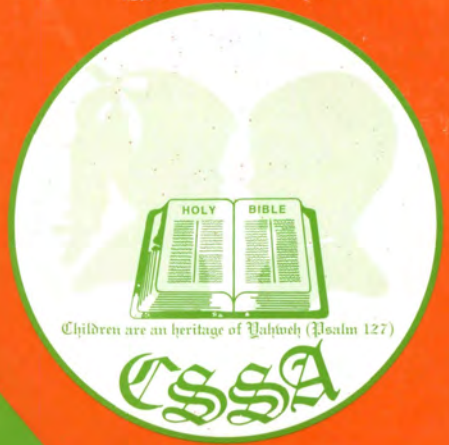


# The Preparation of the Kingdom



**SENIOR NOTES — 15 Years and over**

**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

# CHRISTADELPHIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

## SENIOR NOTES — STAGE 1

### FOREWORD

This is the first of five volumes to be studied in Christadelphian Sunday Schools by Senior scholars over a five year period. Each volume contains 25 lessons. The 125 lessons in the whole course have been specially selected to cover the most important characters and lessons of Scripture so that a balanced picture of God's purpose is presented. It will be appreciated that some lessons are more suitable for Sunday School purposes than others. The Committee believes that by the time the course has been completed, scholars will have a rounded grasp of the Bible as a whole.

The first three stages deal with Old Testament lessons and the last two with the life of Jesus Christ and Acts of the Apostles, respectively. As Jesus Christ is the fulcrum of the purpose of God, accent has to be placed upon those parts of Old Testament lessons which foreshadow him.

Stage One has been entitled:—

#### **“THE PREPARATION OF THE KINGDOM”.**

It covers the first 2,400 years of human history — from the Creation to the constitution of Israel as God's kingdom on earth. The foundation of God's future revelations are laid in this stage, and it is important that we grasp them from the outset.

First of all we shall learn about God, the Creator, and the Bible which reveals His great purpose with man, and what happened when he sinned and was sentenced to death.

Having seen the impact of sin and death upon the world, we will see how God set about rescuing mankind from destruction, and the struggles that took place between God's righteousness and man's growing wickedness.

We will study outstanding men like Abel and Noah, whose faith in God transformed them into heroic figures, men of truth who would stand alone rather than surrender to the ways of the world; and when God would no longer forbear man's sin, and His judgment overwhelmed the world with a flood, we will note how, again and again, God sought to bring man back to His righteousness.

Thus, we will learn of Abram and God's call to him to separate himself

from the idolatry of Ur of the Chaldees and travel to an unknown land that was promised to him as an inheritance. As the story unfolds, we will examine Abram's travels, the promises God gave him, and the development of his family — through Isaac and Jacob — into the nation of Israel, a special people intended by their Creator to manifest His Name and His righteousness to the world.

We will follow the fortunes of Israel — through which was to come in due time Yahweh's promised Redeemer — as it grows to nationhood, its exile in the land of Egypt in the time of Joseph and its exodus therefrom in the mighty deliverance granted under Moses.

Led by a pillar of cloud by day, of fire by night, we will gain with them the lessons of the wilderness as Yahweh sought to impress upon them the knowledge of their complete dependence upon Him. Then, we will come to Mount Sinai (where Israel was constituted the Kingdom of God) and the awe-inspiring circumstances in which the Voice of God was heard declaring the Ten Commandments, the foundation principles of His law. We will consider the lesson of the Golden Calf, its commentary on the weakness and sinfulness of man, and finally, we will examine the way in which the Kingdom of Yahweh over Israel was organised, centred around the Tabernacle, its priesthood, sacrifices and festivals.

In all these, we will note how God sought to instruct His people in the paths of righteousness, that they might see the pattern of redemption later to be unfolded in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Before we commence studying the Word of God, we should always seek our Heavenly Father's blessing. "It is written. . . , 'and they shall all be taught OF GOD' " (Jn. 6:45). Without His blessing all is in vain. May He lead us and transform us so that we might be fitted for a place in His glorious kingdom, soon to be established on the earth.

The Committee, Christadelphian Sunday School Association,  
Secretary: Mr. G. Travers, P.O. Box 20, Modbury North, S.A. 5092.

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## **Section 1**

# **FROM CREATION TO THE FLOOD**

These lessons cover the foundation truths of God's Word. Their importance, therefore, cannot be over-emphasised. At the outset, we find God, the Creator of all, and man, made in "His image and likeness" to understand, love and obey Him. Then there is the tragedy of sin, the Divine penalty of death, and the need for a way back to God. It is here we begin to learn how the love of God provided the means whereby He could receive man back into His favour without abandoning His own holiness.

Thus we will first learn of God, of His Strength and Holiness; next we will learn of man, of his weakness and his need; and then, the basis of our reconciliation to God.

We will trace the lessons through to the time when, while the world lay in wickedness and was fit only to be destroyed, the truth was preserved in a remnant. We shall discover that "God's way" has always been preserved by a very small remnant.

# 1. GOD, THE AUTHOR OF THE BIBLE

**“All scripture is given by inspiration of God”**

*Whether one gazes into the expanse of the heavens or the world of microscopic life, the profound order and design and interdependence of creation is remarkable. On every side the created world bears silent testimony to the existence of its Creator. Yet apart from the book we know as the Bible, man would forever remain ignorant of Earth's origin and destiny.*

*The Bible is the revelation of God to man. It clearly sets forth the truth concerning God and man. It reveals the Divine purpose in creation, the origin of sin and death, the development and destiny of the nations and the coming Kingdom of God.*

*But the Bible also has personal value. It provides young and old with hope. It unfolds the real reason for living and it exposes the foolishness of following a world which has divorced God from His Creation. In brief, it can change our lives.*

*The aim of this lesson is to show that there is but one Supreme Creator, who has inspired the Scriptures which reveal His character and purpose.*

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

### **THE BIBLE: GOD'S REVELATION TO MAN.**

Though divided into sixty-six different sections, the Bible is one, setting forth one consistent message.

