

D. B. Smith



The Preparation of the Kingdom

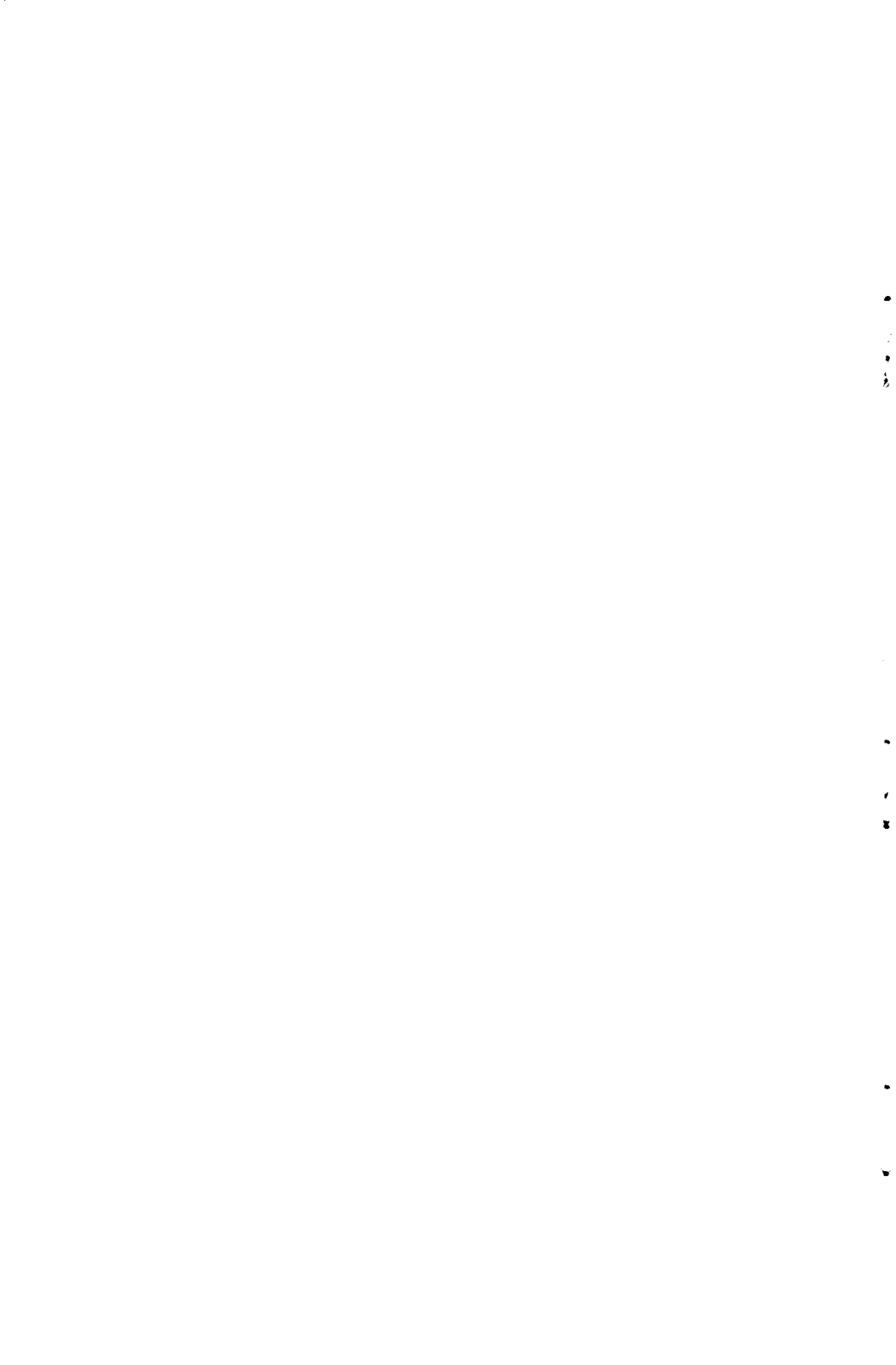
INTERMEDIATE NOTES – 13 to 14 Years

STAGE ONE OF FIVE STAGES

CHRISTADELPHIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 20, MODBURY NORTH 5092, SOUTH AUSTRALIA



"Fear ye not, stand still and see the salvation of Yahweh" —Ex. 14:13



THE PREPARATION OF THE KINGDOM

Intermediate Notes — Stage 1

FOREWORD

With these lessons, entitled THE PREPARATION OF THE KINGDOM, we begin a Five Stage Course of Bible Study designed to take us through the Scriptures of Truth.

As in the past, each stage is planned to consist of twenty-five lessons. They are set out so as to gather in the main points of the Bible Story as it unfolds.

In Stage One, our lessons commence with God, the Author of the Bible. They take us through the story of Creation to the ruin of the Old World in the days of Noah, when but a remnant was saved.

Then we will follow faithful Abraham as he leaves Babylon and travels with his father, brothers and relatives up the Euphrates to Haran and from there into Canaan. Only a few of those reached the land of promise. As we go with Abraham, we will watch a nation in the making as Abraham begets Isaac and Isaac begets Jacob, from whom came the twelve tribes of Israel. We will learn too of the promises made to these faithful men. These promises direct our attention to the seed promised, the Lord Jesus Christ, and how we can be in the Kingdom when these promises are fulfilled.

We will consider Jacob's exciting flight into Syria, and his return, and then later Joseph being sold by his brothers into slavery in Egypt. God saved him from harm in Egypt, and then worked through him to deliver his people. Finally, we will review what happened in Egypt when the years passed; how another Pharaoh arose, who "knew not Joseph" and who made the lives of the Children of Israel bitter with hard bondage; how God raised up Moses as leader of His people; and how they were delivered from Egypt and brought through the Red Sea to Sinai, where they were given God's law and became His Kingdom.

The Bible is a book full of wonders, filled with challenge, and always teaching lessons for today. The 25 lessons in this Stage 1 will be of absorbing interest for they contain numerous principles of divine truth. It is essential that these lessons be well learned and thoroughly understood, because we are laying here a foundation for further understanding of the purpose of God. Genesis is a book of beginnings and as such introduces

us to many promises and prophecies explained more in later books. The young people who start this year on Intermediate Stage 1 will be 17-18 years old, God willing, when they study the witness of the apostles as highlighted in Stage 5. They will be seriously considering their own relationship to Christ.

The year's programme allows for many revision weeks, which can be used to summarise the lessons taught, or to catch up on those lessons that teachers preferred to spend two weeks on. These Intermediate Notes are intended to assist both teacher and student alike in presenting and grasping the essential truths of God's Word. They are not intended to limit in any way, additional matter or more detailed presentation that a teacher or student may wish to undertake. Individual investigation of God's Word is to be encouraged at all times.

Remember that, if further information or assistance is wanted, a letter addressed to the Secretary will receive our prompt attention.

May Yahweh's blessing and guidance continue to be with His children and servants who listen carefully to His Word.

THE COMMITTEE

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
Secretary: G. Travers, P.O. Box 20, Modbury North, S.A. 5092

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1. GOD THE AUTHOR OF THE BIBLE

Whether we look at the world in its marvellous detail or its place in the vast universe we behold the work of God as Creator. But it is a silent witness. Yet God has caused His prophets and apostles to record His purpose. In our Bibles we read of this purpose and a wonderful message of hope. God has said that He will send the Lord Jesus Christ to restore the world to the conditions of peace and harmony that once existed at Creation. This message, so often stated in the Bible, is recorded for our personal benefit, so that we can believe it and obey its directions. We have every good reason to believe the truthfulness of the Bible, since God is its author.

2 Tim. 3:14-17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21

THE BIBLE IS GOD'S WORD

The word "bible" comes from a word meaning "book," and "Holy Bible" means "separate book". Actually, the Bible is *the most important book*, and is separate and different from all other books, because it is God's Word. It is really a library of 66 books (39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament) written by over 40 penmen in various countries, over a period of about 1600 years. There was no chance for these penmen to compare their writings and harmonise them, yet despite this, these scriptures contain one, consistent message of hope, because God is its Author.

How can we explain this? Although various men wrote it, they did not write according to their own thoughts; they wrote as they were "moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21; Heb. 1:1). This is what is meant by the quotation, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16). Therefore the Bible is God's Word, wholly inspired by Him. It is the only place where we can learn the truth about God and His purpose with mankind.

We believe the Bible to be God's Word. The Bible itself makes this claim in hundreds of places, where we read such expressions as: "God said", "the Lord said" and "the word of the LORD came to. . ." This is also proved by the unity of its teaching from Genesis to Revelation. Although so many men wrote it, and their backgrounds were so different, their work all fits perfectly into the whole. The Bible presents one message that never contradicts itself. Its accuracy is also proven through history and the many prophecies that have been fulfilled.

HISTORY

The ancient history recorded in the Bible has never been proven wrong. In fact, in recent times, archaeologists have unearthed evidence to show that people and places previously unknown outside the Bible, really

existed in the past. Some of the strongest critics of the Bible during the last (19th) century have been shown to be wrong by archaeology.

The Bible not only contains the record of God's dealings with people in the past, but tells of things which will happen in the future, proving it to be the work of a divine author. Men can write about past events, but only God knows the future. In the Bible He has foretold certain things that would come to pass, many of which have already been fulfilled. God declares in Isaiah 46:9-10: "I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done." Also, in Amos 3:7-8: "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing but he revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets. . . the Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy?"

PROPHECY

God has revealed His purpose to His prophets and servants in such amazing detail that its record is obviously divine. Without God's help no man could give such a message that has been recorded so long ago yet has seen such exact fulfilment up to the present day. With this proof by prophecy being fulfilled we can await with confidence prophecy yet to be fulfilled in the future. Our confidence is based on prophecies of the past that have been fulfilled exactly as recorded, e.g.:—

- Babylon is still in heaps (Isa. 13:19-21; Jer. 51:37).
- Nineveh still lies empty, void and waste (Nahum 2:10).
- Egypt is among the basest of nations (Ezek. 29:15).
- Tyre has been submerged by the sea, and is literally a place for the spreading of nets (Ezek. 26:5).
- Israel has been scattered among all nations (Deut. 28:64), and is being regathered again (Jer. 30:11; Ezek. 27:21-22).
- A northern power hostile to Israel (i.e. Russia) has developed (Ezek. 38:2-7, 15-16).

GOD AS REVEALED IN THE BIBLE

Knowing then that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, it is important to understand what the Scriptures reveal about God. If we desire eternal life we must *know the only true God* (John 17:3) and worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23).

God is One: In the beginning, men knew there was only one God. As time went by they started to worship other things, like the sun, moon and stars, which had been made by Him. Then they made images of gold, silver, wood and stone, and worshipped them, but the commandment to God's people was "Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God is one LORD" (Deut. 6:4). God said "I am the LORD . . .there is no God else beside Me" (Isa. 45:18, 21).

There are people today who claim that they believe in one God, but teach that He is what they call a Trinity — “Three in One and One in Three,” made up of Father, Son and Holy Spirit; all equal in time and power. But this is false for we have seen how God declared Himself to be One in His revelation to Israel. This is also seen in the New Testament. Notice what happened in Mark 12:28-34, where Jesus quoted Deut. 6:4, and told the scribe who understood this, “Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God.” The emphasis on the unity of God can also be seen in Gal. 3:20; Eph. 4:5-6; 1 Tim. 1:17; 6:15-16.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God: Jesus was God’s Son, through the power of the Holy Spirit coming upon Mary, his mother. She was told “therefore that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). When Jesus was baptised, God said “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17).

Jesus himself denied that he was equal to His Father. He said, “I can of mine own self do nothing . . . I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me” (John 5:30; 14:28). Jesus Christ is God’s Son, and the mediator between God and men (Eph. 1:3, 1 Cor. 8:6; 1 Tim. 2:5).

The Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is not the third person of a Trinity. God’s spirit is the invisible power by which He created all things, and by which everything is kept in being (Psa. 104:30). When God’s power is set apart or used for special purposes, such as the performance of miracles, it is called “Holy Spirit”. “Holy” means “separate” or “set apart”. Jesus received this Holy Spirit power at his baptism (Acts 10:38). Please make reference to Instructor, Lessons Nos. 16-19.

THE CHARACTER OF GOD (Ex. 34:6-7).

There are two sides to God’s character: justice and mercy. He revealed this to Moses in Exodus 34:6-7 and Deut. 5:9-10. God is kind, loving and forgiving, but He insists that men look up to Him and obey His laws (Psa. 103:8-18). He is merciful and gracious to those who come to Him in the way that He has set down in His Word. Today this is through belief and baptism into His Son, Jesus Christ. But if people go on sinning and do not repent He will punish them, because He is a just God and cannot ignore sin.

Jesus showed both sides of God’s character in his life. He was loving and forgiving to those who repented, but he strongly condemned the proud, wicked ones such as the Scribes and Pharisees of his day.

GOD’S PURPOSE (Numbers 14:21)

God’s purpose as revealed in the Bible is stated in Numbers 14:21: “As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD”. What an important verse this is! Here God is saying, with a divine oath to

give us absolute certainty, that the world will one day give honour and glory to God. It is as certain as God's indisputable existence. With that assurance we can look forward confidently to the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth.

We have seen that there is plenty of evidence that God exists, and that God truly lives as a controlling creative power from everlasting to everlasting. We have every good reason therefore to believe God's declaration that this world shall be filled with the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. The Kingdom Age shall see men and women giving honour and glory to God in humble, obedient service. In such a manner shall the world that God created see a return to peace and harmony between God and man. In later lessons we will consider how God has worked in the past, and is still working, to bring about the fulfilment of this glorious purpose.

REFERENCE LIBRARY

"Christadelphian Instructor" (R. Roberts)—Nos. 1-19, 41-46

"Elpis Israel" (J. Thomas)—Chapter 1

"Story of the Bible" (H. P. Mansfield)—Foreword, Chapters 1 and 2

"The Ways of Providence" (R. Roberts)—Chapters 1 and 2

PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

1. *The Bible was written by many men at different times and places. How can we prove it is the Word of God?*
2. *How is the truth of the Bible shown by history and prophecy? Give examples.*
3. *Explain what you understand by "the spirit of God" and "Holy Spirit".*
4. *What does the Bible reveal about God and His character?*
- 5. *What is the purpose of God?*

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

1. *What evidence have we that the Bible is the inspired Word of God?*
- 2. *Show from the scripture that God is One and not part of a "Trinity".*

2. THE CREATION OF THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH

In our last lesson, we learnt that the Bible is God's word and in that Word we read of His plan and purpose with the earth.

This lesson will deal with the beginning of that purpose — the creation week.

The wonders of nature show the work of God in creation (Psa. 19:1), but many people today do not believe that God created all things in the beginning. At school young people are taught that living things came into being by a chance combination of chemicals millions of years ago. They are taught that different forms of life developed by a process called "evolution". It is taught that man himself "evolved" from lower animals.

This is not true, and cannot be proved. Scientists themselves admit that it is a "theory" (that is, an attempt to explain how everything came into being, instead of accepting God as the Creator). The wonders of nature cannot be explained if we leave out God as the Designer and Creator. In the Bible, God tells how all things were made and reveals His purpose in creating them (Refer to the comments on evolution at the back of this book).

Genesis 1; 2:1-3

THE PURPOSE OF CREATION (Num. 14:21; Hab. 2:14).

The purpose of God in creation was to fill the earth with His glory, but this has not yet been completed. The beauty and wonder of the physical creation, from the immense heavenly bodies to the tiniest flower or insect, show God's amazing handiwork. However, the glory to be seen in the Kingdom will be seen in men and women who show God's character in their lives. Throughout the ages, God has been calling out of the nations "a people for His Name" (Acts 15:14). These people will be the redeemed from all ages who will show His glory in the Age to come, in a world that will be restored to its original beauty and peace. What a wonderful Kingdom it will be, when the immortalised saints will show the perfect characteristics of God in their lives; teaching by their instruction and by their example the way the mortal people should serve God.

The history of mankind has been a record of wickedness and misery. Even the glories of nature are being ruined by man's selfishness and stupidity, but God will put an end to this when His Kingdom is set up on earth. Then everything will truly reflect His glory, as prophesied in such scriptures as Psalm 72 and Micah 4:14.

“IN THE BEGINNING” (Gen. 1:1-2; Prov. 3:19).

The name of the first book in the Bible “Genesis”, means “beginning”. This introduces us to God as the Creator. God Himself has declared that He created the world and mankind (Isa. 45:18). This is a remarkable verse for it is another quotation showing that God is one (see Lesson No. 1) and that He has created the heavens and earth with design and purpose. It was not created in vain. The earth shall be inhabited by people who one day will give honour and glory to God as they experience the joys and wonders of the Kingdom Age.

In Genesis 1:1, 2 we are told that “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” The earth was “without form and void”, — without order, in complete darkness and empty of life. So God commenced to set everything in order, ready for the life He intended to place there, to carry out His purpose.

Verse 2 tells us that the “spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” This Spirit is God’s power — by which all things were made (Psa. 104:30; Job 33:4). This work of organisation happened about 6,000 years ago. God said the word, and the angels carried out the command; so the work was done (Psa. 33:6-9; 103:20-21).

THE SIX DAYS OF CREATION (Gen. 1:3-31).

Each of the days in the Creation week was a period of 24 hours. For we read “the evening and the morning was the first day”, and so on. But notice the order of the creation.

1st Day—vv. 3-5: God caused light to shine through the darkness. The light He called Day, and the darkness, Night.

2nd Day—vv. 6-8: God made the firmament (the atmosphere or heavens) and divided the waters under the firmament from the waters above the firmament. He caused clouds to form and the sky to appear.

3rd Day—vv. 9-13: The waters on the earth were gathered together into seas, causing the dry land to appear, which God called Earth. Then God caused grass, other plants and all kinds of trees to grow on the earth.

4th Day—vv. 14-19: God made (or “appointed” — compare Psa. 104:19) two great lights, the sun to rule the day and the moon (together with the stars) to rule the night. These were placed to provide the conditions needed for life on the earth.

5th Day — vv. 20-23: Fish appeared in the seas. Also other creatures which live in the water, and birds of all kinds were created to fly in the air.

6th Day — vv. 24-31: God made the animals that live on the land such as cattle, wild beasts and reptiles. He looked upon all His handiwork and

saw that it was good. But none of these things could respond and give glory to God in the way He desired. So man was formed in the image of God, so that he was capable of reflecting God's character, and he was made head of the animal creation. The fruits and products of the earth were to be used as food for man and beast. "And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good." With man in peaceful harmony with all of God's creation, the work of God's hands must indeed have been very beautiful. It is one of the joys of the future Kingdom on earth for us to behold the world made like unto the garden of Eden and to marvel at the beauty of God's recreative work.

When God said that His creation was "very good", this included man. In this state man was neither mortal nor immortal. He was "very good" physically, and he was surrounded only by good conditions. As yet he had not been tested to see if he would obey his Maker.

7th Day — Gen. 2:2-3: On this day God rested, or "ceased" from the work (Gen. 2:2-3). Later in history, the seventh day or "sabbath" was set aside as a "day of rest" for Israel, that they could rest from their own labours and spend the time in doing the things of God (Exod. 31:16-17). The prophet Isaiah showed Israel how they should have kept the sabbath. They had turned the "day of rest" into a day of self pleasure and caused their people to suffer hardship. Rather, they should have shown mercy and kindness and delighted to do God's will (see Isa. 58).

God said, that the sabbath was "a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever; for in *6 days* the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the *seventh day* he rested, and was refreshed." This proves that the days of creation were literal 24-hour days as we know them.

There is no command for Christ's followers to keep the seventh day "sabbath" only. They must look upon every day as one to be used in God's service.

THE SEVENTH DAY REST AS A TYPE OF THE KINGDOM (Heb. 4:4-11).

The Sabbath rest pointed forward to the seventh millennium (one thousand years) from creation, when the Kingdom of God will be set up on the earth. In Hebrews 4:9-11 we read—"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that hath entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest."

The "rest" of one thousand years will be a time when mankind will be called upon to cease from their works and turn their attention to the ways of God. They shall gladly say, "Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth

the law, and the Word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Isa. 2:2-4). So it will be a time of peace and goodwill toward men for the prophet says, “nation shall not lift up sword against nation neither shall they learn war any more” (v.4).

The saints (the immortalised followers of Jesus Christ) shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years, this being the future “rest” promised to the people of God (Rev. 20:4, 6).

REFERENCE LIBRARY:

See “Five Facts That Show the Theory of Evolution to be False”—Appendix Pages 112-114.

“Elpis Israel” (J. Thomas)—Chapter 2

“The Story of the Bible” (H. P. Mansfield)—Chapter 3

“The Visible Hand of God” (R. Roberts)—Chapter 2

“Wrested Scriptures” (R. Abel)—Section C

“First Principles of Bible Marking Course”—(C.S.S.S.)—pages 12-15

PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

1. *What was the purpose of God in creation?*
2. *What part did the angels have in the work of creation?*
3. *What was the “sabbath”?*
- 4. *Explain how the “sabbath” Rest points forward to the Kingdom Age.*

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

- 1. *What was the order of creation as recorded in Genesis 1? How long did it take?*
- 2. *Describe how you would explain to a school friend why you reject the theory of evolution and why you believe that all things were created by God in 6 days.*

3. GOD'S PURPOSE IN THE CREATION OF MAN

Genesis 1 outlined the broad details of the six days of creation.

In Genesis 2 we learn of the way in which God created man and then woman. After this He placed them in the Garden and gave them a law.

We will see in this lesson how the man and the woman failed to obey God's law and as a result, sin and death entered the world.

Genesis 1:24-28; 2

THE CREATION OF MAN (Gen. 2:7)

As we saw in our last lesson, the most important act of God's creation was man. God intended him to have *dominion* over all creation (Gen. 1:26). The animals were "very good" in their own way, but they could only follow their instincts, which taught them how to obtain food, how to defend themselves and how to look after their young. They were not able to give glory to God in the way He desired, because they were not capable of understanding His ways. In Gen. 1:26 we are told "God said, Let us make man in our image (i.e. bodily shape), after our likeness (i.e. the mental power to take in God's thoughts and to develop a character like His)." So man was formed in the *image* of God having the same *appearance* as angels, but not of the same nature, because they are immortal, spiritual beings. We are told in Gen. 2:7 that "the LORD God formed man of the *dust of the ground* and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul" or creature. He was made of the dust, as were the animals (Gen. 2:19), and they were all kept alive by the same "breath of life" (Gen. 7:21-22; Psa. 104:29). But man was different from the animals, because he had been made in the likeness of God. His brain was able to understand God's ways. This made it possible for him to give God love and obedience, so giving honour and glory to his Maker.

THE FORMATION OF EVE (Gen. 2:18-23).

God had placed Adam over all the creation. Adam had given names to all the birds and beasts, but there was not one among them that was a fit companion for the man. They did not have the same intelligence and understanding. So God said: "It is not good that man should be alone: I will make him an help meet (fit, or suitable) for him."

God caused Adam to go into a deep sleep, and took one of his ribs, from which he built up a woman. When Adam awoke he saw this one

who was to be his companion, who would think and feel as he did because she was made from a part of himself. Adam called her "Woman", which means "out of man", and later gave her the name "Eve" which means "living" (Genesis 3:20). God could have made the woman directly from the dust, as He had made the man, but if he had there would not have been the same sympathy and affection between them.

We know that this is the way man and woman were made. God inspired Moses to write about it, and Jesus Christ himself believed and taught it, quoting from Gen. 1:27 and 2:24 in Matthew 19:4-6 and Mark 10:6-8. So we do not agree with those who tell us that men and women and all the animals just evolved or developed from other lower forms of life.

Speaking of the woman, Adam said, "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh," and the scripture adds—"therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Marriage is therefore a divine appointment and established as a permanent unity of husband and wife. With minds that can be directed in love and devotion to God and an understanding and feeling for each other's needs the husband and wife, in a God fearing and loving unity, can assist each other in their service of God.

MAN IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN (Gen. 2:8-15).

Adam had been placed by God in a garden in Eden, "to dress it and to keep it." "Eden" means "delight" and in this garden grew, "every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil."

All that God had made was physically "very good", including the man and woman. Adam and Eve lacked character, because as yet they had not been tested. God desired their love and obedience and this could only be shown by seeing if they would obey God of their own free will.

THE COMMANDMENT (Gen. 2:16-17).

"The LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

If Adam and Eve obeyed this command it would honour God. If they disobeyed they would "surely die." They had free will to choose their course of action, and God desired them to use it in the right way by giving obedience to Him. He warned them that disobedience would bring death.

It is important to remember therefore that to disobey God's law is to sin. If we sin we become liable to punishment and could well bring shame and dishonour upon God and our family.

THE TEMPTATION (Gen. 3:1-5)

All went well so long as Adam and Eve remembered God's law and kept it. But in the garden was a serpent, a very cunning animal who had the ability to talk. Although he was more "subtle" (shrewd) than any beast of the field, he was still only an animal, with an animal's intelligence. He was not able to understand that everything God said was Truth. He was not capable of developing a conscience as were Adam and Eve and so could not understand right or wrong, obedience or disobedience. He had evidently heard God's command, and his animal intellect had led him to think things which were directly opposite to the truth.

The serpent asked the woman "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Eve replied according to the commandment God had given. The serpent then told the first lie, "Ye shall not surely die." It was the very opposite of what God had said. However it was mixed with part of the truth when he added "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods (i.e. the angels), knowing good and evil." This suggestion aroused the unlawful desire to be equal to the angels. We can see that Eve was deceived to believe a lie (1 Tim. 2:14). She chose not to discuss this lie with her husband Adam but went right ahead and ate of the forbidden fruit.

DISOBEDIENCE (Gen. 3:6).

Genesis 3:6 illustrates the three basic fleshly desires as described by the apostle John in 1 John 2:16. Instead of rejecting the serpent's suggestion, Eve *listened, then looked* and saw that the tree was good for food (lust of the flesh); *pleasant to the eyes* (lust of the eyes); and a tree to be desired to *make one wise* (the pride of life). She ate of it in disobedience to God, giving it also to Adam, who shared it with her.

In doing this, Eve had accepted the fleshly ideas of the serpent, and she was thus led away by her own desires. This process is described in James 1:14-15, and is now the experience of all mankind, for "every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Whenever we are tempted to sin we should try to remember Christ's example of overcoming temptation by always thinking about God and His Word (Matt. 4:1-10; see also 1 John 2:14).

THE RESULT OF SIN (Gen. 3:17-19).

The eyes of the man and woman were opened, but not to "make them wise" in the way Eve had hoped. They were filled with feelings of shame and fear. They realised they were naked, and tried to clothe themselves by making aprons of fig leaves. They no longer felt at one with God and tried to hide themselves from Him. The angel of God sought them out, and Adam confessed that he had eaten of the forbidden tree. He blamed Eve for his action, and Eve blamed the serpent. Judgment was passed upon all:

- The serpent — cursed above all cattle (v.14);
- The woman — subject to her husband (v.16);
- The man — ground cursed for his sake (vv.17-18).

The final condemnation: “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken, for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (v.19). Man was no longer “very good”, he was now mortal — *subject to death*. This condemnation has passed upon all of Adam’s race since. As his descendants, we inherit a mortal nature. As his descendants we also find in our nature a tendency to think and act in opposition to the ways of God (Rom. 5:2, 12; 7:18; 8:5-7).

Death is a reality. It is the end of life, thought and action (Psa. 6:5; Ecc. 9:5; Isa. 38:18). There are still many people who teach and believe the serpent’s lie, “Thou shalt not surely die,” by stating that man has an immortal soul, something which lives on after death. This is not true and is not taught in the Bible (refer to Instructor Lessons No. 31 to 35). The Bible teaches the mortality of the soul (Ezek. 18:4; Psa. 89:48).

