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TWENTY LESSONS IN GENESIS

By William M. Smith

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INTRODUCTION TO THIS DIGITAL PUBLICATION

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND LESSONS -- At the time these lessons were written, William M. Smith was serving as Superintendent of Union Bible Seminary, Westfield, Indiana. HDM now has in possession the following sets of 20 Lessons for Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Revelation. As we received them, these lessons were on loose-leaf sheets, printed on one side, and bound in folders. They could be used as either Sunday School or Bible Study lessons.

ABOUT THE DIVIDER BETWEEN THE CHAPTER NUMBER AND VERSE -- The divider between the chapter and verse is not consistent, sometimes being a period and at other times being a colon. I have left them as they were. Also, there was **NO PERIOD AFTER THE NUMBERED ASSIGNMENTS** at the end of the lessons, and I have also left that as it was. --
DVM

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01 -- THE CREATION

THE BEGINNING and end of the Bible -- A person who reads the first two or three chapters of Genesis, and then immediately after reads the last two or three chapters of Revelation, will see that we have here the beginning and end of what was intended by the Author to be one book. The threads of narrative in God's great story of His love that started in at Genesis show up in the completed history in Revelation. And somehow all that lies between is woven into the vast scheme of redemption, making the most wonderful and engagingly interesting and important writings in the world, being the inspired message of God to His people -- God's very words.

And it is a love story, too. We have scarcely entered the book until a love scene meets us consummated by happy conjugal union. And then, again, at the end we read of bride and Bridegroom, the Lamb and His wife. And, Oh, there are so many love stories between, all woven into and consummating in that last great wedding in the skies.

And how many other things beginning in Genesis have their ending in Revelation! There are heaven and earth created in Genesis, and a new heaven and earth in Revelation. (Many other beginnings and endings can be found by comparing the first chapters of Genesis with the last chapters of Revelation).

The Name of God -- In the first 34 verses of the Bible (chapter I and the first 3 verses of II) the name of God is found 85 times. God is the great Doer of every thing done in these verses. His name is the subject of a sentence in every instance, and the verbs accompanying the name are all in the active voice. God moves in the vast universe supreme. The name in the original is Elohim, a word in the plural form, indicating thus early in the Bible the Trinity of the Godhead. This is in full accord with the pronouns "us" and "our" in verse 26.

Lord God (Jehovah Elohim) is the name of the Deity throughout chapter II, after verse 3. This name indicates more the covenant relation of God, while Elohim refers more to His Creatorship, in chapter I He is seen in His relation to the universe; in chapter II, in His relation to man especially.

One Thing Each Day -- The order of the events of the first six days can be fixed in mind by the following method: The first four days there is a dividing process going on. First day, division of day and night; Second day, division of waters below from waters above; Third day, division of land and seas; Fourth day, division of seasons. The last two days life is brought forth. Fifth day, waters bring forth life; Sixth day, land brings forth life. Man comes in this last day.

What Kind of Days? -- In this connection the question will arise as to the nature of these days. There is every reason to believe that they are 24-hour days. An "evening" and a "morning" constitute each day, after the Jewish method of beginning each day with sunset. The word "day" when used with a numeral is nowhere in Scripture used to mean anything but a day of 24 hours.

Geological Ages -- If these were 24-hour days, where did the geological ages come in? There is plenty of room for them between the first and second verses of Genesis. The first verse tells of the creation of heaven and earth. The second verse tells of the earth laid waste by some terrible catastrophe. After that catastrophe, God re-makes the earth in these six days. See Ex. 20.11: "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth." Note the word "made" instead of "create." It was created in Gen. 1:1, but made in the six days.

Primeval Earth -- Was the earth, before the catastrophe between the first two verses of the Bible, inhabited by intelligent beings? We note that Gen. 1.28 has a command to the human race to "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth," the same as the command to Noah and his sons in Gen. 9:1. "Replenish" means to fill again. However, we are not to suppose that those early inhabitants were men, for Adam was a creation, evidently, therefore, a new thing on the earth. Back in that time some where must have lived the angels who sinned, and the fall of Satan with his angels may have been the cause of the catastrophe, as man's sin was the cause of the later catastrophe, the flood.

Prominent Phrases -- "The evening and the morning" is repeated six times in chapter I. God would emphasize this fact. "After his kind" is repeated ten times in chapter I. This would cut out the idea of evolution which pre-supposes that a thing brings forth a little in advance of itself.

Mature Life First -- The old question about which existed first, the egg or the hen, is fully answered. In each case mature life is first created. Adam was formed full-grown (2.7); the animals were also formed full-size (2.19); the trees were mature trees (2.5).

Adam's Loneliness -- The fact that Adam was the only one of his species is abundantly proven. After God formed all the animals, He brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. The result of this review of all the animals was "but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him" (2.20). If evolution is such a slow process as the evolutionists claim, is it not strange that there is such a gap between this man and the animal nearest to him, just as great then as now, evidently?

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ASSIGNMENT FOR LESSON 2

- 1 Read the third chapter of Genesis.
- 2 Read Matthew 4.1-11.
- 3 Compare Eve's and Jesus' attitude toward the command of God.
- 4 What was the serpent's method of attack?
- 5 What was the serpent's object?
- 6 What do you see by comparing verses 7 and 21?
- 7 Were Adam and Eve forgiven and restored?
- 8 If so what part of the penalty was removed and what part remained?

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02 -- THE FALL

THE THIRD Chapter of Genesis records the success of the attempt of Satan to beguile the human pair in the Garden of Eden, The purpose of the enemy was accomplished through the failure of Eve to abide in the command given by the Lord to Adam. There was no inbred sin in this holy pair, so Satan's end was not secured by luring them into something that an inward propensity disposed them to. He approached them then as he now deals with the sanctified -- a reasoning process, rather than a luring process -- the use of a perfectly good and right thing in a manner contrary to God's commands.

Obedience Wanted, Not Reasoning -- God was permitting His man and woman to be tested as to their obedience, rather than as to their power of reason. Eve's reasoning process was perfect -- the fruit of the tree was good for food, it was pleasant to the eyes, it was desired to make one wise. For these reasons she "could not see any harm in it," as the boy and girl, man and woman still say, failing to see what God wants is an obedient people instead of a "smart" people. God gave no reason why He did not want them to touch this perfectly harmless tree, on purpose to try them out on obedience. The disastrous effect of their act was not the effect of the fruit, but the effect of their disobedience.

Jesus' Perfect Obedience -- Your reading of Matthew 4.1-11 brought into sharp contrast the manner in which Jesus treated temptation. The enemy was trying the same tactics on Him as on Eve -- attempting to get Him to go by reason instead of by God's Word. But He faithfully ordered His conduct by what the Scriptures said, instead of by what reason might dictate. A study of the two

contrasted incidents ought to serve as a guide to the tempted sanctified person who is so often attracted by temptations to do things, not because they lust after them, but because they are persuaded that there will be no harm in them, but good. For instance, a man might be persuaded to join a lodge, not because he has any affinity with it whatever, but because he is persuaded that it would give him a better opportunity to help a certain class of people; and there will be those who will try to persuade him that it is sacrifice to lay down his preferences in the matter for the sake of the good he can do. In such a case he cannot go by his own or other people's reasoning, but by the Scriptures: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." Other examples can be suggested.

Satan's Object -- The devil hides himself in this chapter, just as he always does. He would make men believe there is no devil. Only the serpent is seen with some reasonable suggestions, but behind him is the conniving, scheming enemy of souls with the one object of getting children of God to disobey Him. If he can get God's people to even do good in a way that violates the Scriptures, he is winning his end.

How God Covers Sin as Compared with Man -- Verse 7 shows how man covers sin. The guilty pair endeavored with fig leaves to cover their nakedness. But God says, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whose confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28.13). But vs. 21 tells how God covers sin. God must have slain animals to get those skins, thereby shedding blood, and blood atones for sins. And herein is illustrated that verse, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" (Psa. 32.1).

The Restoration of Adam and Eve to fellowship with God appears to be implied in this covering that God gave them. His covenant with them in verse 15 implies the same. Confession is necessary to forgiveness, and this we find on the part of both in verse 12 and 13. While there seems to be an attempt to evade responsibility by laying it on others, yet confession is in the end in each case.

Penalties Removed and Remaining -- The penal consequences of their sin were forgiven, but the natural consequence remained during this life. In other words, they were saved from hell, but not from the evil consequences of their sins in this life. A consideration of these two kinds of consequences of sin is enlightening and explains many puzzles of the Scriptures and of human experience. In Exodus 20.5 it is said that God visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations. In Ezek. 18.20 it says, "The soul that sinneth it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father." This apparent discrepancy is removed when one sees that it is the natural consequence of sin that passes from father to son, and the penal consequence that falls entirely upon the doer of the sin. This is one of God's wise provisions. The man who gets drunk and falls under a freight train and gets a leg cut off, can be saved and rescued from hell, but he will bear the burden of his lost leg through life as a reminder to him and others that sin is an awful thing, But in the resurrection this consequence also will be removed. Many a saint bears through life infirmities as natural consequences of youthful sins.

Adam's Sin resulted in the fall of the entire race of man. The redemption of Jesus Christ is a remedy for one's own sins, and for sin inherited from Adam.

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ASSIGNMENT FOR LESSON 3

- 1 Read the fourth and fifth chapters of Genesis.
- 2 Read Lev. 17.11; Heb. 9.22; 11.4.
- 3 What was the vital difference between the offerings of Cain and Abel?
- 4 Note similarities and differences in the list of names in the fourth chapter and that in the fifth.
- 5 From the information in chapter five and 7.6 determine how many years it was from Adam's creation to the flood.
- 6 What frequently repeated phrase is in chapter five?
- 7 Adam reaches to the beginning of the human race, and Methuselah reaches to the year of the flood. How long were they on earth together?

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03 -- THE TWO RACES

THE WORLD before the Flood was divided as to population into two antagonistic races, the Cainites and the Sethites. This line of demarcation begins to show in the antagonism of Cain and Abel, and has its sharpest contrast along the line of religion, it is evident that an early revelation was given to the human family to the effect that sin was to be atoned for by blood. This we saw indicated in the procuring of the skins of animals with which to clothe Adam and Eve after the fall. It becomes more evident in the offering of Abel.

The Two Offering, differ vitally in the one matter of blood and no blood, it is plain that if Abel knew God required blood as an atonement, Cain knew it equally well. Hebrews 11.4 says that it was faith that enabled Abel to offer a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain; but the most manifest evidence of faith in God is to keep His commandments, and to do things in accordance with His known will. We may put the emphasis in the wrong place by supposing Abel to be a good man and Cain a bad man. Yet Abel needed atonement as well as Cain, for all have sinned. We see two men who need God approaching Him; one coming with an offering that atones for sin, and the other with an offering that does not atone for sin. The one is reconciled to God, the other is not.

A Bloodless Offering was acceptable only from one who had already been made right with God by a bloody offering. For a man to approach God, therefore, with a bloodless offering was to assume that he was right with God Cain's attitude was therefore obnoxious to God. God dealt kindly with Cain, He told him in verse 7 that if he did well, that is, were all right with Him, he would be accepted; and that if he did not well, a sin offering was at his door. In other words God

tried to get Cain to come with a bloody offering and therefore be accepted by Him. See II Cor. 5.21 and Heb. 9.28 for use of the word "sin" to mean "sin-offering."