It claims to be the Word of God. No less than 500 times in the first five books it asserts: *“The Lord said”* or *“The Lord spake”*! Again, some 300 times it repeats these phrases in the books from Joshua to The Song of Solomon. The books of the prophets repeat the claim some 1,200 times.

The writers of the Bible were really fulfilling the role of scribes for God. He was the real Author. He expressed His teaching through mortal men. They wrote by His inspiration (Heb. 1:1-2; Neh. 9:20). He guided them in what they should say, although the language they used was their own. For this purpose God selected men from every class of society. Kings, statesmen, priests, scholars, shepherds and fishermen were among those He chose. They were divided from each other by social status, time and place. One wrote in Syria, another in Arabia, a third in Italy, a fourth in Greece, a fifth in Babylon, a sixth in Palestine; so they had little personal contact with each other. Moses, the earliest writer, wrote the first five books of the Bible some 1,600 years before John recorded the Revelation.

Yet, despite these great differences, there is a wonderful and complete harmony in all that was written which unites the 66 books in one and makes the Bible unique in the literary world. God has placed this book in the hands of man to provide him with hope (Rom. 15:4). It alone can reveal the way to salvation (2 Tim. 3:15). To refuse its message means death (Deut. 30:17-20; Prov. 14:12).

The Bible is commonly divided into two sections styled the Old Testament (39 books) and the New Testament (27 books). But the division is man-made, and the whole Bible should be treated as the one consistent revelation of God to man. The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek. The Authorised Version of the Bible, which is commonly used today, was first published in 1611. It became known as the *Authorised Version* because authority to make the translation into English was given by King James of England. Since then many other translations have appeared, some helpful, others quite poor. The original manuscripts would have been without fault, but no version is faultless. Over the years there have been errors of transcription (by scribes copying original manuscripts, etc.) and translation (from original languages into others), but these are relatively few and of little significance. Irrespective as to what version is used, the basic teaching of the Bible is clearly discernable.

### THE BIBLE INSPIRED AND TRUE.

Peter set it forth as a basic principle, that the Bible is inspired (2 Pet. 1:20-21). He declares: "Knowing this *first* that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation: for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." The words "private interpretation" have been variously rendered. R. Roberts gives them as "private prophet's origination"; Weymouth renders them as "prophet's own prompting"; Mac-night translates: "prophet's own invention".

Every confidence, therefore, can be placed in what the Bible proclaims. No genuine critic can show it to be false in any of its historical details. Its worst opponents have been forced to admit that here, at least, it is true.

But the remarkable witness of prophecy shows that it is not only factually true, but Divine. It demonstrates that God is its Author, for only He could so wonderfully foretell the future. The Bible's amazing prophecies have been remarkably fulfilled in every detail. As predicted:—

- \* 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. 37:21-22).
- \* A northern power hostile to Israel (i.e. Russia) has developed (Ezek. 38:2-7, 15-16).

## THE GOD OF THE BIBLE.

The Bible opens by concentrating attention upon One Person: God (Gen. 1:1). Its revelation concludes by showing how that One Person will be manifested in all creation, “that God may be all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28). It reveals that each of us can be involved in that glorious consummation. The Gospel calls upon us to step aside from the endless procession of men and women who are making their way to an eternal abiding place in the grave: God is “taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name” (Acts 15:14).

A first essential is a correct understanding of who God is (John 17:3; Heb. 11:6). We must acknowledge the unity of God; that is, that there is only one God, the Father of all. Consequently we must reject as unscriptural the commonly-held idea that God is a Trinity. (For scriptural proofs see 1 Tim. 2:5; Deut. 6:4; Isa. 45:5; 1 Cor. 8:6; 2 Cor. 1:3).

In line with this, note that Jesus Christ is set forward as subservient to His Father (Jn. 12:28; 1 Cor. 15:24-28), and that the Holy Spirit is described as God’s power (Lk. 1:35; Acts 3:12).

## THE FATHER’S CHARACTER.

There are two sides to God’s character, and we are called upon to consider both. Paul exhorts: “Consider therefore, the *goodness* and *severity* of God” (Rom. 11:22). These two aspects of God’s character were revealed to Moses at Mt. Sinai (Ex. 34:6-7), and are revealed in all His dealings with men. Consider for example, the occasion when God sent Moses to deliver His people from Egypt. He saved Israel at the Red Sea, but destroyed Pharaoh’s hosts. Also, the Lord Jesus is coming to judge the world in righteousness. This will entail mercy and redemption for His elect, but death and destruction for the wicked.

The reason for this is man’s rebellious attitude: “Let favour be shown to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness” (Isa. 26:10-11). God disciplines mankind for his good and his ultimate salvation.

The Bible teaches that God is unchangeable in His purpose (Mal. 3:6). He is all-knowing or *omniscient* (Ps. 139:1-6); everywhere present, or *omnipresent* (vv.7-12); all-powerful, or *omnipotent* (vv.13-18).

The fact that God knows all (Heb. 4:13; Jer. 23:24), and can enforce His will, shows how circumspect we should be in our conduct before Him. Nevertheless, He would rule by love, and not fear. The purpose of His revelation is to change our characters that they may conform to His, so

fitting us mentally and morally for the bestowal of eternal life (a physical change) at Christ's coming (see Phil. 3:20-21).

### **THE FATHER'S PURPOSE.**

The Divine purpose is expressed in its simplest form in Numbers 14:21 — "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Yahweh". What does this entail? Certainly the whole earth will display the majesty of God, but God's glory involves more than this — it also involves his character. When Moses asked God to show him his *glory*, God in reply revealed his *character*: "merciful, gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth" (Ex. 33:18; 34:6-7).

God's glory will be revealed in all the earth when it is peopled by men and women who reflect in their lives His character. Jesus revealed in his life "the glory of the father" in that he was "full of grace and truth" (Jn. 1:14). He is the firstborn of many brethren and we can be among those who will be redeemed if we follow his example (1 Pet. 2:21; Rom. 8:29-30).

God is calling men and women now for this purpose. If we understand the Divine purpose and show God's character in our lives now, when Christ returns, we will be given Divine nature (1 Pet. 1:4), and will display the Divine character in the perfection of immortality.