We have seen how, as a result of sin, Adam and Eve were sentenced to death. They became mortal, dying creatures, and all mankind continue to inherit the same mortal nature. How then could God bring about His purpose to fill the earth with immortal people who would give honour and glory to Him?

In our next lesson we will consider Genesis 3:14-19 in more detail, particularly verse 15. We will see how God provided a way of redemption for mankind, which would save them from their hopeless state.

REFERENCE LIBRARY:

- “Elpis Israel” (J. Thomas)—Part First—Chapters 2, 3
- “Story of the Bible” (H. P. Mansfield)—Chapter 4
- “The Visible Hand of God” (R. Roberts)—Chapter 4
- “First Principles Bible Marking Course”—(C.S.S.S.)—Pages 16-19, 68-74.,

PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

1. Describe how man was created, and show:—
 - (a) how he was like the animals and
 - (b) how he was different from them.
2. Explain how woman was made.
3. What was the first lie ever told? How did Eve respond to the serpent’s reasoning?
4. Show scriptural proof that man is mortal.

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

1. Describe the temptation of Eve, showing the three ways in which temptation comes to all mankind.
2. What were the results of the disobedience of Adam and Eve?

4. THE COVENANT MADE IN EDEN

In lesson three we saw what happened as a result of disobedience to God's law. Adam and Eve were condemned to death, and all the descendants of Adam inherit the same curse of mortality. But God, in His mercy, held out hope of redemption from the curse of sin and death, even while giving judgment on the guilty ones. At the time when the curse was put on the serpent, God also gave the promise of a redeemer who would bring salvation.

Genesis 3:14-24

THE COVENANT (Gen. 3:15).

In cursing the serpent, God said, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

The important points of this promise are:—

- Two "seeds" or offspring;
- Enmity (i.e. hatred or hostility) between them;
- Conflict between them, resulting in (1) a permanent and fatal wound (a crushing under foot of the head) to the "seed of the serpent", and (2) a temporary wound (in the heel) to the "seed of the woman".

Who are these two seeds?

First, it must be realised that this promise is told in symbols. We must understand what "the serpent" and "the woman" represent. Then we can see what is meant by the two "seeds".

The Serpent stands for the teaching he uttered, ("Ye shall not surely die") which is described in the New Testament as "the thinking of the flesh". It is opposed to the way of God (Gen. 3:4).

The Woman represents the truth, or Word of God, which she proclaimed when the serpent first questioned her (Gen. 3:2-3).

The Seed of the Serpent are those people who think and act in a similar fashion to the serpent. He could not show faith in any form (being an animal) and was not ruled by morals as he had no understanding of right and wrong. The apostle Paul describes this as a "carnal mind", "self will" or the "thinking of the flesh". In Gal. 5:19-21 he lists the "works of the flesh".

All thoughts and actions which are against God's commandments are in the same category. Those who please themselves in whatever they do are therefore fleshly minded and are grouped together and known as "the seed of the serpent" (Rom. 8:6-8; Matt. 12:34; 23:33).

The Seed of the Woman are those people who think and act in accordance with the Word of God. The one perfect example of the seed of the woman is the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the only one who completely overcame sin. He never yielded to the temptations that we all face. He allowed the

Word of God to influence his every thought and action. Even under the extreme trial to avoid the cross when in the garden of Gethsemane, he was still able to say, “not my will, but thine, be done” (Lk. 22:42). That complete crushing of the will of the flesh was shown in all his life even to submitting to the cross. He was therefore THE “seed of the woman” giving sin a fatal blow. His death and resurrection was a bruising of the serpent in the head (Heb. 2:14).

To achieve that victory over sin he had to endure suffering and death. He was laid in the grave for three days. In this can be seen the fulfilment of a “bruising in the heel”, i.e. a temporary blow. The grave could only claim him for three days for God would not allow His Holy One to see corruption. He rewarded his obedience with resurrection and elevated him to His right hand (Acts 2:27; Heb. 1:3).

We too can belong to that company known as the “seed of the woman” by belief and baptism into the Lord Jesus Christ. We will refuse to follow the ways of the flesh as practised by the “seed of the serpent”. We will strive to follow the example of Christ. We shall then show that we are in the company of the seed of the woman. If we are found to be in that company when Christ returns we shall share in the glory and joy of the redeemed. That company will have all striven to crush sin and obey God, like their Lord who has been their perfect example.

GOD’S PLAN OF REDEMPTION (Jn. 3:14-16; 1 Pet. 2:21-24).

The covenant made in Eden is an outline of God’s Plan of redemption for us.

Left to ourselves, we would all die, return to dust and remain in the grave. Through “the seed of the woman” (Jesus Christ) we can receive forgiveness of sins by baptism into Christ, and thus look forward to everlasting life (John 3:16).

We must endeavour to serve God and do His will at all times, following the example of Jesus, “who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth” (1 Pet. 2:21-22). Jesus Christ was completely obedient to his Father, even unto death. Where we all fail, Christ conquered and overcame every temptation. Because Jesus achieved this God in His mercy has made it possible for all who follow Christ’s example to be raised at Christ’s coming and given life eternal. Jesus overcame the power of sin in himself, but the serpent’s seed will not be destroyed completely until the end of the millennium. Then fleshly thinking will be put down forever, and there will be no more death.

ADAM AND EVE CLOTHED BY GOD—ATONEMENT IN SYMBOL (Gen. 3:21; 1 Pet. 1:18-20).

When Adam and Eve realised their nakedness, they made for themselves garments of fig leaves. This was their own idea of a covering

and was certainly not God's method. Instead God clothed them with "coats of skins", which meant that animals had to be slain and blood shed. In this God was teaching them a lesson. By providing a covering in this way, God was making a rule that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission" of sin (Heb. 9:22). The shedding of blood and the covering of nakedness in this chapter, point forward to the death of God's son. By his shed blood, our sins can be forgiven. He then becomes a sin covering for us.

The Lord Jesus Christ becomes our example. We turn our minds away from fleshly thinking and, like Christ, we concentrate upon the will of God. We repent of our sins and seek to obey God's will. In baptism, after an understanding of the gospel, we "put on" or "become clothed with" Christ (Gal. 3:27). Then our "sins are covered" (Rom. 4:7).

ADAM AND EVE SHUT OUT OF THE GARDEN (Gen. 3:22-24)

After God passed judgment upon them and clothed them, Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden of Eden. God said, "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil." And there was a danger "lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever." He was therefore sent out from the Garden of Eden, to farm the ground from which he was taken. At the east of the garden were placed "Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Adam and Eve were denied access to the tree of life. It represents to us a symbol of the eternal life granted to those found worthy of Christ's return — for them the gift of immortality will be like a partaking of the tree of life.

REFERENCE LIBRARY:

"Elpis Israel" (J. Thomas)—Part First, Chapter 3

"Key to the Understanding of the Scriptures" (H. P. Mansfield)—Pages 36-54

"The Story of the Bible (H. P. Mansfield)—Chapter 4

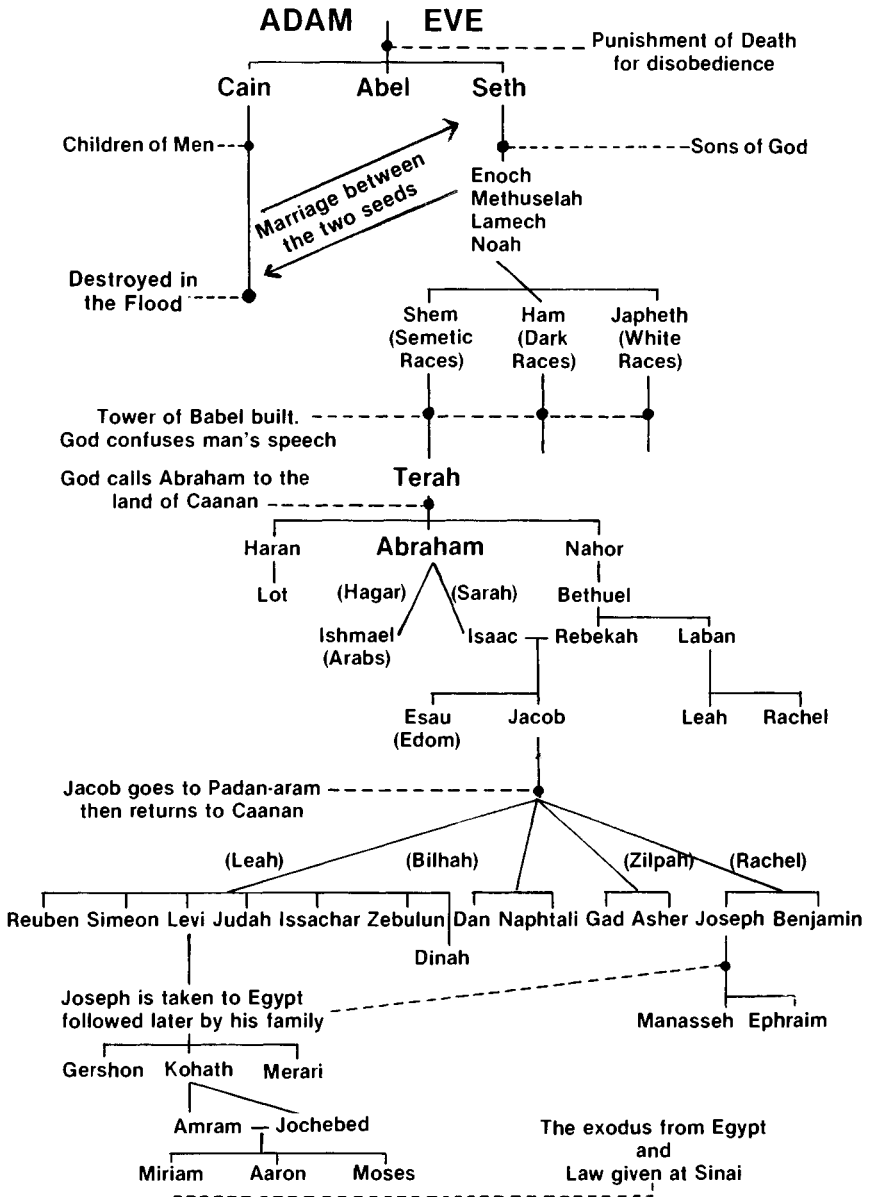
PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

1. Explain briefly what is meant in Genesis 3:15 by:—
"the serpent", "the woman", "the seed of the serpent" and "the seed of the woman".
2. How did Jesus Christ "bruise the serpent's head"?
3. What is the way provided by God for the "covering of our sins"?

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

1. Explain the words in Genesis 3:15: 'It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel'?
2. How can we become part of the "seed of the woman"?

FROM CREATION TO MOSES



5. CAIN & ABEL—THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH

As a result of disobedience, Adam and Eve were sent from the Garden of Eden to lead a life of hardship and suffering until they died. God had told Adam “cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee. . . in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground, for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return (Gen. 3:17-19). When they were condemned to death, all their descendants became mortal or dying creatures. In their first two sons are seen the attitudes of the “seed of the woman” and the “seed of the serpent”. We shall see as a lesson for ourselves, God’s reaction to these two characters and attitudes.

Genesis 4

CAIN AND ABEL (Gen. 4:1-2)

In the course of time, Eve’s first child was born and she called him “Cain”, meaning “gotten” or “acquired”. As it turned out, Cain’s name fitted his character revealing a mind that was more interested in material things than the things of God. Eve bore another son, whom she called “Abel”, meaning “vanity”. Abel showed an attitude that viewed the material things of life as being vanity, or without value. His was an attitude of faith respecting God’s will in all things.

Cain became a tiller of the ground, growing grain and other products of the soil, and Abel became a shepherd.

OFFERINGS MADE TO GOD (Gen. 4:3-5)

Both the sons of Adam and Eve were worshippers of God, and when the time came for sacrifices to be made, Cain brought “of the fruit of the ground” and Abel brought “of the firstlings of his flock” — a lamb or kid.

It is recorded that, “God had respect to Abel’s offering”, but not to Cain’s: that is, Abel’s offering was accepted and Cain’s was not. Why?

It is quite plain that Abel’s offering was what God required, while the other offering was what Cain thought fit to bring. Both brothers would have known what God required. Adam would no doubt have told them of that first sacrifice made to provide a sin covering for himself and Eve. By this they had been taught that the shedding of blood was necessary for sin to be forgiven. Consider the following points.

Abel showed his understanding of sacrifice for remission of sins by offering a firstling of his flock in sacrifice (Heb. 11:4). Cain, on the other hand, brought of the fruit of his labours without regard to God's requirements in the matter of worship. He acted in a way which was "right in his own eyes", and this was the "thinking of the flesh." Hebrews 11:4 tells us that Abel acted by faith in making his offering. Since "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17) we can assume that the requirements of worship were given by God to both Abel and Cain. In his respect for God's Word Abel showed that he was like the "seed of the woman" while Cain's lack of respect showed a "seed of the serpent" likeness.

JEALOUS CAIN (Gen. 4:5-7)

Instead of admitting that God must be approached in the proper way, Cain became very angry and jealous of his brother. God told him he would be accepted if he brought the correct offering. He would then, as the elder brother, continue to have the first place before Abel. Thus God showed mercy to Cain and gave him the chance to repent.

THE FIRST MURDER (Gen. 4:8-10).

Cain was a true "seed of the serpent". He was guided by selfish thinking. God wanted Cain to humble himself and accept that God is right and just in asking him to put his own desires aside and to do God's will. However Cain became more angry and resentful. His hate and jealousy grew against Abel and pushed God's word out of his mind. With wicked rage he slew Abel in the field. "And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous" (1 Jn. 3:12).

Cain thought he had hidden his crime, and when asked by God "Where is Abel thy brother?" in a defiant manner he said, "I know not. Am I my brother's keeper?" But God knows all, and He told Cain "thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground."

CAIN'S PUNISHMENT (Gen. 4:11-16).

As a result of his wicked act Cain was cursed by God. The ground would give poor crops in return for his labour, and he would be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth. In other words, he would spend his life fleeing from justice and going from place to place, always afraid that someone would find him and kill him in revenge for his brother's murder.

Cain realised that he was being driven from the face (or presence) of God and that his life would be in constant danger. He complained, "My punishment is greater than I can bear". God's answer was that anyone slaying Cain would be punished, and He set a mark on Cain "lest any finding him should kill him".

So Cain was sent away to the Land of "Nod", which means "exile" or "wandering". The dreadful end result of defying God's will, bitter

jealousy and murder was that Cain no longer enjoyed fellowship with God.

ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP (Jn. 4:24)

The enmity between Cain and Abel arose when one worshipped God correctly and the other did not. In John 4:24, Jesus said, "God is spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." It is not enough that a person should desire to worship God; Christ is telling us that he must seek out the right way. Cain did not do this. He thought God would be pleased with his choice of offering, and did not recognise the need to approach God in the proper way. Abel showed the humble attitude of one who worships "in spirit and in truth"; that is, in the way God will accept.

Because of his faith and obedience, Abel became a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, the "seed of the woman" (Heb. 12:24). Cain was "of that wicked one, and slew his brother" (1 Jn. 3:12). He showed himself to be a "seed of the serpent".

Those who follow God's ways and those who please themselves can never be at peace with each other. There is "enmity" between the two. Cain went his own way, because of his fleshly mind, and this led to punishment and death without hope. Abel died a violent death at the hand of his jealous brother. He was a man of faith and obedience, so he will be raised from the dead at Christ's coming. He will be rewarded together with all the faithful ones such as are mentioned in Hebrews 11.

The lesson for us is that if we wish to worship God acceptably and have hope of eternal life, we must go to the Bible to find out what God requires of us, and follow His commandments. Like Cain, the people in the world completely disregard God's appointed way of worship. Let us be like faithful Abel and humbly seek to worship God with others of the same true faith.

ANOTHER SEED TO REPLACE ABEL (Gen. 4:25)

God gave to Eve another son to replace the righteous Abel, and she called him "Seth", meaning "appointed". "For God", said she, "hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew."

Seth worshipped God in truth, and his descendants, who also worshipped faithfully, were called "sons of God". The descendants of Cain were wicked, and they were called "the sons of men" (Gen. 6:1-2). In this way, two "seeds" or kinds of people were developed. There were the true worshippers of God, who represent the "seed of the woman" and the false worshippers who do as they please, who represent the "seed of the serpent".

The descendants of Seth are listed in Genesis chapter 5 and show us how the "seed of the woman" developed into a large community of people (see Gen. 4 for the community developed from Cain).

The last of the "seed of the woman" before the flood was Noah and his three sons.

REFERENCE LIBRARY:

“Elpis Israel” (J. Thomas)—Pages 115-120

“The Story Of The Bible” (H. P. Mansfield)—Chapter 5

PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

- 1. *Why did God accept Abel’s worship?*
- 2. *Describe how Cain felt towards his brother, and how this led to Cain’s downfall.*
3. *What was God’s punishment on Cain?*

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

- 1. *Why did God accept Abel’s sacrifice and reject the offering of Cain?*
2. *How can we worship God so that He will accept us?*
3. *Explain how two “seeds” or classes of people developed in Cain and Abel and their descendants. What words are used in Genesis 6 to describe the two ‘seeds’ or classes?*

6. NOAH—THE RUIN OF THE OLD WORLD

Seth's descendants being people who followed God's ways, were called "sons (or daughters) of God". Cain's descendants, although skilful in many arts, were wicked, and became known as "sons (or daughters) of men". For a long time, these two groups were separate from each other, but as time went on the separateness disappeared, and they began to seek each other's company. The "sons of God" found "the daughters of men" very attractive, "and they took them wives of all which they chose." This was a departure from the way of God. The children of these marriages became "mighty men of renown". They were "giants", not necessarily giants in size, but giants in wickedness. They were "renowned", which means they had a name for great deeds, particularly in warfare. God gave judgment on the wicked and set a time when he would destroy them.

Genesis 6, 7, 8

WICKEDNESS INCREASED IN THE EARTH (Gen. 6:5-13)

Human pride and rebellion against God rapidly increased. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was *only evil continually*, and it repented the LORD that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart. . . for all flesh had corrupted His way upon the earth".

The earth was filled with wickedness and violence, but even in those evil days, one man, Noah and his family, were faithful to God (verses 8 and 9).

God told Noah He would destroy mankind but in His Mercy He would give them warning and the chance to repent (v.3). Noah became a "preacher of righteousness" to the people around him, calling them to repent and warning them of God's judgment to come (2 Pet. 2:5). From Genesis 6:3 and 1 Peter 3:20 it seems that the "longsuffering" of God waited for 120 years as Noah preached to the people. Unfortunately for them, the people ignored Noah's preaching and continued in their evil ways.

THE ARK OF SAFETY (Gen. 6:14-22)

God told Noah to build an ark which would provide a place of safety when His judgments came. He said, "I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die; but with thee will I establish my covenant, and thou shalt come into the ark, thou and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee" (vv. 17-18).

Noah was given directions for building the ark, and carried out the work in faith and obedience. The measurements were 300 cubits long by 50 cubits wide by 30 cubits high. A cubit was about 45 cms to 55 cms long, so it would have been approximately 150 metres long by 25 metres wide

by 15 metres high — a very large vessel. It was to have three storeys, with a window in the top and a door in the side. It would provide room for men and animals, beside the necessary food supplies.

Such a task would take many years of hard work, patience and faith. While Noah was carrying out the building of the ark, he was also preaching his warning message to the people, who refused to take any notice. His faith was tested, as year followed year, and the wickedness on the earth increased, but still God's judgment was not revealed. But Noah's faith did not fail, for it is recorded, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Heb. 11:7). We can be encouraged by Noah's faith and obedience to God's instructions by showing faith and courage to do God's will as we mix with ungodly people at school. Rather than be discouraged we can gladly tell them of the good news of Christ's coming.

HOW GOD SAVED THE RIGHTEOUS AND PUNISHED THE WICKED (Gen. 7; 8:1-19)

The ark having been completed, God told Noah, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark, for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation". This was God's invitation to "come out and be separate" from the evil world which was about to suffer God's judgment. So Noah and his family — only eight of all the multitudes on the earth — accepted God's offer of salvation.

Noah was directed to take into the ark seven pairs of each kind of clean beasts and birds, and one pair of each of unclean beasts and birds (note: The Authorised Version in Chapter 7:2-3 gives "by sevens", but other translations give "seven pairs", e.g. Revised Standard Version, N.I.V.).

Noah obeyed God's instructions and gathered his family and the animals and other creatures within the ark, together with sufficient food for them. They were "shut in" by God, and after seven days the rain began and continued for 40 days and 40 nights, "bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly" (2 Peter 2:5). "And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man and cattle, and the creeping things and the fowl of heaven". So God's judgment came upon those wicked people and "Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark".

After the rain stopped, Noah and his family had to remain in the ark until the land was dry.

As the flood waters went down, Noah sent out a raven, then a dove. The raven flew back and forth until the waters were dried up, but the dove came back to the ark because there was "no rest for the sole of her foot". After seven days she was released again and returned with an olive leaf, showing that the waters were going down. After a further seven days the dove was once more sent out, and this time she didn't return. Finally,

just over a year after they had entered the ark, the earth was dried. Noah and his family were told by God to “go forth”, taking with them all the living creatures, to be “fruitful, and multiply upon the earth”.

GOD’S COVENANT (Gen. 8:20-22; 9:1-18)

Noah’s first act after leaving the ark was to build an altar and sacrifice burnt offerings unto Yahweh in thanksgiving for His deliverance. This pleased the Creator. He blessed Noah and promised that He would never again wipe out everything living, as He had done. Noah and his sons were told to “be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.” God had removed wickedness from the earth. A new beginning would be made with righteous, faithful Noah and his family.

God said, “I will establish My covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the water of a flood. . . This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow (rainbow) in the cloud, and it shall be for a token (or sign) of a covenant between me and the earth” (Gen. 8:11-13).

WHAT THE FLOOD TEACHES (2 Pet. 2:5-9; Matt. 24:37-39; 1 Pet. 3:20-21)

• God will deliver the righteous in the day of judgment:

The record of the flood shows us the justice and mercy of God. In the days of Noah God was longsuffering toward a world given over to wickedness. He finally brought judgment upon it and at the same time saved Noah and his family, who showed faith and obedience. In like manner, those who have obeyed the call to “come out from among them and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing” (2 Cor. 6:17) will be saved in the day when God judges this present evil world (2 Pet. 2:5-9).

• Conditions “as in the days of Noah” before Christ’s return:

Jesus Christ used “the days of Noah” to show the conditions that would be in the world just prior to His return. We see these wicked conditions existing today. The earth is filled with violence; an evil generation denies the power of God and even His existence. Their lives are given only to their own pleasure and they ignore the warnings given in our ecclesial and personal gospel preaching efforts about judgment and the need to repent. This is one of the signs which tell us that the return of Christ is near, for He said, “as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be” (Matt. 24:37-39).

Even though the world is wicked and far from God we need not be overcome by the ungodly behaviour of people about us. Christ taught that his followers were to be “in the world but not of it” teaching us to use our time wisely, not to be caught up with foolish talk and behaviour but rather to use any opportunity to speak positively of God’s coming Kingdom to change this evil world.

• **Baptism:**

The Apostle Peter, in his first epistle, said the flood was like baptism. . . “when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 3:20-21). The “old world” was cleansed by flood and a new life commenced for Noah and his family when they stepped from the Ark.

Jesus is the “Ark” of salvation to all who believe the gospel and obey the command to be baptised into his Name (Mark 16:15-16). In him we are safe from the destruction which will come on the world through wickedness, if we remain faithful as did Noah. When we turn aside from the wickedness around us and decide to obey Christ in baptism, then we are like Noah. Noah’s first act after leaving the ark was to offer burnt offerings to Yahweh, showing his complete dedication to Him. We too, after baptism, must make our offering of a life given to God’s service that “henceforth we should not serve sin” (Romans 6:4-6).

So the lessons of the flood come home to each one of us, and may we be like Noah, and his family, working together to save ourselves from the judgments of God on a wicked and unheeding world (Heb. 11:7). Even though we are young, we can still show in our lives that the world holds no attractions for us but that we eagerly look forward to Christ’s coming.

REFERENCE LIBRARY:

“The Story Of The Bible” (H. P. Mansfield)—Chapter 6

“Elpis Israel” (J. Thomas)—Pages 118-120

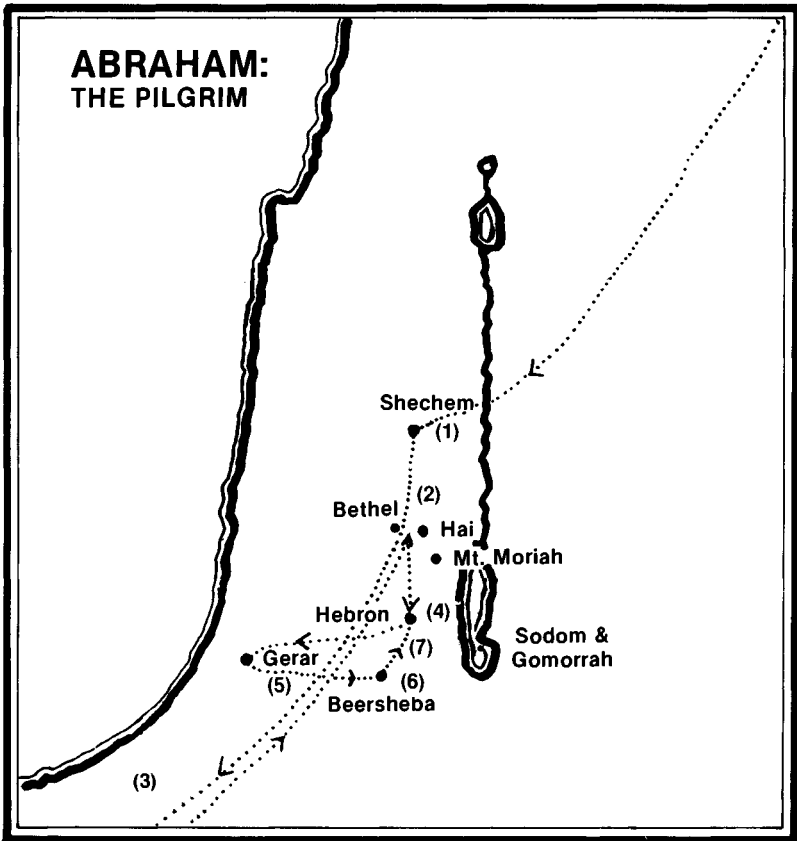
“The Visible Hand Of God” (R. Roberts)—Chapter 5

PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

- 1. *What was God’s attitude to the people in Noah’s day?*
- 2. *What did Noah do when God warned him that judgments were to come upon the world in which he lived?*
- 3. *Whom does the ark that Noah and his family built typify?*
- 4. *Noah’s obedience in building the ark and entering it during the time of the flood is like an act of obedience which God requires of us. What is this act?*
- 5. *What was God’s covenant given to Noah?*

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

- 1. *Describe the conditions on earth in the time of Noah, and explain how they are similar to our times.*
- 2. *Outline the character of Noah, giving illustrations from the record of his life.*



- (1) Abram arrives with Lot and his family from Haran and builds an altar (12:6-7).
- (2) Abram pitches his tent between Bethel and Hai and then builds an altar (12:8).
- (3) Abram travels to Egypt to escape a famine and returns to Bethel/Hai (12:9-10; 13:1-4).
- (4) After Lot has departed for the city of Sodom, Abram moves south to Hebron and builds another altar (13:18).
- (5) Abraham stays in Gerar amongst the Philistines (20:1).
- (6) Abraham moves to Beersheba from where he travels to Mt. Moriah to offer Isaac (21:32-33; 22:2).
- (7) Abraham buries Sarah in the cave of Machpelah near Hebron. He is later buried there himself (23:19; 25:8-9).