The Two Genealogies have both similarities and contrasts. No ages are given in the list of Cainite names, but Bible Chronology is built with exact correctness from the ages given in the Sethite list. Women's names, cities, musical instruments, skilled tradesmen, war and the like are mentioned or hinted in the Cainite list. None of these are given in the Sethite list, which reads like an obituary marked with a tombstone every now and then with the simple epitaph "and he died." But one notable exception is Enoch: "God took him." It is evident that the record of both races goes on to the flood: the Cainites first, then the Sethites. Cain's wife may have been his sister, or a more remote female descendant of Adam and Eve, as no time is given as to how long after the fall he was married. No law then prohibited consanguineous marriages. There is a notable similarity of names in the two lists. As names denote character we can see in the Cainites' names an evident attempt to imitate the character of the Godly race of Sethites. In like manner now Unitarian and other bloodless religions imitate the virtues of those saved by the blood of Christ.

From Adam to the Flood is a period capable of exact measurement of 1656 years. Calculate as follows: Adam-0, plus 180 years at Seth's birth; Seth born in 130, plus 105 at Enos' birth makes 235; Enos born in 235, plus 90 at Cainan's birth makes 325, and so through the list. The great ages of men before the flood make notable combinations. Adam lived to be 930 years old and his memory could reach back to the beginning of the human race; Methuselah died the very year of the flood at the age of 969 years. Their combined ages were 1899 years, which is 243 years longer than from Adam's beginning to the flood, so they must have been on earth 243 years together. Methuselah was with Noah 600 years, being his grand, father, and Noah lived 350 years after the flood, or to within two years of the birth of Abraham.

The Bible Record of Enoch shows that volumes can be written in a few words. Put together all the Bible says of him; Gen. 5.18-24 I Chron. 1.3; Heb. 11.5; Jude 14 What a short history, but here is one of the great men of the Bible. In Genesis we have Enoch's walk; in Hebrews we have Enoch's faith and Enoch's testimony; in Jude we have Enoch's prophecy; and Genesis and Hebrews both bear record of his translation.

Early Civilization -- That the world before the flood had an advanced state of civilization is hinted at in the record of the Cainites, though the theme of the Bible is aside from the progress of the race on those lines. City building, music, technical instruction are hinted A detailed history of those days might astonish us with a record of a civilization approaching our own days.

Bloodless Religions -- How the enemy had deceived Cain! It was just as well known then as now "without shedding of blood is no remission." But the enemy fooled Cain into thinking that an offering of fruit, grain, or flowers was just as acceptable to God as an offering of blood. They would have been, had Cain been right with God. But man was under the fall, and shedding of blood was a confession that the offerer deserved to die, but was accepting God's provision of a substitute. Now, as then, the enemy is fooling people with bloodless religion: getting them to pattern their unregenerate lives after Jesus' example, instead of accepting His blood as an atonement for their sin to the end that they may be born again and thus become capable by virtue of

the new nature to follow Jesus Christ. God's order is, First confession and forgiveness; then works of righteousness..

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ASSIGNMENT FOR LESSON 4

- 1 Read chapter 6, 7 and 8 of Genesis.
- 2 Read I Sam. 16. 6, 7; Luke 16.15; 17.28, 27
- 3 Give the dimensions of the ark in feet.
- 4 How many sheep did Noah have in the ark? How many lions? How many people?
- 5 How long were they in the ark?
- 8 Of what is the ark a type?
- 7 What was the first act after coming out of the ark?

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04 -- THE FLOOD

THE FLOOD was 1656 years after the creation of Adam or about two-fifths of the way from Adam to Christ. We have covered most of the history of those centuries in the five chapters studied in the three previous lessons. The historical facts being given, we are given a glimpse into the moral and spiritual condition of those days. especially toward the close of the antediluvian age, in the 6th chapter.

Noah was informed beforehand of the coming of the flood. The length of time the ark was in building is not positively stated, but it is inferred that it was 120 years from a comparison of Gen. 6.3 and I Peter 3.20. Noah either had no sons until he was 500 years old, or else all his sons born before that date joined in the general apostasy of those days. It would appear that when he began the ark he had no sons, but planned for them in faith.

It took a revelation from God to see the real condition of the world in Noah's day. See vs. 5, "God saw" and vs. 11, "before God." We do not have handed down to us what man saw or how man thought of those days. Is it not possible that God's thought of our own day may be different from that of some very good men? By way of comparison read the reference suggested, I Sam. 16. 6,7. Samuel a real man of God, thought Eliab was the one to anoint king of Israel, until God revealed what he did not know. God explains, "the Lord seeth not as man seeth" -- not even as good men see. Compare also what Jesus says the world will be like just before He comes again, in Luke 17. 26,27. He says it will be "as it was in the days of Noah." Then he tells in detail what they will be doing:

"They did eat, they drank, they married wives." Nothing sinful or low about these things. Again, comparing it with Sodom, "they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded." Nothing about these things sinful in themselves. Where was the trouble? They ate, drank married, bought, sold, planted, and, so far as the record shows, they did nothing else. They were merely civilized animals, wholly occupied with this present life and forgetful of God. How this reveals the day we live in! People not so terribly wicked, but just living for the things that perish with the using, But it is the first stage of terrible wickedness; for we read further, "the earth was filled with violence." When God is forgotten soon every wicked device fills men's hearts and comes out in their conduct.

The size of the ark is given in cubits. Estimating a cubit at a foot and a half we have these dimensions: length, 450 feet; breadth, 75 feet; height 45 feet. With its three stories, more than 1,000 rooms ten feet square could be partitioned off in it. This would have held a lot of animals, for while some would need more than that much room for each pair, many would not need so much, leaving room for Noah's living rooms and food storage. Some of the animals may have hibernated, as they do in winter, in which case they would not eat food.

Clean and Unclean animals are mentioned. Of the unclean a single pair was taken in, Of the clean there is a difference of opinion, some thinking 14 of each were taken. but we believe seven of each were taken in, and, when one of the clean animals was sacrificed on coming out of the ark, it left just three even pairs of clean animals. Sheep were of the clean animals, and lions of the unclean. There were four men and four women in the ark; Noah and his wife, and his three sons and their wives.

The length of time in the ark appears easy to figure by a comparison of chapter 7:11 and 8:14, making a year and ten days. But it is surprising how many in figuring the time do not notice 7:10, which indicates seven days more.

The Ark a Type -- Like many other things in the Old Testament, the ark is a type of Christ. There was absolutely no way to be saved from the flood but by getting into the ark. So there is no other way to be saved but by being in Christ.. There were just as good animals drowned in the flood as were saved in the ark, doubtless. So there will be just as good men, speaking naturally, that go to hell as are saved, But the difference between those animals saved and lost in the flood was not in kind, but in the one point of being in the ark or out of it. So the difference that divides men for heaven and hell is, in Christ or out of Him. One's own righteousness cannot save him. It must be Christ's righteousness. The solemn question that may well occupy every mind, is, Am I in Christ or out of Him?

Worship was the first act on coming out of the ark. It looked like extravagance, after keeping that seventh animal of the clean species over a year, to sacrifice it on coming out into the world again. But God is worthy of extravagance, and loves a cheerful giver.

Unholy Mixture characterized the social condition of the race before the flood. However the mingling of the "Sons of God" and "daughters of men" may be interpreted, whether as angelic beings seeking unholy relations with the human race, or mingling of the Cainites and Sethites the act violated the rule of God regarding the unequal yoking of the discordant elements. The same

tendency to "mix" is evident today. God wants His people separated and kept separate from the world.

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ASSIGNMENT FOR LESSON 5

- 1 Read chapters nine, ten, and eleven of Genesis.
- 2 What new word, occurring first in 6:18, is common in chapter 9.
- 3 What evident change in diet was made after the flood?
- 4 What elements of human government are given?
- 5 What was the order of the ages of Noah's sons?
- 6 What is the basis of the division of the human family?
- 7 What indication is given of what son of Noah would be in the Messianic line?
- 8 Bring your genealogy up to the birth of Abram.

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05 -- THE DISPERSION

THE WORD "COVENANT" occurs first in the Bible in Gen. 6:18, pointing forward to the age that began after the flood, in chapter 9 it is used seven times, and is one of the great Bible words. This covenant is not exactly like a contract, in which one party to an agreement promises to do certain things on condition the other party to the agreement does certain other things. This covenant was made unconditional. God does not say, "Now if men will be good, there will not be another flood." How often since then would He have had to have brought one! But He says positively that there will not be another flood to cover the earth, without stipulating any conditions. As men sign a contract, so God gave a token of His covenant, and to this day we see His signature in the rainbow that reminds us of His promise made so long ago, but still in full force and effect.

Man's diet seems originally to have been fruit and grain (Gen. 1:29). After the fall God gave direction that man should also eat herbs (Gen. 3:18). Now, after the flood, his diet was enlarged to include the flesh of animals (Genesis 9:3). Though there was a distinction in clean and unclean animals at the time of the flood, there is no mention of this difference when giving this direction about eating flesh. Evidently every animal may be included in the "every moving thing that liveth." Later the Hebrews were restricted to what are known as clean animals.

Human government is mentioned in an elementary way in the words, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." God has committed to men the government of the

world, and those who are so appointed are to be obeyed by other men. If these men to whom government is committed exceed their authority God will hold them accountable to Himself. There can be no law against what God has revealed in the Bible as the duty of His people. The 13th chapter of Romans elaborates this idea of human government and admonishes Christians to obey those who are in authority. Nothing in this is calculated to compel a Christian to do contrary to the dictates of his conscience. He may refuse to obey an evil law, but even then he should Patiently submit to the penalty to show his subjection to law and order.

Noah's sons are named in this order: Shem, Ham and Japheth, but it seems not to be the order of their ages. From Gen. 9.24 it appears that Ham was the youngest, and from 10:21 it appears that Japheth was the oldest, leaving Shem as the middle one. Shem is named first because he is the covenant son, "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem," (Gen. 9.26) the one through whom the Messiah eventually came.

The Geographical division of the human family is given in chapter 10, and the occasion of it in chapter 11. The division is given in the reverse order (Japheth, Ham and Shem; instead of Shem, Ham and Japheth. See verses 2, 6 and 22). The Bible thus disposes of the least important first in order to proceed with the main line after ward, just as the Cainites are given in chapter 4 before the Sethites in chapter 5. Practically all the rest of the Bible is about the descendants of Shem. The three sons of Noah head the three races of men. The descendants of Japheth predominate in Europe, the descendants of Ham in Africa, and the descendants of Shem in Asia. This however, is not an exact division, as the people of India are mainly from the Japhetic race, and some Hamitic tribes are also in Asia.

National prestige first demonstrated itself in the descendants of Ham, his grandson, Nimrod, being the founder of Babel. The earliest Egyptian civilization was also Hamitic. The next wave of civilization was Semitic and produced the later Babylonian and Assyrian and Israelitish kingdoms. The last wave of civilization, that in which we now live, is Japhetic, it is significant, in view of Noah's blessing on his sons, that all monotheistic religions (Mohammedan, Jewish, Christian) have come through the descendants of Shem. God's plan for the race was given immediately after the flood: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." The design was evidently to populate the whole earth. But man had other plans that he set against God's: "Let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad." God brought their plans to confusion. But man is ever trying to rebuild Babel. The latest attempt to build Babel is to organize all Christians into one great federation that will move as a unit in politics, social and religious life. This has been tried before, when the Roman Catholic church dominated Europe and precipitated the dark ages on the world. Protestantism, with its divided denominations, is the remedy. How much better the church is kept small and insignificant in the eyes of the world! But man is determined to build Babylon, The League of Nations, leagues of labor and capital and secret orders all repeat in some way the mistake of Babel.