Let us apply ourselves to our studies of the Bible so that we might be made "wise unto salvation" and be found worthy of an abundant entry into the kingdom when the Lord comes!

### **LESSONS FOR US:**

- Only by reading the Bible can we know the ultimate destiny of the earth and mankind.
- God requires us to know the truth concerning Him.
- A study of the Bible can and should affect our lives:
  - "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word" (Ps. 119:9).
  - "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh" (Heb. 12:25).
  - "Prove all things: hold fast to that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21).

### **REFERENCE LIBRARY:**

- "Christadelphian Instructor" (R. Roberts)—Nos. 6-15
- "The Ways of Providence" (R. Roberts)—Chapters 1 & 2
- "Elpis Israel"—Part First, Chapter 1
- "Christendom Astray" (R. Roberts)—Chapters 1 & 6
- "First Principles Bible Marking Course" (C.S.S.S.) — Pages 1-8
- "God's Way" (J. Carter)—Chapters 1 & 2

### PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

1. Why has God caused the Bible to be written? \*
2. Describe two events which have occurred among the nations in the twentieth century which prove that the Bible is true. \*
3. What proof can you give from the Bible to show that God is One? \*
4. What are the two aspects of God's character? Give examples which show how they have been revealed in the past, and will be revealed in the future. \*

### ESSAY QUESTIONS:

1. What basis do we have for believing that the Bible is inspired?
2. What is God's purpose with the earth and how will it be fulfilled?
3. In general terms what does the Bible reveal about:—
  - a) God?
  - b) His purpose?

Homework.

2 Tim 3:16-17 Quote.

## 2. THE CREATION OF THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH

**“Thus the heaven and the earth were finished”**

*The Earth was created “in the beginning” (Gen. 1:1; Heb. 1:10), at an unspecified time before the creative work of the six days. Then the earth was “without form and void” (Gen. 1:2). It was waste and empty, shrouded in darkness, covered with water, and lifeless. It was God’s plan to people the earth with inhabitants who would show forth His glorious characteristics in their lives (Num. 14:21). This necessitated the preparation of the earth for habitation.*

*The aim of this lesson is to show God’s power and wisdom from His creative acts in the beginning.*

### Genesis 1; 2:1-3

#### THE WORK OF THE ANGELS (Gen. 1:1-2).

God, through the angels, fitted the earth for habitation and filled it with life. Though this work is attributed to God in Genesis 1, the Hebrew word is “*elohim*” and refers here to the angels as the messengers of God (see Psalm 8:5, where “*elohim*” is translated “*angels*”). The angels do God’s bidding (Ps. 103:20-21). God spoke and the angels performed His will (Ps. 33:6-9). All was done according to God’s predetermined plan. He is therefore rightly called the Creator (Prov. 3:19-20; Isa. 40:28; Acts 17:24). At the conclusion of their work, the angels rejoiced (Job 38:4-7).

The work of the creation week began about 6,000 years ago, when God’s Spirit, or power (Ps. 104:30; Job 33:4), “moved upon the face of the waters.”

- **DAY 1 (Gen. 1:3-5):** God caused the light to shine forth to dispel the darkness. The first day, like every subsequent day of creative activity is described as “an evening and a morning”, i.e. a period of 24 hours.
- **DAY 2 (Gen. 1:6-8):** God created the atmosphere. The Hebrew for “firmament” (v.6) means “an expanse”, and is translated “air” in Gen. 1:26. God called this “heaven” (v.8). It divided the waters above (i.e. the cloud layer) from the waters beneath (i.e. the seas).
- **DAY 3 (Gen. 1:9-13):** The dry land emerged from the waters which had covered the globe. At God’s command, it produced grasses, plants and trees, each possessing the power of reproduction.
- **DAY 4 (Gen. 1:14-19):** Sun, moon and stars were set in the heavens to give light upon the earth. Times and seasons were arranged according to

the earth's relationship to these heavenly bodies.

- **DAY 5 (Gen. 1:20-23):** The oceans were filled with marine life and the atmosphere with fowl.

- **DAY 6 (Gen. 1:24-31; 2:7, 21-22):** Cattle, reptiles and beasts were created out of the ground (2:19). Man was formed in the image and likeness of God, i.e. the “*elohim*” or angels (1:26 “*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness*”). “*Male and female created He them*” (v.27). Adam named the animals and fowl, and was given dominion over every living thing.

- **DAY 7 (Gen. 2:1-3):** God completed His creative acts in six days and on the seventh day He rested “*from all the works which he had made*”. The Hebrew word translated “*rested*” is “*Shabath*” from which the word “*Sabbath*” comes. This day is distinguished from the others, being “*sanctified*” or set apart by God (v.3). We are told that God “*blessed*” this day. It was “*blessed*” in that blessings would accrue to man when he ceased from his physical labours and thought about God's works, and it was also blessed in its prophetic significance pointing to the “*rest*” which would come in Christ (Matt. 11:29-30), and the glorious rest of his millennial reign on earth (Heb. 4:3-5, 9-11).

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## **THE INCOMPATIBLES: CREATION AND EVOLUTION.**

To attempt to reconcile evolution and creation is to detract from clear Bible Truth. Evolution denies the Creator's existence. It claims that man evolved over millions of years from lower forms of life (note Ps. 100:3). The Bible reveals that man was specifically created from the dust of the earth. Evolution is a man-centred doctrine. Creation is God-centred. Creation and Evolution, as ideas, are mutually opposed.

A theory which does away with the Creator automatically removes man's responsibility to Him. All restraint is thus removed from man's conscience. It is little wonder that we live in a world sunk in unchecked immorality and vice. The world with all its wisdom is but foolish before God (1 Cor. 1:20-28).