7. FROM THE CALL OF ABRAM TO THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM

It did not take men long to forget the lesson of the flood and to turn away from the faith that Noah had shown. God had commanded them to go throughout the earth and subdue it (Gen. 9:1-7) but instead they gathered together to build a city (Babel) (Gen. 11:4-9). Soon they fell to worshipping idols and the one true God and His ways were quite forgotten. Out of the midst of this idolatry God called one man—the man Abram, whom He later renamed Abraham. Please note that the promises to Abraham are dealt with in more detail in Lesson No. 9.

Genesis 11:31-32; 12:1-9

GOD CALLS ABRAM (Gen. 11:26-32; 12:1-9)

Abram lived in a large and highly civilised city, Ur of the Chaldees. The inhabitants of Ur worshipped the moon-god, to which an impressive temple was built. In Ur, God appeared to Abram and called him to a land that He would show him (Acts 7:2, 3). This was a great test of his faith and trust in God. For Abram to leave behind all the prosperity and security of city life and to go forth into the unknown shows his belief that Ur could offer him nothing compared with his confidence in God's calling (Heb. 11:8).

Abram obeyed and journeyed to Haran, a city far to the north and on the banks of the River Euphrates. He went with his father Terah, Nahor his brother, Lot his nephew and his wife Sarai.

While in Haran, Abram was again spoken to by God and told: "Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred" (Gen. 12:1). Abram was clearly shown that if he wanted to worship God, he would have to separate himself from all the things that he was used to, even (if necessary) his family.

God also gave a wonderful promise to Abram (vv.2-3). He was told that:—

- (a) he would become a great nation;
- (b) his name would be great and he would become a blessing;
- (c) God would bless those who blessed him and curse those who cursed him;
- (d) In Abram all families of the earth would be blessed.

Meanwhile Terah died in Haran and Nahor could not be persuaded to leave the city and lead a pilgrim life. Abram however, obeyed God and left Haran, taking with him his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot.

So with cattle and goods and servants Abram and his party crossed over the river (Joshua 24:2-3). Abram became known as a Hebrew which means a "crosser-over" (Gen. 14:13). He had crossed over from the ways of idolatry to the way of the one true God: from the land of Babylon to the Land of Promise.

ABRAM PASSES THROUGH THE LAND (Gen. 12:6; 13:1-18)

Abram and his company journeyed through the land, moving from pasture to pasture, feeding their flocks. At Shechem God appeared again to Abram and promised him “Unto thy seed will I give this land” (v.7) even though at that time it was inhabited by the Canaanites.

At one time there was a severe famine in the land and Abram went down into Egypt to obtain food for his family and for his herds. When he left Egypt he was much richer “in cattle, in silver and in gold” (Gen. 13:2). As a result of the increase in their herds, it became difficult for the herdsmen of Abram and of Lot to find enough pasture together and they quarreled. “Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife I pray thee, between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen, for we be brethren” (Gen. 13:8). So Abram gave Lot the choice of all the land for feeding his flocks. Lot chose the well-watered plains of Jordan and later made his home in the city of Sodom. Abram himself remained in the hill country and continued to dwell in tents. However, God again promised Abram all the land that he could see. “To thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever” (vv. 14-17).

Until this day, Abram has not received this land, but what God has promised He will surely carry out. Abram must therefore be raised from the dead at the return of Jesus Christ. He will then receive the land promised to him and his seed many centuries ago (see Gal. 3:16, 26-29). Abram knew that God had promised him the land and he waited in patience for God’s purpose to be worked out.

There was nothing in the cities of the plains to attract Abram. He was content to wander through the land, a stranger and a pilgrim “looking for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11:10).

LOT’S UNFORTUNATE CHOICE

Lot suffered as a result of his choice to live in Sodom. Consider how the events finally led up to the loss of his possessions and of nearly his whole family.

- He looked towards the well-watered plains (Gen. 13:10);
- He chose to move to the plains in preference to the hill country (v.11).
- He journeyed east (v.11).
- He pitched his tent toward Sodom (v.12).
- He dwelt in Sodom, in a house (Gen. 14:12).
- He sat in the gate of Sodom (Gen. 19:1).
- He was forced to leave everything and flee for his life (v.17).

Lot chose the easy way which appealed to his eyes. He may have thought that he could maintain his separateness from the evil Sodomites but step by step he and his family became entangled with the ungodly city life with tragic results. We must be very careful not to let the wickedness of our cities have a corrupting effect on our life. We can be so easily affected by their immoral behaviour (1 Cor. 15:33, 34 ; 2 Tim. 2:22).

We must be careful to consider what God requires of us and what we can do to please Him. We must not choose the easy and attractive things in life that will not last (see 2 Pet. 2:6-8). Christ warned us of how foolish it would be to “gain” the pleasures and comforts of this life only to “lose” our life at his coming. His appeal was that “if any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matt. 16:24-26).

ABRAM'S FAVOURED PLACE WITH GOD

Abram believed God's promises and the scripture records that his faith was “counted to him for righteousness” (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3). He showed his faith in all his actions: in leaving his birthplace; in choosing to dwell in tents; in believing God's promises concerning the land, the birth of Isaac and the multitude of his descendants. He was therefore rightly described as “the friend of God” (James 2:23).

LOT SAVED FROM SODOM (Gen. 18, 19)

We read in Genesis ch. 18 that three angels visited Abraham. After they had finished the meal, they set off towards Sodom to destroy it. Abraham pleaded with them to spare the city if there were any righteous men to be found in it (Gen. 18:23-32). Abraham would have in mind the welfare of Lot, but the story shows us just how wicked Sodom was because there could not be found even ten righteous men in it. In fact there was only one — Lot.

All Lot's household and his servants had sunk to the immoral ways of the city. How difficult it must have been for him to keep his mind on worshipping God in such a wicked society. If we act as unwisely as Lot did then we will run the grave risk of being overcome by the world about us, and of suffering the terrible judgment of God upon this wicked and godless world.

Of all those who had gone with him, only Lot remained faithful to God. He was a good man at heart, yet he too was slow to heed the warning of the angel and he “lingered”. But God was “merciful unto him” (Gen. 19:16) and led him out of the doomed city. On the other hand Lot's wife could not bear to leave her possessions behind, and the rest of her family whom she loved in spite of their ungodly ways. So she turned to look longingly back to Sodom and was caught in the terrible fire and brimstone that destroyed the cities of the plain. Lot and his two daughters fled to Zoar and were saved.

CHRIST'S WARNING TO US (Luke 17:28-32).

The scriptures tell us that “as it was in the days of Lot. . . even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man shall be revealed” (Lk. 17:28-32).

We see the wickedness of Sodom all about us in the way people live, talk, act and dress. Jesus warns us that in our times he will come as a thief in the night, to bring the judgments of God, like the terrible fire and brimstone that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah without warning. These are perilous last days. Paul's description of our times recorded in 2 Timothy ch. 3 is accurate and full of warning for us. Let us never yield to the temptation to enjoy the pleasures of sin for they lead to further sin and destruction when the judgments of God sweep over the earth.

We must do the things that please God, believe His promises and wait patiently and faithfully like Abraham. This means that like Abraham we must also be "strangers and pilgrims" in this world. We must stand apart from the ungodly ways of the world and wait for the time of the kingdom. Abraham was greatly blessed because of his separateness and faith in God while Lot suffered the sad loss of his family and possessions because of his becoming too involved with the evil ways of Sodom.

Christ warns us that we must remember Lot's wife. She could have been saved but the warnings of the angels and the appeals of her husband could not enter a heart that chased after the pleasure and comforts of her wicked surroundings. She looked back, desiring the life of Sodom, disbelieving the reality of God's words. The wicked ways of this world will not last for ever. The warnings of God's judgments will soon be turned into dreadful reality. Let us now learn the urgent lesson of separateness. Christ said "remember Lot's wife!" (Lk. 17:32).

REFERENCE LIBRARY:

- "The Story Of The Bible" (H. P. Mansfield)—Pages 77-110
- "Elpis Israel" (J. Thomas)—Part 2, chapters 1 and 2
- "The Visible Hand Of God" (R. Roberts)—Chapter 7
- "The Ways Of Providence" (R. Roberts)—Chapter 3
- "Christadelphian Instructor" (R. Roberts)—Nos. 82-89

PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

- ♦ 1. *How did Abraham respond to God's call to leave Ur of the Chaldees?*
- ♦ 2. *Describe how Lot came to leave Abram and the lesson we can learn from Abram's way of life.*
- ♦ 3. *What was wrong with Lot's choice of Sodom as a dwelling place?*
- ♦ 4. *What warning did Jesus give when he referred to the days of Lot?*

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

1. *Write an essay contrasting the faith of Abraham and the foolishness of Lot.*
2. *What lessons can we learn from Lot and his family being involved with the city of Sodom?*

8. ABRAHAM AND ISAAC: THE PROMISED SEED

Abraham's faith was developed over many years but with few revelations from God. God had promised that He would make of him "a great nation" (Gen. 12:3). During his early time in the land, Abram was concerned as to how his seed would be developed since his wife Sarai was unable to have children. He wondered whether this promised seed would come from one of the children of his servant Eliezer (Gen. 15:2-3). God spoke to him and said that the seed would be out of Abram's own body (v.4) and would grow to be as numerous as the stars (v.5).

Despite these difficulties Abram believed God (v.6) i.e. he believed that because God had spoken, that He would therefore fulfil His word (Heb. 11:6). To Abram, God was real. He trusted God completely so God accounted him to be righteous (v.6).

Genesis 21:13-22

BACKGROUND TO THE PROMISE OF THE SEED (Gen. 15-17)

After Abram's courageous rescue of his nephew Lot from the battle described in Genesis chapter 14, God said to him, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (ch. 15:1). Abram immediately took the opportunity to ask God how the seed of promise was to be provided since he was childless. Could the seed be one born to one of his servants? No, the answer was that the seed was to be his own child and when he was shown the stars of heaven he was told, "So shall thy seed be" (v.5). Looking up to the vastness of the heavens and their innumerable stars, Abram "believed in the LORD" and God counted it to him for righteousness. What an amazing faith and confidence in God's word, at a time when Abram knew only too well that he was unable to naturally have children of his own.

To show how sure was His promise to Abram, God made a covenant with him. By a type, He showed Abram how the covenant would be confirmed by preparing a sacrifice (ch. 15:9-10). The chapter indicates that these things would be fulfilled after Abram's death (v.12). God gave a prophecy of the captivity in Egypt of Abram's descendants, and added details setting out the borders of the land promised (vv. 13-18).

Genesis 16 records the birth of Ishmael the son of Hagar, Sarah's maid. This was an attempt by Sarah to solve the problem of the promise of the seed (Gal. 4:29). Abram set his heart on Ishmael thinking that he was the seed of promise, but that special seed of promise was to be born by the miraculous power of God; and was to be the child not only of Abram, but also of Sarai, who was not then able to bear children.

Thirteen years passed before God appeared again to Abram. He again stressed the certainty of the covenant and that he would multiply his seed (ch. 17:1, 2). His name was changed to Abraham, showing that he was to be the father of many nations (vv. 4-8).

His change of name was followed by the covenant of circumcision which was to be a sign of the covenant. Circumcision of itself means nothing. It was used by God to indicate that Abraham was a man who had put trust in God above his natural desires, even in the matter of having children (see Rom. 4:11). Paul says that the man who obeys God and not the will of the flesh is "circumcised in heart" (cp. Rom. 2:28-29). He has, in effect, cut off the natural thinking of the flesh and followed the teachings of God's Word.

At long last the time was now ready for the birth of the promised seed, and God told Abraham that Sarah was to bear a son, "Isaac" which means "laughter" or "joy" (Gen. 17:15-22). Abraham was 100 years old (and Sarah only ten years younger) when at long last she gave birth to the promised son. Sarah also showed faith in God and received strength to bear the child of promise (Heb. 11:11). Their great faith had overcome what seems impossible to humans (Rom. 4:17-22).

IN ISAAC SHALL THY SEED BE CALLED (Gen. 21)

Abraham's household were "sharers in the covenant" with him, and would have rejoiced with him over Isaac. We can just imagine how thrilled Abraham and Sarah were to be blessed with this special son of promise. But there were two who were not : Hagar and Ishmael (Gen. 21:9).

When Sarah made a feast to celebrate the weaning of Isaac, she found Ishmael mocking him. God asked Abraham to send Ishmael away "for," He said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (v.12).

GOD TESTS ABRAHAM (Gen. 22:1-9)

Isaac became the centre of Abraham's love and the heir of the promises. Abraham's life was bound up in the life of his son. Isaac was a joy to his parents, growing up to be a faithful and obedient son. It is not difficult then to imagine the effect of God's words to Abraham, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac. . . and offer him up for a burnt offering" (v.2). To offer the son of promise! Isaac his beloved son must die!

God was asking Abraham to obey His command at the cost of his own natural feelings for his beloved son. What a great trial! With amazing faith his trust in God's word was greater than any natural objections. He believed that even if Isaac had to die, then God would, because of the promises, raise him to life again. Abraham's great faith was equal to the task. What amazing faith and what great belief in God's promises!

Abraham did not hesitate. He and Isaac journeyed to Mt. Moriah. Abraham was confident that Isaac would be raised again. He showed this by saying to his servants, "I and the lad will go yonder and worship *and come again to you*" (Gen. 22:5).

Abraham and Isaac's actions were typical of what Jesus and his Father did in later years. Let us see how closely the offering of Isaac parallels the offering of God's beloved Son.

- Verse 2—"Thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest" (Jesus was God's only begotten Son — Matt. 3:17).
- Verse 6—Laid wood upon Isaac (Jesus had to carry his own cross—Jn. 19:17);
- "They went both of them together" (Jesus co-operated willingly with his Father (Jn. 12:27-28; Heb. 10:5-7).
- Verses 9 and 10—Isaac allowed himself to be offered up as Jesus was. Although Abraham was prevented from slaying Isaac, yet Isaac was as good as dead in Abraham's mind. God accepted the intention as the deed. Paul says that Abraham's confidence was in God's ability to raise Isaac from the dead "From whence also he received him in a figure" (Heb. 11:19). Jesus, speaking to the Jews of his "lifting up" (crucifixion) (Jn. 8:23-28) said "Abraham rejoiced to see my day; he saw it and was glad" (Jn. 8:56).

Because of his great faith and obedience, Abraham was promised that God would:

- a) bless him;
- b) give him a seed which would be multiplied;
- c) make his seed victorious over his enemies;
- d) bless all the nations of the earth in his seed.

This great promise, confirmed by a divine oath, promises the coming of Abraham's greater Son who will reign as King of the world (cp. Gal. 3:16).

ABRAHAM'S FAITH: A LESSON FOR US.

Abraham's willingness to obey God shows the character of Abraham's faith. He was prepared to obey God in all things, even by slaying his son, if need be. "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed (counted) unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God" (James 2:23). When we compare Genesis ch. 15 with ch. 22 we can see how Abraham's faith grew. In the early stages he had shown faith and belief in God's promise of a seed (see Rom. 4:3). Here, in Genesis ch. 22 we can see Abraham's faith has matured and become complete. James says that we can see "how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect" (Jas. 2:21-24). Our faith, too, must be more than just believing that there is one God. We must show in our way of life that we have a faith and trust

in God each day of our lives. Because the Lord Jesus Christ ruled, or controlled, his own thoughts and actions so that he might perfectly obey his Father's will, he has been promised to "possess the gate of his enemies". We should similarly guard our thoughts and actions. We live amongst people at school who show an undisciplined, rebellious attitude. If we would obey God we must first show self control.

Paul says that we too, like Abraham, must go "from faith to faith" — growing in faith step by step (Rom. 1:17). We too can become friends of God. The key is to make God a reality in our life. We must see Him near us in all that we do, seek His guidance carefully from His Word, and trust and obey Him. We must "circumcise our hearts" in cutting off fleshly desires and show our willingness to follow the way of truth, by being baptised into Jesus Christ. We will then be Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise (Gal. 3:29). If we do this we will inherit with faithful Abraham, the glorious promise of an eternal inheritance in the land.

REFERENCE LIBRARY:

"The Story Of The Bible" (H. P. Mansfield)—Pages 96-127

"Elpis Israel" (J. Thomas)—Part 2, chapter 2

"The Visible Hand Of God" (R. Roberts)—Pages 64-67

"The Ways Of Providence" (R. Roberts)—Chapter 3

"Letter To The Hebrews" (J. Carter)—Pages 139-146

PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

1. (a) *Abram was concerned about the birth of the promised seed. Was it to be one born to one of his servants?*
(b) *Show how great was Abram's belief in God's promises when shown the stars of heaven.*
2. *Why was Abram's name changed to Abraham?*
3. *When God told Abraham to offer Isaac, what was Abraham's response?*
4. *How was Abraham's offering of Isaac like God's offering of His Son?*
5. *What was the great blessing that God made to Abraham after his willingness to slay Isaac?*

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

1. *The promises were to Abraham and his seed. Show how Abraham's faith in these promises was tested over many years before Isaac was born.*
2. *Describe what happened and tell the meaning of Abraham's offering of Isaac.*

9. THE HOPE OF THE PROMISES MADE UNTO THE FATHERS

We have considered the history outline of the life of Abraham. Now we will consider the lessons from the great and precious promises made to this great man of faith, and to Isaac and Jacob.

The aim of this lesson is to see the importance of this promise to Abraham as the second of three great covenants upon which the Divine purpose is built. The first covenant was made in the garden of Eden where a promise was given of the seed of the woman who would conquer sin and death (Gen. 3:15). The third covenant was later made to King David of that same seed being the Son of David and Son of God who will reign as king on David's throne forever over all the earth (2 Sam. 7:12-16; Luke 1:30-35).

Genesis 12:1-3, 7; 13:14-17; 15:8-21; 22:16-18; Galatians 3

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM

Abraham is referred to over seventy times in the New Testament alone, often because of his faith and confidence in God's promises. He is an example for us to follow (see Paul's comments in Rom. 4). More especially the apostle Paul taught that the GOSPEL was proclaimed to Abraham in those important promises that God made to him about two thousand years before Christ: "And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the GOSPEL unto Abraham, saying, 'In thee shall all nations be blessed'" (Gal. 3:8). The word "Gospel" means "Good News" and surely God's purpose to bless all nations through Abraham is indeed good news.

The apostle Paul also showed that the promises to Abraham spoke of one particular seed, who is the Lord Jesus Christ who will fulfill the promises (Gal. 3:16; Rom. 15:8). Here then are promises that speak of the Kingdom and an eternal inheritance of the land of Israel guaranteed by the resurrection of Christ. This hope is held out to all those who would be faithful "children" of Abraham. When these promises are fulfilled, all nations will be blessed. That is the foundation of the "Gospel" and is clearly very different from the church error that supposes that souls go to heaven at death. They are sadly ignorant of this "hope" of the gospel that teaches the Kingdom of God will be on earth.

DETAILS OF THE PROMISE

Abraham was a "stranger and sojourner in the land" looking forward to the future when the promised seed, the Lord Jesus Christ will be established as ruler over God's Kingdom. Abraham believed that even

though he and his sons would die, God would raise them from the dead to see Christ in his Kingdom. They will inherit the land promised (Heb. 11:39, 40; Acts 7:1-3). He did not think that the many things he owned were really important compared with the eternal possession of a land in God's Kingdom.

He was not discouraged either by how long it took to fulfil God's promises to Abraham and Sarah. At each stage more detail was seen until the complete picture was revealed. Let us then set out the build up of the Abrahamic promises and see the overall purpose of God:—

Genesis 12:1-3—At UR and HARAN the first promise and call was made:—

1. Abram was promised that he would become a great nation and that his name would become great;
2. God would bless those who blessed Abram, and curse those who cursed him;
3. God promised that in him all families would be blessed.

Genesis 12:7—At SHECHEM, after Abram had crossed over the River Euphrates leaving behind his country and family, God promised him a “seed” and a “land”.

4. God promised Abram a seed who would inherit the land of Canaan.

Genesis 13:14-17—At BETHEL, after Lot departed to Sodom, God promised a multitudinous seed to Abram who will possess the land for ever. Here is the first indication of a resurrection.

5. Abram and his seed would inherit the land over which he walked for ever.
6. He is told for the first time that his seed will be made many.

Genesis 15—Although he had no child, Abram believed God's promise of a multitudinous seed and at HEBRON:

7. God made a covenant with Abram;
8. Abram was told the boundaries of the land promised.

Genesis 22:16-18—After being prepared to offer Isaac in obedience to God's command, Abraham was rewarded with a great promise sealed by a divine oath:—

9. Abraham's seed included a certain seed who will possess the gate of his enemies, i.e., would be victorious over his enemies;
10. In his seed all nations will be blessed;
11. The promise was confirmed by the oath, “by Myself have I sworn”.

EXPLANATION OF THE PROMISE

1. The Singular Seed Of Abraham (singular = one).

The Lord Jesus Christ is the central figure in the seed promised to Abraham. He is the one through whom the blessings will come (Matt. 1:1; Gal. 3:16). Abraham was promised that the one who will “possess the gate of his enemies” will bless “all nations of the earth”. For this to be possible God must bring all nations under Christ’s control. Jesus Christ will rule over all nations (1 Cor. 15:25; Dan. 2:44). Jesus himself tells us that Abraham believed in what Christ would do when he said, “your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, he saw it and was glad” (John 8:56).

2. The Plural Seed Of Abraham (plural = more than one).

Many passages speak of a multitudinous seed of Abraham being blessed. This seed developed out of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But to be counted as the seed of Abraham one does not have to be born a Jew. Fleshly descent from Abraham does not count. Rather, the children of Abraham are people who share the faith of Abraham (John 8:33-40; Rom. 9:6-13). That faith and obedience are what could be called “family likenesses” (Gal. 3:7-9). The greatest among the “family” is the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul shows that if we believe the Gospel and are baptised, we are baptised “into Christ” and also counted as “Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:27-29). We can then be included in the seed of Abraham who will inherit Christ’s Kingdom for ever (Rev. 5:9-10; Matt. 5:5; Rom. 4:13-14). An essential part of that promise held out to us, is the promise that our sins can be forgiven by baptism (Acts 3:25-26). That is an immediate blessing of the Abrahamic promises for those who become “children by faith” and who walk by faith like their “father” Abraham.

3. Inheritance Is Through Resurrection.

Abraham must have been impressed with the need for resurrection if he and his seed were to inherit the land *for ever*. They, like us, were mortal men and women facing the certainty of death and the grave. For God’s Word to be fulfilled, Abraham and his seed must be raised from the dead. Abraham has not yet entered into his inheritance (Acts 7:5). How do we know they shall be raised and receive their inheritance? The assurance is in the personal resurrection of the Seed, the Lord Jesus Christ. His resurrection guarantees that he shall return, that he shall raise the dead and that he shall reward the righteous (Acts 17:31; 2 Tim. 4:1, 8). His own resurrection guarantees the fulfilment of everything in the Abrahamic promises (Rom. 15:8).

4. The Promise Confirmed By Divine Oath.

God showed Abraham in a dramatic way that His promise of a multitudinous seed would come true. He made a covenant with Abraham by cutting a sacrifice and passing between the pieces, making a sign that His promise was sealed and would not change (Gen. 15:9-18).

When Abraham showed outstanding faith and obedience in his willingness to offer Isaac as commanded by God, he was rewarded with a wonderful promise given with a divine oath. Since God cannot give greater certainty to His Word than by giving an oath based on His own existence, Abraham received the greatest of all assurances. "By myself have I sworn, saith Yahweh, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine own son, that in blessing I will bless thee. . ." (Gen. 22:16-18). Thus the promises were confirmed and guaranteed in the most solemn and binding way possible.

5. The Promise Repeated To Isaac And Jacob.

The same promise was made to Isaac and Jacob, Abraham's descendants (Gen. 26:3-4; 28:3-4, 13-14).

REFERENCE LIBRARY:

- "Elpis Israel" (J. Thomas)—Part 2, chapter 2
- "Christendom Astray" (R. Roberts)—Lecture 9
- "First Principles Bible Marking Course" (C.S.S.S.)—pages 57-62

PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

1. *Explain the connection between the Gospel and the promises made to Abraham.*
2. *How can we hope to inherit the promises made to Abraham?*
3. *How important is resurrection in the fulfilment of the Abrahamic promises?*

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

1. *Show the importance of the Abrahamic promises in the purpose of God.*
2. *To show the developing details of God's promises made to Abraham in colour shade each of the verses in your Bible which give details of the promises.*
3. *Explain how the promises to Abraham point forward to Christ and to a multitudinous seed.*

10. A BRIDE FOR ISAAC

Abraham's faith in the promises which God had given him had been tested in a number of ways. Isaac was born according to God's promise after a long period of waiting, when Abraham and Sarah were both very old. This was a test of Abraham's faith because becoming parents at the age of Abraham and Sarah was quite impossible normally (Heb. 11:11; Rom. 4:18-21). The greatest test came when Abraham was commanded to sacrifice Isaac, the son of the promise, and the only one through whom the promise could be fulfilled (Heb. 11:17-18).

The promises were to be fulfilled through Abraham and his seed. Abraham was therefore anxious that Isaac should find a suitable wife through whom, after many generations, Jesus would be born as Abraham's seed.

This lesson shows that God guides His servants according to His purpose, and also the importance in God's eyes, of marriage in the Truth.

ABRAHAM INSTRUCTS HIS SERVANT.

Abraham was determined that Isaac's wife should not come from among the godless Canaanites around him on all sides. He knew these people did not worship the one true God who had called him and given him these precious promises. To allow Isaac to marry a daughter of the families of the land would lead to the loss of the faith which he had so carefully developed in his whole household (Gen. 18:19). Marriage with a godless partner would weaken that faith as it would today.

Abraham instructed his servant Eliezer to travel to the land from which he had come, and there choose a suitable wife for Isaac from among his relations. Isaac himself was not to leave the Land of Promise, but Abraham believed that a suitable wife would be brought to him (Gen. 24:3-5). Normally this would be a very difficult task. A long journey lay ahead. To find the right wife and encourage her to travel many long miles to marry a man she did not know might be impossible. Thus Abraham showed his prayerful trust in God by allowing Him to govern the choice of a wife for Isaac, his son. Abraham assured his servant Eliezer that God would prosper his journey to find a wife for Isaac.

TWO WAYS MEET

So well had Abraham instructed his household in the truth of God that his servant Eliezer had great faith in God's care and providing. When he reached Mesopotamia where Abraham's relations lived, this belief and confidence in prayer was seen. Of course, God had long foreseen

the need for Isaac to marry. He had prepared Rebekah from childhood to be a suitable companion for the seed of promise, Isaac. She too was instructed in the knowledge and fear of Yahweh. Now that time had come for Isaac and Rebekah to meet so that the purpose of God might be fulfilled: "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3; Gal. 3:8).

THE SERVANT AT THE CITY OF NAHOR

The servant asked God in prayer to show him the woman He had chosen. "And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I say, 'Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also!': let the same be she that Thou hast appointed for Thy servant Isaac" (v.14). When the prayer was answered, he praised God and offered thanks on Abraham's behalf. Notice that he did not rely on his own judgment in selecting a wife for Isaac, but trusted in God who was watching over all that was happening. It was clear that Rebekah was God's choice by the way she fulfilled all the requirements. She was a daughter of Abraham's relations (vv.15, 24). She was not as yet married (v.16). Her faith was great. She was prepared to leave her family and travel to the Land of Promise to become Isaac's wife (v.58). She was humble and became a good wife to Isaac. What a wonderful answer to the prayers of Abraham and Eliezer!