The genealogy from the flood to Abram's birth is readily estimated just as we did in the fifth chapter. But notice Abram is not Terah's oldest son, but covenant son. Gen. 11.26 would make it appear that Terah was 70 when Abram was born, but a comparison of Gen. 11.32 and 12.4 shows that Terah was 130 at Abram's birth. This follows the same rule as that regarding Noah's sons, where the covenant son takes precedence.

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ASSIGNMENT FOR LESSON 6

- 1 Read carefully the 12th chapter of Genesis.
- 2 Read Acts 7. 2-5; Heb. 11. 8-12.
- 3 Reread Gen. 11. 27.32.
- 4 Where was Abram living when he received his call, in Ur or Haran?
- 5 Was he a married man when he received the call?
- 6 Did he fully obey God from the start?
- 7 Was he guilty of knowingly doing contrary to God's call?
- 8 Was it deception he practiced on Pharaoh in calling his wife his sister?

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06 -- THE CALL OF ABRAM

ABRAHAM, who, the first ninety-nine years of his life was known as Abram, comes into Bible history in the last part of the 11th chapter of Genesis, and the account of his life continues into the 25th chapter. The fact that God uses more space in the Bible to give the history of a single individual than He gives to the whole race up to his time, suggests the importance of that life in the plan of God. The fact that his name is in the first verse of Matthew, and incidents of his life referred to repeatedly in the New Testament, further proves the importance of the lessons of his life to the Bible reader.

The time of his call is not difficult to determine. The statement "Now the Lord had said" of Gen. 12. 1, indicates that God had called Abram previous to the time of the incidents recorded in the last two verses of chapter 11. This is confirmed by comparing Acts 7. 2, "the God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran" (or Haran).

Whether married or not at the time of his call may not appear on the surface as a very important question, but the investigation of it leads to some interesting considerations. Notice, if you will, the contract-like transaction God proposed to Abram, as given in the first two verses of Genesis 12.

Abram's Part

1 "Get thee out of thy country," 2 "and from thy kindred," 3 "and from thy father's house," 4 "unto a land that I will show thee."

God's Part

1 "I will make of thee a great nation," 2 "and I will bless thee" 3 "and make thy name great," 4 "and thou shalt be a blessing."

From the nature of this contract it will be seen that Abram was to make the first move. The things God was asking him to do were all possible for Abram to do, but would mean much sacrifice. The things God promised to do for Abram were things Abram could not do for himself, but it would take great faith on Abram's part to secure them. The measure of Abram's faith would be shown by the promptness of his going about his part of the contract, for only so could he be sure of God's doing His part.

The difficulties in the way of God doing what He has promised would be more evident to Abram than the difficulties of his own part. This is human. There is reason to believe that, before Abram started out on his journey, the question came to his mind: How could God make of him a great nation unless he was married? With this thought filling his mind, he married his half sister, which involved the taking with him of his kindred. Sarah proved incapable of bearing children, and Abram's faith had more to surmount than it had before. The death of Abram's brother Haran left Lot an orphan, and Abram adopted him as his heir in the absence of children of his own, still further complicating his affairs. Finally, perhaps after many years, the whole family started out for Canaan, complicating still further Abram's part of the contract, for he took with him his kindred and his father's house, which he was told to leave behind.

Abram's progress in the will of God is measured by the time it took him to divest himself of the things he took along that God had told him to leave. His father's death in Haran, after no one knows how many years, released him to make the rest of the journey to Canaan. God's appearance to him on entering the land was a signal that he was headed in the right direction.

The famine forced him down to Egypt for sustenance because of the great household he had gathered about him. Out of the land of God's call, he resorted to helping himself by resorting to the world's way of doing. He prevaricated about his wife, which proved to be much worse for him than telling the whole truth, which at last came out. He left Egypt with another acquisition, the woman servant Hagar, destined to be another obstacle to his faith.

Abraham in the New Testament is presented as the father of the faithful, in the fourth chapter of Romans his faith is highly commended, and it is said of him, "He staggered not at the promise of God." Here we have his perfected faith; while in the Old Testament we have his faith on test in the making. Abraham was a pioneer in faith and struggled around many difficulties that his followers do not have to encounter. A study of his life is a revelation to us of how men are disposed to resort to different things to help God out in the keeping of His promises, to the neglect of the things that are their part to do.

Faith is a quality that God delights to find in His people. Jesus marveled at the faith of the Roman centurion and the Syrophenician woman (Matt. 8:10; 15:28); and at the lack of it on the part of the others (Matt. 8:26). To believe the promises of God and to act in that belief as one acts on a law of nature is well pleasing to God. Its importance is seen in the fact that without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6).

The Pilgrim life of Abraham is especially noticeable. Called from what appears to have been a settled home of some wealth, he became a wanderer on the earth with no settled home. The only land he ever owned in Canaan was a burial lot, but he was looking for a city to come.

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ASSIGNMENT FOR LESSON 7

- 1 Read chapters 13, 14 and 15.
- 2 What things did Abraham have along when he left Ur that the Lord had told him to leave?
- 3 What had he gotten rid of since he left Ur?
- 4 What new hindrance did he bring with him out of Egypt?
- 5 What did he divest himself of in chapter 13?
- 6 What did he escape taking on in chapter 14?
- 7 When does the 400 years begin to count, v. 13?
- 8 With what kings did Abram have personal dealings in chapter 14?

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07 -- EXPERIENCES OF ABRAM

EGYPT left behind, Abram returned to Canaan. Like a hungry backslider he sought the place of the altar where the Lord had met him on entering the land, but there is no mention of the Lord manifesting Himself to him as before. But he remained in the land. The things that clung to Abram from the past life hindered his progress in the things of God. Aggravations began in connection with them. His own herdsmen and those of Lot became quarrelsome, and division became necessary.

Lot's Declension followed the logical order: "Lot lifted up his eyes," (vs. 10); "Lot chose," and "Lot journeyed," (vs. 11); "Lot . . . pitched his tent toward Sodom," (vs. 12); and "Lot sat in the gate of Sodom," (chapter 19:1).

An uplift in Abram's life immediately followed the separation from him of Lot. One thing on which his faith had been hung up was taken away. There is great significance in the words, "after that Lot was separated from him." Lot saw only one way and judged by human considerations; saw only for the present and went into trouble. Abram, in response to God's "Lift up now thine eyes," saw in all directions and saw an everlasting possession. Relinquishing his human hope of Lot, the adopted son, he got a vision of a posterity "as the dust of the earth."

Leagues of nations are no new thing in the earth. This first glimpse of ancient governments in their relation to God's chosen people shows the league plan already in vogue. The "Four kings with five," made a league against a league. The "Quadruple Alliance" conquered the "Sodom-Gomorrhah Entente." But they got themselves in trouble when they took the sojourner Lot as a prisoner, That the Bible passes over so lightly the wonderful victory of Abram and his little band over the organized armies of four combined kingdoms, shows at once that the message of the Bible is greater than man's narrow ideas of military prowess and world conquest.

Two kings met Abram on his return from the "slaughter of the kings" (Heb.. 7.1), with quite different motives. The king of Sodom, who had escaped the captors of his people, offered Abram all the booty for the return of his people. Abram might have taken another heavy load of hindrance had he consented thus to obligate himself to the king of Sodom, but he nobly rose above it. Quite different was his meeting with "Melchizedec king of Salem," Which is interpreted in Hebrews 7.2 to mean "King of righteousness, King of Salem," type and forerunner of Jesus Christ. Contact with this "priest of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth," made an enlargement in Abram's conception of God. See how he appropriates the name in vs. 22 when refusing the offer of the king of Sodom.

Fear and disappointment might have possessed Abram after the experiences of chapter 14, but if so God came to him in the 15th chapter with reassurance: "I am thy shield ,and thy exceeding great reward." The nations he had dared assault would not harm him, and rewards greater than that he had refused from the king of Sodom would be his.

Eliezer of Damascus, who is to figure so largely in chapter 24, is mentioned here. Had Abram died at this time this servant would have been his heir and thus the only inheritor of the promises to Abram. The prospect is not fully satisfactory to Abram, and he mentions it to God, Who assures him that he shall have an heir truly his own. Again God grants him a vision, enlarging on the previous one. As the other spoke of a seed like the "dust of the earth," this one speaks of a seed like the "stars," suggesting possibly Israel, the earthly seed, and Christians, the heavenly seed.

Wanting to know for sure, Abram was much like ourselves. When God spoke to him of a posterity like the stars it is recorded that he "believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness," But when He spoke to him about inheriting a little patch of earth on this one little star he asked "whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" God told him how he could know. "Getting all on the altar" is vividly pictured in, Abram's sacrifice, and keeping it there is symbolized by his day-long contention with the birds of prey that were determined to get something off the altar. The setting sun brought relief from the birds and in the darkness of gloomy night, God appeared to him with a vision of the future, both foreboding and reassuring. Even so the struggling soul that wants to know that God's promise is true, aside from just believing what He says about it,

after the wearisome struggle of bringing all into subjection to God is rewarded at last, in the gloomiest hour, perhaps, by the witness of the Spirit that God has accepted the offering.

400 years ahead Abram saw into the future the history of his descendants, while as yet there were none of them. Beyond that also he saw a delivered people coming into possession of the land where he was a pilgrim and stranger, and saw that land enlarged to reach to the far-off Euphrates he had left behind him. This element of futurity is one of the steadying, sobering things of right religion. The thought of a future in heaven or hell may well make the individual stop and think to his profit. What may follow to succeeding generations is a wholesome thought in the face of today's decision. Each thing clinging to us, which God did not put on us, is a hindrance to ourselves today and all down the future.

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ASSIGNMENT FOR LESSON 8

- 1 Read chapters 16 and 17 of Genesis.
- 2 Was there intention of sin in Abram's deed of chapter 16?
- 3 What is the evidence that it did not please God?
- 4 What is the spiritual application to present-day conditions in the church?
- 5 How many years are passed by in silence?
- 6 How was Abram occupied those years?
- 7 What new word comes into Abram's life in chapter 17?
- 8 How is this new word related to Gen. 12. 1-3
- 9 What is the significance of the change from Abram to Abraham?

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08 -- ABRAM BECOMES ABRAHAM

GOD'S PROMISES are not always explained. It sets us to wondering how He is going to be able to make His promise true. God had promised Abram that he should have a son of his very own (Gen. 15:4). Years passed by and no heir came. Then came Sarai's suggestion that Hagar, the maid-servant they had acquired in Egypt, he made use of in building the family. Abraham hearkened to the voice of his wife. He undertook to go about the matter in an orderly way. He made the woman his wife, thus setting the example of polygamy that has cursed the world. He who sees in Abram's act in this matter only the arrangement of lust misses the point of the lesson altogether.

Thirteen years of silence is God's commentary on Abram's plan to help Him keep His promise. Compare the last verse of chapter 16 and the first verse of chapter 17. These were busy years for Abram. If we ask what he was doing in this interval of silence, we can only say he was raising Ishmael. At last he had a plan that worked in the way of obtaining a real heir, and he was wholly absorbed in it, but God was silent.

Men still plan to help God in His work. Childless churches plan arrangements with the world to get members, after the manner of Abram bringing Egypt into his family to help rear children. These plans often appear to work so wonderfully that the pastor and people are wholly absorbed in the plans of their own devising so that they do not hear the voice of God, even as God was silent in Abram's life, so far as Scripture record is concerned.