## **HEED PAUL'S WARNING!**

How God's foreknowledge far outshines the forecasts of the so-called ‘wise’ of the 20th century! God foresaw that the days would come when men would ignore both revelation and reason (Rom. 1:19-20), and would seek to “*dethrone*” Him from the place He should occupy in the minds and affections of men. He revealed this would lead to the complete break-down of society with man destroying himself in his new found liberty (Rom. 1:21-31). But man still remains ignorant of the root cause of his trouble — his rejection of God (Rom. 1:18, 32)! Because it suits

him to continue indulging his own lusts, he continues to “educate” his youth with the fanciful “probabilities” and “perhaps” of an unproved and impossible theory!

True wisdom comes from God and relates to His Son and His glorious purpose in him (1 Cor. 1:18-31). Human learning which contradicts this is folly. Paul encountered human philosophy in Corinth and he wrote, “Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He has taken the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. Therefore let no man glory in men” (1 Cor. 3:18-21).

Let us then heed Paul’s advice to Timothy: “Keep (guard) that which is committed to thy trust, avoid profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science falsely so called” (1 Tim. 6:20-21).

### **GENESIS IS LITERAL.**

Attempts to harmonise creation and evolution usually involve the question, “Are the Genesis records (Chapters 1 to 3) literal?” Do they mean exactly what they say, or are they figurative in some way and need interpretation?

The natural reading of the Genesis account of Creation leads one to accept its details literally. This is what God intended. The fact that Jesus Christ believes in Creation and took its details as read, proves conclusively the case for Creation. He refers to Adam and Eve (Mk. 10:6-8), and the Creation (Mk. 13:19).

The inspired apostle Paul likewise accepted Creation without question. He referred to Adam and Eve (Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:21-22), the serpent (2 Cor. 11:3), etc.

Some have suggested that the days of creation could be figurative of periods of 1,000 years, or even longer. This suggestion makes room for the false idea of “theistic evolution”, ie that God began life and evolution completed it.

But the days of Genesis 1 are unequivocally designated to be 24 hour days by the repetition of the phrase “and the evening and the morning were the first (or, second, etc) day” (Gen 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). Moreover Moses understood these to be normal days (Ex 31:17). God’s power was all-sufficient to complete the creative work in six literal days each of

24 hours. In any case, what plants could have survived a night of 500 years? And how would Adam's life of 930 years (Gen. 5:5) fit into a '1,000 years equals a day' concept? Undoubtedly Genesis 1 to 3 is an account of literal events.

### **THE LESSON OF THE SABBATH.**

The seventh day, when God "rested", points forward to the seventh millennium in the earth's history when God's kingdom will be established in the earth (Heb. 4:1-11). This is the "rest" which God has promised us — a rest from serving sin, and a time of education in divine ways (Isa. 2:2-4).

Under the Law of Moses, Israel was commanded to keep the Sabbath (Ex. 20:10-11; Neh. 9:13-14). It was to be a day when they should cease from their own labours and devote themselves to doing God's will (Isa. 58:13-14). This is the true spirit of the Sabbath and should be followed today. Even though Christ's followers are not required to observe the weekly Sabbath details in the Law of Moses (Rom. 14:5-6; Col. 2:16-17; Gal. 4:10-11), they must cease from serving sin and instead dedicate themselves to God's ways. This is not just a one-day-a-week job — it requires our concentration seven days each week!

### **LESSONS FOR US:**

- Evolution and Creation cannot be harmonised, for Evolution is contrary to God's word.
- In accepting the theory of Evolution, mankind has rejected the reality of God and now serves himself instead.
- The natural reading of the Genesis account of Creation leads one to accept its details literally.
- Both Jesus and Paul believed in Creation and taught accordingly.

### **REFERENCE LIBRARY:**

- "The Visible Hand of God" (R. Roberts) — Chapter 2
- "Elpis Israel" (J. Thomas) — Part First, Chapter 2
- "Christadelphian Instructor" (R. Roberts) — Nos. 24-29
- "Evolution, Science and the Bible" (H. W. Hathaway)
- "The Finger of God: Evolution or Creation?" (D. A. B. Owen)
- "Wrested Scriptures" (R. Abel) — Section C
- "First Principles Bible Marking Course" (C.S.S.S.) — Pages 12-15

### **PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:**

1. How do we know that Paul and Jesus accepted the Genesis account of Creation literally? ●
2. How do we know that the angels, on God's behalf, fitted out the earth in the creation week? ●

3. *In what way should believers fulfil the principles of the sabbath in their lives? ●*
4. *Why do men prefer to believe in Evolution and reject the Bible account of Creation? ●*

**ESSAY QUESTIONS:**

- ① *Give reasons for rejecting the theory of Evolution.*
2. *Show from the scriptures your reasons for believing that the opening chapters of Genesis are literal.*
3. *“And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his work which God had created” (Gen. 2:3). Comment on the significance of these words.*