THE IMPORTANCE OF MARRIAGE IN THE TRUTH

Marriage is made before God and so great care should be taken to make sure that a wise choice is made. It is important for both husband and wife to be of one belief. Otherwise the home may be disturbed by argument, and sometimes worse things. The worship of God is hindered and can be neglected. Such a marriage would be a compromise and the Truth would suffer. Ease, pleasure-seeking and worldly interests are naturally appealing to human nature. The other partner would see nothing wrong in these things. Because of this the apostle Paul warns, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14).

Where there is oneness of mind in the Truth there is love, warmth and respect for each other. How can the commandment to children, "Obey your parents in the Lord" be fulfilled as God intended, if one parent is in the Truth and the other not (Eph. 6:1)? Thus we can see the importance of Paul's words in 2 Cor. 6:14, and the instructions under the Law (Deut. 7:3-4). Marriage to an unbeliever is not only unwise, but is a breach of God's commandments (see 1 Cor. 7:39). Look at what happened in the following cases through inter-marriage: Gen. 6:2; 1 Kings 11:1-8; Neh. 13:23-31.

When we are older and ready for baptism and later marriage, we too should choose a God-fearing partner. In this way alone can marriage be happy and children be brought up in the "fear and admonition of the Lord".

Rebekah had been brought up in the discipline and instruction of Yahweh. Therefore she was a fit marriage partner for the seed of the promise. Time proved that this was so, and Rebekah became a source of comfort to Isaac (Gen. 24:67) and a spiritual strength in their walk together in faith.

Abraham realised the need of a proper wife for Isaac in order that God's promise might be fulfilled. He confidently believed that God would provide her. In order to help Isaac to marry in the Truth, Abraham had to send his servant to his own people, who also respected God. God Himself had guided the life of Rebekah and prepared her for Isaac.

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PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

1. *Why was Abraham so careful in arranging for Eliezer to find a wife for Isaac?*
2. *How did Eliezer find a wife for Isaac?*
3. *What qualities did Rebekah possess to make her a suitable wife for Isaac?*
- 4. *How important is it for brethren and sisters to marry only those in the Truth?*

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

- 1. *How did God guide the choice of a wife for Isaac?*
2. *Why does God command believers to marry “only in the Lord?”*

11. JACOB, THE BIRTHRIGHT AND THE BLESSING

This lesson shows us how God preferred Jacob to Esau; and how God guided the lives of all concerned in the carrying out of His purpose.

Genesis 25

ESAU AND JACOB

Twin sons were born to Rebekah and Isaac after a remarkable prophecy had been given to them by God (Gen. 25:23). The prophecy revealed:—

1. Two nations were to be developed from the two boys.
2. They would be two manner of people—one fierce and warlike who would seek to dominate his younger brother: but eventually the elder would serve the younger.

In this prophecy, God revealed His knowledge of how these boys would develop. God realised that Esau would be a godless, fleshly man with no respect for Him, while Jacob would be the opposite. God therefore planned accordingly and chose Jacob as the one through whom the Abrahamic promises would be developed (Rom. 9:10-13).

Notice how Chapter 25:24-34 proves God's action to be correct. Esau was red (like the earth) and hairy (rough) when born (v.25). Jacob when born, had hold of Esau's heel as though he would have tripped him up and taken first place (v.26). This resulted in him being called Jacob meaning "supplanter" or "he who trips up by the heel" (for the purpose of getting in front). This desire to be first in sharing God's blessing remained with Jacob all his life. Esau developed in the skills of the world (v.27) but Jacob was a "plain" or "upright" man. This tells us that he preferred to spend much time in developing an understanding of the ways of God. But he was not a weak man. His life reveals him as a hard-working, determined man who drove himself toward his goal. He really wanted the inheritance of the promises! Verse 28 records the sad detail that Isaac allowed his natural affection for Esau to over-ride his knowledge of God's will. Rebekah was more thoughtful and saw in Jacob a godly seed. Isaac knew of God's purpose that Jacob was to have the promises. That can be seen when the meaning of Gen. 27:33 is noted (see section on "Jacob blessed").

ESAU SELLS HIS BIRTHRIGHT (Gen. 25:29-34).

Sod pottage is made from boiling red lentils (like beans) in water. Esau

returned from hunting so faint that he thought he was about to die. He demanded food from Jacob who, quick to grasp the chance, offered to buy Esau's birthright with the vegetables.

Because Esau agreed to this, it reveals several things about him:—

1. He thought more of himself than of God.
2. He did not care much about the honour of being firstborn, which gave him the "right" to a double share of the inheritance.
3. He thought nothing of the responsibilities that elder sons had for training and caring for the younger members of the family.

Paul says he was a profane person (Heb. 12:16-17) which means unholy and ungodly. He was a man dominated by fleshly ways and who became known as "Edom" meaning "red", the colour of sin (also the colour of the pottage, v.30).

THE BIRTHRIGHT (Deut. 21:15-17).

In a family of Bible times other members of the family respected an eldest son. He was the firstborn, the head of his brethren. He would take over the respect due to the father, had a special claim to his father's blessing, and received a "double portion" of his father's goods by way of inheritance. This birthright could be given to another son by the father for a good reason. Esau gave up his priceless birthright for one simple meal.

JACOB BLESSED (Gen. 27).

Jacob's father, Isaac was 117 years old and his eyesight was failing. He thought that he was close to death and decided to give his blessing to his firstborn.

It is sad to note Isaac's refusal to accept the will of God in regard to Jacob and his resolve to give the blessing to Esau. Note the way in which the sons are described, "his son" (v.5) "her son" (v.6). This is a further criticism of Isaac's favouritism and his failure to rebuke Esau for his worldly ways.

Rebekah acted quickly so that the younger son would be blessed. She insisted that the hesitant Jacob obey her voice and deceive Isaac.

Jacob came before Isaac, acted out his part and deceived his father (vv.18-26). Isaac was confused over the speed in which the meal was prepared and the speech of the son who didn't speak like Esau at all. Still puzzled, he went ahead with the meal and blessed the son whom he believed was Esau. He pronounced the blessings of material prosperity, of authority over people and nations and blessings on friends and cursings upon enemies. This blessing is similar to the Abrahamic blessing by God. However in a remarkable statement Isaac said "Be lord over thy brethren and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee" (v.29). Here was the fulfilment of the words that God told Rebekah before the boys were born. The elder would serve the younger. But Isaac thought he was

speaking to Esau! Then he realised that he had tried to oppose the purpose of God when the real Esau appeared and demanded the blessing (vv.30-33).

Stunned by such a reversal, Isaac “trembled with a great trembling greatly.” His faith did not fail. In a moving demonstration of his submission to God’s will he said “Yea and he shall be blessed”. Hebrews tells us that “by faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come” (Heb. 11:20). Esau “lifted up his voice and wept” (v.38). These were tears of anger and frustration. Imagine the pressure brought to bear upon Isaac by the tearful pleas of his favourite son. Yet Isaac’s faith, badly shaken, stood firm under that pressure. Failing to change Isaac’s mind, Esau showed his real character by plotting the murder of his brother (see Heb. 12:16-17).

Isaac later blessed Jacob with the fulness of the Abrahamic covenant, (28:3-4) and at the same time confirmed Esau to a position of serving his brother (Gen. 27:38-40).

We should note that Isaac lived a further 63 years after these events, which in itself reveals his undue haste in wanting to bless Esau.

LESSONS FOR US.

- Before the two boys were born God chose Jacob because he foresaw the characters that would develop. But Isaac’s favourite son was Esau who grew up to be a man of the world. We should resist any attraction of worldliness and prefer the quiet, godly attitudes as shown by Jacob.
- Esau demonstrated his unworthiness by selling his birthright for a “mess of pottage.” Let us never treat the promises of God with the same lack of interest. We have been given the priceless hope of eternal life. Let us value this above all the temporary benefits of life today.
- Isaac’s faith was developed to maturity as he submitted to the will of God. He had been humbled by the overriding hand of God. In our lives we should “prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:2) and be obedient to it. We can see from this lesson that we should not “lean to our own understanding” but rather “acknowledge God in all our ways” for then God will direct our steps (see Prov. 3:5-7). If we do that, God will guide us to the Kingdom and an inheritance of those great and precious promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

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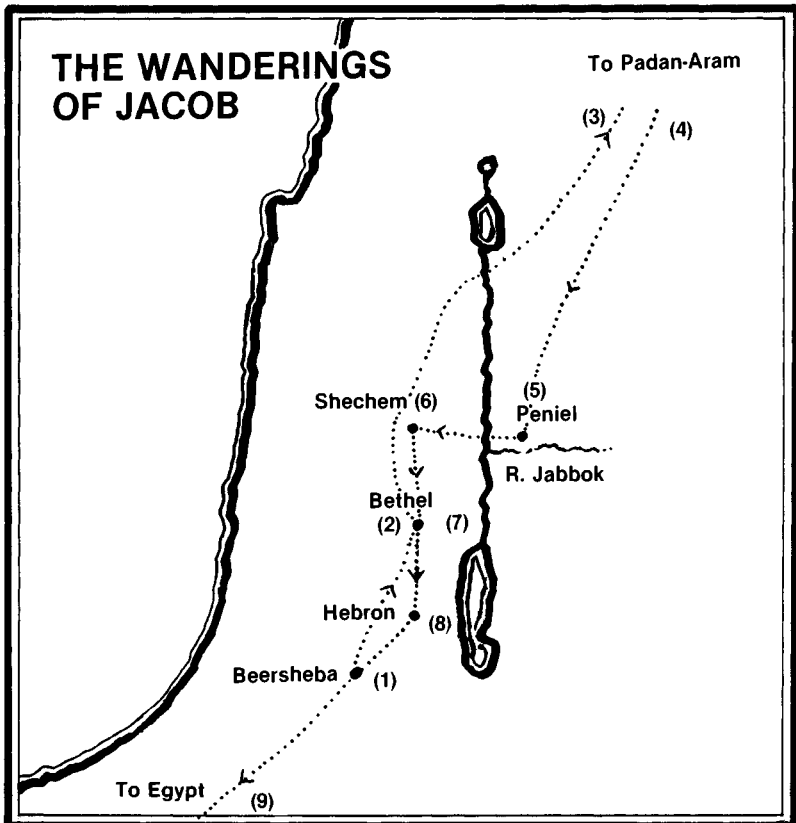
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PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

1. *What message did God give Rebekah about her two sons?*
2. *In what way did Esau despise the birthright?*
3. *How did Isaac show faith in blessing his sons?*
4. *Explain what is meant by the “birthright” (or “firstborn”).*

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

1. *Write a brief character study of Esau and Jacob.*
2. *Show how Isaac’s intentions to bless Esau were overridden by Jacob and Rebekah’s actions.*



- (1) Jacob flees from Esau after he obtained the blessing Isaac intended for Esau (27:41-46; 28:1-5).
- (2) Resting for the night at Bethel, Jacob is given the vision of angels ascending and descending on a staircase (28:10-22).
- (3) At Padan-Aram Jacob serves Laban 14 years for Leah and Rachel (29:1-30).
- (4) After working forty years for the deceitful Laban, Jacob leaves secretly with his wives, children and flocks (31:1-18).
- (5) He wrestles with the angel at Peniel and the next day meets Esau who unexpectedly (by God's grace) proves friendly (32:22-32; 33:1-16).
- (6) Jacob pitches his tent near Shechem, but leaves in haste when his sons Simeon and Levi kill the men of Shechem for the treatment of Dinah their sister (33:18-20; 34:1-31).
- (7) Jacob returns to Bethel and builds an altar (35:1-15).
- (8) He returns to his father Isaac, now dwelling at Hebron, the city where Abraham had dwelt (35:27).
- (9) Later Jacob and his household move to Egypt at the invitation of Joseph (46:1-7).

12. JACOB'S EXILE AND RETURN

Esau was not humbled by his experience but threatened to kill Jacob when Isaac was dead. Rebekah was told of Esau's plans. Following her advice, Jacob fled north to Padan-aram where he would be able to find shelter and relatives.

In this lesson we learn how God prepared Jacob to be a father of many nations.

Genesis 28 – 32

ISAAC BLESSES JACOB

Before sending him away, Isaac gave Jacob the fulness of the Abrahamic promise (Gen. 28:3-4). This included:—

- God would bless him and make him fruitful;
- His seed would develop into a multitude of people;
- He would inherit the land wherein he was a stranger, “which God gave unto Abraham”.

Like his fathers, Jacob died not having received the fulfilment of the promises. But God will be faithful to His Word. He will raise them from the dead and establish them in the land of promise: the land where they were strangers (Luke 13:28).

THE DREAM AT BETHEL (Gen. 28:12-22).

Though Jacob was separated from his mother and felt extremely lonely on his journey, God was with him. As he slept that night at Bethel, he had a most significant dream. It was the first occasion that Jacob heard the voice of God.

God assured Jacob that through His angels, He would be with him, and his seed:

- To fulfil the promises of Isaac and Abraham made to him; and
- To bring him again to his father's house.

Jacob was most impressed. He called the name of the place “Bethel” meaning “House of God” and declared his intention to serve God faithfully for the rest of his life (vv.18-22).

JACOB IN EXILE (Gen. 29, 30).

Jacob finally reached Haran and settled in the house of Laban, his mother's brother. Jacob loved Rachel, Laban's youngest daughter and agreed to serve Laban for seven years as payment to have her for his wife.

After working for seven years for Rachel, Jacob was deceived by Laban and given the older daughter, Leah, in marriage. No doubt this reminded Jacob of his own part in deceiving his father, Isaac. Jacob had to learn how terrible his lie really was. By these trials and difficulties God

wanted his character to be tested and develop to a whole hearted dependance on God. As he had deceived Isaac, so too Laban deceived him on many occasions. Seven days later, he was permitted to marry Rachel on condition that he work a further seven years for Laban. We should note that Jacob's stay at Haran was for a total of 40 years (ch. 31 v.38 — 20 years with Laban as a friend; ch. 31 v.41 — 20 years he served for wages). This 40 years time period is consistent with other features of Israel's history.

Jacob then settled down to building up his family and flocks. It is obvious from later events, that Jacob's mind remained centred upon God's promises to him. His mind was continually upon the day when he would return to the land. Gen. 31:36-42 reveals Jacob as an example to us all as a man who worked hard day and night and was faithful "even to bad masters".

JACOB RETURNS (Gen. 31:22-55).

Jacob's heart was in the land that God had promised him and he longed to return. Laban persuaded him to stay and work for wages, but after six years of this, Jacob determined to go (Gen. 31:3-5). God twice appeared to him and advised him to go, but Jacob knew that Laban would be angry for he was a greedy man.

One day while Laban was away with his sheep, Jacob left. He was well away before Laban found out that Jacob and his wives and sons had left. Laban quickly pursued after them, but during his pursuit God warned him not to harm Jacob or try to deceive him again. When he finally caught up with Jacob the two men made a covenant of peace and erected a monument of stones as a witness to their agreement.

Laban returned home, and Jacob turned again towards Canaan, conscious of another fear mounting within him: the threat of Esau!

JACOB PREPARES TO MEET ESAU (Gen. 32:1-23).

God gave Jacob reason to trust in His protection for He sent a company of angels to meet Jacob. Yet that lesson was soon gone from Jacob's mind. He was utterly dismayed to learn that Esau was coming to meet him with 400 men!

What could he do? Jacob, under pressure showed fear and distress working out ways and means to pacify his angry brother whilst praying to God to remember His promises to him. He divided his flocks sending some on ahead as gifts for Esau. Then he prayed earnestly to God for the deliverance which he knew God only could give (vv.7-12).

He then followed last with his family (v.22) and was about to follow them over the River Jabbok that night, when his attention was taken by "a man" (v.24).

JACOB WRESTLES WITH AN ANGEL (Gen. 32:24-32).

All night the angel sought to release Jacob's hold on him. Desperately Jacob hung on: He realised that to proceed without angelic help was useless. The angel revealed his superiority over flesh by putting Jacob's thigh "out of joint" at a touch. Still Jacob held on: "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." Jacob was alone and incapable of fleeing from the angel. In his weakness and anxiety for God's blessings through the angel, Jacob showed a faith purified by trial. The prophet Hosea says that was when Jacob was strong. God called him strong because his faith was now set in God alone. He had come to depend only on God and not on his own cunning (Hos. 12:3, 4).

Jacob had learned the lesson of complete trust in God. Now he would depend on God to deliver rather than depend on his own schemes. Therefore God blessed him and changed his name from Jacob ("sup-planter", or "heel-tripper"), to Israel ("a Prince or Ruler with God"). By Divine and not human help he would overcome all his afflictions (see Gen. 48:15-16; Hos. 12:4).

Jacob recognised that God had appeared to him through the Angel and so he named the place Peniel, "face of God". But he still had to face Esau with his 400 men. He placed his family behind him for safety and bowed to Esau seven times. To his great surprise Esau ran forward and embraced and kissed his brother. They both wept for joy. Esau too was very rich and did not need the gifts sent by Jacob, but he accepted them graciously and they became at peace with one another. The crisis over, Jacob moved on and arrived at Shechem in "peace". Note that in Gen. 33:18 "Shalem" means "peace" and should be so translated in this verse.

Thus God fulfilled the vow He had made to Jacob and became "his God" (see Gen. 28:16-22). Looking back on these events, Jacob could later say, "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil. . ." (Gen. 48:15, 16).

LESSONS FOR US:

- The story demonstrates God's love and protection for Jacob and his family. That same care is there for us too. God's guiding hand, although unseen, is directing our lives, just as it did for the people of God in the past. Let us show our love and dependence upon Him in return.
- Jacob's faithful attitude in exile brought blessings to both himself and Laban. He came to depend upon God for deliverance from present evils. His maturity and complete dependence upon God was shown when Jacob's faith triumphed in his struggle with the angel. Having admitted that he was unable to save himself from the crisis which faced him, Jacob desperately wanted God's help. We too need to put aside all schemes and plans of our own will and rather seek God's ways as our guide in life.

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PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

1. *What vow did God make with Jacob at Bethel? How was it fulfilled?*
2. *What lesson did Jacob learn from his suffering, toil and deception at the hand of Laban?*
3. a) *Why did Jacob wrestle with the angel?*
b) *What does this incident reveal about Jacob’s attitude to God?*

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

1. *Explain how Jacob learned to trust in God.*
2. *How was Jacob deceived by Laban? What lessons can we learn from these experiences of Jacob?*
3. *Describe Jacob wrestling with the angel and show why his name was changed to Israel.*

13. JOSEPH'S TRIALS & TRIUMPHS IN EGYPT

The account of Joseph's life is a "type" (an example or parallel — see Lesson 14) of the Lord Jesus Christ and the salvation that he will provide. Joseph went into Egypt so that he might "preserve life" and there is great benefit in comparing everything that happened to him with the work of Christ.

This lesson deals with the history of Joseph's life and the principles that we can learn from it. Lesson 14 will show how Joseph's life pointed forward to Jesus Christ.

Genesis 37 – 45

JACOB'S FAMILY

Jacob had twelve sons and one daughter, Dinah (Gen. 29:31; 30:24; 35:16-18). His sons were:—

- *Sons of Leah:* Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun.
- *Sons of Leah's handmaid, (Zilpah):* Gad and Asher.
- *Sons of Rachel's handmaid, (Bilhah):* Dan and Naphtali.
- *Sons of Rachel:* Joseph and Benjamin.

From these twelve sons God developed the twelve tribes of Israel.

They were shepherds and looked after their father's flocks. Some of them were self-willed and wayward. Joseph was envied by his brothers because their father favoured him above them. When Joseph received a coat of many colours from his father, which indicated that he was loved more than his brothers, their dislike turned to hatred. Joseph however had proved himself worthy of the honour by the reverence which he gave to God and to Jacob.

BETRAYAL BY HIS BRETHREN (Gen. 37:5-36).

When Joseph was seventeen years of age, God revealed to him two dreams (Gen. 37:5-11) which indicated that his father, mother and family would one day bow down to him. This made his brethren angry and increased their hatred of him.

This hatred became so strong that when Jacob sent Joseph to visit his brethren as they grazed their sheep near Shechem, they determined to kill him (vv.12-20).

At Reuben's suggestion they placed him in a pit. Reuben had intended to rescue him later, but before he could do so, a company of Ishmaelites came by. The other brothers sold Joseph to them for twenty pieces of silver. They in turn sold him as a slave in Egypt. The brothers then devised a scheme to deceive their father. They dipped Joseph's coat in blood and let Jacob think his young son had been slain by a wild beast. Jacob kept on mourning for his beloved son and would not be comforted. His sons would not ease his grief by confessing to their wicked deceit. They were hardhearted and let Jacob sorrow over Joseph's apparent violent death.

Think of Joseph, only seventeen years old, suddenly finding himself a slave in Egypt. But despite his loneliness and hardship he did not despair. Under great hardship and no doubt often feeling lonely and cut off from his father and family, Joseph put his faith in God and in the fulfilment of his dreams.

IN EGYPT—TRIALS (Gen. 39, 40, 41:1-36).

•Sold to Potiphar—Gen. 39:1-20

Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, bought Joseph. He found him to be a wise, trustworthy person and a hard worker so he promoted him to a very responsible position as head of his household. Joseph came under the notice of Potiphar's wife who was immoral and made advances to him. Joseph refused to yield and in the end had to flee from the woman's presence to avoid her. This evil wife falsely accused Joseph to his master who had him cast into prison.

•Dreams of Butler and Baker—Gen. 39:21-23; 40

Joseph may have thought himself badly treated but he did not show it. Soon the prison keeper noticed that he was a trustworthy, cheerful person. "The LORD was with Joseph". He was then put in charge of the other prisoners. In this way he met Pharaoh's butler and baker who had been thrown into prison. Joseph's faithfulness during this long time of hardship prepared him for the responsibility God had in store for him. With God's help he was able to interpret the dreams of the butler and baker. His words were fulfilled to the letter; the baker was put to death and the butler restored to his place in Pharaoh's household. Knowing this would happen, Joseph pleaded with the butler to remember him, but the butler soon forgot him leaving Joseph to spend two further long years in prison.

•Pharaoh's Dreams — Gen. 41:1-36

It was when Pharaoh had two strange and mysterious dreams, that the butler remembered Joseph. Hastily summoned from the prison and shaved and suitably dressed, Joseph was presented before Pharaoh. Joseph made it quite plain that it was only through the power of God that he could interpret dreams. Joseph revealed to Pharaoh the meaning of the dreams. There would be seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. Through Joseph, God warned Pharaoh so that he could store up food to be used during the seven years of famine.

IN EGYPT—TRIUMPHS (Gen. 41:37 to ch. 45)

•Ruler in Egypt — Gen. 41:37-52

So wise was Joseph with God's help that Pharaoh made him second in charge in the land. He was the prime minister of Egypt. He was given the task of supervising food storage for the coming famine.

He applied himself with the same honesty and diligence that he had shown in Potiphar's house and in prison. He did not allow his high

position to affect his faith in God, but remembered always that God had a purpose in bringing him into Egypt.

From the time that Joseph was sold into slavery at seventeen years of age (Gen. 37:2) to the time that he stood before Pharaoh (Gen. 41:46) thirteen years had passed. Now he was ready for the great work which God had in store for him. In all of those years when the young Joseph suffered heartache and frustration he kept uppermost his faith and trust in his God. What a good example he is to all of us in our youth. Let us maintain our faith in God in the face of any setbacks we may experience.

•**Visited By His Brethren—Gen. 42**

The seven years of plenty came and went. The famine started and spread over all the lands of the Middle East. People came from far and wide to buy corn. In Canaan, Jacob instructed his ten eldest sons to go down to Egypt to buy corn. He kept Benjamin home, fearing that something would happen to deprive him of his last link with Rachel (who was also Joseph's mother and had died when Benjamin was born).

Thus one day Joseph's brothers appeared before him and bowed themselves to the earth, not recognising Joseph. Joseph had come now to understand why God had exalted him. After all those years here they were unconsciously fulfilling the terms of the dreams they resented so much! Joseph determined to test his brethren and teach them a lesson.

He accused them, through an interpreter, of being spies and locked them up for three days. He then demanded that one brother be bound and remain in prison while the rest returned. Simeon who was bound, would only be released if they brought Benjamin down the next time. Imagine their dismay when, on the way back, they discovered that their money had been refunded in their sacks! Jacob was angry because they told the "Ruler" in Egypt about Benjamin. He refused to let them take Benjamin lest harm should befall him also, as, he believed, harm had come upon Joseph.

•**The Second Visit—Gen. 43; 44:1-13**

Lack of food forced a decision upon Jacob. Judah, who years before had been foremost in selling Joseph into slavery, now guaranteed the safe return of Benjamin and showed kindness to his father. So they left for Egypt with Benjamin, double money and the prayer of Jacob: "God Almighty give you mercy before the man" (Gen. 43:11-14). In Egypt strange events awaited them: they were not to worry about their refunded money. They were showered with kindness, were given a feast, during which Benjamin received five times as much as anyone else, and were sat down in order of age. Mystified at the great honour paid them, they had their sacks filled with corn and were sent on their way with Simeon restored. Imagine how they felt when Joseph's servant overtook them and accused them of stealing the Governor's divining cup! They were

experiencing a little of the hardship and heart-ache they had earlier brought to Joseph and Jacob. The cup was found, where the servant had secretly hidden it—in Benjamin's sack! Benjamin was arrested and in total shock and bewilderment the brothers were forced to return and face what they thought was the certain wrath of the ruler.

• **Joseph Reveals Himself—Gen. 44:13 to Ch. 45**

In answer to Joseph's judgment that Benjamin, being guilty, should become his slave, Judah stepped forward and pleaded for his release (Gen. 44:18-34). As Judah explained the tender affection that bound the family together, especially the love that Jacob had for his youngest son, Benjamin, Joseph's heart was stirred with emotion for his brothers. He could hold back his emotions no longer.

Putting all the Egyptians out, he cried out, "I am Joseph. . ." The brothers were frightened and thought he would seek revenge. Joseph reassured them, and urged them to return home quickly and bring their father and their families back to Egypt.

• **God's Purpose Revealed—Gen. 45:4-13**

The climax of the events in Joseph's life had been reached. He carefully explained to his brothers that God's overshadowing mercy and providence had guided their actions and his. Through a long series of events God had brought a deliverer from death; a provider of food in a time of need; a preserver of the seed of Abraham. In the process God had moulded their characters so that they might be worthy of the great honour that God was to bestow upon them in making a nation of them (Gen. 45:7).

Upon hearing the news, Jacob was overcome with joy. Though old and feeble, he strengthened himself in his God that he might be re-united with Joseph. Arriving in Egypt, Joseph presented Jacob to Pharaoh who kindly granted him the land of Goshen to dwell in. Jacob had experienced the truth of Paul's comment that God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20 cp. Jude 24, 25).

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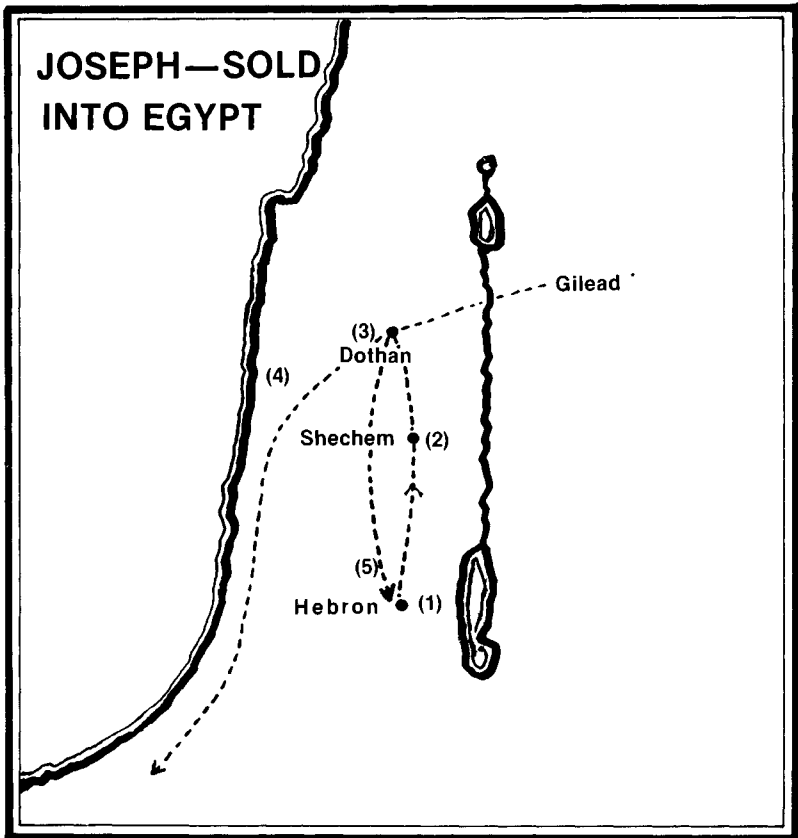
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PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

1. Describe how Joseph's brothers seized him and sold him into slavery.
2. Show how God helped Joseph when he was a slave in Egypt.
3. What was God's purpose in preserving Joseph alive in Egypt?