The contract method failed in Abram's life, just as it did in Adam's. Had Adam done what the Lord told him to do, he would have retained favor with God through his own obedience. Had Abram done what the Lord told him to do he would have seemed to have merited what God promised. But after all these years Abram seems no nearer getting everything done God asks of him than at the beginning, and he is in danger of getting hopelessly involved.

God breaks the silence in Abram's case. All plans for man's good originate with God. When Adam fell, God was the first to seek a way for communion to be restored. God had suggested the contract to Abram, and now He proposes a covenant. God's first words to Abram after this silence are not those of chiding or fault-finding, and yet they brought Abram to his face in penitence.

"I am the Almighty God" suggests the futility of Abram's devices. Why should Abram plan and scheme to help God out when the Almighty God, the God Who can do anything, has promised him definitely what He would do?

Future, present, and past glide by in a panorama of God's glorious promises as He unfolds them to Abram, now Abraham. The promise first comes into sight in the dim and distant future: "I WILL make My covenant between Me and thee" (vs. 2). Rapidly it looms nearer, until it is in the present. "My covenant IS with thee" (v. 4). Then the promise becomes the settled record of the past: "Thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations HAVE I MADE THEE" (vs. 5). What a glimpse is this into the program of Him with Whom the past, the present, and the future is one great NOW!

"Covenant," what a key that word is to this 17th chapter! Twelve times it is repeated, and every time God is the speaker of the word, and nine of these times God calls it "My covenant." The word occurs as many times in this chapter as there are tribes of Israel.

Sarah shared in the blessings of her husband, having an "H" put in her name at the same time as he. He would be "a father of many nations," but she would be "a mother of nations." The beginning of nations is promised in Isaac that is to be Abraham's very own son with no stigma attached. His name means "laughter," suggesting either the holy laughter with which Abraham received the promise of God, or the laughter with which Sarah greeted the news when the angel of

the Lord conveyed the news as recorded in the next chapter. One was the laughter of faith, the other of doubt. But Sarah became a sharer in the faith as we learn from Heb. 11.11. Here, again, we see God's overruling goodness in miraculously using a hindrance Abram had taken on to help himself..

Circumcision was instituted as a seal of the covenant.. Circumcision did not save, but it showed that the one circumcised had accepted the terms of the covenant. In New Testament times the ordinance had been elevated in the popular mind to a saving ordinance, and its use, so far as the Christian is concerned, was discontinued by authority of the Holy Ghost as related in Acts 15. In Romans 4:9-12 the fact is made plain that Abraham was saved before he was circumcised, circumcision being added for the following reason: "He received the sign of circumcision, as a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised." It is further made plain, in Col. 2. 10-12, that it is the circumcision of Christ that saves and not that of man, even as it is His baptism that saves, and not our own. In other words, Christ was the God-appointed Substitute for all who accept Him as their Saviour, and as their substitute, the fact that He was both circumcised and baptized with water relieves His people of both those ordinances, so far as any saving power is attached to them. We are saved by what He did for us; not by what we do or have done to ourselves.

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ASSIGNMENT FOR LESSON 9

- 1 Read chapters 18, 19 and 20.
- 2 What two announcements did God make to Abraham?
- 3 Why did Abraham stop his intercession at ten?
- 4 Did God answer the spirit of Abraham's prayer?
- 5 Why did Lot's testimony to his sons-in-law seem mockery?
- 6 What error did Abraham repeat in his dealing with Abimelech?

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09 -- ABRAHAM AND SODOM

TWO announcements were made to Abraham in the 18th chapter: an announcement that Sarah would give birth to a son, and an announcement of God's inquest of conditions in Sodom.

This second visitation and promise of God regarding the birth of a son appears to have been on purpose for Sarah. Abraham's faith had been encouraged by the covenant promise of the previous chapter; but Sarah seems now to be the especial object of God's visitation. She greets the announcement at first with apparent doubt, but faith does its work at last and she by faith received

strength to conceive seed. God again reiterates the fact of His almightiness by asking the question, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" There may be things the Lord will not do for His people, but it is not because they are too hard to do. He has other and better reasons for declining to answer prayer than the difficulty of doing so. It was a difficult thing God had promised, but God had said it would be done and that settled it. What a stimulant to faith this is, That question appears to have settled Sarah's doubts.

The three men proved to be the Lord accompanied by two angels. See verse 22, where One is called the Lord; and the "men" of v. 22 are evidently the same as the "two angels" of 19.1. This was one of the manners in which God made His presence known to His people in Old Testament times. After Jesus was incarnated these appearances ceased, and after His ascension He makes His presence known by the Holy Ghost.

The threatened destruction of Sodom drew from Abraham a prayer of intercession. He has prayed out beyond his own needs and feels the pulse of the lost world about him, just as all do who have ceased from sin and found the rest of faith for themselves. Just why his intercession ceased at ten, we may not wholly determine. It is significant that Lot's family at this time appears to have numbered ten, as follows: Lot and his wife; his two daughters at home; his sons; (at least two) his sons-in-law; and the daughters they married. Abraham's diminishing number suggests that the closer one gets to God the less hope he has of man. Perhaps he thought at first that surely fifty righteous would be found in the city of Sodom. But as he waited before God, in His great holiness, his opinion of the goodness of the place diminished. Nothing helps one see the conditions of our times like being much before the Lord. Evidently the spirit of intercession would press no further than ten. But it is a solemn fact, that when ten righteous men would have saved Sodom, the ten men could not be found. What a commentary this is on the righteous being the salt of the earth!

God answered Abraham's prayer, not in the letter but in the spirit. The desire of Abraham's heart was the deliverance of Lot and any righteous ones that might be found there. See 19.29. The two angels sought out the house of Lot, stayed with him that night, warned him of the coming doom, and set all who would go, outside of the city. Lot's testimony to his sons-in-law may have been so unlike what his everyday conversation had been that they took it as a huge joke that their father-in-law was so agitated over the statement of the two strange men that the city would be destroyed.

Lot's wife stands out a vivid example of those who reject deliverance because of being enamored of the perishing things of the world. Those who are disposed to judge the contrivance of Lot's daughters by which they became mothers should temper their judgment with the consideration that their motive was the strongest instinct or the race to keep the race from becoming extinct. V. 31 seems to indicate that at this time these young women believed their father was the only living man on the earth the catastrophe in their opinion, having destroyed all but them and their father, and no other way could keep the race from becoming extinct. Their Sodom associations doubtless dulled their moral sense of the deed, and the fact the Bible records it does not give sanction to their sin. Their sons became the heads of two races that were a constant aggravation to the race of Israel.

Abraham and Abimelech got into just about the same trouble over Sarah as Abram and Pharaoh had some time before. If we ask why Abraham, standing out as typical of the sanctified man, should repeat the prevarication that his wife was his sister, conveying an opinion that deceived we should observe that habits formed in early life have the power of projecting themselves into the renewed life. But we should also observe that this was the last time, that it was fully confessed and abandoned as the light came on it. Men now do not always immediately see that little schemes of deception, practiced from childhood, and by their parents before them, and concerning which it may be said "everybody does it" are wrong until light comes. The test of the reality of the work in them is that when the light comes these deceptions are confessed and put away.

God's care of Abraham is manifestly evident in both of these cases by the manner in which he dealt with Pharaoh and Abimelech, it is evident these incidents are what are referred to in Psalm 105:14: "He reproveth kings for their sakes."

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ASSIGNMENT FOR LESSON 10

1 Read chapters 21 and 22. Also Gal. 4.21-31.

2 Does the New Testament justify Sarah in demanding the casting out of Hagar and Ishmael?

3 Why was not Abraham solicitous about what became of them?

4 How do you account for the promptness with which Abraham responds to the Lord's demands now as compared with his manner before the 17th chapter?

5 Why did not Abraham take the young men with him to the place of sacrifice?

6 What new meaning of the word "Seed" is plainly given in 22.17?

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10 -- ABRAHAM'S SUPREME TEST

WHEN Abraham was one hundred years old Isaac was born according to the promise of the Lord. All went harmoniously until Isaac was weaned, then Ishmael began his opposition to the real heir of the promises. In like manner the new birth makes no disturbance at first; but when it develops strength, then it meets the opposition of the carnal nature, and then, as in the case of Ishmael and Isaac, he that was born after the flesh must be cast out, or Isaac will be in danger.

Sarah's demand that Ishmael be cast out is justified by both the Old and New Testament. God takes Sarah's side in Gen. 21. 12, and tells Abraham to consent to her demands. Gal. 4.21-31 gives the spiritual application to Israel after the flesh and the church; the former, in not accepting

Christ, representing Ishmael; and Isaac representing the true church, persecuted by the unbelieving Jews.

Abraham was obedient in every particular to the Lord's demands on him. He got up early in the morning and executed the Lord's wishes to the letter. God had promised him (Gen. 17.20) that He would multiply Ishmael exceedingly, so when God said to cast him and his mother out, he need have no solicitude as to what became of them, for obedience to God's commands could not defeat His promises. He loved them still, and wished them well, and it was hard to send them away, but he had started in to obey God, and obey Him he did at any cost. Abraham's promptness in obeying God's commands now, as compared with the way he did in his earlier experiences, is refreshing. Ever after his name was changed from Abram to Abraham we notice this promptness to obey the Lord's commands. When Abraham committed Hagar and Ishmael to the Lord He looked after them, taking the responsibility from Abraham.

The supreme test of Abraham's life is that of the 22nd chapter. All the other hard things of his life seemed but preparatory for this. The farther men walk with the Lord the more is required of them. But, along with the heavier requirements comes the needed grace to meet them. God did not "tempt" Abraham in the sense of trying to get him to do evil, for God does not do that (James 1.13), but He put him to the test. There was explicitness in God's command: "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest." There could be no doubt as to which son was intended. The same element of faith as in the first call is seen in Abraham going out not knowing just what was ahead: "upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Again Abraham was up early in the morning for prompt obedience. His meditations those three days journeying to the place we may imagine. Abraham could stay his mind continually on this fact, that obedience to God's commands cannot possibly defeat the promises of God, however contrary the commands may seem to the promises. God had promised that through Isaac would come the great nation He had promised, therefore to sacrifice him in obedience to God's command, could not defeat that purpose, for God surely knew what He was doing. From Heb. 11.19 we find the faith of Abraham was depending on God raising Isaac from the dead after he had sacrificed him.

At the foot of the mountain Abraham left his two young men and the ass that he had taken that far to help him along, while he and Isaac went alone to the mountain top to complete the sacrifice. The "both of them together" suggests unity between the father and the son, even as there was between the Father and the Son in a sacrifice later made of which this is the type. "God will provide Himself a lamb," was not evasive, but prophetic beyond Abraham's understanding. All preparatory steps being made, and Abraham's hand raised to complete the sacrifice, God called a halt in the proceedings, substituting the ram for his son. Faith had done its work.

A new meaning is revealed in the word "seed" as used in Gen. 22.17. God had spoken of Abraham's seed being like the dust of the earth (Gen. 13.16) and like the stars of heaven (15.5). These two promises are combined here, but another one added: "thy Seed shall possess the gate of His enemies." We know from the use of the singular pronoun "His" that the word "Seed" is used singularly, and must refer to Jesus Christ. This is verified by Gal. 3.16: "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy Seed, which is Christ."

Abraham's increasing vision of God's plan is worth noting. When God first spoke to him about all the world being blessed in his seed, Abraham saw only a great earthly posterity. With this end in view he married Sarah in order to make possible the propagation of such a race. Checked in this plan, Abraham adopted Lot and later Eliezer, but neither plan was satisfactory. Then came the Ishmael plan that promised great things for a season. At last came Isaac the one in whom Abraham's seed was to be called. But even here Abraham's faith was not allowed to rest, for God told him to sacrifice him, From the mountain top where he had ascended to sacrifice Isaac, in despair of all human affairs, Abraham saw down the ages to the Seed, the Lord Jesus Christ, in Whom all nations are to be blessed. How much Abraham would have missed had God blessed the first plan!