*Genesis 1:1-2.*



# 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.

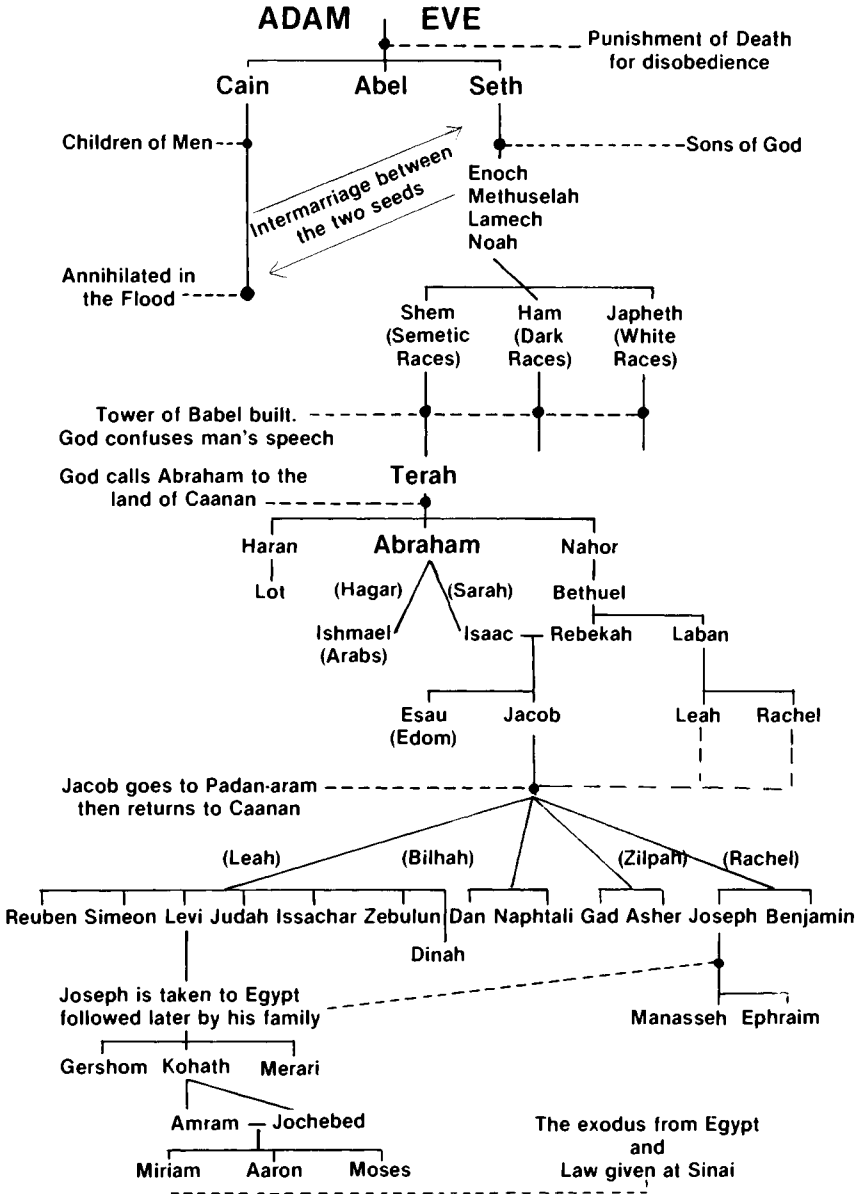
#### **5. THE MECHANICS OF EVOLUTION**

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!

# FROM CREATION TO MOSES



### 3. GOD'S PURPOSE IN THE CREATION OF MAN

**“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness ”**

*In man, God created a being who could respond to His love and His care and who could, if he chose, obey his Creator. But when put to the test man chose otherwise. So sin and death entered the world with man now subject to mortality and bearing a nature which is prone to sin.*

*This lesson covers the creation of man and his subsequent fall; while the next lesson looks in more detail at the covenant God made following man's fall.*

*The aim of this lesson is to show how God created man and woman and how sin entered into the world and the tragic result.*

#### **Genesis 1:24-31; 2, 3**

**THE CREATION OF MAN AND WOMAN (Gen. 1:24-28; 2:7, 18-24).**

The creation of man is described in Genesis 2:7; “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”

The destiny God desired for man is stated in Gen. 1:26; “Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”

In this verse “image” and “likeness” refer to physical shape and mental capacity, respectively — so, like the angels, man was able to take in God's thoughts and thereby develop a character patterned on God's character. Although man was made of the dust of the ground just like the animals (2:19), and both were kept alive by the same “breath of life” (cp. 7:21-22), man alone had the ability to look beyond his instincts and comprehend moral issues. He alone could respond to and reverence his Maker. Therefore man was promised “*dominion*” over the animals — a destiny which was interrupted when sin entered the world, but which will be fulfilled when the earth is cleansed of sin and when men are given immortality.

While Adam was created superior to the animals, he was inferior to the angels. There was no creature with whom he shared a really close relationship. God recognised that he was alone and in need of “an help meet for him” or a suitable companion (2:18). When the animals

were brought before Adam for him to give them names, his sense of isolation was brought home to him (2:19-20). He had capacity for thought and work, but he needed scope to use these in caring for others. How better to do this than to give him one whom he would truly love.

“God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam” (v.21). Removing a rib, He fashioned from it a woman and brought her to the man. Adam saw her as a part of himself; someone who would think and feel as he did. There was a sympathy and affection between them which would not have been the case had God created the woman directly from the dust, as with the females of the animal creation.

Adam said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh,” and he called her “woman” which means “out of man” (v.23). The scripture adds, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh” (v.24). Marriage was thus instituted by God in the beginning and was intended to be a permanent relationship (Matt. 19:9; Mark 10:2-12).

The union of Adam and Eve foreshadows the coming union of Christ and his bride, the Ecclesia (Rev. 19:7-8; 2 Cor. 11:2-3). As the first Adam was put to sleep that Eve might be formed, so Christ, the ‘second Adam’, was put to death so that his spiritual bride might be developed. As the first Adam showed sympathy, love and affection for the wife whom he styled “bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh,” so there is mutual sympathy, love and affection between Christ and his ecclesia. In the coming day when this spiritual ‘marriage’ will take place between them both, they will be “one” as Adam and Eve were “one” (Eph. 5:25-32; John 17:21).

### **MAN IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN— FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD (Gen. 2:8-15).**

After they sinned Adam and Eve “hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden” (3:8-10). This state contrasts with the close relationship they enjoyed with the elohim (angels) before. They appear to have discoursed with them and been instructed by them. In their first estate they were at one “with God”.

All that God had made was physically “very good”, including the man and woman. But Adam and Eve’s characters had yet to be developed. God desired their love and willing obedience, but this could only be displayed if they could choose to either obey or disobey Him. Only by being placed under trial, could they show whether they would remain faithful to Him or would seek their own personal pleasure.

### **PLACED UNDER LAW (Gen. 2:16-17).**

Adam and Eve were given a simple law to obey in the Garden of Eden. “Of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of

the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it". They were permitted to enjoy all the pleasures of the "Garden of Delight", except one — "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (vv.16-17). They had free-will to choose their course of action, but they were warned of the consequences of disobeying their Creator: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely *die*" (literally "dying thou shalt die" — refer margin). If they sinned, they would become mortal or dying creatures, subject to death. Note that Gen. 2:17 does not necessarily mean that they would die *immediately* they ate the fruit. This Hebrew idiom ("dying thou shalt die") is a form of solemn emphasis. In using it to caution Adam, God was emphasising the certainty, not specifying the mode of death for sin. In the day they ate the fruit they would be as good as dead — death would be inevitable.