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

1. Tell how God was with Joseph, and why.
2. Describe Joseph's two dreams and explain how they were fulfilled.
When will the second dream be completely fulfilled?



- (1) Jacob sends Joseph in search of his brothers who are tending their father's flock at Shechem (37:12-14).
- (2) Arriving at Shechem, Joseph is re-directed on to Dothan (37:15-17).
- (3) Through envy, Joseph's brothers strip him of his coat and cast him into a pit (37:18-24).
- (4) Joseph is sold as a slave to Ishmaelite traders travelling from Gilead, who take him to Egypt (37:25-28).
- (5) The brothers return to Jacob and with Joseph's coat, suitably blood-stained, they deceive Jacob into thinking that Joseph was killed by a wild animal (37:29-35).

14. JOSEPH AS A TYPE OF CHRIST

Our previous Lesson (No. 13), showed us how God had guided Jacob's family and had made Joseph a ruler in Egypt. He was then able to preserve Israel.

This lesson shows how God watched over the events of Joseph's life so that he might foreshadow, or be a type of, the life and mission of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Genesis 45

WHAT IS A TYPE?

A type is an event or person deliberately set forth in the Bible to be a foreshadowing of something which will be greater in the future.

It is a "shadow" of the later event, and as a shadow it is only an outline, a silhouette, lacking the details of the actual object. It is **not** an exact parallel. It is as important to remember the differences as it is to learn the similarities.

TYPES ARE A FORM OF TEACHING

God often describes events in His Word by the use of "types" or examples. We have already seen how some of the events in the lives of Abraham and Isaac point forward to the life of Christ. For example, in the offering of Isaac (Gen. 22) we can see a foreshadowing or type of the sacrifice and resurrection of Christ.

The wanderings of the children of Israel in the wilderness are called by Paul "ensamples" (1 Cor. 10:6, 11). In the margin, we read "types" or "figures". Paul teaches us to learn from their experiences and not to "imitate" their failings.

A type is like a parable or story with a hidden meaning. The life of Joseph was a dramatic and detailed parable of the life of Christ although Joseph lived two thousand years before Jesus Christ was born.

JOSEPH AS A TYPE OF CHRIST.

Joseph is similar to Jesus in these ways:—

- Both Joseph and Jesus were loved by their fathers, but hated by their brethren (Gen. 37:4-8; cp. Matt. 3:17; John 15:25).
- Joseph's brothers were jealous of him because of his dreams which pointed forward to his authority over them. The Jewish rulers were jealous of Jesus because of the authority and influence he had over the people (Gen. 37:5-11 cp. Jn. 19:15; Matt. 27:18).
- The brothers of Joseph plotted his death and so did the Jews plot the death of Jesus (Gen. 37:18-20 cp. Matt 21:38; 26:4).

- Joseph’s brethren determined to slay him and cast him into a pit, as good as dead. In Egypt he was cast into prison though he had done no sin. The Jews, the Gentiles (the Romans under Pilate) combined to put to death the sinless son of God (see Gen. 37:26-28; 39:20-21 cp. Matt. 27:26; Acts 4:25-27, where Jew and Gentile unite).
- As God brought Joseph out of prison and appointed him second to Pharaoh, so He brought Jesus from the grave and granted him immortality and honour at His right hand (Gen. 41:14; 39-42 cp. Acts 2:24, 33; 3:13-21).
- Joseph’s brethren sought his help in a time of need. They did not know him and bowed down to him as unto a ruler. Likewise Israel in a future time of great trouble will be saved through Christ’s help. At first they will not recognise him, but when they realise that he is their Messiah and see the marks of crucifixion in his feet and hands they will mourn and fear (Gen. 45:1-8 cp. Zech. 12:10-14; 13:6; Isa. 49:6).
- Joseph overlooked their sins and gave them the best land in Egypt. Even so the Lord Jesus Christ will restore Israel and cause them to inherit the promised land in peace and prosperity. Under him they will be the “head” and not the “tail” among the nations (Gen. 45:5, 9-11 cp. Zech. 2:12; Mic. 4:7-8).

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF JOSEPH

The life of Christ followed closely the pattern of the life of Joseph. We can expect the still future work of Christ to follow the remaining events in Joseph’s life. In fact the prophets tell us this is so. From Joseph’s life we can look ahead to the return of Christ who will reveal himself unto his people. He will gather, restore and bless them in the Kingdom which he will soon establish. We therefore know in part what Christ shall do on his return and this helps us to picture in our minds the Kingdom.

To be ready for that glorious time we should learn the lesson of Joseph’s life. We should ask ourselves what qualities of character made Joseph fit for favour and rulership. We see how Joseph’s life was guided and controlled by God so that His purpose with Jacob’s family would be fulfilled. We should also note how God is guiding events in our lives. If we follow His directions in His Word we will be among those who gladly honour Him in the wonderful Kingdom Age.

SUMMARY.

- The close similarity between the life of Joseph and that of Christ is obvious and striking.
- Joseph’s sufferings foreshadow the great trials of Christ. His promotion to honour foreshadows the resurrection and future glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Jacob's family was humbled and then accepted by the exalted Joseph—so too will Israel be humbled before restoration by their exalted Messiah.
- Those who follow God's direction, like Joseph, will also be blessed by the greater than Joseph, even the Lord Jesus Christ in the land of promise.

REFERENCE LIBRARY:

“Elpis Israel” (J. Thomas)—Part 2, Ch. 3 “The Parable of Joseph”

PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

1. a) *What is a type?*
b) *Give examples of how this is a form of scriptural teaching.*
2. *Show how the treatment of Joseph by his brothers in their hatred and planning of his death is a type of the treatment that Christ experienced by the Jews.*
3. *What can we expect to happen to natural Israel at Christ's second advent? (use the typical story of Joseph's revealing himself as ruler of his brethren)*

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

1. *Describe how Joseph's life was a type of the first and second advent of Christ.*
2. *Write a character study of the life of Joseph bringing out the lessons for us in our youth.*

15. GOD PROVIDES A DELIVERER FOR ISRAEL

Jacob, overjoyed at finding Joseph alive, settled with his family in the Land of Goshen. The Egyptians continued to suffer the effects of the famine as they were forced to sell their lands to Joseph, in order to buy food. After the death of Jacob and Joseph the family of Israel were treated cruelly by the Egyptians.

In the midst of great sorrow and heartbreak the ground was being prepared for Moses, their deliverer.

Exodus 2

INTRODUCTION.

Quite a while before Isaac was born, God had given Abraham a prophecy concerning Israel dwelling in a strange country and serving under affliction (Gen. 15:13, 14). Yet God had also planned the time when He would bring them out. They would not be just a family of seventy which went into Egypt, but they would become a nation through whom God would declare Himself and be glorified among men (Gen. 46:3).

JACOB BLESSES JOSEPH'S SONS (Gen. 48)

When the time drew near that Jacob would die (47:29) Joseph brought his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim to him to be blessed.

Jacob made a remarkable choice in blessing Ephraim above Manasseh for Manasseh was the elder (v.14). Jacob was guided by God in the matter and once again showed how God selects people according to His will, so that in this case the "elder" shall serve the younger.

Jacob's blessing (v.15, 16, 19, 20) was a very moving plea to his God who had so faithfully preserved him from evil. As we consider these words against the tragedies in Jacob's life, his great faith in God becomes apparent.

DEATHS OF JACOB AND JOSEPH (Gen. 49; 50:22-26)

Jacob had dwelt in Egypt for seventeen years (Gen. 47:27, 28) when the time came that he should be gathered to his fathers in death. Before Jacob died, he blessed his sons, revealing to them things that would happen in the "last days" (Gen. 49).

Jacob died in Egypt though God had promised him the territory of Canaan for an everlasting possession. Like the promises made to Abraham and Isaac, this promise of God has yet to be fulfilled. God also told Jacob not to fear to go down into Egypt for He would "bring him up

again” (Gen. 46:4). Though this had particular reference to the deliverance of the nation of Israel, it also had a personal application to Jacob.

At Jacob’s request he was not buried in Egypt, but taken back to Canaan (Gen. 47:29-30). He had lived in hope of inheriting that land of promise when God would bring about the Kingdom and the resurrection of the faithful seed of Abraham. Even as he was dying that land was in the forefront of his mind. Clearly his hope lay in deliverance from Egypt and in a resurrection to an eternal inheritance in the land promised him. As Hebrews says, he also “died in faith, not having received the promises but, having seen them afar off” (Heb. 11:13).

In time Joseph died also. His final words to his brethren demonstrated his faith in the covenants made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Gen. 50:24; Heb. 11:22). He reminded his people that God would not leave them in Egypt but would surely visit them to bring them out.

Joseph requested his bones be taken with them at their Exodus and be buried in the land promised to their father Abraham. These bones acted as a constant reminder to them of Joseph’s words, “God will surely visit you and bring you out of this land” (Gen. 50:24, 25). In a sense, they represented the living faith of a dead man!

ISRAEL’S BONDAGE (Exod. 1:8-14)

As the years passed, Jacob’s descendants multiplied and became a mighty people (Exodus 1:7).

Then came tragedy: “There arose a king over Egypt who knew not Joseph” (v.8). He had no regard for the good that Joseph had done for Egypt. Fearing the great number of Hebrews and fearing the danger to Egypt should they join with Egypt’s enemies, he afflicted them and made them slaves (v.10). Because slavery did not stop them increasing in numbers the Egyptians made them “serve with rigor and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage.” Harsher and harsher measures were taken, until Pharaoh commanded that every firstborn male infant should be slain (v.22). We can only just imagine the shock and terror experienced in the family life of the Hebrews.

Great was the bitterness of heart in the land of Goshen where Israel dwelt. Under the affliction of slavery and having their children slaughtered, Israel dwelt in terror without apparent help or hope. But God was well aware of their plight and was preparing a deliverer according to His promises.

It was during this time of persecution that Moses was born.

BIRTH OF MOSES (Exodus 2:1-10)

Moses was the third child of Amram and Jochebed of the tribe of Levi (Ex. 6:20). Aaron and Miriam were Moses’ elder brother and sister.

Moses was born at Israel’s darkest hour. It required strong faith on his parents’ part to defy the rule of Pharaoh (Heb. 11:23). His parents realised that he was a “proper child” and was “exceeding fair to God” (Acts 7:20 marg.).

Paul in Romans 10:17 says “faith cometh by hearing the word of God.” Therefore, when Hebrews chapter 11 describes Moses’ parents acting by faith we may safely assume that Amram and Jochebed were given a special message about Moses, indicating, that he would deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage. Therefore, they took special care to keep him safe.

When it became impossible to hide the boy any longer he was deliberately placed in an ark of bulrushes. He was set afloat at the very spot where Pharaoh’s daughter bathed. They did not abandon Moses, but deliberately placed him in that position. They prepared Miriam with what to say to the Princess. In faith they allowed God to work out His purpose with Moses.

When Pharaoh’s daughter arrived and saw the ark she commanded someone to fetch it. When she opened it the babe wept. Her motherly instincts aroused, she decided to adopt the child. At the prompting of Miriam, Moses was given to his own mother to nurse until he was old enough. What an amazing answer to the hopes and concerns shown by the parents of Moses. Their faith was upheld in a wonderful way for through it Moses was given a wonderful education in the promises made unto the fathers by his mother!

Pharaoh’s daughter named him Moses for she “drew him out of the water”. Pharaoh had tried to destroy the strength of Israel by casting all their baby boys into the river. His own daughter drew one out of the river who became the means in God’s hand of destroying Pharaoh and delivering God’s people. What an amazing reversal of Pharaoh’s evil plans!

Moses was educated in the “wisdom of the Egyptians” and rose to power in Pharaoh’s realm: he “was mighty in works and deeds” (Acts 7:22). Yet Moses never forgot the spiritual instruction of his mother in early years. He realised he was a Hebrew and awaited the time and opportunity to set his people free. He perceived that it was God’s purpose that through his own hands Israel would be delivered (Acts 7:25).

As Moses grew older in the palace he was faced with a very difficult choice. He could use his position to enjoy the material pleasures and luxuries of Pharaoh’s court, or he could deny himself the lusts of the flesh, and prepare himself for the task of leading the people out of Egypt into the promised land. He chose to deny himself because he believed that God would fulfil his promise. He knew that God’s way was far better than life in Egypt (Heb. 11:24-26).

Moses becomes an important example to us, for we live in the midst of luxury and plenty. We must refuse to become involved in seeking this world’s goods and devote our time and energy in the service of God.

We can reap a much greater reward by entering the Kingdom if we have the courage to stand for God’s way now (Matt. 6:19-21; 2 Cor. 4:17-18).

THE FLIGHT FROM EGYPT (Exodus 2:11-22)

At forty years of age Moses determined to deliver Israel from Egypt (Acts 7:23-25). But the Israelites had lost hope and were not prepared for

the coming of a deliverer. Indeed many of them had embraced the idols of Egypt and turned from Yahweh.

Moses felt sorry for his brethren. They were mere slaves in a seemingly hopeless position. He visited his brethren and when he saw an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, he was moved to action. He slew the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. The next day when seeking to stop two Hebrews quarrelling it was clear that this secret was known (Ex. 2:11-14). Moses knew that Pharaoh would hear of it and would seek to slay Moses. Moses therefore fled from Egypt and found refuge in Midian near Mount Sinai (Ex. 2:15-22).

The Midianites were descendants of Abraham of the family of Keturah (Gen. 25:2). At a well, Moses met the seven daughters of Jethro, the priest of Midian. He was made welcome at his house. He married Ziporah, one of Jethro's daughters and kept his flock forty years (Acts 7:29, 30). In the quiet rugged environment of Sinai, away from the pomp of Egypt, Moses tended humble, harmless sheep and learned humility and care for the weak. That is a real need for a true leader, especially of God's people. Self confidence was replaced by trust in God. When he returned to Egypt his character was mature. He was now a shepherd God would use to lead his "sheep" out of Egypt (Psa. 78:52, 77:20).

PARALLELS BETWEEN MOSES AND JESUS—IN THIS LESSON.

Moses	Jesus
1. Pharaoh slew male babies	1. Herod slew all the children of Bethlehem.
2. Moses was saved from death.	2. Joseph and Mary were warned and escaped to Egypt.
3. Deliverer, lawgiver, mediator.	3. Deliverer, lawgiver, mediator.
4. First appearance rejected—"Who made thee a prince and judge over us?"	4. First appearance rejected—"Who art thou. . .By what authority. . .?"
5. Moses fled into a far country	5. Jesus ascended into heaven. Refer to parable in Luke 19:10-15.
6. Moses returned to deliver.	6. Jesus will return bringing great salvation to those who look for him.

SUMMARY:

- Jacob and Joseph showed faith in God's promises in the instructions given at their deaths.
- Slavery and the murder of their infants made Israel cry to God, who heard and prepared for them a deliverer.
- Moses was divinely looked after and educated for his great work. He

refused Egypt and its pleasures and chose affliction with the people of God.

- As a shepherd he learned the lessons which qualified him, under God, to lead His people—humility, patience, tender care.
- He was a prophet like Messiah would be.

REFERENCE LIBRARY:

- “The Story Of The Bible” (H. P. Mansfield)—Pp. 208-237
- “Ways Of Providence” (R. Roberts)—Chapter 9
- “The Visible Hand Of God” (R. Roberts)—Chapter 9
- “Elpis Israel” (J. Thomas)—Part 2, chap. 4, pp. 286-289
- “Moses my Servant” (H. Tennant)—Chapt 1

PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

1. *When Jacob reached the end of his life how did he show his faith?*
2. *What commandment did Joseph give concerning his bones and why?*
3. *Why did Moses’ parents hide him?*
4. *Describe Moses’ education from boyhood to 40 years old.*

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

1. *Describe the events which came upon Israel after the death of Joseph and up to Moses’ flight into exile. the people*
2. *How was Moses as a boy in Egypt and as a shepherd in Midian prepared for the work of deliverance of Israel?*
3. *Of Moses it is said, “Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (Heb. 11:25). How does this apply to us today?*

16. THE REVELATION AT THE BUSH

In this lesson we will discover the wonderful name of the God of Israel. It is a name full of meaning and was given to Moses at a very important stage in the history of his people.

Moses himself needed to feel sure that God was with him. The dramatic events of the burning bush and the voice of God from its midst restored Moses' confidence in God and in himself. Moses was still hesitant about being a leader and so God gave him Aaron, his elder brother, as his spokesman. Moses and Aaron returned together to Egypt to accomplish Israel's deliverance.

Exodus 3

IN MIDIAN (Exodus 3:1-12)

Almost forty years had passed since Moses fled into Midian. God was now ready to deliver His people according to His plan given to Abraham so long ago (Gen. 15:13-16).

Moses had taken his father-in-law's flock to the area around Mount Sinai. It was a lonely place of rugged grandeur, well suited to a revelation from God. Here, the lofty peaks which rise steeply from the plain and the deep silence emphasize the greatness of the Creator and the relative insignificance of man.

Moses on this occasion witnessed a remarkable sight—a bush burning but not being consumed! (Exodus 3:1-2). Moses went closer. An angel addressed him from the midst of the bush (vv.3-4). He was told to remove his shoes for the ground whereon he stood was holy (v.5) and that this angel spoke for the God of his fathers (v.6).

A fearful Moses then heard the meaning of the burning bush! God had heard Israel's cry of affliction in Egypt, and had come down to deliver them. To this end He had appointed Moses as their deliverer (vv.7-10 cp. Exod. 2:23-25). Moses was instructed to lead the nation out to worship God in Mount Sinai. As a sign of this, God gave him the sign of the burning bush (vv. 11, 12).

The bush burning but unconsumed pointed to the future history of God's people. They would suffer affliction and "fiery" trials but God would preserve them (cp. Jer. 30:11). His Name, about to be revealed to Moses, guaranteed their survival as a people, a fact recognised by the prophets (Mal. 3:6; Isa. 43:1-2). God would reveal himself through them, would bring them through many persecutions and in the end they will reflect His glory in the Kingdom as the head of all nations (Zech. 2:5).

THE NAME OF GOD (Exodus 3:13-16)

Hebrew names are quite often expressive of character or purpose. God's Name is no different. His Name has a meaning that tells us of a future time when God's glory shall fill this earth.

Moses asked His Name so that he could return to his people and show that he had come with the full authority of God to lead Israel out of Egypt.

God's Name as revealed in Exod. 3:14 is "I am that I am" but this translation in our English bibles is incorrect. The words should be translated as prophetic and should read "I will be who I will be". When Moses spoke of God to Israel he would say "He who will be" and the nearest equivalent English pronunciation of the Hebrew word is "Yahweh". "Yahweh" is therefore God's Name and we find it generally indicated in our bibles as "LORD" or "GOD". We should always speak of God's Name with total respect. It is His Holy Name, and by it we are caused to think of God's future purpose with the earth and His people. His Name is linked with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (v.15) for He will become their mighty ones (Elohim) as part of the fulfilment of His covenant with them.

God is now calling out of the nations a people for His Name (Acts 15:14). Those who are worthy at the second coming of Christ will be made immortal and assist him in the Kingdom. God's purpose will then be to educate and bless all nations so that the glory of God will fill the earth and God will be able to dwell with those who have "become" immortal. They will show forth the wonderful characteristics to be found in God's Name (Ex. 34:6, 7). God's Name, "I will be who I will be" will then be complete (cp. Num. 14:21; Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:13; 1 Cor. 15:28; Rev. 21:3).

THE CHARACTER OF GOD (Exodus 34:6-7)

The name Yahweh expresses more than purpose. It teaches us about the character of God. God loves righteousness and hates iniquity (see Rom. 11:22). When we are baptized, we are baptized "into the name of the Father. . ." (Matt. 28:19). This means that our lives should show His goodness. An example of how this works is to be seen in the life of Jesus. He said "I have manifested Thy Name" i.e., he showed the character of God in all that he did. He said, "I have declared Thy Name", i.e., he preached the gospel of the kingdom of God or taught Yahweh's purpose (cp. John 17:6, 26). The believer must therefore forsake the world and walk faithfully and obediently toward the coming Kingdom. We look to the example of Christ for our daily living, learning from him how to display His Father's character in these days of Gentile wickedness.

This Name is being fulfilled —

(a) in the mind, character and exaltation to immortality of our Lord Jesus Christ;

(b) in the development of a character like Yahweh's in men and women of faith by their obedience to the gospel;

(c) in those who will be Christ's at his second coming; and finally, at the end of the millennium when God is "all and in all".

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MOSES (Exodus 3:16-22)

God instructed Moses in detail how he was to bring about Israel's deliverance. He was to be bold in the face of Pharaoh's refusal so that God might bring upon the king and his nation the punishment which they deserved. Yahweh was going to be feared and honoured by both the Egyptians and His people, the Hebrews. During the coming plagues He was to be known in the eyes of all the people.

When the time was ready, Pharaoh would let them go but they were not to go empty (v.21). They were to "borrow" (the word actually means "demand") of the Egyptians jewels and raiment. They had laboured for many years as slaves and God demanded their wages! By His power God would show He was greater than the might of Egypt and its gods.

MOSES' RELUCTANCE (Exodus 4:1-17, 27-31)

Moses was reluctant to act. No doubt he remembered his people's rejection of him forty years earlier. God gave Moses three signs to show that God would be with him.

- The rod that became a serpent (vv.1-5);
- The hand that turned leprous and was healed (vv.6-8);
- The waters of the river that turned to blood (v.9).

Yet Moses still did not want to go. God's reply was direct and assuring "Go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say"(vv.11, 12). Yet Moses still refused to go (v.13) so that God's anger was roused (v.14). So Aaron was appointed as Moses' spokesman (vv.15, 16) and Moses was instructed to return to Pharaoh, rod in hand, to perform the signs (v.17).

Aaron was sent to meet Moses as he returned and together they made known to the Israelites God's purpose and convinced them that the time of their deliverance had come: "The people believed. . .and they bowed their heads and worshipped" (vv.27-31).

SUMMARY:

- The bush that burned but was not consumed was given as a symbol of God's intention to deliver His people out of their afflictions and to reveal himself in them.
- So that Israel might ever keep in mind God's purpose with them He revealed Himself by the name "Yahweh" — He who will be.

- God's judgments were to be poured out upon Egypt so that all people might fear His Holy Name — just as the world will fear His Name at Armageddon.

REFERENCE LIBRARY:

- “Elpis Israel” (J. Thomas)—Pp. 288-289
- “Phanerosis (Australian Edition), Pp. 56-59
- “Visible Hand Of God” — Chapters 10 and 11
- “The Story Of The Bible” (H. P. Mansfield)—Pp. 237-257

PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

1. *What was the meaning of the burning bush?*
- ② *What is God's Name and what is its meaning?*
3. *How did the Lord Jesus Christ reveal God's name?*
4. *What was the reason for sending Moses back to Egypt?*
5. *What signs did God give to Moses to show that God would be with him? How did Moses use the signs?*

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

1. *Explain the meaning of God's memorial name.*
2. *Describe the events which took place when the angel of God appeared to Moses at the burning bush.*
- ③ *What was Moses' reaction when he was told to go and lead Israel out of Egypt. How was he helped in this work?*

17. THE PLAGUES AND THE PASSOVER

Moses was about to enter the court of Pharaoh again, not as a son, but, as an ambassador of Yahweh. The message he brought was "let my people go that they may serve me".

Yahweh's purpose was not only to free Israel from bondage but to demonstrate to the Egyptians His majesty and might. He was going to reveal Himself as the one and only true God, and cause the great nation of Egypt with its stubborn arrogant king to tremble at His presence.

So well was this done that for centuries after, Gentile nations remembered the way in which Yahweh the God of Israel triumphed over the Egyptians cp. Josh 2:9-11; 1 Sam. 6:6.

Exodus 11 and 12

MOSES RETURNS TO EGYPT

God revealed at the bush that He was determined to deliver His people Israel. He now started a series of events by which this would be done.

First, He called Aaron to Mount Sinai to meet with Moses his younger brother. The two men then entered the land of Goshen and delivered the message of Yahweh's deliverance to the elders of Israel (Exodus 4:27-31).

MOSES AND AARON BEFORE PHARAOH (Exod. 5)

A great contest now started between Yahweh and Pharaoh. Moses, representing God, went again to the court of Pharaoh, to the very place where he had spent the first forty years of his life (Exod. 7:7; Acts 7:23, 30). His first request was treated with contempt and with Aaron he was ushered out of Pharaoh's presence (Exod. 5:1-9). To show his complete defiance of Yahweh, he increased the burden of the children of Israel. Without a supply of straw, they were to maintain their quota of bricks! (Exod. 5:10-19). This was an impossible situation and the people in their grief turned upon Moses and Aaron and blamed them for the increased burden (Exod. 5:20-23).

Step by step, however, this mighty ruler of the leading nation of the time was to be humbled while Moses was to become greater and greater before him. The purpose of this contest with Pharaoh, God expressed as: "*to show in thee my power: and that My Name may be declared throughout all the earth*" (Exod. 9:16). Egypt would see an outstanding display of Yahweh's power in the events brought upon the nation. Egypt would be impressed, and an important part was to be the effect of these things upon the children of Israel (see Deut. 4:34-37; 7:8-9).

At Moses' second appearance before Pharaoh, he threw down his rod in front of him and it became a serpent.

However, by their trickery, the Egyptian magicians did what seemed the same. Pharaoh refused to accept the sign of God's power even when Moses' rod left the magicians without theirs! (Exod. 7:10-13). Later Pharaoh would be forced to accept Yahweh's supremacy by the plagues that followed.

THE PLAGUES (Exodus 7:13)

1. Water Into Blood—Exodus 7:14-25

The Egyptians were proud of the great River Nile and worshipped it as a god. They had no other source of water. This plague caused them to abhor their river and detest the smell of its dead fish. Yet the magicians imitated this and so Pharaoh hardened his heart.

2. Frogs—Exodus 8:1-5

God caused the frogs to come up and cover the land. They got into the households of all the Egyptians. The frog was also sacred to the Egyptians, but now Pharaoh had to plead with Moses to intreat Yahweh to remove what had become a plague. God responded to Moses' prayer and the plague was stopped at the exact time that Pharaoh had requested. The very easing of the plague strengthened Pharaoh's resistance and so he would not listen to Moses (cp. Isaiah 26:10).

3. Swarms of Lice—Exodus 8:16-19

This plague was more severe because the lice were "*in man and in beast*", bringing discomfort and pain. The magicians were unable to imitate this and admitted that "This is the finger of God;" but Pharaoh remained unmoved.

4. Flies—Exodus 8:20-32

The significant point of this plague was that a division was now made between the Egyptians and the Israelites (vv.21-23). From then on the plagues fell only upon the Egyptians.