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ASSIGNMENT FOR LESSON 11

- 1 Read chapters 23 and 24.
- 2 From your reading of chapters 22, 23 and 24 see if you can discover types of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, also Israel and the bride.
- 3 What is the significance of Abraham buying a burying place in Canaan.?
- 4 How does the 24th chapter compare in length with the other chapter. of Genesis?
- 5 What is the theme of the entire chapter?
- 6 What was the subject of Abraham's servant's conversation all the time?
- 7 Who made the final decision that Rebekah should go to Isaac?

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11 -- SEEKING THE BRIDE

THE LONGEST Chapter in Genesis is the 24th. The 23rd is one of the shortest. Sarah, whose death is recorded in the 23rd, is noted as being the only woman in the Old Testament whose age is recorded. In connection with her death, Abraham makes his first and only purchase of real estate. God has given him the land, but he was not yet given possession, so he purchases a burying place from those who claimed ownership that it might be his until the resurrection, when it will all belong to him and his posterity.

Old Testament Typology of New Testament events makes a most fascinating study. The succession of chapters 22, 23, 24, and 25 is an example. The offering up of Isaac in chapter 22 foreshadows the offering up of Christ; the death of Sarah in chapter 23 suggests the cutting off of the Jewish race after the death of Christ; the servant sent after the bride for Isaac in chapter 24 suggests the Holy Ghost sent after the Church, the bride of Christ; and the re-marriage of Abraham

in chapter 25 suggests the restoration of the Jewish nation after the bride is secured from among the Gentiles.

The Eldest Servant of Abraham was doubtless Eliezer, who is mentioned in Gen. 15.2,3 as steward of the house of Abraham and his heir in the absence of a son. There is a strange omission of his name in this chapter which is so full of his doings from start to finish, He is a type of the Holy Ghost, and like Him does not mention Himself, though He is the doer of all that pertains to the securing of the bride. Abraham had been told that the Canaanites were destined to be destroyed, therefore his wisdom in instructing the servant not to get Isaac a bride from among the daughters of Canaan.

The Bride was to be Secured without taking Isaac to her to show what he was like. The servant's account was all the prospective bride had to go by and make her decision from. In like manner we are wooed and won for Christ, and not by having ever seen Him but from the description and revelation of Him by the Holy Ghost. The Bible account of what Jesus did on earth is the work of the Holy Ghost, as are also the Epistles that tell of the blessings to be secured through Christ, and the consciousness of having received Him is by revelation of the Holy Ghost.

The Resources of the servant were great: "all the goods of his master were in his hand." In like manner the Holy Ghost has all the power of the Father and Son behind Him in the work He is doing in securing the Church for Jesus Christ. He who goes forth, somewhat after the manner of Eliezer, to seek to win souls for Jesus, has back of him the "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" of Jesus. The servant seems to have made ample provision in the "ten camels of his master." This does not look like "penny collections" for missions.

The Simplicity of the servant's work is suggestive of how effective work for the Lord is more often done in the ordinary walks of life than in some spectacular parade of forces. "Let it come to pass," is the plea of the servant of the Lord. "And it came to pass," is the chronicled result. The devise by which the servant was to discover the one whom he should solicit to be Isaac's bride was simple in the extreme, but it is recorded in part three times in this chapter: first, when the servant proposed the method to the Lord; second, when the result is recorded when Rebekah came to the well; and third, when the servant recounts it to Bethuel and Laban.

The Success of the servant's mission is remarkable. It is suggestive to him who would succeed that the servant had one constant theme from which he would not be swerved, not even to eat. That one theme was Abraham and his son Isaac, and his one avowed object, of which he made no secret, was that he was after a bride for Isaac. What lessons this contains of the value of having one constant theme, the Lord Jesus Christ and God Who so loved the world that He gave Him, and making no secret of the fact that we are ambassadors for the avowed purpose of securing a people for the Lord. Dependence on the Lord would more often lead us right to the person or persons whom the Lord knows are ready for the message, even as Eliezer did not have to try his plan out again and again with different women before he found the right one, but was led directly to the very one the first time. Life is short. We cannot always be cutting and trying and twisting and turning, but must have an object and go directly to it.

The Final Decision as to whether or not Rebekah should go with the servant rested entirely with her. Her mother and brother were for delaying her a little while, but the servant was anxious to go: "Send me away that I may go to my master." Rebekah is faced with the question that must be answered by every one who considers their relation to Jesus Christ. "Wilt thou go with this man?" is the plain, unequivocal question. Her decision was as direct as the question, and settled everything: "I will go."

The Journey to Isaac doubtless had its trials and privations, possibly perils. As the darkness of night settled over the camping place, we may well imagine Eliezer endeavoring to encourage Rebekah from night to night: not with amusement and recreation, but by telling more about Isaac. "Tell me more about Isaac," would be the attitude of Rebekah; and "tell me more about Jesus" is ever the request of the truly saved soul.

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ASSIGNMENT FOR LESSON 12

1 Read chapters 25, 26 and 27.

2 Of what is Abraham's second marriage a type?

3 How long were Isaac, and Rebekah childless?

4 Which had the better ground for their favoritism, Isaac or Rebekah?

5 What mistake of his father did Isaac repeat?

8 How many lies did Jacob tell getting the blessing?

7 To what extent, if any, did the scheming of Rebekah, Isaac Jacob and Esau change things?

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12 -- ISAAC AND REBECCA

ABRAHAM'S Marriage to Keturah, as already suggested, typifies the restoration of Israel at the beginning of the millennium as will be understood by comparison with the lesson of a week ago.

Isaac and Rebecca experienced the same test as Abraham and Sarah had before them in being disappointed about offspring. We read in v. 20 that Isaac was forty years old when he married, in vs. 26 we are informed that he was sixty when his twin sons were born. "Isaac entreated the Lord" tells the secret of how they overcame their difficulty. God was twenty years in answering, but there is no record that Isaac wavered in his patient waiting in faith, exhibiting a type of faith unlike that of his father. Abraham's faith was more of the pioneer type struggling with untried problems: Isaac's was more the faith that rests patiently on the promise and precedent.

The favoritism of the father and mother reveal strange characteristics in the parents. "Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison" gives a view of Isaac from the domestic side. "But Rebekah loved Jacob," would seem to have as its reason that God had promised her that the elder son should serve the younger son, Jacob.

Jacob's Device to buy the birthright from Esau shows that he set value on things worth while, but reveals his characteristic to take nothing from God as a gift, assuming that he must scheme and plan for all he had, a trait that characterizes his life for many years. Esau's willingness to part so easily with his birthright for one mess of pottage reveals him as a "profane person" (Heb. 12.16), one who for the momentary gratification of appetite, gave up his interest in the spiritual and unseen.

Isaac Repeated the prevarication of Abraham in dealing with Abimelech about his relation to his wife, calling her his sister, with perhaps less truth than Abraham had done so; but, as in Abraham's case, the truth was found out, proving again that it is always best to tell the truth. Isaac's patience in digging wells and giving them up when his right to them was contested showed a most pacific spirit. It was cheaper to dig a new well than it was to have a quarrel over the old one. Isaac, like his father, had an altar by which to worship the Lord.

Human Nature, even in a family of God's choice, shows up in carnal traits in the controversy about the bestowment of the blessing. But God's grace prevails. Had Rebekah and Jacob been content to have rested on the promises of God, that the elder should serve the younger, they might have saved themselves much trouble and kept themselves from deceitful tricks and lying. Four times in verses 19-24 does Jacob lie to his father. "I am Esau thy firstborn;" "eat of my venison;" "the Lord thy God brought it to me;" "Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am." But it was all found out before night.

God's Foreordination and man's freewill are brought into juxtaposition in this transaction. God had ordained beforehand that Jacob should be the birthright son and the inheritor of the blessing of Abraham. Isaac and Esau set out to make it come out some other way; and Rebekah and Jacob just as earnestly set to work to make it come out as the Lord said it would. All four of them were given a free hand to do just what they wanted to do; but when it was all over it had come out just as the Lord had said beforehand it would. This illustrates how the fact of God's foreknowledge does not in the least put limitations on man to use his free will as he pleases. The guiding hand of God leads His people on to victory in spite of the opposition of men.

The three blessings given in chapter 27 and 28 carefully compared show that Jacob gained nothing by his contrivance, nor would Esau have gained anything had his expectation been fulfilled without Jacob's interference. Verses 28 and 29, of chapter 27, contain Isaac's blessing when he thought he was blessing Esau, a blessing that did not convey what Jacob really sought. Verses 39 and 40, of chapter 27, contain the blessing Isaac gave when he knew he was blessing Esau, But in verses 3 and 4, of chapter 28, Isaac blesses Jacob, knowing it was Jacob. This conveyed "the blessing of Abraham," which was what Jacob was after, however little he may have understood all that was couched in it.

"By Faith," says the writer of Hebrews (Heb. 11.20). "Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come." in spite of personal preferences, in spite of bodily infirmity, in spite of the clash of conflicting devices in his family, Isaac's faith looked to the things to come and blessed Jacob and Esau in the light of those things. And Jacob -- scheming, underhanded, conniving Jacob -- with his face toward the future, became one of the trio whose names God so often associates with His own; while Esau -- happy, cheerful, care-free Esau -- with his mind on the present enjoyment, shriveled into Edom, named after the pottage that he consumed in a meal as the price of eternal privileges, But the same mistake is being made by Esaus now-a-days. They fall in with the spirit of these days of seeking pleasure and waste all their precious years in its quest along proper or improper lines, casting eternal hopes to the wind, only to awake at the judgment with bitter tears, if not before. However, now and then a Jacob sets his face toward eternity and orders the things of his life in accord with that hope.

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ASSIGNMENT FOR LESSON 13

- 1 Read chapters 28, 29 and 30.
- 2 Compare the three blessings Isaac gave his sons. (chs. 27 and 28).
- 3 Which of these blessings conveyed the covenant?
- 4 Was God's promise to Jacob made any more sure by Jacob's vow?
- 5 What is the prominent word in chapter 29?
- 6 Was it necessary for Jacob to earn his wives?
- 7 Why were Jacob's schemes blessed?
- 8 How many of Jacob's sons were born in Padan-aram?

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13 -- JACOB'S SERVITUDE

ISAAC Sent Jacob Away from Canaan to obtain a wife. Esau already had married two Canaanitish wives (26:34), and soon after added an Ishmaelitish wife (28:9). thus further demonstrating his lack of faith, for the Canaanites, God had intimated to Abraham, were to be destroyed. Isaac and Rebekah united in their desire that Jacob should not do as Esau had done.

Jacob's Vision was at Bethel, some forty miles from Beersheba, his boyhood home. Perhaps he had never spent a night away from his father's home before. The place where night overtook him was not far from where Abraham and Lot, 150 years before, had divided the land. He seems to have been afraid to go to any village for lodging, if there were any about the place,

but slept in the open field. That lonely, homesick man might well have felt himself forsaken of men. He was little accounted of in this world. But God was watching over him, for he was the heir apparent to the promises given to Abraham who had pioneered and prayed over those very hills and valleys.