### **THE TEMPTATION (Gen. 3:1-6).**

Genesis 2 ends on a note of sublime innocence: "And they were both naked, the man and his wife and were not ashamed." All went well so long as they were loyal to God.

Then follows in Chapter 3 man's temptation and fall. Genesis 3:1 introduces the serpent who was more subtle (shrewd) than any other creature. He was able to speak and had the power of reasoning. But his reasoning was on purely an animal level — he could not understand moral issues, e.g., why Adam and Eve should be required to obey their Creator. He could not discern right from wrong. Thus his animal instincts led him to conclusions which were directly opposite to the truth. The serpent came to Eve and said, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (3:1). Eve's reply indicated an attitude of implicit and unquestioning obedience: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." For the forbidden fruit she knew no desire. This state of harmony with God's laws and willing obedience contrasts with mankind after the Fall: the descriptions of the human heart as deceitful and desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9), and as the source of sin (Mark 7:21-23), show that after sin entered the world man's nature was different — he was prone to sin.

The serpent suggested to Eve that all was not as God would have them believe. Reasoning from the things he had seen and heard, he concluded: "Ye shall not surely die" (v.4). This was the first lie told, but it was deceptive when mixed with some truth: "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (v.5).

Perhaps the serpent reasoned that even if eating the fruit of the tree resulted in the onset of death, then these effects could be removed by

partaking of the tree of life — the “tree of life” would be an antidote to the effects of eating fruit of the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil”. The only reason for the prohibition which the serpent could see was that God did not want Adam and Eve to become equal in knowing good and evil.

The false reasoning, initiated by the serpent, aroused Eve’s hitherto latent pride and she desired to be “equal with God.” With these thoughts in her mind she approached the tree and when she saw the fruit other feelings stirred within her: “When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise; she took of the fruit thereof and did eat” (v.6). Eve was led away by fleshly desires, which the apostle John termed: “the lust of the flesh” (“the tree was *good for food*”), “the lust of the eyes” (“it was *pleasant to the eyes*”) and “the pride of life” (“a tree to be desired *to make one wise*”) — refer 1 John 2:16. She experienced the process now common to all men — “every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed” (James 1:14-15; cp. also Josh. 7:21).

Although the woman was deceived by the serpent, Adam was *not* deceived (see 1 Tim. 2:14). The woman, having breached God’s law, would be sentenced to death. Would Adam follow her, or stand apart? History stood in the balance as now she stood before him. His problem at that moment was — should he follow the way of obedience and continued fellowship with God, without his companion Eve, or should he follow the path which would certainly lead to death?

Knowing what was both right and wrong, Adam’s mind grappled with the problem. His strong emotional attachment to Eve entered the conflict. The issue was soon resolved when “she gave unto her husband, and he did eat”.

### **THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN (Gen. 3:7-19).**

The eyes of the man and woman were opened, but not to “make one wise” in the sense Eve had imagined. They realised they were naked and were filled with shame — a shame they tried to avoid by making clothes of fig leaves (3:7). No longer did they have a pure conscience before God. Fear crept over them. They were now estranged from God and sought to hide themselves from Him (vv.8-10).

God carried out the death sentence — the penalty or punishment threatened should they disobey his law: “Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake. . .In 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.” Thus the condition of Adam and Eve was changed —



death entered the world because of sin (Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:21-22), they were now mortal. As their descendants we suffer the effects of their sin — mortality and a nature prone to sin.

The whole creation was affected by God's curses uttered at the time (Rom. 8:22). Not only was God's sentence of death thereafter to grip all mankind, but the serpent was "cursed above all cattle" (Gen. 3:14), so that animal life as a whole felt the effects and became "red in tooth and claw" (contrast the savage animal world today with the peace of Gen. 2:19 or Isa. 65:25). The very ground itself was cursed to bring forth "thorns and thistles" (Gen. 3:18). Doomed to die, man was to live "by the sweat of his brow", in hard labour until death claimed him (v.19).

### **MAN MORTAL.**

The serpent told Eve, "Ye shall not surely die," and, in subsequent generations, all varieties of religions have said the same thing. But this is only a lie.

The Bible reveals that death is a state of hopelessness. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul is wrong. The Bible sets forth death as—

- the cessation of life, thought and action (Ps. 6:5; 30:9; 88:10-12; Ecc. 9:5, 6, 10; Isa. 38:18-19);
- a state of silence (1 Sam. 2:9; Ps. 115:17);
- a condition of corruption and destruction (Acts 13:36; Job 28:22).

It teaches that Christ brought "life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10), which would be wrong if man possessed an "immortal soul" from the beginning. The Bible shows that, apart from the resurrection, those who have "fallen asleep in Christ are perished" (1 Cor. 15:18). This could not be said if their souls had already ascended into heaven at death. On the other hand, eternal life is said to be a matter of hope (Titus 1:1-2).

The Bible teaches the mortality of the soul (Ezek. 18:4; Ps. 78:50; 89:48; 22:29). It uses the word "soul" in many different ways but *never as an immortal, divine spark in man* that lives after the death of the body. In Gen. 12:5 it is used to define the bodies of men. In Numbers 31:28 it is used both of men and beasts. It is sometimes used in the sense of mind, disposition, life, etc. The "soul" is spoken of as being capable of hunger (Prov. 19:15); of being satisfied with food (Lam. 1:11, 19); of going into the grave (Job 33:22, 28); of coming out of it (Ps. 30:3). The word is used in connection with birds, fish, animals, as well as men and women (Gen. 1:20, 30 margin), but *never once, in the 800 times it occurs in the Bible, is it referred to as being immortal, or as living on after the death of the body.* Never once do the words "immortal" and "soul" occur in

conjunction in the Bible.

Thus apart from the resurrection from the dead, man's state is hopeless.