5. Murrain on Animals—Exodus 9:1-7

A terrible disease broke out, resulting in the death of all the cattle of the Egyptians, which were considered sacred by the people.

6. Burning Boils On Man And Beast—Exodus 9:8-12

This even affected the magicians themselves. Yet in spite of all these terrible afflictions, Pharaoh remained stubborn against Moses' repeated appeals for the release of God's people.

7. A Storm Of Hail—Exodus 9:13-35

What a frightening storm this must have been to the people of Egypt

for rain itself was virtually unknown to them (Zech. 14:18). Notice that some of the Egyptians were now beginning to fear Yahweh (v.20), in fulfilment with His purpose.

8. Locusts—Exodus 10:1-20

Through Pharaoh's foolish stubbornness this plague fell upon Egypt devouring it of all green growth, so that Pharaoh earnestly intreated Moses to forgive his sin. Again Yahweh was merciful and removed the locust, but Pharaoh hardened his heart again.

9. Complete Darkness—Exodus 10:24-29

This frightening plague completely blotted out the sun, which was worshipped by the Egyptians as their chief god. Again Pharaoh refused Moses' plea, so Moses left him with the words "I will see thy face again no more!"

10. The Passover

The final terrible plague was about to come upon Egypt to force Pharaoh to let Israel go. Death was to strike the firstborn of every family in Egypt, including the firstborn of their flocks and herds.

(a) Preparation For The Passover—Exodus 12:1-4

The Israelites were told to request precious items of jewellery from their Egyptian neighbours, who willingly gave them. The time was the month Abib, their new first month, for their Exodus from Egypt was going to be their new beginning.

On the tenth day they took a male lamb in its first year, making sure it had no blemish. Then on the fourteenth day they killed it "between the two evenings" (i.e. between 3 p.m.-6 p.m.) v.6 (margin). The blood of the lamb was caught in a basin and sprinkled on to the door posts and lintels (tops of the doorframes) of their houses by means of a bunch of hyssop. Then the lamb was roasted whole (v.9). The Israelites were in a state of great anticipation that evening. They had to stay inside their homes (v.22) and eat of the lamb with bitter herbs and unleavened bread (v.8). They were not to break a bone of the lamb (v.46). Any remains were to be burned in the fire (v.10). They were to eat the meal in haste, their sandals on their feet, their clothes tucked in and staff in their hand (v.11). As they were feasting, the angel bringing death went through the land of Egypt smiting the firstborn of every family. Only where he saw the blood upon the lintel did he "pass over" without causing death (vv.12-13, 23). This fearful night became a memorial event for Israel and to this day the Jews keep a Passover Feast (cp. v.14). On the same night that Egypt lost her firstborn, the children of Israel were saved from their bondage in the land of Egypt (v.27).

(b) *Jesus the True Passover—1 Corinthians 5:7*

It is wonderful how Jesus fulfilled the type of the Passover Lamb (John 1:29). Jesus entered Jerusalem on the tenth day of the first month and remained “penned” up there until his crucifixion four days later. His blood was shed for the salvation of those who trust in him and are ready to leave Egypt (slavery to sin).

He was a perfect sacrifice for there was no blemish found in him. His sinlessness and his righteousness made it possible for God to raise him from the dead and exalt him to His right hand. He is now a mediator for those who seek forgiveness of sins and a new way of life. Jesus kept a passover with his disciples just before his death. At this meal he spoke of a “new covenant” in the shedding of his blood. This new covenant would provide man with a way of deliverance from the bondage of sin and death. If men will accept his sacrifice and obey God, then they will share with him a “feast of deliverance” in the kingdom of God (Matthew 26:26-29). Since the sacrifice of Jesus, all baptised members of his ecclesia take bread and wine in memory of his deliverance. In so doing they are encouraged to look upon the world as Egypt — cruel, enslaving, dark (sinful), ending in death: and to look to God who is all powerful and can deliver us from death.

(c) *The Last Plague A Type Of Coming Judgment—Luke 21:24-28.*

The people of the earth today refuse to listen to God even though He brings punishment upon them. They harden their hearts and refuse to give honour to God. For this reason great calamities are occurring in the world. These calamities are natural, and in all man’s activities — political, social, economic, religious and environmental. They are happening more often and with greater effects. They are preparing men for the greatest event in their history — the appearance of the Son of God on earth. He will firstly deliver his people Israel from the bondage of the nations (Jer. 16:14, 15; Ezek. 36:21-24; Rom. 11:25-27). He will then deliver the nations out of bondage to sin and lead them all, Jew and Gentile, into a new life of service to God. Jesus exhorted us to “watch” so that we are not caught “sleeping” in that day (Luke 21:34-36).

REFERENCE LIBRARY:

“The Story Of The Bible” (H. P. Mansfield)—Pp. 258-277

“Elpis Israel” (J. Thomas)—Pp. 290-292; 295-297

“Visible Hand Of God” (R. Roberts)—Chapters. 11-14

“Law Of Moses” (R. Roberts)—Chapter 21

“Christadelphian Instructor”—Questions and Answers Nos. 91, 92

PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

1. *List the ten plagues.*
- ② *Why did God bring plagues upon Egypt?*
3. *Describe the Passover feast kept by the Israelites in Egypt.*

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

- ① *Describe how the Israelites kept the first Passover feast. Show the results of that night for Israel and for Egypt.*
2. *Explain how Jesus fulfilled the type of the Passover Lamb.*



18. BAPTISED INTO MOSES

The nation of Israel was about to be born! Yahweh had made His name great in Egypt and now He instructed Moses to lead Israel out. The crossing of the Red Sea is an event full of meaning, and we should try to understand its significance. We too, are called to leave behind a life of darkness, and to be baptised into a new life of "walking in light" i.e., according to the Word of God.

Exodus 14

LEAVING EGYPT BEHIND

The last plague had broken Pharaoh's resistance. In their sorrow for their firstborn sons, the Egyptians offered no resistance as the Israelites left.

600,000 men with their wives and children, together with some of the Egyptians who wanted to go with them, journeyed down to Succoth and camped there (Exod. 12:37, 38). Joyously they made booths to dwell in and celebrated their deliverance. Later when Israel was established in the land they celebrated this event by dwelling in booths each year during the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:39-43).

Leaving Succoth they journeyed down to Etham on the edge of the wilderness (Exod. 13:20). God was now leading the way with a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night (vv.21, 22). Why did God lead them south when He could have taken them by the main trade route to the north-east?

As well as leading the way to final deliverance from Egypt, God also knew that the people were not ready for war and occupation of the land (Exod. 13:17, 18; Deut. 8:2-6). They needed to be organised as a nation and given a Law. Sinai, with its quiet, remote and awe-inspiring mountains and wide plain, was well suited for this purpose. So in this direction they went.

PURSUED BY PHAROAH.

Moses led the people down the western side of the Red Sea. They camped at Pi-Hahiroth which was a desolate region with harsh, barren mountains and steep cuttings running down to the sea (Exod. 14:1-3). The area was grim and foreboding, and when Israel "lifted up their eyes," they saw the dust of Pharaoh's pursuing army! Hemmed in by mountains on each side, with the sea in front and the mighty Egyptian army in hot pursuit, Israel panicked. Terror and fear gripped the people. Pharaoh had regretted his decision to let them go and was "hard on their heels", determined to recapture and destroy the hated Hebrews.

It was such a habit to fear the Egyptians, that they turned upon Moses and accused him of bringing them into the wilderness to die! (Exod. 14:10-12).

Moses, however, was calm and faithful. He courageously calmed the panic stricken people with the words: "Fear ye not. Stand still, and see the salvation of Yahweh. . .He shall fight for you and ye shall hold your peace" (Exod. 14:13, 14).

DELIVERANCE THROUGH THE SEA

God gave Moses his instructions and then took the pillar of cloud and placed it between the Egyptians and the Israelites. While the Egyptians groped in darkness, the Israelites were given light to see, and to prepare to go on.

Moses led the children of Israel to the shore of the Red Sea. All night long a strong east wind blew, causing the waters of the sea to stand up as a wall and making a path through the sea (v.21; see frontispiece).

As the dawn broke—Moses gave the command to go forward. The children of Israel, accepting the miracle performed for them, hastened across. "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land" (Heb. 11:29).

The Egyptians, now able to see what was happening, plunged into the path in pursuit! But, alas for them, the chariot wheels came off, the horses floundered about, and all was confusion. Then they realised that they were fighting Israel's God, and panic broke out among them (Exod. 14:23-25).

Moses was instructed to stretch forth his rod again. When he did so the sea crashed in upon Pharaoh and his host. Not one escaped!

A NEW LIFE

Free now, from the bondage of slavery and death, Israel rejoiced in their deliverance. A wonderful song of deliverance was sung by Moses and the people, as recorded in Exodus 15:1-21. Truly, Yahweh had triumphed gloriously! (v.1).

God indeed is a Saviour and a Deliverer, able to do wonderfully in the cause of His people.

Paul says this crossing is like baptism (1 Cor. 10:1-5). It is a type intended to teach us the great things God will do for us if we will in faith "go forward" and obey God's command to be baptised (cp. Exod. 14:15).

While "buried" in the waters of baptism, we are like the Israelites of old: cut off from our past way of life. As we rise from the water to "a newness of life" (Rom. 6:3, 4) we are like Israelites standing on the East bank of the sea. We are then delivered from bondage, knowing that God is greater than the power of the world which held us captive before.

Ahead of us stands our "wilderness of life" with its narrow path leading to an eternal inheritance in the Kingdom of God. That

deliverance should cause us to serve God each day of our lives, with joyfulness and thanksgiving. God, who has done great things for us, is surely worthy of our praise.

Behind us lies our former life, lived in service to sin. Faith in the God who has delivered us and a life dedicated in service to our Deliverer will in the end bring victory over the greatest enemy of all — death (1 Cor. 15:22, 23; Rom. 6:23).

SUMMARY:

- When God brought Israel out of Egypt, He led them south into the wilderness to cut off Egypt from them, to protect them from war and to develop them as a nation.
- We too are disciplined through hardship and trial for the development of our character and to fit us for the Kingdom.
- With mountains left and right, sea in front, and enemy behind, the great lesson God taught Israel (and us) is that there is no salvation apart from Him. We also experience the protective hand of God, who saves us from those who would destroy us.
- Threatened by death but believing in God, Israel went through the Red Sea and were thus “baptised into Moses” (1 Cor. 10:2).
- Once we come to a knowledge of the Truth, we can be delivered from the bondage of sin and death, by baptism into Christ.

REFERENCE LIBRARY:

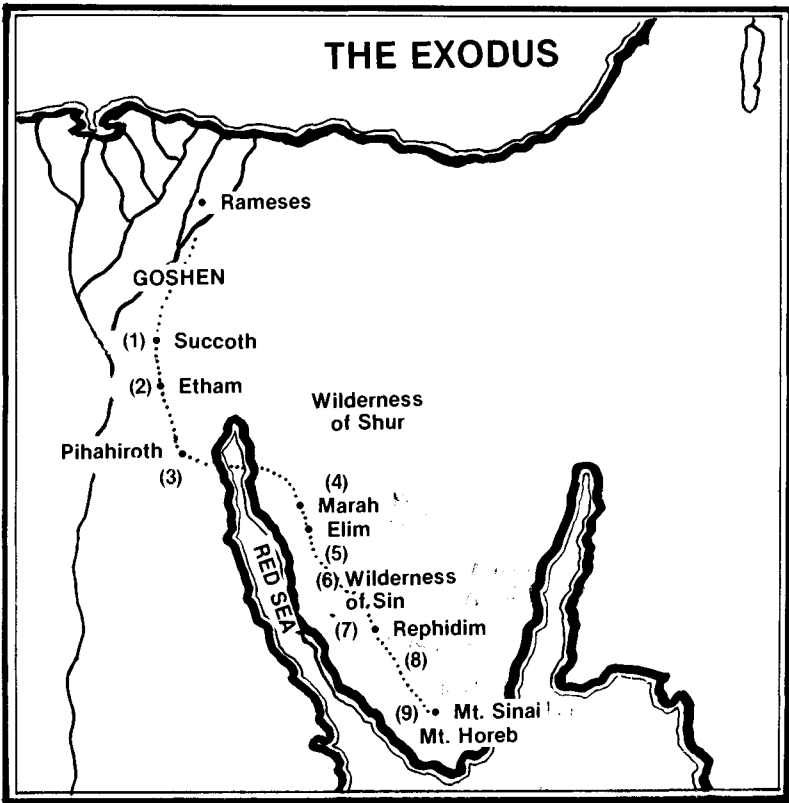
- “Elpis Israel” (J. Thomas)—Page 292-293
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- “Christadelphian Instructor” Questions and Answers Nos. 58 to 63
- “The Story Of The Bible” (H. P. Mansfield)—Pp. 278
- “The Wilderness of Life” (J. Martin)—C.S.S.S. Notes

PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

- 1. *Why did God lead the children of Israel south when He brought them out of Egypt?*
2. *How did the people react when pursued by Pharaoh? What was wrong with their attitude?*
3. *How did God deliver Israel from the pursuing army of Pharaoh?*
4. *In what way is baptism like Israel’s crossing of the Red Skea?*

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

- ♥ 1. *Describe the crossing of the Red Sea and the fate of the Egyptians.*
2. *On the basis of Israel’s deliverance at the Red Sea explain the difference between the life we leave behind at baptism and the new life in Christ.*



- (1) On the night of the Passover, and after the firstborn of Egypt had been slain, Moses leads the children of Israel out from Rameses to Succoth (12:31-39).
- (2) From Succoth they are led by the pillar of cloud to Etham on the edge of the wilderness (13:20-22).
- (3) The people are led along the western side of the Red Sea and, being pursued by Pharaoh, cross the Red Sea in a great display of God's mighty power to deliver His people (14:1-31).
- (4) After three days they come to Marah where the bitter waters were miraculously made sweet (15:22-25).
- (5) Israel encamp at Elim where there are 12 wells of water and 70 palm trees (15:27).
- (6) The people complain and are fed by manna and quails (16:1-36).
- (7) Again complaining, the people are given water from the rock at Rephidim (17:1-7).
- (8) Amalek is defeated when Moses' hands are held up by Aaron and Hur (17:8-16).
- (9) Israel arrives at Mt. Sinai where the Law is given through Moses (19:1-6).

19. SUSTAINED BY GOD IN THE DESERT

The children of Israel were in a state of great excitement. They were on their way back to the land of their fathers! But they were not very well organized, and they had to struggle along in family groups. The going was tough and it tried their faith. Like Israel of old, we tend to feel sorry for ourselves when things go wrong or the way seems hard. Though the children of Israel complained bitterly at times, Yahweh's love never left them. He gave them enough manna to eat, protected them from their enemies and brought them to Him at Mount Sinai.

Exodus 15-17

WATER TO DRINK (Exodus 15:22-27)

Free now of Egyptian bondage, the people were led by Moses south toward Sinai. They had to pass through the wilderness of Shur which was a weary, barren desert of low rolling sandhills. They were going to be “proved”, to know what was “in their heart” and to be “humbled” to learn to depend fully on God and His Word. That was the purpose of the wilderness wanderings (Deut. 8:2). For three days they trudged along without finding any water. Finally they came to Marah where there was an oasis.

But Marah means “bitter” and that was the condition of the water — undrinkable! The people were angry and complained to Moses saying, “What shall we drink?”

Yahweh gave the people a wonderful sign of His care for them by causing the waters to be healed when a tree was cast into the water. This is a “type” of Christ who when he was cut down (his crucifixion) made the bitter sinfulness of mankind sweet by giving them the hope of salvation. God could and would sustain His people through all their trials. He further promised them blessings if they obeyed His Word. He promised them freedom from the diseases of Egypt if they would—

- Listen to God;
- Do what is right in His eyes;
- Take notice of His commandments and keep His statutes (v. 26).

The people then moved on to Elim where they were refreshed by such a pleasant place with its 12 wells of sweet water surrounded by 70 palm trees. This represented the Kingdom when all the nations (70 palms) shall gather around the twelve tribes of Israel.

FOOD TO EAT (Exodus 16)

The huge company of Israelites now entered the wilderness of Sin. The character of the country altered. Rugged granite mountains thrust steeply upwards, and the people were forced to travel through narrow winding

ravines. Their progress was difficult, communication was a problem and food was running short. Despite the pillar of cloud above them, a sign of God's presence, they felt lost and bewildered.

They began to grumble. They longed for the flesh pots and fulness of bread in Egypt, completely forgetting the agony of their slavery. Note the "ye" of v.3. They blamed Moses and Aaron for their problems. God pointed out through Moses that it was He who had brought them there and He would now demonstrate once more His mighty power and care. He would provide flesh and bread to eat. That evening the people beheld a miracle. Vast flocks of quails came to the camp and the people were able to gather them for food.

Next morning after the sun had risen, and the dew had evaporated, the ground was covered with a white substance, small and round. The people said, "What is this" (i.e., "manna" see margin v. 15).

Moses explained that this was what God provided for their need. They were to gather enough for their families each day and to use it all. It would not keep. Trying to do so, some found that it bred worms and stank. However on the sixth day they were permitted to gather twice as much and to keep it overnight for there would be no manna on the sabbath.

Aaron was instructed to put some in a golden pot and place it in the Ark. This manna did not rot, although later the ark itself disappeared (cp. Rev. 2:17). This incorruptible manna represented the immortal risen Christ.

During all their wilderness wanderings God fed them with manna and it ceased only when Israel entered the promised land (Josh. 5:12).

A TYPE OF JESUS CHRIST (John 6:31-38).

Israel ate manna to save their natural lives from hunger and starvation. It was designed also, to teach them spiritual lessons. Moses taught them "man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD" (Deut. 8:3). They were therefore, to seek after God's word as they did their natural food (cp. Matt. 5:6) — keenly and daily.

Jesus later pointed out that he was "the true bread", for anyone who ate of the bread that he could give would live for ever (John 6:51). This "bread" is the example he showed of loving God's Word and doing his Father's will at all times. We need to have a "taste" for the Word of God. To "eat" and "digest" this bread is to be more satisfied than with any amount of natural bread (Isa. 55:1-3; John 6:56, 57). By it we can live spiritually growing and gaining strength.

The Israelites had to gather the manna every day, and so we must study daily the word of God. The manna kept them alive during the wilderness wanderings, and the word of God is able to strengthen our “spiritual man”, and give us eternal life in the Kingdom of God. The Israelites who ate the manna are now dead, but Jesus said that those who eat the “true bread from heaven” shall live forever (John 6:33, 40, 49).

We can keep our natural man alive with natural food. To reach the kingdom of God we need to feed daily on the food which God provides — His Word.

WATER FROM THE ROCK (Exod. 17:1-7)

The cloud moved on and the people followed until they came to Rephidim where it rested — but there was no water! Once again Moses received their complaints, and once again took it to God in prayer. God instructed Moses to go to a particular rock and smite it in the sight of all Israel. Moses did so and miraculously water flowed out, by which their thirst was satisfied.

Paul says that this rock pointed forward to Christ (1 Cor. 10:4). He has been “smitten” by God in being put to death. But God raised him, and as a result, life-giving “waters” have flowed out to all nations (in the Gospel). Those who drink of this “stream” will be refreshed and strengthened in their wilderness journey (John 4:14).

THE AMALEKITE ATTACK — THE POWER OF PRAYER (Exodus 17:8-16)

Suddenly Israel faced a new danger. At Rephidim they were attacked from the rear by the cowardly Amalekites (Deut. 25:17-18).

Moses appointed Joshua as captain of an army which he sent forth against the enemy. They were unskilled in war and would certainly have suffered defeat if God had not helped. Moses took Aaron and Hur and on a high look-out point held up his arms in prayer to God on high.

Immediately the tide of battle turned and Israel was successful, but as soon as Moses’ arms drooped through weariness the Amalekites started to win. So Aaron and Hur sat Moses on a stone and held up his hands until Israel had achieved a victory over Amalek. For their attack on His people, God declared an unending hatred of Amalek and towards those who like them would seek the opportunity to take advantage of Israel (Exod. 17:14-16). The action of Samuel against Agag, the king of all the Amalekites illustrates God’s judgment against this nation (1 Sam. 15:2, 3).

The lesson for us from Rephidim is that prayer is powerful. We can gain strength from Yahweh when we ask Him to help.

Even now, Jesus sits at God's right hand to help those who will put their trust in him, believe his word and pray for strength (James 5:16; 1:5-6; Luke 18:1). God will deliver those who trust in Him and grant them the great victory over sin and death (2 Cor. 10:4-5; Phil. 4:13).

There is a time coming, too, when Christ with his saints as the all powerful commanders of Israel will subdue the nations to the rule of Christ (Isa. 55:4; Zech. 9:13, 14).

SUMMARY

- From what happened at Marah we learn that by obeying God's commandments we will obtain spiritual health and sweetness in our wilderness journey.
- "Man does not live by bread alone but by every word of Yahweh". God has provided us with that food which, if we partake daily, will bring us into His Kingdom. The manna is a symbol for God's Word.
- Jesus styled himself "The true bread". The eating of this true bread will give eternal life. This is done when we read his Word and obey it, thus developing a Christ-like character in our own lives.
- Moses brought water out from the smitten rock which was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. Living water (the Gospel) has flowed to all nations for them to drink and be healed.
- The defeat of Amalek points to the time when Christ will finally overcome all evil and establish Israel as the centre of the Kingdom.
- We must recognise our dependence upon God and pray continually for His guidance.

REFERENCE LIBRARY:

- "Elpis Israel" (J. Thomas)—Pages 294, 295
- "The Visible Hand Of God" (R. Roberts)—Chapter 15
- "The Story Of The Bible" (H. P. Mansfield)—Pp. 279-306
- "The Wilderness Of Life" (J. Martin)—C.S.S.S. Notes

PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

1. (a) *How were the waters of Marah healed?*
(b) *What lesson was taught Israel by this?*
2. *What was the manna and in what way was the manna in the wilderness a type of Christ?*
3. *What was the significance of the smiting of the rock at Rephidim?*
4. *How were Israel able to defeat Amalek?*

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

1. *What lessons do we learn from the giving of manna and water in the wilderness?*
2. *How were the Amalekites defeated at Rephidim and what lessons do we learn from this incident?*

20. ISRAEL AT SINAI— A KINGDOM FORMED

When the children of Israel reached Mount Sinai they were only a collection of people struggling along in family groups. It was necessary for them to be organised into a kingdom. Through Moses, God gave them a law which taught them how to live with God and each other. It made them into a kingdom, gave immediate benefits upon their obedience to it, taught them lessons about the work of their Messiah and how they might share with him eternal life.

They were about to become the kingdom of God on earth and the events that followed suitably prepared them for this great responsibility.

Exodus 19 and 20

ARRIVAL AT MOUNT SINAI—GOD'S MESSAGE TO HIS PEOPLE

Now we look at the people of Israel almost three months after they left Egypt, approaching Mount Sinai, which is an awesome, towering mass of granite rock rising out of the surrounding plain.

The people camped near the Mount and God called Moses up to the top of the mountain. God explained why He had saved Israel and what He intended to do with them. They were to become a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exod. 19:6). No longer a struggling band of ex-slaves but now they were to be organised as a highly privileged and honoured people. They were to be a nation whose calling was to serve in holiness their God who had so miraculously delivered them out of Egypt.

Notice how God says that "He bare Israel on eagle's wings." An eagle thrusts her young out of the nest to make them fly. They are carefully watched as they flutter towards the ground below. Before they crash on the ground the mother swoops down and bears the young ones aloft. So the young learn to trust their mother. In the same way God showed His care for the new-born nation of Israel. He had brought them to birth and nationhood in saving them from the afflictions of Egypt. His care for them at Marah, Elim and Rephidim, gave them many reasons to trust in Him.

After God had finished speaking with Moses, he returned to the people. He told them that if they would obey God's voice and keep His covenant, God would make them His people, a peculiar treasure to Himself above all people and they would be a Kingdom of priests. They would therefore be a witness to God teaching other nations of God's ways (Deut. 4:6).

The people agreed to keep the covenant of God (Exodus 19:7, 8).

GOD ESTABLISHES HIS KINGDOM

Moses took the answer of the Israelites back to God, who told him to prepare the people because he was going to manifest Himself to them (Exod. 19:9). He was going to show the people that it was indeed Yahweh who had spoken with Moses. God was also going to tell the people, directly, the first principles of the covenant He was making with them.

The people had three days to prepare (Exod. 19:10-15). They had to be holy in mind and body because they were to meet with God. As His children they must be holy or separate for He is a holy and jealous God. Barriers were set around the mount because it was a holy place and the people of Israel were not to touch it or they would die.

On the third day, the silence was suddenly shattered by thunder and lightning. The ground shook and a thick cloud covered the top of the mount. Flames issued from it. The piercing blast of a trumpet rent the air, and the people trembled in fear. Moses brought the people to the foot of the mount. God called Moses up to the mount again and told him to be sure that no one came near the foot of the mount.

Why did God do this?

The people came out of Egypt disorganised and often worshipping idols. In order that they might fear and obey Him, God accompanied the giving of His law with fearful signs (Exod. 20:18-20; Deut. 4:10-11).

The angel of Yahweh then spoke in a great voice to the people (Deut. 5:22).

THE PEOPLE GIVEN LAWS

1. The Ten Commandments — God's Covenant

The angel gave the people ten important commandments which they were to obey. These commandments formed the basis of God's covenant with them as the people of His kingdom. They were guidelines as to how they should conduct their lives, to be holy as Yahweh is holy.

We read these commandments in Exodus 20:1-7. They are arranged in a special way. The *first four* speak about *our relationship to God* — He is to be first in our affections.

1. Thou shalt have no other gods beside Me;
2. Thou shalt not worship any graven image.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Yahweh Thy God in vain.
4. Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy.

The next one speaks of the need for children to obey parents, next in importance to God. It was a commandment with a blessing of long and happy family service to God in the land that He would give them. Paul says that it was the first commandment with promise (Eph. 6:2, 3). What

a lovely thing it is to see family love and unity. What a tragedy it is to see the reverse.

5. Honour thy father and mother.

The rest concern behaviour to fellow man. Whereas God is mentioned in the first five commandments (Exod. 20:2-12), He is not mentioned in the second five (vv.13-17).

6. Thou shalt not kill.

7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

8. Thou shalt not steal.

9. Thou shalt not bear false witness.

10. Thou shalt not covet anything that is thy neighbour's.

We learn from this arrangement that God requires us to place Him *first* in our lives, our duty as parents and families *second* and other people *third*. Notice that there is no place for ourselves! There is no commandment which draws attention to "self".

These commandments are called "My covenant" (Exod. 19:5). Moses says in Exod. 34:28 "He wrote upon the tables, the words of the covenant, the ten commandments."

(b) Further Laws and Judgments

When God stopped giving the commandments He ordered the people back to their tents. Then He gave Moses further commandments and instructions which the people were to obey in their daily lives. These laws and statutes taught them how to worship God, how they were to treat each other, and how they were to regard the nations among whom they dwelt. All these laws together we call the Law of Moses.

(c) The People Make A Covenant —Exodus 24:1-11

Moses wrote the words of the ten commandments in a book and assembled all the children of Israel together. He read them again in their hearing and the people said, "all the words which Yahweh hath said will we do and be obedient" v. 7. Unfortunately in the next lesson we shall see how quickly they forgot these words. Moses then caught the blood of a sacrifice in a bowl and sprinkled the altar, the book and the people with the blood. In this way the people understood that they had entered into a solemn agreement with Yahweh. The basis of their national covenant with Yahweh was sacrifice. The shedding of the life blood bound them to their God. To emphasise how solemn and important the covenant ceremony was Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and 70 of the elders of Israel were permitted to see the glory of Yahweh manifested in *elohim* (angels) and to eat a meal of fellowship with them.

THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW

We have seen how God gave Israel the Law to establish them as a special people (His kingdom) with their minds thinking like His so that other nations would admire them (Deut. 4:6-8), fear them (Deut. 28:9-10) and follow their example (Zech. 8:23).

The law helped them to think of God every day in all circumstances. It directed the nation to think about the deep meaning of their laws and sacrifices. Sacrifice and offering pointed to Christ's sacrifice. Thus faithful Israelites were directed to the coming of the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world (John 1:29). Paul in Gal. 3:24 says that "the Law was a school-master" to bring the people to Christ.

The children of Israel could not keep the law perfectly. The failure of the Israelites to keep the law should have impressed upon them their need of a Saviour. It taught them to look for someone to come who would be able to redeem them. This one was to be their Messiah (Christ) (Gal. 3:13, 24, 4:4). His perfect obedience to his Father's will, even unto death, "pleased" God far more than any sacrifice of oxen or lambs.

BY GRACE YE ARE SAVED, THROUGH FAITH

Of the Jews who believed in Christ, Paul says, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law being made a curse for us, for it is written 'cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree'" (Gal. 3:13).

The Law, in cursing a righteous man simply because he hung on a tree, was done away with. The Lord Jesus Christ had fulfilled all righteousness throughout his life and even in his crucifixion he laid down his life in obedience to his Father's will. In all his life he declared that God's ways were right. His was a perfect offering and on that basis of a sinless life the grave could not hold him. Hence we do not live under the Law, but under grace (Rom. 6:14; Eph. 2:8). Grace is "unmerited Divine favour". We are blessed with the mercy, goodness and favour of God because we have faith in His son who exhibited so perfectly His Father's will and character.

In order to receive the grace of God we must:—

- Believe the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ — the Gospel (Acts 8:12).
- Be baptised into Jesus Christ (Mark 16:15-16).
- Try as hard as we can to follow the teaching and example of Christ (Matt. 11:28-30). "Faith works by love" (Gal. 5:6).

Like Israel under Moses, those who accept Christ by belief, baptism and obedience are accounted in God's sight as "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar (purchased) people" (1 Peter 2:9). These words are a clear reminder of Israel's calling to be a Kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Like Israel we are called to show in our lives the glory of God who is calling us out of the darkness into the marvellous light of the Truth (see 1 Pet. 2:9; Exod. 19:6).

REFERENCE LIBRARY:

“Elpis Israel” (J. Thomas)—Pp. 298-299

“The Visible Hand of God” (R. Roberts)—Chapter 16

“The Story Of The Bible” (H. P. Mansfield)—Pp. 307-312

“Christadelphian Instructor”—Questions & Answers Nos. 96-102

PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

1. *List the ten commandments.*
- * 2. *How are the ten commandments grouped and what do we learn from this?*
3. *What was the purpose of the Law of Moses?*

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

- * 1. *Tell how the Law of Moses changed the children of Israel and fitted them to be the Kingdom of God on earth.*
2. *The Law was a “schoolmaster” to bring Israel to Christ. How did it do this and why was the Law done away?*

21. THE GOLDEN CALF

God's purpose in His people was to make them a "kingdom of priests and an holy nation". It was a difficult task because human nature does not readily accept God's laws — it has to be trained. Before concluding our lessons on Israel's worship and service at the Tabernacle, we need to consider the warning of how quickly Israel forgot about Yahweh. In this lesson we shall see how easily the children of Israel fell back to fleshly ways learned in Egypt.

Moses is revealed as a mediator for his people and Yahweh's love is shown as He corrects and chastens His people.

Exodus 32

ISRAEL AT SINAI

In the third month after leaving Egypt, Israel came to Sinai and there received the ten commandments and many other laws and ordinances. There God made a covenant with them. If they would obey Him, He would make them a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exod. 19:5-6). The people agreed to God's offer accepting it and making it binding upon themselves. They were now a covenant people, separate from all others because they worshipped the true God instead of idols. They were the only people to have laws given by God.

Chapters 25 to 31 of Exodus describe how Moses received the Law and the design of the Tabernacle. Chapter 32 describes events in the camp of Israel at the same time.

MOSES IN THE MOUNT—ISRAEL GROWS IMPATIENT (Exodus 32:1-6)

While Moses was in the mount 40 days, Aaron had been left in charge of the people with the elders. He wasn't strong enough to resist their wish to break God's law. He complied with Israel's wishes for, "gods which will go before us", fearing the people. Taking their golden ear-rings he melted them down and moulded a golden calf which they worshipped. They said, "these be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (v.4). What a terrible insult that was to Yahweh, their deliverer!

The following day was proclaimed by Aaron to be a feast to Yahweh. Rising early in the morning, the people came and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings on an altar erected in front of the calf. Aaron may have hoped they would worship Yahweh but Paul says that they were idolaters and pleasure seekers who "sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play" (1 Cor. 10:7). How evil the people had become in the absence of their leader. In worshipping the calf they had:

- broken the first and second commandments (Exod. 20:22-6);
- insulted Yahweh;
- shown how extremely unfaithful they were in returning to the idolatrous ways of Egypt at the first chance.

MOSES INTERCEDES FOR HIS PEOPLE (Exodus 32:7-18).

With all that idolatry going on among His people, Yahweh's jealousy rose up in terrible anger. God told Moses what was happening in the camp. He was so angry that He had decided to destroy Israel and start a new nation from Moses. Moses interceded for his people, whom he knew to be unfaithful. He saved them from destruction by pleading with God to remember the honour of His name among the nations. God would be mocked if He let them perish after He had delivered them from Egypt. Moses also called on God to remember His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to give their seed (Israel) an inheritance in the Promised Land.

The wonderful character of Moses as a mediator is shown at this time. Instead of grasping at the honour of a nation starting from him, he pleaded strongly for Israel's forgiveness. He was willing to have *his* name blotted from the Book of Life, if only God would forgive *them* (Exod. 32:32). God showed him however that anyone who sins must be punished, as in Colossians 3:23-25 "He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons." Sins may be forgiven, but to be forgiven, the wrong doer himself or herself must repent and seek forgiveness (1 John 1:9).

MOSES RETURNS (Exodus 32:15-24)

Moses went down the mountainside carrying the two tables of stone on which the Law was written. He was joined by Joshua. As they neared the camp they could hear the people shouting around the gods that Aaron had made. Joshua thought it was the noise of war (v. 7) but Moses knew that it was not so.

MOSES DEALS WITH THE PROBLEM (Exod. 32:25-35)

When Moses saw the extent of Israel's sin, he was so angry that he broke the tablets of the law that God had given him (v.19). Turning on the golden calf he burnt it with fire, and ground it to powder, mixed it with water and made the Israelites drink it. Moses blamed Aaron for leading the people astray and he in turn blamed the people (v.24).

Moses appealed to those who were prepared to stand for the things of God, to stand with him. His own tribe of Levi did so; with sword in hand they went through the tribes of Israel in judgment, killing 3,000 idolators.

God's anger was still not appeased and he sent a plague upon the people. It was only through the constant pleading of Moses that finally He forgave the people and promised that He would send His angel to guide them to their inheritance.

Moses was told to go into the Mount again with two new tablets, on which God would write the ten commandments as before.

ISRAEL'S SIN A WARNING TO US

In all the things that happened to Israel the scriptures show us that there are many strong warnings for us (1 Cor. 10:6-14). Paul tells us that these things were written as figures or types, stories with a warning for us who live so many years later. They lusted after evil things and were idolaters but we must be on guard never to slip into their wicked ways. They had many signs of Yahweh being with them, yet they acted as if they didn't care or believe in Him. We are surrounded by an evil society, so let us take special care to be faithful to God.

As Moses ascended into the Mount, so the Lord Jesus Christ has ascended into heaven where he intercedes for those who approach God through him. It is possible for us to tire of his absence (2 Peter 3:4). We may doubt, as they did, whether he will come again. The Israelites broke their promises to love and serve Yahweh alone. We don't make idols like the calf, but we can forget God and worship other things, such as money, pleasure, or a high position in the world, and may be as unready for the return of Christ as Israel was for the return of Moses. Then, instead of receiving his blessing and commendation, we will witness only his anger and receive his condemnation. We must resolve to wait in faith, reading His word, thinking about His truth and be ready for His return, doing the will of our Master.

REFERENCE LIBRARY:

"The Story Of The Bible" (H. P. Mansfield)—Pp. 313-327

"The Visible Hand Of God" (R. Roberts)—Chapter 17

PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

1. *Why was it wrong for the people to construct the golden calf?*
2. *How did Moses learn of Israel's idolatry and what did he do?*
3. *How did Moses deal with the problem of the golden calf at his return?*
- 4. *What part did the tribe of Levi play in overcoming the problem of the golden calf?*

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

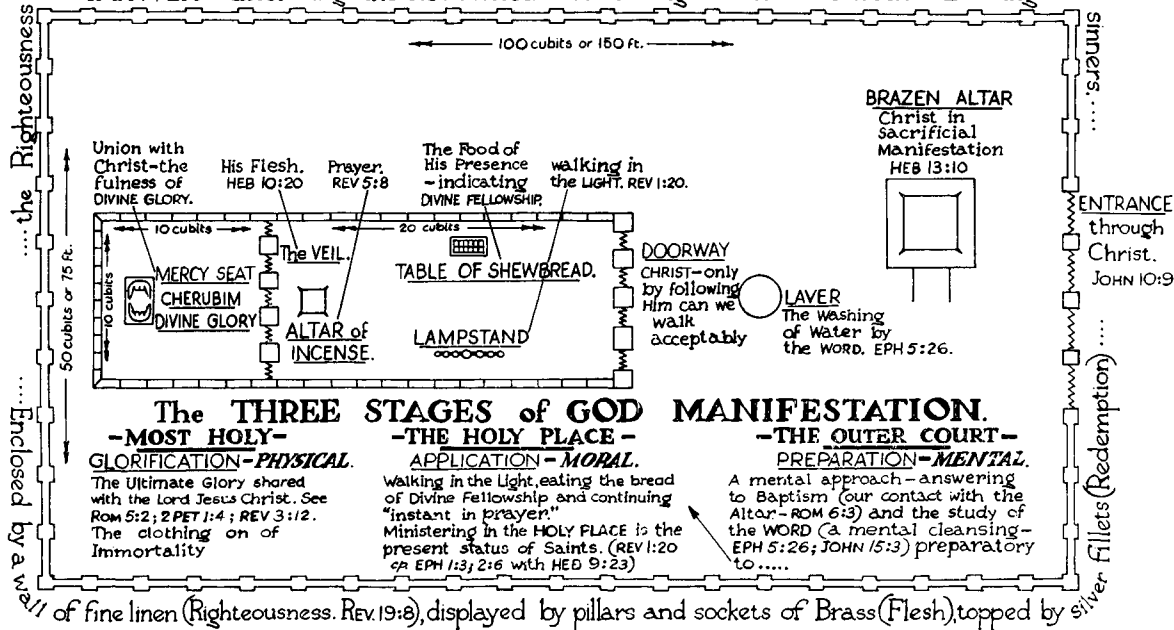
- 1. *What lessons do we learn from Israel's sin in making a golden calf?*
2. *Tell what Moses did when he descended Mount Sinai and found that the people had turned to idols. How does this incident parallel what Jesus Christ will do when he returns?*

The TABERNACLE - CENTRE of DIVINE WORSHIP in ISRAEL

"A figure for the time then present.." (HEB 9:9) - foreshadowing GOD-MANIFESTATION.

PLANS DIVINELY REVEALED - WORKMEN SPECIALLY ENDOWED - MATERIALS TAKEN "OUT OF" EGYPT.

of YAHWEH - Enclosing the Redeemed - Excluding all that defileth - Barring all



22. THE TABERNACLE: GOD'S MEETING PLACE WITH ISRAEL

The children of Israel needed a central point of worship in their lives. They needed to be continually reminded of Yahweh's holiness and the right way of worship. The tabernacle taught them all this as well as giving valuable instruction about the manifestation of God's glory in the future. Every detail of the tabernacle and its furniture is full of meaning. In discovering these meanings there is a wealth of instruction for us in our approach to God in worship (cp. Heb. 9:1-10).

Exodus 25

GENERAL DETAILS

When Moses was receiving the law in the Mount, God commanded that a special place should be constructed where He would meet with Israel. There they would assemble to worship and remember Him. This was necessary for their spiritual education. Here is revealed God's care for His people and His provision for them — "Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" (Exod. 25:8; 29:43-46). Sanctuary means "separate place". Even though Yahweh dwells in heaven, He was pleased to reveal His presence in the Tabernacle at the centre of His nation. As Israel had no fixed dwelling place a permanent building was impossible. Therefore God designed a movable tent or sanctuary. It could be carried in sections and erected without the use of hammer and nails.

God the Designer (Exod. 25:8-9). In the construction of every building, an architect, a plan, estimates, materials and workmen are essential. God gave Moses a detailed design of the Tent of Meeting or Tabernacle.

Materials (Exodus 25:1-7). Moses appealed for gifts and the people willingly brought treasures they had taken from the Egyptians. Only the best materials were offered: gold, silver and brass were the metals needed for the vessels; linen, wool and threads for the curtains, goats' hair, rams' skins and badger skins for the outer roof coverings of the Tent. The wood used was shittim or acacia grown in the desert. It is a beautiful, very hard wood, and very durable.

The Workmen (Exod. 35:30-35). Skilled workmen were appointed by God's command. God gave them wisdom, and understanding of how to work with the materials. The wood had to be prepared and fitted. The metals had to be molten and cast. The linen curtains had to be woven and embroidered. Women with clever fingers did this, realising that the work was for God. What a hive of activity it must have been with so many willing hearted and wise-hearted men and women working so enthusiastically for Yahweh. We should be similarly enthusiastic about our activities in Sunday School working happily with others of like precious faith.

Position of the Tabernacle (Num. 2:17-34). The Tabernacle was set in an enclosure 46 m long by 23 m wide, shut off from contact with the people by a curtain wall. The Tabernacle and enclosures, with its entrance

toward the east, was set up in the midst of the camp of Israel (Num. 2:17). The camp of Israel was set out in a square: on the East were Judah, Issachar and Zebulun; on the south were Reuben, Simeon and Gad; on the West were Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin; on the North were Dan, Asher and Naphtali. Inside this square was a further square made of the tents of the Levites. The tribe of Levi was also divided into four divisions (Numbers 3). Then inside this priestly square was the Tabernacle itself.

Israel was thus gathered around the Tabernacle, a symbol of what every true Israelite should do. But they were not allowed direct contact with the Tabernacle because the Levites and the Priests stood between them and it. God was showing His people that He is holy (i.e. separate) and even though they had been selected above all other nations they must reverence Him.

THE COURT OF THE TABERNACLE—OR ENCLOSURE (Exod. 40:29-33) (see drawing of layout p.92)

The court was a space of 46 m long by 23 m wide, enclosed with fine twined linen curtains, about 2½ m high. It was supported upon brass pillars with fittings of silver and brass. A gate made of four pillars and curtains of blue, purple and scarlet fine twined linen was the entry to the court. Set in this court were:—

- The brazen altar of burnt offerings;
- The laver;
- The Tabernacle itself, divided into the Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place.

Let us now see how these details point forward to Christ:—

The Curtains enclosed the court of the Tabernacle. Only the Israelites serving God entered through the curtains by way of the door, into the court. Christ is our only way of approach to God. Christ is the Door (John 10:9). “No man cometh unto the Father but by me” (John 14:6). Before we can come to God in truth, we must understand and acknowledge the work of God in Christ (Acts 4:12). The outer court represents a person’s introduction to the Truth; so its fittings were of brass.

The Brazen Altar was of wood covered with brass, approximately 2¼m square by 1½ m high. In the centre of it was a grate upon which the animals brought as sacrifices were burned. The fire was never allowed to go out (Lev. 6:12). The Israelites learned that the first thing in acceptable worship of God was sacrifice. The sacrificial blood was shed “to make reconciliation” to God (Lev. 8:15).

This altar was a type point to Christ. Through him we draw nigh to God (Heb. 13:10). Further, the atoning blood of Christ gains forgiveness and redemption for us (Hebrews 9:13-14).

The Laver was in the court for the priests to wash in before ministering in the Tabernacle (Exod. 30:20-21). It was to teach a reverence for God's holiness. Only those with clean hands and a pure heart shall stand before God (Ps. 24:3-4). The washing at the laver is a type of our daily contact with God's Word: "washing by the word" (Eph. 5:26 cp. John 15:3). Through the word we can be cleansed and escape the defilements of the world about us.

THE TABERNACLE AND ITS CONTENTS (Exod. 40:1-28)

Refer also to earlier chapters of Exodus for details of the Tabernacle.

The Construction. The Tabernacle was a framework of boards overlaid with beaten gold. The boards were connected with rods along the side and fitted at the base into silver sockets. The Tabernacle was not very large — about 14 m long, 4.6 m wide and 4.6 m high. As a tent its sides and top were covered with curtains, four in number, to protect the vessels in it. It could be entered from one end only.

The Coverings. The first curtain was of fine twined linen embroidered (decorated by sewing) in blue, purple and scarlet. The second curtain was woven goats' hair — protection for the fine linen. The third curtain was rams' skins sewed together, dyed red. The fourth curtain was badger or seals' skins — very hard wearing.

The Holy Place. The Tabernacle was made of two sections. The first was known as the Holy Place, measuring 9 m long, 4½ m wide and 4½ m high. The other end, divided from the Holy Place by a curtain or veil, was the Most Holy Place or Holy of Holies, which shall be considered in detail in the next lesson. The Priests attended to their tasks daily in the Holy Place.

The items in the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place were of gold which speaks of a tried faith (1 Peter 1:7). Therefore the Tabernacle represents a true believer's service to God after baptism (i.e. walking in faith).

The Holy Place contained:—

- The table of shewbread;
- The seven-branched lampstand;
- The golden altar of incense.

The Table of Shewbread held the twelve loaves of bread which represented the twelve tribes of Israel. The bread was changed every Sabbath Day (Lev. 24:8). The old loaves were to be eaten only by the priests and always in the Holy Place. During our life of service as brethren and sisters we partake of Christ whom the Shewbread represented as "the Bread of Life" (John 6:35 and 38). Then partaking of him, we offer to God the fruits of our labours, the result of his influence in our lives.

The Golden Lampstand held the seven lights that burned continually, and represented the light of truth (2 Peter 1:19). We must walk being guided by this light, which comes from reading and understanding God's Word (Psa. 119:105). In this way our thoughts are directed to God.

The Altar of Incense. At morning and evening incense was burned upon it. Incense is a perfume from spices and is sweet and fragrant. David said, "Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense" (Psa. 141:2). Through the altar, incense ascended to God. Likewise prayer ascends to God through Jesus Christ, the true altar. Prayers to God express longing for fellowship with Him, and the day when His goodness will triumph in the earth. The prayers of sincere brethren and sisters in Christ ascend to God as a "sweet savour" pleasing to God.

THE CLOUD OVER THE TABERNACLE (Exod. 40:34-38)

"Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation" (v.34). Outside, and visible to the people, the cloud and the pillar rested. So long as the cloud by day and the appearance of fire by night stayed over the Tabernacle, the children of Israel stayed in the same place and did not journey; when the cloud was taken up from over the Tabernacle, the people went forward and followed where it led.

When we consider the wonderful design of the Tabernacle and its different parts so full of meaning, we can appreciate God's greatness and goodness. The camp of Israel was set out in a square and the Tabernacle was set up in the midst of the camp. There, within the Tabernacle, God's glory shone as we shall see in our next lesson. The people were continually reminded to praise and honour Him.

REFERENCE LIBRARY:

- "The Story Of The Bible" (H. P. Mansfield)—Pp. 335-383
"The Visible Hand Of God" (R. Roberts)—Chapt. 17
"Law of Moses" (R. Roberts)—Chapts, 14, 15, 16

PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

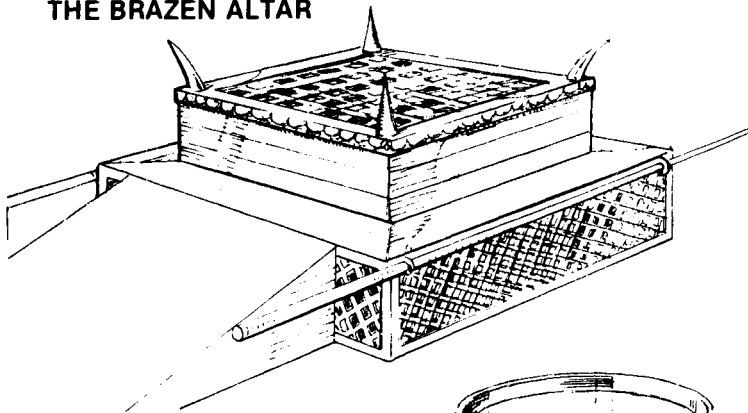
1. *Who planned the Tabernacle and why did Israel need it?*
2. *Name two metals used in the making of the Tabernacle and say what they represent?*
3. *Tell the meaning of:—*
(a) The lampstand; (b) The laver; (c) The door.

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

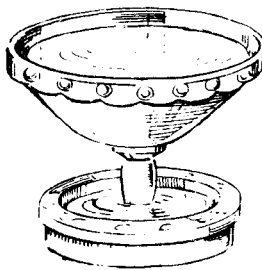
1. *Explain the reason for the Tabernacle's position in the midst of Israel?*
2. *What lessons are there for us in the Outer Court and the Holy Place of the Tabernacle? Make sure you refer to the Altar of Sacrifice.*
3. *Describe the table of shewbread, the lampstand, the altar of incense in the Holy Place and tell what they mean for us today.*

THE FURNITURE OF THE TABERNACLE

THE BRAZEN ALTAR

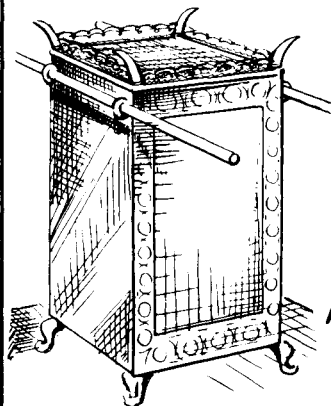
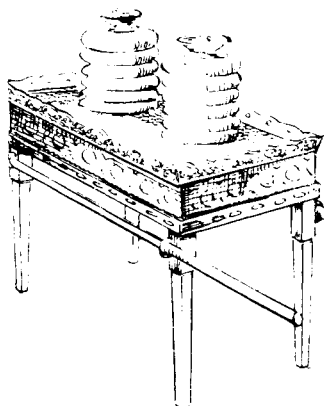


THE LAVER



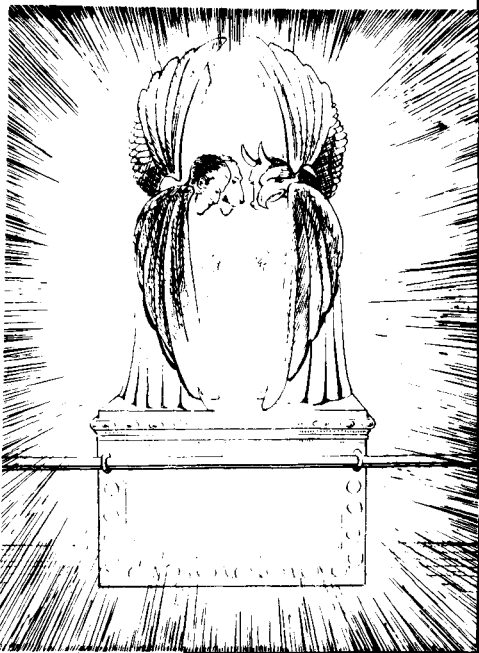
THE SEVEN
BRANCHED
LAMPSTAND

TABLE OF SHEWBREAD



ALTAR OF INCENSE

**THE ARK
OF THE COVENANT**



23. THE MOST SACRED PLACE IN ISRAEL

The Most Holy Place was Israel's most sacred place, as its name indicates. Only the High Priest was permitted into it, and even then only once a year after a special ritual. In this way all Israel was impressed with the holiness of Yahweh their God. He is separate from all flesh, and man must humble himself before Him if he wants to be approved of God.

Exodus 25:10-22; 37:1-9

THE MOST HOLY PLACE

The far end of the Tabernacle was divided by a curtain or veil like the one at the door. The Veil separated the Most Holy from the Holy Place and it was through this that the High Priests entered only *once* a year on the Day of Atonement (Exod. 30:10). Only *he* was allowed into the Most Holy. Israel was taught that Yahweh was separate from all flesh and that man needs a mediator (a go-between) appointed by God between himself and God.

THE VAIL

The veil was a curtain of needlework embroidered with blue, purple and scarlet threads and gold cherubim. It was hung from four wooden pillars overlaid with gold. It separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy. The colours of the threads of the veil are used to mean the following in scripture:—

Fine Linen represents righteousness (Rev. 19:8);

Scarlet symbolises sin (Isa. 1:18). Christ is the sin bearer whose blood was shed for us (1 Pet. 2:24).

Purple is a token of royalty showing Christ's royal destiny (Jn. 19:2)

Being a mixture of red and blue, it is a token of priests mediating between man and God (1 Tim. 2:5);

Blue is a symbol of holiness to God (Num. 15:38-40).

THE FURNITURE IN THE MOST HOLY

The only furniture in the Most Holy was the **Ark of the Covenant**. It was a chest made of shittim wood overlaid with gold, and with rings of gold on each corner and staves of wood overlaid with gold. The lid called the "Mercy Seat", was a slab of pure gold, with the figures of two cherubim — one at each end, beaten out of the *same* piece of gold. The two cherubim had outstretched wings which bent over the mercy seat. Its faces looked toward each other and down upon the mercy seat. Inside the

Ark there were the tables of stone, on which was inscribed the Law, the golden pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded.

THE CHERUBIM AND MERCY SEAT

The Mercy Seat pointed forward to Jesus Christ, who is our Mercy Seat (Rom. 3:25). Through him, his brethren and sisters approach God and through him obtain forgiveness for their sins. The Cherubim are one with the Mercy Seat, being formed from the same piece of gold (Ex. 25:18-20). In the same way, true believers must be one with Jesus Christ (John 17:20-21). Notice that the faces of the Cherubim are turned towards the Mercy Seat (Exod. 25:20), as the faces of true believers should always be turned towards their Lord (Hebrews 12:2).

THE BLOOD IN THE MOST HOLY

Once every year on the **Day of Atonement**, the High Priest entered through the Vail into the Most Holy. He was commanded by God to sprinkle the mercy seat with blood (Lev. 16:14). If he dared to go into the Most Holy without doing this, he would be punished by death. The Mercy Seat was sprinkled with the blood of bulls and goats (Lev. 16:14-15). As the Cherubim looked down, their faces were turned towards the blood-spattered Mercy Seat. As our eyes are turned towards the Lord Jesus we "see" his great offering for us, and we realise that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. We know that in him is the true law, the true manna or bread of life (John 6:48-51), and the true resurrection of which Aaron's dead rod that budded is a symbol.

THE GLORY OF YAHWEH

The Most Holy had no need of artificial lighting as it was lit by the light of the glory of Yahweh, which shone from between the Cherubim and above the Mercy Seat (Exod. 29:43-46; 25:22).

When Jesus appeared 1960 years ago, he was likened to the LIGHT or GLORY of Yahweh *shining in a dark place* (John 1:5). He revealed the glory of the Father to men. In all that he said, and did, as well as in the wonderful character he had, there was seen a reflection of Divine glory. This was made even brighter when he was raised from the dead, and made immortal.