The Ladder was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. As the ladder connected heaven and earth, so Jesus Christ connected God and man -- the only possible means of communication between them. This seems to be definitely referred to in John 1:51. Notice, also, that the angels are spoken of in both cases as "ascending and descending," not descending and ascending. He who had so tried to get the blessing of Isaac is now blessed directly by the Lord. God passes on to him the title deed of the land as he had given it to Abraham before him. What a promise was that to a man like Jacob!

Jacob's Vow was not asked for by the Lord. He volunteered it on his own account. God did not condition His promise to Jacob on his making any vow or doing anything else. God took over the entire responsibility of seeing to it that what he was telling Jacob about would come to pass. In a way the vow cheapens the promise and reveals the low conception Jacob had of what the Lord was promising. God had made him the heir of Abraham, given him the land of Canaan, made him a channel of blessing to all the world; but Jacob vows that if the Lord will only direct his journey, give him food and raiment and bring him home again, then he will make Him his God and pay Him the tithe. This promise shows that it had been instilled into Jacob's mind that the tenth was the Lord's. Evidently this was a well-understood precept of the patriarchs.

The Word "Serve" gives the key to Jacob's career in Padan-aram. The word, or some of its derivatives, occurs frequently in the history of that period. There was no need of his serving for his wife. It was his own voluntary proposition. His father had gotten his wife in the same country for the asking, and he might have made wages that seven years and had a wife for the asking free of any charge. The seven years extended out to fourteen.

Reaping What One Sows is vividly illustrated in Jacob's experience with Laban. He had deceived his father into thinking he, the younger, was the older son; and now Laban deceives him by making him think he had the younger daughter, when he had the older. The customs of the land were for the bride to be veiled so that the bridegroom did not see her face until the next morning after the marriage, which took place at night. This made the deception comparatively easy. However, it all worked out for good, for Leah proved to be the wife God had appointed for him. She was the mother of the ancestral line of Jesus Christ, and it was by her side that Jacob told his sons later to bury him (49:31). Had he been contented with one wife he would have had the Lord's choice.

Eleven of Jacob's Sons were born in Padan-aram. The marriage of Jacob to Leah was only one week before his marriage to Rachel. He served seven years in advance for Leah, but Laban trusted him to serve the seven years for Rachel. It appears to have been six years after the completion of his fourteen years of servitude for his wives that he left Laban for the return to Canaan. His first eleven sons appear to have been born during the last thirteen years of the twenty he spent in that land. (See 31:41).

Jacob's Schemes Were Blessed, not because they were worthy of being blessed, but because God had promised to be with Jacob. He would have fared as well, probably better, if he had been straightforward in all his dealings with Laban. However, no real dishonesty can be charged against Jacob. As the 31st chapter shows, it was not the schemes of Jacob that determined the color of the cattle, but the work of the Lord in his behalf. (See 31.7-12).

The Names of Jacob's sons were given them by Leah and Rachel. Reuben means "See, a son!" Simeon means "Hearing," indicating that the Lord had heard her prayer. Levi means "Joined," indicating her hope of Jacob's closer love. Judah means "Praise." All these names Leah gave her sons suggest that the Lord was in her thoughts. Rachel's names for the sons of her maid suggest animosity existing between herself and Leah. But later, her names for her own son, Joseph, suggests thankfulness to the Lord. Levi (joined), also has priestly significance.

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ASSIGNMENT FOR LESSON 14

- 1 Read chapters 31, 32 and 33.
- 2 What memory did God bring back to Jacob?
- 3 How many years was Jacob in Padan-aram?
- 4 What feared enemy was behind and what one before?
- 5 Of how many animals did his present to Esau consist?
- 6 Did the present have anything to do with reconciling Esau?
- 7 Was it advisable that Jacob and Esau dwell together?
- 8 What was the object of the man wrestling with Jacob?

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14 -- JACOB'S RETURN TO CANAAN

JACOB'S Leading to Return to Canaan was both by revelation and by providential circumstances, and God was the mover in both ways. Dissatisfaction on the part of Laban and his sons was manifest, making it unpleasant for Jacob to stay there any longer. Had it not been for these providences perhaps Jacob would not have been so ready to have heard the call of the Lord in 31.3. Laban was pushing him away from Padan-aram, and God was calling him to Canaan. Other providences line up when God is calling. Jacob's wives, naturally attached to their own home country, were ready to go when Jacob spoke to them of his leadings.

God spoke to Jacob as the "God of Bethel," thus reminding him of that memorable night when he slept under the open sky in Canaan, The vow, not asked for, once made, must be kept, and God used it to remind Jacob of his obligation to Him. Conditions of trouble often wring vows from men, but relief too often makes them forget the vows. To go back to Canaan meant to keep those vows, which Jacob had conditioned on the Lord bringing him back.

Jacob was Twenty Year, in Padan-aram we judge from 31.41. The chronology of Jacob's life brings out some interesting facts. It is most easily figured backward. He was 147 years old when he died, (47.28), From the same verse we learn that he was 130 when he came to Egypt, which is confirmed by 47.9. To trace his age previous to that we must figure Joseph's age. Joseph was 30 when he stood before Pharaoh (41.46), The seven years of plenty and two years of the famine had passed before Jacob came to him (45.11) so Joseph was 39 when Jacob was 130. This would show Jacob to be 91 when Joseph was born. Joseph was evidently born the 14th year of Jacob's stay in Padan-aram, as it appears from 30.25 to have occurred just at the time of the expiration of the fourteen years of servitude for his wives. This would have made him 77 when he left home.

Jacob was Beset behind and before by those who were determined to resist his doing what he believed he ought to do. But the Lord dealt with both, as He always does when His people are going forward in His will. Laban overtook him, but was powerless to do him any harm or to take anything from him, in spite of his claim that everything Jacob had was his. Those who use the so-called "Mizpeh benediction" will do well to observe that its original use was between men that seem never to have met again, and perhaps had no desire to do so.

The Angels of God cheered Jacob on his way after the controversy with Laban. But soon Esau was heard to be coming with a band of 400 men, and again Jacob was in distress. Jacob's prayer is a sample of how men pray who must have help. He places his feet firmly on the fact "Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good." Still Jacob was not yet quite at the end of his own devices to help himself. With a view to placating his brother with a present, he selected from his herds and flocks 580 head of stock. This is an indication of the amount of Jacob's possessions at this time. "I will appease him," he thought. But God did the appeasing.

Jacob at the end of himself, God could undertake to do for him what he needed to make him a more perfect servant of His. "Jacob was left alone." How much men miss because they are never alone! The wrestler with Jacob, it is noticeable, was the aggressor: "there wrestled a man with him." This was one of those ways in which God made Himself known to the patriarchs. "I have seen God" is the testimony of Jacob afterward. This experience was typical of the entire life of Jacob. He was always relying on himself. But now, disabled in the place of his strength, he becomes strong for God. He prevailed by surrendering to God. Jacob bore the mark of his all-night conflict next morning. He "halted" or limped on his thigh that had been touched. It may be he bore this mark of his conflict through life as a reminder of that night when, by surrender, he became "a prince of God" -- Israel, instead, of "the supplanter," -- Jacob. Thankful may one be who, if God can subdue him no other way, meets an experience that marks him for life, a constant reminder of his dependence upon God.

Esau Came to Jacob the next morning. With proper ceremonies he planned to meet him. But, with the disregard of ceremonies characteristic of his nomadic life, Esau "ran to meet him." He seemed thoroughly reconciled, with the old animosity all forgotten. When Jacob surrendered to God He took charge of all his battles and subdued all his enemies. As God had met Laban the night before he overtook Jacob, so God evidently had met Esau before he reached his brother. While Jacob was surrendering, evidently so was Esau. "When a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Jacob was returning to Canaan, and it was pleasing to the Lord, so He dealt with all his enemies to make them agreeable to Jacob's going. Though reconciled, for Jacob and Esau to have dwelt together would have defeated the purpose of God for Jacob's descendants.

God's interest in Jacob is manifested in many ways. Why should God have been so interested in this one insignificant man, as to tell us of the little details of his life: his dreams, his quarrels, his wives and children, and his cattle? The only answer is that he was Abraham's seed.

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ASSIGNMENT FOR LESSON 15

- 1 Read chapters 34, 35 and 36.
- 2 What mistake did Jacob make in locating in Canaan?
- 3 How did God overrule his troubles for good?
- 4 What was the moral character of the people of Canaan?
- 5 When did Jacob's household dispose of their idols, and why?
- 6 What one of Jacob's sons was born in Canaan?
- 7 Why is this chapter about the descendants of Esau put in here?

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15 -- JACOB'S TROUBLES

JACOB did not go to Bethel immediately on arriving in the land of Canaan, though one would suppose, from 31.13, that he was directed to go there. He went instead to Shalem, a city of Shechem. How long he dwelt there before the incidents of chapter 34 occurred, is not definitely stated. His older sons appear to have been young men and his daughter Dinah a young woman at this time.

The Work of Satan is manifest in this attempt to mix the race of Jacob with the races of Canaan, The devil is still an adept at this work. Jacob's sons were not justified in their treacherous dealings, but, like many other things to be regretted in the history of God's people, it worked out

good for the race. Getting religion in order to get a wife is still practiced. Submission to the religious ordinances of Jacob's race was easy compared with getting a change of heart, even as submission to outward church observances is too often an easy substitute for a heart change.

Jacob was Dismayed at the dealings of his sons. It was in a sense God's whip-lash to line him up with His purpose. Jacob thought of his reputation with the people of the land. If one sets too much on his reputation with the world it may be the Lord will let something come to smear that reputation. We should live above reproach before the world, but if one goes to counting on his reputation with men of the world as an asset he will very likely find it an uncertain resource. The fear expressed in the words, "I shall be destroyed, I and my house," shows lack of faith. Jacob and his family were surely in great jeopardy at this time, as one considers the human element in the circumstances, but they were back in Canaan at God's command, and that made a difference.

God Speaks in the Emergency: "Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there." God also instructs to build an altar. The altar at Shechem failed. Trouble comes when the family altar is allowed to crumble. He had dwelt in Padan-aram without an altar, perhaps, but he could not dwell in Canaan without one. As the old memories that clustered about Bethel came fresh to his mind, Jacob realized that his family needed a house-cleaning. Strange gods had been secretly brought from Padan-aram, as we have already seen in 31.30-35. Before he could go to Bethel and deal with the God of Bethel these idols must be put away from his household. As Jacob moved along the line of obedience, God took charge of his troubles. His household readily surrendered their idols, and the "terror of God" was upon the inhabitants of the Canaanitish cities about him.

The Moral Condition of the inhabitants of Canaan is vividly portrayed in this incident, it is said of Shechem, the young man who seduced Dinah, "he was more honorable than all the house of his father." This makes one wonder what the rest were like. Evidently impurity was so common as not to be considered particularly immoral among the Canaanites. Jacob's family doubtless imbibed some evil ideas from them that cropped out later in deeds showing a downward trend in moral apprehension, it is dangerous for one to associate with people whose ideas of moral integrity are low.

The Return to Bethel was celebrated by the erection of an altar to the Lord, and God signalized His pleasure in Jacob's thus obeying Him by again appearing to him, once more giving him the promise to Abraham's heirs. Again He reminded him, also, that his name was Israel. How Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, came to be with him here we do not know. It seems likely that, after Rebekah's death, which seems to have occurred in the period when Jacob was in Padan-aram, she had come to join Jacob and his family as they came into the land of Canaan.

Jacob's sons were all born in Padan-aram, except the youngest. Benjamin, who was born near Bethlehem. Why Jacob did not remain at Bethel is not stated. Perhaps it was not intended that he should. But his visit there appears to have enabled him to get his proper bearings, after which he moved on southward, eventually coming to Hebron where his father Isaac was still living at that time.