### LESSONS FOR US:

- God created man "very good". Placed at the head of the animal creation, he alone possessed intellectual, moral and spiritual potential.
- In the creation of Eve, God "caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam" — an experience which prefigured Christ's own death, out of which is formed his bride, the ecclesia.
- Marriage was instituted by God as a permanent relationship, with each partner being a help to the other.
- While Adam and Eve were innocent of transgression, they had fellowship and peace with God.
- When confronted by the serpent, Eve was deceived by its reasoning. The pride of life, and the lusts of the flesh and the eyes were inflamed.
- The consequences of the transgression were shame, mortality and a nature prone to sin. As Adam's descendants we are mortal and inherit this nature.

### REFERENCE LIBRARY:

"Elpis Israel" (J. Thomas) — Part First, Chapters 2 and 3

"The Visible Hand of God" (R. Roberts) — Chapter 4

"Christadelphian Instructor" (R. Roberts)—Nos. 30-36

"Redemption in Christ Jesus" (W. F. Barling)

"First Principles Bible Marking Course" (C.S.S.S.)—Pages 16-19, 68-74

### PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

- c 1. *What was the first lie ever told? Comment upon how this lie came to be told.*
- c 2. *Describe briefly the temptation of Eve, showing the three ways in which temptation comes to all mankind.*
- o 3. *What was the effect of the punishment for sin upon Adam and Eve?*
- o (4.) *How would you use your Bible to prove that man is mortal? Give three references.*

**ESSAY QUESTIONS:**

1. Describe the creation of man. What were the points of comparison and contrast between Adam and the angels?
- ② How was a wife provided for Adam? What lessons do we learn from this?
3. What does the Bible teach about man's "soul" and immortality?

Gen 2:- 16-17

## 4. THE COVENANT MADE IN EDEN

“It shall bruise thy head”

*The most significant of all the Bible covenants is the first one, for it has to do with the means God has appointed for the removal of sin, the root cause of all mankind's problems. The other covenants made with Abraham and David concern the land of promise and the throne of God over Israel, but without the conquest of sin and its effects, they would go unrealised.*

*Our aim in this lesson is to examine the promise of a redeemer who would conquer sin and re-open the gateway to life.*

### Genesis 3

#### THE CONSEQUENCES OF ADAM'S SIN.

The destiny God intended for man is set out in Gen. 1:26 — that he should attain ‘dominion’ over the earth. But whether he should realise his Divinely appointed destiny, depended upon his obedience to God's law (2:17). So long as Adam and Eve followed what God taught, all went well.

In our last lesson we considered how Eve was tempted by the serpent and how Adam likewise partook of the forbidden fruit which was offered to him by Eve. God put into effect His Law; death was the punishment for sin and this involved Adam, Eve and all their descendants.

In Romans 5:12, Paul sums up how Adam's sin affected mankind at large: “Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all have sinned” (R.V.).

Note that Paul says that “through one man” four things happened. They were:—

1. **Sin entered into the world:** When Adam sinned, sin as a principle of human action came into existence. From then on, Sin reigned like a king over mankind (Rom. 6:12).
2. **And death through sin:** Death was the penalty imposed by God once sin had become a fact (Gen. 3:17-19; cf. 1 Cor. 15:21-22; “by man came death”).
3. **And so death passed upon all men:** Adam's descendants inherited from him a body which is mortal. Thus all are subject to death and corruption. What was a penalty to Adam, became to all others a law of their nature.
4. **For all have sinned:** Adam's descendants inherited not only mortality

from him, but also a nature prone to sin (Jer. 17:9; Mk. 7:21-23). This proneness to sin is so strong that men, left to themselves, will inevitably sin. For this reason Paul can say that through Adam's sin, all men have sinned (cf. Rom. 3:23). Also, because men will inevitably sin, it is quite just for God to make them all subject to death.

Because of Adam's trespass, mankind at large has been locked into a cycle of sin and death. Only through the work of Christ is it possible to break out of that cycle. It was that work which was foreshadowed in God's punishment of the serpent in Eden.

### **THE PROMISE OF REDEMPTION (Gen. 3:15).**

When God punished the serpent, He cursed him above every other animal. The serpent was to spend his days "upon his belly", grovelling in the dust of the earth (v.14). But something further was added, and it was this that constituted God's first great covenant with mankind — the Edenic covenant:—

"I (God) will put enmity between thee (the serpent) and the woman (Eve) and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel" (v.15).

The important points of this promise are:—

- **Two parties will be involved**  
—the serpent and his seed, and  
—the woman and her seed.
- **There will be enmity between them.** The two parties will be continually in conflict with each other.
- **The conflict will finally be resolved.** The *seed of the woman* will inflict the *serpent* with a fatal and permanent wound (i.e. a wound in the head). But while this is taking place the *serpent* will inflict a temporary wound (i.e. a wound in the heel) on the *seed of the woman*. The picture presented in these words is that of a man's foot about to descend upon a serpent's head, in order to crush it to death. But before the man's foot crushes the snake's head, it bites his heel, causing him to suffer pain, but only for a limited time.

The words of Genesis 3:15 have a literal sense. Throughout history, snakes have been deadly enemies of human beings. Most people are revolted at the sight or even the thought of snakes. However, the real importance of Genesis 3:15 lies in its figurative meaning:

- **The serpent uttered** the false teaching, in which he expressed the **thinking of the flesh**, as opposed to God (3:4-5). Thus the serpent represents the *source of sin (human nature)*.
- **The seed of the serpent** then are those who display the characteristics of the serpent — those who speak and act after the flesh (cf. Matt. 3:7; 23:33; Rom. 8:7-8).

- **The woman** represents the truth of God's word, which she initially spoke (Gen. 3:2-3).
- **The seed of the woman** is, in the first instance, Jesus Christ. God was his Father, and he always displayed the mind, ways and character of his Father. The term "seed of the woman" implies that he was not to be the seed of the **man**. In fact God caused a virgin to conceive through His Spirit power (Lk. 1:35; Isa. 7:14). In this way it was foreshadowed that God would have to be involved in human salvation.

