Chapter 4. The Father of the Faithful (11:27 - 23:20)

31. The story of Abram (Abraham) occupies 12 chapters in the Book of Genesis.
A. True
B. False

32. God spoke to Abraham and called him to leave his father's house to go into a land God would show him.
A. True
B. False

33. What is true of Abraham's stay in Egypt?
A. He had Sarah pass herself off as his sister.
B. He feared he would be killed in order for someone to take his beautiful wife.
C. He was rebuked and sent away from Egypt.
D. all of these

34. What is not true of the quarrel between Abraham and Lot's servants?
A. The combined flocks and herds of the two families were so large that there was insufficient pasture for all.
B. There was contention and strife between the retainers of the two men.
C. Abraham chose to move to the well-watered plain of the Jordan Valley.
D. Lot got the first choice.

35. Melchizedek is regarded in the New Testament as a type of Christ, the great High Priest of the new covenant.
A. True
B. False

36. Sarah persuaded Abraham to take Hagar, her Egyptian maid, as a secondary wife.
A. True
B. False

37. What was the name of Abraham's first child?
A. Lot
B. Isaac
C. Ishmael
D. Jacob

38. Who were Lot's descendants?
A. Moabites
B. Ammonites
C. the offspring of Lot's daughters
D. all of these

NOTES

39. What is true of the testing of Abraham?
A. There is no time indicator to tell us how long after Isaac's birth and infancy Abraham's supreme test came.
B. He was to take his son into "the region of Moriah" and offer him for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains there.
C. It is one of the most vivid Old Testament pictures of the divine atonement and of human consecration
D. all of these

Chapter 5. Isaac (24:1 - 26:35)

40. Isaac represents a great host of people who serve God faithfully but unobtrusively.
A. True
B. False

41. One of Abraham's chief concerns as he grew older was that Isaac should have a suitable wife.
A. True
B. False

42. Abraham's third wife was Keturah.
A. True
B. False

43. When Abraham died, he was buried by his sons Isaac and Ishmael in the cave of Machpelah beside Sarah, his first and fully recognized wife.
A. True
B. False

44. The descendants of Ishmael became the wide-ranging Arabian nomads who moved about throughout the Middle Arabian Peninsula.
A. True
B. False

45. Rebekah was unable to have children during the first 20 years of her marriage to Isaac.
A. True
B. False

Chapter 6. Jacob and his sons (27:1 - 36:37)

46. Esau, the younger twin son of Isaac and Rebekah (who apparently had no other children), took the spotlight in Genesis 27.
A. True
B. False

NOTES

47. Jacob hated Esau (27:41) and planned to kill him as soon as Isaac was dead.
A. True
B. False

48. Isaac sent Jacob northeast to the ancestral home to find a wife from there of the daughters of Laban.
A. True
B. False

49. Jacob served Laban for 10 years to marry 2 of Laban's daughters.
A. True
B. False

50. Rachel gave birth to 12 sons and one daughter.
A. True
B. False

51. What is true about Jacob becoming Israel?
A. One of the most striking encounters of the human with the divine took place that night as Jacob wrestled there with a heavenly visitor.
B. Jacob sought a blessing from the heavenly visitor.
C. Israel is the most typical name for the people of God in the Bible.
D. all of these

52. Who does Genesis record as "the father of the Edomites"?
A. Jacob
B. Ishmael
C. Esau
D. Joseph

Chapter 7. The Epic of Joseph (37:1 - 50:26)

53. Who does the last quarter of the Book of Genesis center around?
A. Jacob
B. Esau
C. Joseph
D. Isaac

54. What is true about the favoritism of Jacob toward Joseph and Benjamin, the sons of his best-loved Rachel?
A. It caused Leah and Rachel to hate each other.
B. It caused Joseph to fight against Benjamin.
C. It aroused jealousy and hatred among the remaining brothers.
D. all of these

NOTES

55. What is not true about Joseph moving to Egypt?
A. He was rescued from possible death in an empty cistern.
B. He was sold as a slave to merchants on their way to Egypt.
C. He wanted to go to Egypt to prepare a place for his father and family.
D. When he arrived in Egypt, he was sold again to the captain of the Pharaoh's guard.

56. What is true of Judah's relationship with Tamar?
A. Tamar was married to Judah's oldest son, Er.
B. Judah refused to allow Tamar and Shelah to be married.
C. Tamar tricked Judah into fulfilling the levirate law of fathering a son for Er.
D. all of these

57. What is not true of Joseph's stay in Potiphar's house?
A. His talents and the blessing of the Lord upon Joseph were so obvious that he was soon put in charge of the entire household.
B. Potiphar's wife was attracted to Joseph.
C. Joseph married Potiphar's daughter.
D. Potiphar put Joseph in prison.

58. What is not true of Joseph's stay in prison?
A. Joseph advanced as a trusty in prison.
B. Joseph accurately interpreted the dreams of two political prisoners.
C. One prisoner was released and immediately got Joseph released.
D. Joseph was asked to interpret the Pharaoh's dream.

59. What is not true of Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dream?
A. The Pharaoh's dream was strange and mystic.
B. Pharaoh's magicians and wise men failed to decipher the dream.
C. Joseph was asked to interpret the dream after the chief baker remembered Joseph.
D. Joseph gave God honor for his ability to interpret dreams.