The Descendants of Esau are now recorded and that line of the chosen family set aside, just as we saw the descendants of Cain recorded in the 4th chapter before proceeding from the Sethites

in chapter five. As from there on all the Bible is about the Sethites, so from here on all the Bible is about Jacob and his descendants, Esau's descendants only being mentioned incidentally as they come in contact with Israel. The Bible narrative follows the history of the redemptive plan. Esau had as good a chance as Jacob to be in the ancestral line of Jesus, being the son of Isaac, the heir of the promises to Abraham, But he deliberately cut himself off from the prospects of that glorious line for a single meal of food. All men who now hear the gospel have an equal chance to be in the descent of Christ, but the majority are losing the opportunity for the selfish indulgence of this present life. Esau sought a place of repentance with tears, but found it not. The hour had forever gone from him, and his name Edom reminds throughout the Bible of the man who loved the gratification of appetite better than the heritage of God.

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ASSIGNMENT FOR LESSON 16

1 Read chapters 37, 35 and 39.

2 How do you account for the fact that the remainder of the book of Genesis clusters about the life of Joseph?

3 Of whom is Joseph a type?

4 Find typical events in his life recorded in chapters 37 and 39.

5 What new Testament text is abundantly exemplified in Joseph's life?

6 What was the secret of Joseph's promotion in Egypt?

7 Why do we have the shameful story of chapter 38 recorded in the Bible?

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16 -- JOSEPH TAKEN TO EGYPT

JOSEPH and the record of his life and deeds forms the theme for the greater part of the book of Genesis from the 37th chapter to the end. There is a reason for this. The Bible's main theme is Jesus Christ. In the New Testament this is plainly evident, in the Old Testament, while not so evident, yet Jesus is foreshadowed in many persons and incidents. Joseph is one of most significant of these typical persons in that his relationships and the incidents of his life foreshadow Jesus Christ.

Types of Scripture are not exactly the same as spiritual teachings of the Scripture. Some of the types of Christ in the history of Joseph are plainly evident. Like Jesus. Joseph was the beloved son of his father. Like Jesus, he was hated of his brethren. The Jews did not themselves kill Jesus, but turned Him over to the Romans to crucify. In like manner, though Joseph's brethren spoke of killing him, they instead turned him over to the Ishmaelites. Jesus was falsely accused. So was

Joseph in the house of Potiphar. As Jesus was put in the prison of death, Joseph was put in the Egyptian prison. Jesus was associated with two thieves in His crucifixion, one of whom was saved and one lost; typical of which we see Joseph associated with two criminals in his prison, one of whom was saved and one lost. Joseph was exalted from the prison to the throne, even as Jesus rose from the dead and is exalted at God's right hand. Many other types can be worked out by a careful comparison of all the events of Joseph's life with those of Jesus' history. This constitutes one very plain proof of the inspiration of the Scriptures. It is certainly no accident that these foreshadowings are in the Old Testament 1700 years before their counterparts in the New.

Spiritual Teachings also abound in the life of Joseph. What better illustration of the text Romans 8.28 can he found anywhere? "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Notice how pliable Joseph was in the midst of God's over-ruling providences. Every person he met did something to him and he without resistance allowed himself to be shoved along and every shove brought him nearer to the goal of God's purpose for him. Only when right and wrong was involved in his own act did Joseph resist as in the case of the temptation by Potiphar's wife. Notice the verbs. Joseph's brethren hated him, hated him yet the more, they envied him, conspired against him, sold him.

The Christian Attitude toward those who would do us harm is exemplified by Joseph. Joseph's dreams disturbed his brethren. They did what they did to try and hinder those dreams coming to pass, but those very measures they used to prevent the fulfillment of those dreams hastened their coming to pass. It looked as though it did not pay to be good and virtuous. It might appear that Joseph could have retained his liberty if he had become a party to the unfaithfulness of Potiphar's wife, but in resisting it he was thrust into prison as a criminal. But that was another step toward the throne of Egypt. The Christian is sometimes disposed to believe that all that is happening to him is calculated to overthrow him, but let him lie still in the hands of the Lord, resisting only temptation, and things against him become his servants.

Judah's indiscretion, recorded in the 38th chapter, is a portion of Scripture that infidels and shallow thinkers declare ought never to be in the Bible, calling it an obscene story. We should not judge the Lord by such shallow standards of propriety, for surely He knows what it is proper to put in His Bible and what lessons He desires to teach, it is our part humbly to sit down and read this chapter and let the Holy Ghost speak to us. The private reading of it may be more effective for good than its reading in public. God's corrective precepts touch all sides of life, and His would not be a complete Bible if He remained silent on this subject.

A Historical Link would have been missing in God's record of the history of redemption if this chapter were left out. Judah was the ancestor of Jesus Christ. Naturally his eldest son Er would have been the next in the lineage. His untimely death without offspring would put Onan as next in the genealogy, By the law of duty to a childless brother then prevailing Onan's first son would have been counted as the son of Er. But Onan did not like this law and undertook to evade the inconvenience it would put upon him. This was a deliberate attempt to break the scarlet thread of the ancestry of Jesus Christ, and so criminal a thing was visited by God with vengeance. The only link left to pass on the holy seed to the next generation was now Shelah, and when he was grown Judah refused to allow him to take Tamar as wife to provide for the continuance of the genealogical line. Judah's later history is a comment on this. Since he sinfully refused to do what

was a law of God, God allowed him to fall into temptation and by one of those strange occurrences by which God brings good out of evil (not neglecting to punish the sinner however) this indiscreet act of Judah provided the natural means of Passing along to the next generation the ancestry of Jesus Christ. (See the third verse of the first chapter of Matthew).

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ASSIGNMENT FOR LESSON 17

1 Read chapters 40 and 41.

2 About how long was Joseph in Egypt before his promotion.?

3 in what way did Joseph's prison experience prepare him for his high office?

4 How did the butler's forgetfulness work out good for Joseph?

5 Where in Joseph's life does the type change from Christ when first here and when He will come again?

6 Why was Pharaoh so ready to fall in with Joseph's advice?

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17 -- JOSEPH MADE RULER

JOSEPH'S days of Humiliation and waiting were long and tedious, The first mention we have of his age was when he was seventeen, and it seems not to have been long after that when his brethren sold him into Egypt. He was thirty years of age when he was promoted to the place of second ruler of Egypt, and the indications are that he spent the greater part of that interval of thirteen years in the prison.

The Prison was Joseph's School of training for his coming responsible task. The particular prison where he was confined is worthy of special note: "a place where the king's prisoners were hound." It was the royal prison, where court offenders were placed for shorter or longer periods. Only two of these prisoners and the positions they held are mentioned, but from these we can judge about the class of people that passed through that prison during the long years Joseph was a "trusty" there, and the care he took to find out about them. We should not fail to believe that God specially prepared Joseph for his task and gave him specially endowed gifts for the work. On the other hand we should not fail to see that God rules in the providences of life. He works miracles when it is necessary, but miracles are not all He works in, for all the natural laws are His and He uses them all.

Joseph's Sudden Promotion was due, not only to the God-given insight he had into the dreams of the butler and baker and of Pharaoh, but also to the sagacity he showed in grasping the situation in Egypt from the standpoint of the government's responsibility in the threatened crisis.

There is no doubt that his long stay in the prison, associated as he was with the officers of Pharaoh's court, gave him the means of learning the political situation in Egypt, so that, when the emergency arose, he sprang into the position of famine premier of Egypt fully educated for his task. Instead of those weary days being days of idle repining, they were filled with useful study in the school where God was pleased to put him.

Joseph's Cross is not prominent in the account of his prison life. But a little glimpse into his heart that we catch in his remark to the chief butler when he told him that he would be restored to his office lets us know he had one to bear: "Think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house." Had the butler told Pharaoh of his experience with Joseph it is not unlikely the king would have sent for him and attached him to his court as a kind of freak, or he might have released him and sent him back to Canaan, in either case the purpose of God would have been defeated. "Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him." And it was of the Lord that he did forget him for the time being. But, just as wonderfully, he suddenly remembered him, and that just at the right time.

Pharaoh's Two Dreams distressed the monarch of that land that was to be the cradle of the Hebrew race. All his interpreters could give no satisfactory explanation. The chief butler's relation of his experience in the prison gave him a clue. How fortunate that Joseph was still in the prison when the king sent for him! How good it is to stay "put" until the day God has been preparing one for arrives!

A Great Reversal in the nature of Joseph's deeds is manifest as soon as he leaves the prison. Previous to that time he was always in the passive voice of circumstances, but from now on he is in the active voice of accomplishment. In this he is again a type of Jesus Christ, Who, in the days of His humiliation, was always acted upon by men, hunted, accused, arrested, crucified; but in the days after his resurrection is King, in like manner the Christian in this life is ever the object of others' doings, but in the days of the kingdom he will reign with his once rejected Lord.

Pharaoh's Readiness to promote Joseph to take the place of premier of Egypt and to manage the laying up of the stores to provide against the coming famine was of the Lord first of all. Then, too, Joseph's excellent plan for handling the situation outlined in connection with the interpretation of his dreams, appealed to his advisors as qualifying him to carry out the project better than any one else could do it.

All the World is governed to promote the interests of God's people. Here we see the greatest nation of those days working seven years to lay up store against seven years of pinching famine. And back of it was God's gracious purpose for the descendants of the man He called His friend, the pilgrim Abraham. Millions were inconvenienced for the convenience of these seventy souls. And yet the service was well repaid, for that little family of seventy furnished the man whose wisdom and sagacity saved the nation where they had asylum for a season. It is ever thus with the people of God: the world exists for them, but they are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. The world often mistreats them and lays grievous charges against them, but still the people of God bless and curse not. One Spirit moves them forward through the centuries toward the consummation of the purpose of God, and all things bend to that purpose.

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ASSIGNMENT FOR LESSON 18

- 1 Read chapters 42, 43, 44, and 45.
- 2 How many trips did Joseph's brethren make to Egypt, and who went each time?
- 3 Why did Joseph treat them so roughly?
4. Why did he pick out Benjamin for special accusation?
5. What confession did the sons of Jacob have to make to their father, evidently?
- 6 What evidence is there that Joseph's brethren truly repented?
- 7 Why did the words of Jacob's sons need the verification of "wagons" in order for Jacob to believe?

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18 -- JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

JOSEPH'S Brethren had a long road to travel to get food all the way from Egypt, but they had a longer road of repentance to walk. One was to the end that the other might be brought to pass. The first time ten, all of the ones left at home except Benjamin, took the trip. The next time all the eleven went. These two round trips and the experiences connected therewith were necessary to produce the proper confession and repentance. In all they passed five times over the road before they found rest in Egypt.

Joseph's Treatment appears rough, but it brought the desired effect. God is often obliged to treat people roughly to bring about desired repentance and confession. How gladly he would have made himself known at the first sight, for he held nothing in his heart against them, but that would not have been good for them. Their crime against their brother and their deceit of their father were some fourteen years in the past, and probably long since ceased to be mentioned among them, but three days in prison with an uncertain fate before them dug deep into their subconsciousness and took the scab off the old sore. "We are verily guilty concerning our brother," was their admission to each other as they faced their judge. Binding Simeon "before their eyes" may have reminded them of how they had bound him -- perhaps with the same kind of knots in the cords. Simeon left behind kept their minds constantly on their experience in Egypt, and the money in their sacks, a token of love and a means of help, was read as an ill omen by these men of guilty conscience.