Possessing now the **nature** of God as well as God's **character**, he is, indeed, the expression of **Divine Glory**. As the High Priest saw the glory of God above the Mercy Seat, we can imagine it manifested by the Lord Jesus. John says that the disciples beheld in him "the glory of the Father" (John 1:14). This was the Father's moral glory. Paul later saw him in his physical glory (Acts 9:3; 22:6), and all the world will see Christ's glory at his return. The glory of Yahweh not only shone above

the Mercy Seat, but between the Cherubim as well. The lesson taught Israel (and us) is that true Israelites must reflect the same glory as the Mercy Seat. That is what Jesus meant when he said "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). We can reflect or mirror the glory of the Lord now, if he dwells in our hearts by faith (Eph. 3:17). If that is our position, we will in the end gain the glory which is the Lord Jesus' now. We will possess his nature of sinlessness and immortality, and share his glory. Thus Paul said we live "in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2) He also told us that Jesus at his return will change our body "that it may be like his glorious body" (Phil. 3:21). Then men will see in us, as in our Lord, the glory of Yahweh revealed (Rom. 8:18). How thankful we should be to be given such a glorious hope to take part in extending God's glory in the Kingdom Age. What an honour is held out to us!

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TABERNACLE TO US

In Hebrews 9:1-10, the Apostle shows how the rules, sacrifices and the Tabernacle furnishings were typical of Christ and his work. Later he states that Christ is our High Priest who has entered into heaven (vv. 11-12). He is our Mediator through whom we can approach and worship God (Heb. 10:19-24).

The Tabernacle was God's dwelling place and there He met with Israel. When Christ's work is completed and the earth freed from sin, God will dwell with men in the complete sense. If we are worthy and rewarded with eternal life God will dwell with us for eternity.

SUMMARY OF THE LESSONS FROM THE TABERNACLE

The three sections of the Tabernacle are like the three stages by which we can share God's glory in the coming Kingdom:

1. Outer Court — Preparing

All must enter the doorway (through Christ). They must wash at the laver by heeding the instruction of the Word. Then they must make contact with the altar of sacrifice through Baptism. Only then are they fit to enter the Holy Place.

2. Holy Place — Walking In The Light

A person does this when he accepts Christ in the way appointed. He must walk in the light of the Truth (Lampstand). He must partake of the bread of life and bring forth fruit to God (Shewbread). He must keep on praying (Incense).

3. Most Holy Place — Sharing The Glory

The apostle says that the veil is a symbol of the flesh (Heb. 10:20). Thus to go 'beyond the veil' is to become immortal. In the bright shining of glory there is seen the final glory of one who has accepted Christ and has walked consistently in the light of his truth.

As the Most Holy Place was approached, fewer in Israel were permitted to enter as worshippers. Thus:

- a) Outside the court were the thousands of Israel;
- b) Inside the court the Levites and priests could come;
- c) In the Holy Place only the Priests were permitted;
- d) In the Most Holy the High Priest alone could enter once a year.

Jesus has told us that many are called but few will be chosen. They will enter the immortal, divine state, represented by the Most Holy Place. Let us listen to that call and joyfully seek to know the Truth so that we can be judged worthy to enter the Kingdom of God.

REFERENCE LIBRARY:

- “Visible Hand Of God” (R. Roberts)—Ch. 17
“The Law Of Moses” (R. Roberts)—Ch. 13
“Law And Grace” (W. F. Barling)—Pp 63-66
“The Tabernacle” (H. C. Gates)

PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

- 1(a) *How often was the High Priest allowed into the Most Holy Place?*
 - (b) *What material and colored threads were used in the making of the vail and how did these point forward to Christ?*
- 2(a) *What furniture was used in the Most Holy?*
 - (b) *What was placed in the Ark of the Covenant?*
- 3(a) *To what does the Mercy Seat and the Cherubim point forward?*
 - (b) *Who was likened to the light or glory of Yahweh?*
4. *How is the Tabernacle like the three stages of our calling?*

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

1. *What do the contents of the Most Holy mean to us?*
2. *In what ways does the Tabernacle show how we can come to enter the Kingdom of God?*

24. TEACHERS FOR ISRAEL

The Priests and Levites were appointed to teach the Children of Israel about God's Law and His purpose with them. The sacrifices pointed forward to the Lord Jesus Christ and we should know what they mean and what they teach us.

Numbers 18; Exodus 40:13-16

PRIESTS APPOINTED (Num. 18:1-7)

When the Tabernacle was completed as a place of meeting between God and Israel, Moses was told by God to appoint priests.

Aaron was appointed as High Priest. His sons were appointed as priests. At the end of his service the High Priest handed over his duties to his elder son. Moses received detailed instructions about their consecration to the priesthood. They were set apart for this special work of God. Even their clothes were designed by Him (Exodus 28:1-4; 40:13-16).

To assist the family of Aaron in their priestly duties, the whole tribe of Levi supported their work. They were restricted in the work that God allowed them to do. The Levites were allowed in the court of the Tabernacle, but were not permitted in the Tabernacle itself (Num. 18:2-3). The priests ministered in the Holy Place. Only the High Priest was permitted into the Most Holy, on the day of Atonement, which was once a year. The work of the Priests and Levites included:—

- At the Tabernacle one of the chief duties of the Priests was to watch over the fire on the altar of burnt offerings to keep it always burning.
- They offered for the nation a lamb as a sacrifice each evening and morning.
- They received and offered the sacrifices brought by the worshippers.
- They kept the seven branched lampstand supplied with oil.
- They changed the shewbread weekly.
- They instructed Israel in God's Laws.

THEIR LIVING (Numbers 18:8-32)

The Priests and Levites were given no inheritance in the land (vv.20-23). They were taught by this to rely entirely upon God for their living. The people of the land had to sustain them by giving a tithe (a tenth) of all their increase to the Levites (Num. 18:24). They did this every three years (Deut. 14:28-29). In turn, the Levites gave to the Priests a tenth part of the tithes they received from the people.

This "Tithe" was called a "heave offering" (v.24). The word "heave" means "raised" or "levied" like a tribute. It really belonged to God. In a

sense everything the people, including what they gave to the Levites really belonged to God in the first place. They were giving back to God a part of His blessings to them. When they did not give their tithes (as sometimes they did not) it was the same as robbing God of what was His due (Mal. 3:8).

God thus taught the people that all they received came from Him was really His. As a token of that, He demanded this "tithes" as His portion, and it was given to the Priests as His representatives in Israel.

In addition, the Priests were given certain parts of some of the sacrifices which they also ate as their due.

The Priests and Levites were expected, in turn, to give their lives to serve God. They studied and expounded the Law (Lev. 10:11; Deut. 24:8); they acted as its judges (Deut. 17:9), and when Israel was established in the land, they were given cities throughout the whole nation (48 cities — Numbers 35:2-8). They would always be on hand therefore to teach and instruct the people (Mal. 2:7).

SACRIFICES

A large part of the work of the Priests, and the worship of Israel had to do with offering sacrifices. These sacrifices were to be without spot or blemish (This general principle is stated in Lev. 1:2, 3 concerning burnt offerings).

Sacrifices were divided into two main classes:—

Individual Sacrifices: These were offered by individuals and were the sin and trespass offerings, burnt offerings, meal offerings, peace offerings.

National Sacrifices: These were offered daily at morning and evening for the nation, and also on other occasions, e.g. on the day of Atonement.

Individual sacrifices for sin were made frequently but these were not sufficient. God planned a special Day of Atonement for the sins of the whole of Israel, when they were confessed by the High Priest and pardoned by God. Both the people and priests went to a great effort to prepare themselves for that important and serious day.

INDIVIDUAL SACRIFICES:

Burnt Offerings (Lev. 1:1-3)

In these an animal or bird was completely burnt upon the altar. By this, the offerers showed that they wanted to give themselves over to serve God with complete dedication.

Meat (Meal) Offerings (Lev. 2:1-2)

These were not animal flesh but grain flour mixed with oil and baked without leaven. They showed the dedication of a man's labours.

Peace Offerings (Lev. 3:1-5)

These were free-will offerings brought when the people desired to give something to God, for example when they had received the blessings from God and desired to thank Him.

Sin Offerings (Lev. 4:22-35)

When a person sinned through ignorance, he was required to offer a sin offering. The animal (a kid) was slain and its blood poured out at the altar for an offering to God. The blood was accepted by God as a covering for sin, for it represented the life. God forgave the sins of the offerers *if they were truly repentant*.

NATIONAL SACRIFICES—THE DAY OF ATONEMENT (Lev. 16)

The Day of Atonement was one of the most important days of the whole year for Israel. It was so named because on that day atonement was made for the sins of the nation. Aaron was required to make a sin offering for himself, his family and for the nation. "On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before Yahweh" (v.30).

An atonement is a covering for sin, an act bringing man back closer to God. When Israel brought sacrifices to God, the blood of the animals was accepted by God as a covering or atonement for sin. Repentance was also necessary before God would forgive sins and accept the life (blood) of the sacrifice in place of the life of the sinner.

The High Priest had to bathe himself and dress in white garments made of linen. All his costly garments were put aside because it was a special day of fasting and repentance. This was in preparation for his entry into the Most Holy Place and God's presence. It was the only day of the year when the Most Holy was entered by the High Priest, and he alone had that privilege.

The sacrifices and the ceremonies of this day were a type of Christ in a very special way. They pointed forward to the great work Christ was to perform in making atonement for the sins of who ever came to God through him (John 3:16).

The *holy garments* worn on this occasions represent the spotless righteousness of Christ (Psa. 132:9, 16; Rev. 19:8).

The *blood* was a type of Christ's blood shed for the remission of sins, as Christ was our sin-offering (Heb. 9:28). He was the Lamb of God, perfect, obedient without blemish of character (John 1:29).

The High Priest was a type of Christ and the greater work which he is doing now as mediator. Christ makes intercession for us before God and through him, those baptised into Christ ask forgiveness for sins.

Unlike the Israelites' sacrifices which had to be offered continually, year after year, no further sacrifices were necessary after Christ shed his blood. He was the perfect offering and sacrifice whose life was given once for all. Through Christ's sacrifice our sins may be forgiven if we are

repentant and seek forgiveness (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-4). There is another difference between the animal sacrifices and Christ's offering. Israel's offerings, once killed, remain dead. But Christ rose from the dead and was given immortality. He therefore became a symbol of hope for us (Rom. 4:25).

OUR SACRIFICES

Sacrifices of a different kind are asked of us. We are not expected to bring sin or burnt offerings with the blood of animals. God asks us to give ourselves with obedient minds and hearts to serve Him (Romans 12:1-2). The first act of obedience is the all important act of baptism following belief and a good confession of faith. Then we are in the very wonderful position of having our sins washed away and being cleansed, prepared to serve God in our life.

We must sacrifice our desires, our wills, our thoughts, our wishes, our time, to what God requires. Only the best is good enough for God, and we should be prepared to give Him nothing less.

REFERENCE LIBRARY:

"The Law Of Moses" (R. Roberts)—Chapters 24 and 25

"Law And Grace" (W. F. Barling)—Ch.8, pp. 94-101; ch.9, pp.114-121

PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

- 1 a) *From what family were the High Priest and the Priests drawn?*
b) *What tribe did God give to Moses to help with the teaching?*
- 2 a) *Why were the Priests and Levites given no inheritance in Israel?*
b) *What portion did the people give to the Levites?*
- 3 a) *What is an atonement?*
b) *What kind of sacrifices are asked of us?*
4. *What features of the "Day of Atonement" activities were fulfilled in Jesus Christ?*
5. *How did the High Priest represent the Lord Jesus Christ?*

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

1. *Describe the important functions carried out by the priests in Israel?*
2. *List the different individual sacrifices under the Law of Moses and briefly outline the lessons they teach us.*
3. *Describe what the High Priest did on the Day of Atonement.*

25. FEASTS FOR YAHWEH

To consider the Memorial Feasts of Israel and their lessons for us.

Leviticus 23

THE FEASTS OF YAHWEH

The Children of Israel were to meet together at certain times of the year to keep these feasts. These were not feasts for eating and drinking. The people were to meet to praise God and remember what He had done for them. They were to be Memorial Feasts. They were to be regarded as times of rejoicing (Deut. 16:14). Sacrifices were to be offered to God.

In all there were seven feasts, including the Day of Atonement. Please refer to the calendar chart on page 111.

The first three: The Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread and Firstfruits, fell in the first month and were all included in the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The fourth: The Feast of Pentecost or Weeks stood alone in the third month.

The last three: The Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Feast of Tabernacles all occurred in the seventh month.

THE PASSOVER (Lev. 23)

This feast was to remind Israel of a great occasion in their history. Exod. 12:1-13 contains the details of the first Passover which occurred in the land of Egypt. We can remember how the Egyptians had made slaves of the Israelites, and would not let them go out of the land to a new home in Canaan although God had commanded it. The Israelites were ordered by Moses to select a lamb on the tenth day of the first month. Then on the 14th day they slew it and sprinkled its blood on the door posts. That night the Angel of Death went through the land. He passed over Israelitish homes protected by the blood, but entered into the houses of the Egyptians and slew the eldest child of each family. So grief-stricken were the Egyptians that they thrust out the children of Israel from their country. The Israelites were to keep this event in mind every year. On the 14th day of their first month Abib, they were to eat of an unblemished lamb. This feast would remind them that—

- They had been redeemed by the blood of the lamb;
- The lamb was without blemish. It was slain and its blood had been used to save Israel in the way that God had commanded.
- They had been saved by the power of God. God had saved them from the might of the Egyptian army, and had brought them into the land of Canaan (Exod. 12:37-51; 14).
- Yahweh was honoured and sanctified in the eyes of the Egyptians.

Christ is our Passover (1 Cor. 5:7)¹³⁰

Christ was as a "lamb" without blemish. We can be redeemed by his precious blood (1 Pet. 1:19). The risen Christ can deliver us from the bondage of sin and bring us unto God (1 Pet. 3:18).

THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD (Lev. 23:6-8)

This feast was held during the seven days straight after the Passover, from the 15th to the 21st of the month of Abib. The people were to meet together, and offerings were to be made to God. During this time they were to eat unleavened bread. Unleavened bread is bread made without yeast. It does not ferment as does leavened bread. Paul tells us that leaven represents wickedness, so that unleavened bread represents a life free from malice and wickedness (1 Cor. 5:6-8; 2 Cor. 7:1). Therefore this festival week of unleavened bread was to remind the children of Israel that they were redeemed to be a separate people, and should live holy lives. First redemption, then a holy walk. The application of this feast in the life of followers of Christ is seen in their endeavour to walk as God would have them do.

THE FEAST OF THE FIRSTFRUITS (Lev. 23:10-14).

Included in the week of the feast of unleavened bread was the feast of the firstfruits. The first of the fruits to ripen was the barley. The first ripe ears of barley were to be gathered, made into a sheaf and brought to the priest as an offering to God. The people were not to eat of either bread or ears of corn until the first had been given to God.

This, too, was an act of thanksgiving to remind the people of God's goodness to them in providing them with the necessities of life. Being the first fruits it would suggest good things to come, the full harvest given by God.

Typically, this feast reminds us of the resurrection. Jesus was the first to rise from the dead, and is therefore known as the "firstfruits" of them that are dead. Later, when the resurrection occurs there will be a further "harvest" and many of the dead will be made alive again. Many will receive eternal life (1 Cor. 15:20-23).¹⁴¹

THE FEAST OF PENTECOST (Lev. 23:15-22)

This feast was held 50 days after the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It was sometimes called the Feast of Weeks because 7 weeks were counted from the Feast of First Fruits. During these weeks the wheat had ripened for harvest, and at this Festival people thanked God for the grain harvest. Two loaves of bread made with fine flour and leaven were brought to the priests as an offering to God. Leaven was permitted in this offering. It was a reminder that in each one there is evil, and that we must continually strive to be more like Jesus. Even as Israel

rejoiced before Yahweh, so should we rejoice because of His goodness to us (Deut. 16:11). On the first day of Pentecost after Christ's ascension the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples (Acts 2). The believers at this time were joined together and formed the first ecclesia. The loaves offered at the Feast of Pentecost remind us of the ecclesia formed on the Day of Pentecost. As the bread was made of many particles of flour formed into a complete unit or loaf, so the ecclesia was formed out of separate disciples into a unity in faith (1 Cor. 12:12, 20; 1 Cor. 10:17).

Also as an act of gratitude no less pleasing to God, they were not to reap every part of their harvest but were to leave the corners of the fields and the gleanings for the poor. The gleanings were the ears of corn missed by the harvesters when they went over the crops the first time.

THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS (Lev. 23:23-25)

This feast and the following two were in the seventh month. This festival was held on the first day of the seventh month. It was a day of blowing of trumpets announcing the new month and the approach of the great Day of Atonement.

It pointed forward to the return of Christ and the gathering of scattered Israel to their land. Our hope is the Hope of Israel. We wait the time when "the trump of God" will sound to call His elect or faithful ones to Him (1 Thess. 4:16-17).¹⁵ Following this, all Israel will be restored to their own land and will accept Christ as their Messiah.

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT (Lev. 23:26-32)

This "feast", kept on the tenth day of the seventh month, was in the nature of a "fast", the only fast day Israel had to observe. On that day all Israel had to stop work and "afflict their souls", that is, be truly humble and sorry for the many sins that they had committed. It was to symbolise the coming time of Israel's full repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation to God. The day of Atonement was the only day in the year that the High Priest could go into the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle (see previous lesson).

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES (Lev. 23:34-44)

This festival is also called the Feast of Ingathering because it fell in the Autumn when the full harvest of corn, wine and oil had been gathered in. It was observed from the 15th to the 22nd day of the Seventh month. It was a time of rejoicing and thanksgiving when Israel showed their gratitude to God. They remembered that He had delivered them from Egyptian bondage and brought them into a land which produced so many good things. During the seven days Israel dwelt in booths or tents (hence the name tabernacles) made with boughs of trees. This feast pointed forward to the full harvest, the result of Christ's work during the Millennium. Looking forward to this all nations will rejoice together in

this feast during his reign (Zech. 14:6-9).¹¹⁵⁴

THOUGHTS FROM THE FEASTS

Let us briefly summarise the meaning of the feasts of Israel.

- **The Passover:** The partaking of the bread and wine is a reminder of the redemption provided by the blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:19), and eternal life given by the power of the risen Christ (Phil. 3:10, 21).
- **Unleavened Bread:** We realise our responsibilities and should endeavour to lead holy lives to God (permit no “leaven” in our lives).
- **Firstfruits:** We are again reminded that Christ is the first fruits of them that sleep. He is the only one to have risen from the dead, never more to die.
- **Pentecost:** We desire to be in the resurrection, the harvest of those who are Christ’s at his coming.
- **Trumpets:** We know that we are mortal, and that life is short. The time will come when the trumpet will sound and we will have to be judged by Christ. We need to prepare.
- **Atonement:** Repentance, and prayer to God for forgiveness is through the great High Priest.
- **Tabernacles:** We look forward to the time of rejoicing with Christ in His Kingdom.

REFERENCE LIBRARY:

“The Law of Moses” (R. Roberts)—Chapter 21

“Law and Grace” (W. F. Barling)—Pages 133-150

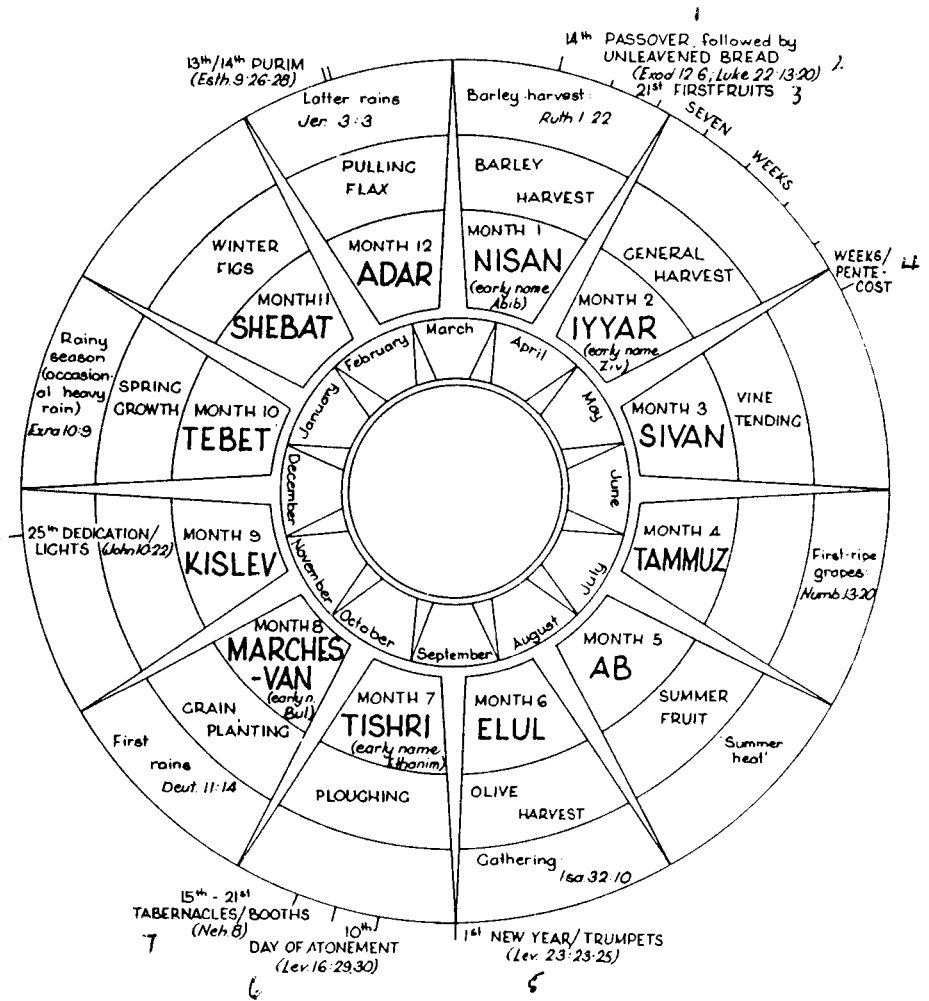
PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

- ✕ 1(a) *Who is our Passover?*
- (b) *What is unleavened bread and what did it bring to the mind of Children of Israel?*
- (c) *Who was known as the “first fruits” of the dead?*
- ‡ 2(a) *The Feast of Pentecost reminded Israel of many things. What were they?*
- (b) *Why did the children of Israel fast on the day of Atonement?*
- (c) *What did the feast of Tabernacles bring to mind?*

ESSAY QUESTIONS:

1. *Briefly outline the Memorial Feasts of Israel.*
2. *Describe the Feast of Passover and its meaning to followers of Christ.*

CALENDAR IN ANCIENT ISRAEL



Scholars may wish to copy this calendar chart onto a Bible insert page and perhaps colour it in with sketches of the various activities such as harvesting and ploughing.

FACTS THAT SHOW THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION TO BE FALSE

1. THE GAPS BETWEEN THE SPECIES

Genesis Chapter 1 refers to the various "kinds" of creatures, e.g., "Every winged fowl after **his** kind" (v.21) and "beast of the earth after **his** kind" (v.24). Biology confirms the very distinct gaps between the different "kinds" or "species" of living things. Interbreeding between species never occurs in normal conditions. Where interbreeding does occur through man's control, the resulting hybrids are normally sterile — such is nature's barrier to the merging of the species.

This picture is not that which evolution would predict. If evolution is occurring, then there ought to be evidence in nature of transitional forms between one species and another. But all the gaps are bigger than evolutionists could wish. Even where deliberate human selection is involved, a new species has never been produced. Dog breeders can produce only dogs, rose breeders nothing but roses. Even fruit-fly breeders, who run through dozens of generations a year, have never bred anything but weird, mis-shapen fruit flies.

The vast gap between man and the apes is the most embarrassing gap of all to the evolutionist. If man is only a "naked ape", how did he acquire a brain that, although only a little bigger, can be a million times more powerful than that of the apes? What was it that caused man to be able to think abstractly, so that he can be a mathematician, a philosopher, a physicist, a poet? Why has he alone a voice which enables him to communicate abstract ideas and pass on his learning from one generation to another? How did he develop unique hands which enable him to put his brain to best effect? What process of "survival of the fittest" gave man his sense of humour, his artistic abilities, his appreciation of music, his sense of beauty, his ability to appreciate moral issues?

Evolution is left grasping for answers, but the Bible plainly reveals that: "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him" (Gen. 1:27).

2. THE FAILURE TO PRODUCE FOSSIL EVIDENCE

Darwin and his contemporaries had great hopes that geological research would eventually produce fossils showing

gradual changes between species. After more than 100 years of such research and the discovery of millions of fossils, the gaps between species are still there. Furthermore the gaps in the fossil record correspond to the gaps in the living world today.

There is nothing to fill the gaps between:

fish and amphibia
amphibia and reptiles
reptiles and birds
reptiles and mammals.

Evolutionists have desperately searched for fossil evidence of man's evolution, but the earliest fossil men found are still **Homo sapiens** walking erect and with a brain as large as that of modern European man. Claims of supposedly prehuman fossils have been based on such scanty evidence as to bring the evolutionist into disrepute.

If man has descended from a lower form, there should be thousands upon thousands of intermediate hominoids (early "man") fully preserved and readily classified as such. Huxley, an eminent evolutionist, said that evolution would stand or fall on the fossil record. He was right. It falls!

3. THE COMPLEXITY OF NATURE

Evolutionary theory assumes that changes occurred on a "step-by-step" basis over countless ages. But numerous features found in nature can only be classed as "all or nothing".

The eye with all its finely balanced components does not see unless it is fully developed. The ear does not hear unless all its intricacies are present and operational. How can evolution explain these organs in terms of gradual changes?

A bird flies because of: (1) its feathers (themselves very complex), (2) a lightweight body, (3) powerful wing muscles. Did blind chance cause all these to develop simultaneously, given that a complete development of all three was required before the bird could take off and fly and so gain an advantage over its fellows? Furthermore, did blind chance cause this to happen not once, but three times, for the ability to fly must have evolved separately for birds, bats and insects?

The poison apparatus of a snake requires: (1) a chemical plant for making the venom, (2) a safe storage vessel for it, (3) an elaborate delivery system (fangs), (4) the instinctive skill to use the weapon effectively, (5) safeguards to ensure that the snake does not poison itself. How could such apparatus evolve in stages?

Nature is filled with such complexities that evolutionary theory cannot explain. The honest response is: "O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all" (Psa. 104:24).

4. THE PROBLEM OF LIFE'S ORIGIN

Life was thought to evolve starting from "simple cells". But even the simplest life is far from simple.

The simplest living things are viruses which typically consist of one large nucleic acid molecule surrounded by some protein molecules. Could a virus have evolved? Firstly nucleic acid is an extremely complex chemical with tens upon tens of thousands of atoms arranged in exactly the right order. Secondly proteins are also very large and complex molecules. Thirdly nucleic acid cannot thrive and multiply without its protein molecules. Fourthly, and most devastatingly, a virus is a parasite and can only grow and reproduce when living inside the body of some living host much larger than itself.

Evolution would require first the chance production of a far, far more complex one-celled creature, such as bacteria. The odds that this occurred are in the realm of fantasy.

5. THE MECHANICS OF EVOLUTION

At first evolution was thought to have occurred by changes acquired by habit, use, disuse or a change in environment being inherited by offspring. But after years of fruitless research, this theory has been largely abandoned.

Then came "neo-Darwinism" which explained change on the basis of random mutations coupled with the survival of the fittest. Mutations are basically changed offspring resulting from damaged genes in the parent caused by high level radiation. But mutations are most unlikely events and the vast majority of, if not all, mutations are harmful. Artificially induced mutations in fruit flies cause wilted wings, short wings, curled wings, stumpy wings — all useless to the fly. Mutations produce chaos, deformity and disability to already well-organised animals.

The lack of a mechanism for evolution has caused some evolutionists to suggest that evolution occurred in steps — e.g. a feather suddenly appeared on the offspring of a reptile. Men will do anything, but turn in reverence to the One who made them!