60. What was true about Joseph when he became prime minister of Egypt?
A. He was about 30 years of age.
B. He had been in Egypt for 13 or 14 years by that time.
C. He married the daughter of an Egyptian priest.
D. all of these

61. Joseph had two sons before the years of famine set in.
A. True
B. False

NOTES

62. By the time the famine began, Joseph was firmly engaged in directing Egypt's economic affairs.
A. True
B. False

63. When food began to get scarce, Jacob sent all of his sons to Egypt to buy grain.
A. True
B. False

64. Joseph's brothers immediately recognized him when they came to buy food.
A. True
B. False

65. Joseph contrived a test of the sincerity of his brothers and a way to know their present attitudes.
A. True
B. False

66. Joseph demanded his brothers not to come again without Benjamin.
A. True
B. False

67. Benjamin was charged with the theft of Joseph's silver cup.
A. True
B. False

68. Joseph assured his brothers that the hand of God had been in it all and that he did not hold their sin against them.
A. True
B. False

69. Pharaoh authorized Joseph to send for his father and the entire household.
A. True
B. False

70. What is true of Jacob's move to Egypt?
A. At first, Jacob could not believe the good news that Joseph was alive and wanted the family to join him in Egypt.
B. When Jacob and his entire household went to Egypt, they paused to offer sacrifices at Beersheba.
C. God appeared to Jacob and reassured him concerning the migration to the land of the Nile.
D. all of these

NOTES

71. Why did Joseph want Jacob to settle in Goshen?
A. because the Hebrews were cattlemen and shepherds
B. because it was in the northeast corner of the land in Egypt
C. because it was an area rich in pastureland
D. all of these

72. What is not true about the time Joseph took Manasseh and Ephraim to visit Jacob in Goshen?
A. Joseph had heard of his father's failing strength.
B. Jacob gave his blessing to Joseph and, more particularly, to Joseph's sons.
C. Joseph had placed his sons so that Jacob's right hand would naturally fall on the head of Ephraim.
D. Jacob explained that Joseph's younger son was destined to become the greater of Joseph's sons.

73. Jacob asked his sons to bury him in a cave at Machpelah, where Abraham was buried.
A. True
B. False

74. With Jacob dead, Joseph's brothers feared retaliation because of their betrayal many years before.
A. True
B. False

75. Genesis by itself is an incomplete book.
A. True
B. False

Methods of Study

Have you enjoyed this study of the Book of Genesis? Do you wish to study further? If so, here are a few more suggestions.

1. Compare authorship of the Book of Genesis to the other writings of the Pentateuch.

2. Compare relationship of the Book of Genesis to the other writings of the Pentateuch.

3. Compare the creation stories in Genesis chapters 1 and 2.

NOTES

4. Examine the use of the Hebrew term yom as elsewhere translated in English in other books of the Old Testament.

5. Examine the special Hebrew name for God, "Yahweh," in other books of the Old Testament.

6. Examine the use of El and Elohim as used in other books of the Old Testament.

May God, our Creator, become even more influential in your life as you study the Book of Genesis!

Pronunciation Guide

Abimelech [ah-BEE-meh-lek]
anthropomorphisms [an-throh-poh-MOHR-fismz]
Aqaba [AA-kuh-buh]
Arabian [uh-RAY-bee-uhn]
atonement [uh-TOWN-muhnt]
Beersheba [beer-SHEE-buh]
Bethel [BEH-thul]
Bethlehem {BETH-luh-hem]
Canaan [KAY-nun]
cataclysm [KA-tuh-kli-zuhm]
Chaldees [KAL-dees]
circumcision [SER-kum-si-zhun]
consecration [kaan-suh-KRAY-shn]
covenant [KUH-vuh-nuhnt]
Edom [EE-duhm
Elohim [uh-LOW-heem]
Ephrath [EH-frath]
Genesis [JEH-nuh-suhs]
Gilead [GI-lee-uhd]
Goshen [GOW-shun]
Hagar [HAY-gahr]
Haran [HEH-ruhn]
Hebron [HEH-bruhn]
Hittite [hi-TYT]
Hivite [hi-VYT]
Hyksos [HIKS-sos]
idolatry [ai-DAA-luh-tree]
inspiration [in-spruh-AY-shun]
Ishmael [ISH-may-ul]
Ishmaelite [ISH-may-lyt]

NOTES

Israel (IZ-ree-uhl)
Israelites [IZ-ruh-lyts]
Jordan [JOHR-dihn]
Lamech [luh-MEK]
Machpelah [mak-PEE-lah]
Mediterranean [MED-uh-tuh-RAY-nee-un]
Melchizedek [mel-KIZ-uh-dek]
Mesopotamia [meh-suh-puh-TAY-mee-uh]
Messiah [muh-SIE-uh]
Methuselah [muh-THOO-suh-luh]
Midianite [mid-ee-uh-NYT]
Mizpah [MIHZ-paa]
Negev [NEH-gev]
Paddan Aram [PAH-dan-ay-ram]
Palestine [PAL-us-tien]
Patriarchs [PAY-tree-aarks]
Pentateuch [PEN-tuh-tewk]
Pharaohs [FEH-rowz]
Potiphar [PAA-tuh-fur]
reconciliation [reh-kuhn-si-lee-AY-shn]
Satan [SAY-tuhn]
Seir [SEE-uhr]
Semitic [suh-MI-tuhk]
Shechem [SHECK-um]
Shinar [SHAI-nahr]
Torah [TAW-ruh]
Triune [trai-oon]
Ur [erh]
Yahweh [YAH-way]