Benjamin was singled out on their second visit for special attention. They had not wanted to go on this second trip, But God brought the pressure more and more severe: "the famine was sore in the land." How Jacob did cling to Benjamin! But he had to go. He interpreted his

experience as "all these things are against me," but they were working for his good. Their good treatment on their second visit made them feel that suspicion was now over. but there was something they did not understand in how their host arranged them in the order of their ages. The plot to find the state of mind of his brothers was well calculated to bring the desired results. If they were now as they were when they sold him, they would not have grieved particularly in the loss of their younger brother. He tries them out at their weakest point. The silver cup is covertly placed in Benjamin's sack. Up in the morning with glad hearts they started out for home, believing all their troubles were over. They not only had their money question settled, but they were safely bringing Benjamin back and Simeon also was now free. But just as they were getting well under way, here comes a servant of the governor of Egypt asking an explanation and demanding search of their goods for stolen property.

The Search began at the eldest and slowly passed down the line. As each sack was searched and declared clear they breathed easier, and they were about to give a long sigh when -- "the cup was found in Benjamin's sack." The servant of Joseph had stipulated that all but the one in whose sack the cup was found could go free. But every brother came right back with Benjamin. Judah, the seller of Joseph, had the hard lot of pleading the case for his brother Benjamin and for his father. Joseph was mightily moved by this plea, but held his peace until he was sure his brothers had gone to the bottom as far as they could.

Confession was not over when Joseph had made himself known to them. In order to convince their father that Joseph was yet alive there evidently had to be some kind of a confession made to him as to how Joseph could be alive and in Egypt. They had never in so many words told him that Joseph was dead. They had dipped his coat in blood and taken it to his father and led him to the inference, "it is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces." Hard-hearted, they had let him remain under this deception all these years. But now, Joseph was alive, and they had to undo the settled opinion that had imbedded itself for some fourteen years in their father's mind. It was not an easy task. When they first told him that Joseph was yet alive and governor in the land of Egypt, "Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not." But "they told him all the words of Joseph," just as we need to tell a seeker all the words of Jesus in order that he may believe. The words and the wagons of Joseph convinced Jacob of what the words of his other sons could not, and he finally consented to go the way the Lord was leading for the salvation of his household in the time of famine.

Judah's Solicitude for his father was a mark of a softening heart. All the sons seem to have been indifferent to his grief when they brought him the blood-smearred coat of Joseph, though they tried hypocritically to comfort him. But now they are solicitous of the feelings of their father, and united in trying to save him from the added sorrow if possible. Judah's portrayal of their father's grief if they return without Benjamin was the point of his plea. By their common trouble in Egypt the family was bound into a unit and prepared for that career that needed a family solidarity that the vicissitudes of the future could not break up.

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ASSIGNMENT FOR LESSON 19

1. Read chapters 46, 47 and 48.
- 2 How was the going of Jacob to Egypt different from that of Abraham?
- 3 Why did Joseph want his brethren to be an abomination to the Egyptians?
- 4 Which was the greater man, Jacob, or Pharaoh, and how is it shown in the account?
- 5 How long did Jacob live after reaching Egypt?
- 6 In what position did Jacob hold his hands in blessing Joseph's children?
- 7 What two sons of Jacob did Ephraim and Manasseh take the place of?

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19 -- JACOB IN EGYPT

JACOB'S Departure to Egypt was attended by a direct revelation from God that he was in the will of God in going there. Abraham had been out of the will of God in going to Egypt and had gotten in trouble. Isaac had been specifically told by the Lord not to go to Egypt (Gen. 26.2). But when Jacob reached the border of the land of Canaan at Beersheba, the Lord appeared to him in a vision of the night and said, "fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation."

Going to Egypt was attended with new dangers. It was essential to the carrying out of the plan of God for the Israelites that they be kept from mingling with other peoples. The problem was how to save themselves by going to Egypt and not lose themselves among the Egyptians. Joseph wisely planned for the preservation of their tribal integrity. He gave to his brethren instructions to tell Pharaoh that they were shepherds, a true statement, with the rather strange reason: "for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians." At this time it appears the hereditary kings of Egypt had been overcome and the land was ruled by what were known as the "Shepherd Kings." The ruling family were favorable to the Israelites as shepherds, but the native Egyptian population, over which the "Shepherd Kings" reigned, detested shepherds on account of the low origin of the people who were now ruling them. For this reason Pharaoh, while himself favorable to the Israelites, wisely arranged for them not to mingle indiscriminately with the native Egyptian population lest it lead to discontent and disorder among his subjects. This is why they came to be assigned to the land of Goshen, a segregated section of the land of Egypt, lying to the northeast, but it was the richest portion of Egypt, so God was guiding even in this.

The greater of two men is the one who lives nearest to God. Pharaoh was the greatest of world rulers of his day, and might have appeared far more important to the course of history than did Jacob, this pilgrim patriarch with his famine-driven family. But who knows today which of the many Pharaohs this particular one was? But there is no confusion as to who Jacob was. That Jacob and his children went to Egypt is a far greater event in the shaping of the world's history than that the "Shepherd Kings" ruled the land for a season. In fact the invasion of the "Shepherd Kings" was

but an incident of the larger movement of Israel that an asylum might be found for them for a season. The relative greatness of each is shown by the statement, twice repeated, "Jacob blessed Pharaoh." The writer to the Hebrews, speaking of the meeting of Melchisedec and Abraham, speaks of Melchisedec as the greater, and assigns as the reason therefore, "Without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better" (Heb. 7.7). On this Scriptural basis of comparison Jacob was greater than Pharaoh, for Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

Jacob's Age seemed great to the people of Egypt. Old men like him evidently were not common in that land. He was 130 on arriving there (47.9) and lived 17 years after that (47.28). Righteousness, other things being equal, tends to a long life in this world.

The Blessing of each patriarch upon his descendants is an item of great importance with the Israelites. Jacob had a special blessing for the sons of Joseph. The younger generation did not always catch the point of view of the older. Joseph failed to see with the clearness that his father did the vision of the future for his sons. A careful reading of Gen. 48.13-19 reveals interesting features. Joseph approached his father with his sons in such a manner that if Jacob had reached forth his hands in the natural way his right hand would have rested upon Manasseh's head, the older son, and his left on Ephraim's head, the younger son. But Jacob crossed his hands and put his right upon Ephraim's head, and his left upon Manasseh's head, it is interesting, also, to note this is one of those places in the Old Testament where the cross is typified.

Ephraim and Manasseh were placed on the same level as Jacob's sons of the first generation, dividing the tribe of Joseph in two. This made possible the distribution of the land among the twelve tribes, leaving the thirteenth tribe, Levi, to be the priestly tribe scattered all among the rest of the tribes. Reuben, the oldest son of Jacob, who would naturally have been the heir of the Messianic blessing, incapacitated himself for that place by a grievous sin against his father (35.22). Simeon and Levi deceived and slew the Shechemites (34.25), and the heritage passed on to Judah, the fourth son, who became the ancestor of Jesus Christ. Notice, in this connection, what Jacob says of the sons of Joseph: "thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. . are mine: as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine."

A passage in I Chronicles (5.1,2) is interesting in this connection: "Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, (for he was the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright. For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph's)."

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ASSIGNMENT FOR LESSON 20

1 Read chapters 49 and 50.

2 Are the blessings of Jacob on his sons mere good wishes for them?

3 Through which son did the lineage of Jesus come?

4 In the order of his age where does he come in?

5 Why was not one of the older sons chosen as forefather of Jesus?

6 Is there any indication that Jacob died of disease?

7 Why did he insist on being buried in Canaan and by the side of Leah?

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20 -- JACOB'S LAST DAYS

JACOB'S Last Days were filled with thoughtfulness about his sons and the future of the race. Some one has said that an old man's face is turned toward the past, while a young man's face is set toward the future. On this theory Jacob was a young man when he called his sons about him for a parting message before he was gathered to his fathers. While memory called up some of the scenes of the past, his face was set toward the future, seeing as far away as the "last days," a period that has not yet come to its fulness.

Blessings and Predictions mingle in these last words of Jacob. He seems to start in with the individual son in his blessing and then what he says unfolds into a prediction about the tribe that is to come from each son. There is a distinct connection between the past history of the individual son and the future of the tribe that is to spring from him. The tribe of Reuben loses its prestige as the kingly tribe through the sin of the father of the tribe. Simeon and Levi, the next to whom the right of the firstborn would have come in the order of their ages are displaced from that place of honor because of their cruelty to the Shechemites. Both these latter tribes secured no lasting inheritance in the land of Israel, though the curse was turned to a blessing in the case of Levi who became the priestly tribe though scattered among the tribes according to their father's prediction.

Visions of the Future, like these Jacob has, are, as some one has said, "pictures drawn without perspective," in such a picture one cannot discern the relative distance of the various objects. So in these predictions it is impossible to discern the order of time in which the various predictions may be expected to take place. The patriarch sees all as a composite picture before his eyes as though it was taking place as he talks. In a particular way the meaning of the name of the individual son appears, in a measure, to predestine, the future of the tribe that descends from him, suggesting inspiration in the names bestowed upon them by their mothers. This is especially true of Judah, whose name means "praise." "Thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise." Perhaps not he himself is meant, but it points away to his illustrious Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as does also the name "Shiloh," signifying "rest."

Dan's Future is interesting and mysterious. Why is he likened to a serpent? Why is his name omitted from the list of the twelve tribes in Revelation 7.5-8? Some have supposed, perhaps not without reason, that this suggests that the Anti-christ will come from the tribe of Dan and that the whole tribe will be apostate. We can only mention it for thought. It is noticeable that just after this Jacob interjects a prayer: "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord." An ancient Jewish

commentary thus speaks of or paraphrases this passage: "My soul waiteth not for the deliverance of Gideon, the son of Joash, for it was only temporal; nor for that of Samson; for it was but transient; but for the redemption by the Messiah, the Son of David, which in Thy word Thou hast promised to send to Thy people, the children of Israel: for this, Thy salvation, my soul waiteth."

Joseph receives the longest blessing and in many ways the most mysterious. Shallow Bible readers think Jacob gave way to a weakly parental favoritism in giving Joseph a coat of many colors when he was a boy, but it is very likely that his discerning spirit saw that in Joseph was something more than the other sons possessed at that time. Joseph's past is mentioned and a glorious future portrayed for him. The two tribes that sprang from him occupied double portions in the land of Israel, providing also the leader Joshua.

Jacob's Future is viewed complacently as he tells his sons how and where to bury him. The old family sepulcher in Canaan, where already lay Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Leah, is where Jacob will have his bones laid away to await the resurrection day, that when he comes he may be in the land of promise, in which he had only the privilege of being a pilgrim. All directions being completed, Jacob lies back on his bed apparently without pain or struggle, commits his spirit to the Lord and is gathered unto his people, evidently a living people in the other world.

Joseph again comes into prominence after his father's death. His brethren without cause suspicion he may deal ill with them, but their fears are allayed. He lives on to be 110 years of age, thus outliving his father 54 years. In his dying hours he shares the vision of the future his father had before him. He told his brethren that the Lord would surely deliver them out of Egypt and bring them again into Canaan, He gives strict command that when they go forth they take his bones with them and deposit them in the land of Canaan. All through the wilderness journey Joseph's coffin would have been a silent witness to the testimony of Joseph. Exodus 13.19 tells that Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, and Joshua 24.32 relates how they were finally deposited in the land of promise, there to await the resurrection. While the bones of doubters bleached in the wilderness, the bones of Joseph were carried on from day to day wherever Israel marched. The faith of a dead man is so much better than the doubts of a living man.

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THE END