The most important **conflict** of all time was the struggle between Christ and Sin. Although he had human nature, or in the words of Paul, was "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3), he never once yielded to sin. He gained the victory over sin by subduing his natural human desires and instead obeyed God. He did this not only in his life, but also in his death. So it can be said that through death, Christ destroyed that which has the power of death, i.e. SIN. Heb. 2:14 expresses this concept using the word "devil" as a personification of Sin.

Gen. 3:15 expresses the same concept as Heb. 2:14, only using the term "serpent" rather than "devil". Christ had to suffer death himself (be bruised in the heel by the serpent) because he had human nature, but this was not a fatal blow since Christ was raised from the dead after 3 days and given immortality. The victory came because he gave a fatal blow to sin — the serpent thinking (he bruised the head of the serpent). His conflict was not just with the seed of the serpent (the Jews and Gentiles of his day who conspired against him), but with the serpent itself — the origin of evil works — in order that, in due course, others would be released from the bondage of sin and death.

#### **GOD'S PLAN OF REDEMPTION (1 Peter 2:21-24).**

While the term "the seed of the woman" primarily refers to the Lord Jesus Christ, it also includes those who have accepted God's word and are baptised into Christ. They too are involved in the conquest over sin.

Jesus is the great example "who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Pet. 2:21-22). In his death, sin was overcome (Heb. 9:26), and God was shown to be just in condemning human nature to death (Rom. 3:23-26). This having been done, God could then justly open up the way of resurrection unto eternal life.

For sin to be overcome, we must follow a path which is similar, though not the same. Christ **died** as a sacrifice for sins, but we are **baptised into Christ's death** (Rom. 6:3-9).

In our baptism, we acknowledge that God is right in condemning human nature. God then forgives us our past sins and from then on we must "walk in newness of life", not serving self but serving God. We must follow in the steps of Jesus and give obedience to God. But God has provided a means so that when we stray from the path of obedience, we can seek forgiveness for our sins through Jesus Christ who intercedes with God on our behalf (1 John 2:1).

We must avoid sin at all times, but sin will not be completely eradicated from our lives until Christ returns and gives us, if we are worthy, eternal life. Then we will, under Christ, work to eliminate sin from the earth (Rom. 16:20). At the end of the millenium, sin will be completely destroyed and there will be no more death (Rev. 20:14 to 21:4). Then the victory over “the seed of the serpent” will be complete.

### **THE ATONEMENT IN EDEN (Gen. 3:21).**

When Adam and Eve sinned, they realised they were naked and in their shame, they sought to cover their sin by clothing themselves with fig leaves (v.7). But God rejected this humanly devised covering and provided them instead with “coats of skins” (v.21). This required the slaying of animals.

In this, God was teaching a lesson. Nakedness in Scripture symbolises the state of sin (Rev 16:15). For sins to be covered and fellowship with God restored, a sacrifice provided by God is required. “Without the shedding of blood is no remission” of sins (Heb 9:22).

Adam and Eve were taught that the pathway back to friendship with God required a life of sacrifice to God in which the serving of self is put aside.

From the fact that Jesus Christ is styled “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8), it is clear that the animal slain was a lamb and that it was intended to point forward to him as “the Lamb of God” (John 1:29, 36).

What happened in Eden, therefore, foretold the work of God in Christ. We have natures prone to sin and because we sin we are in the same need of covering for our sins as Adam and Eve. Baptism provides that covering. When we are baptised into Christ, we “put on” or “become clothed with” Christ (Gal 3:27). Then, renouncing sinful ways, our “sins are covered” by God’s grace (Rom 4:7; Psa 32:1).

### **ADAM AND EVE EXCLUDED FROM THE GARDEN (Gen. 3:22-24).**

Adam and Eve were finally driven from the Garden of Eden. God said, “Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil.” There was the danger that Adam might “put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.” He was therefore sent forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. At the east of the Garden of Eden were placed “cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life”.

But even in that there was hope. Adam and Eve were barred at that time from the tree of life, but the way to it was preserved so that, through the later work of Christ, believers could have the hope of eternal life (Rev. 2:7).

### LESSONS FOR US:

- Through the disobedience of Adam and Eve, sin and death entered the world, thus marring God’s creation.
- In Eden, God promised that the power of sin would eventually be destroyed by “the seed of the woman” (i.e. Christ).
- But in destroying sin, “the seed of the woman” would be bruised in “the heel” by “the seed of the serpent” (i.e. Christ would suffer death himself, but only for a time).
- By believing God and being baptised, we are forgiven our past sins. We must then put down sin in our lives, though forgiveness of sins is available to us through Christ.
- Christ is returning to eradicate sin from the world. Then the victory over the serpent’s seed will be complete.

### REFERENCE LIBRARY:

- “Elpis Israel” (J. Thomas)—Part First, Chapter 3
- “Key to the Understanding of the Scriptures” (H. P. Mansfield)—Pp.36-54
- “First Principles Bible Marking Course” (C.S.S.S.)—Pp. 55-56
- “The Devil — the Great Deceiver” (P. Watkins)—Pp. 46-50

### PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

- ① *What was the effect of Adam and Eve’s sin upon their descendants?*
- ② *Explain the terms “the seed of the woman” and “the seed of the serpent.”*
- ③ *How did Jesus “bruise the serpent’s head”?*

### ESSAY QUESTIONS:

- ① *Explain the words of the Covenant in Eden: “it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”*
- ② *How does the Covenant made in Eden foreshadow God’s plan of redemption for mankind?*
- ③ *What clothing did God provide for Adam and Eve and what lesson do we learn from this?*



## 5. CAIN AND ABEL—THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH

**“Yahweh had respect unto Abel and to his offering”**

*Because of their disobedience, Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden of Eden to commence a life of toil and suffering under sentence of death. But God, in His mercy, had opened up a way of salvation through sacrifice. In the provision of ‘coats of skins’, the principle was acknowledged that “without shedding of blood is no remission” of sins (Heb. 9:22). The animal slain, and all animals later offered in sacrifice pointed forward to the one great sacrifice God would provide in the offering of the Lord Jesus.*

*The aim of this lesson is to show that God desires men to worship Him in the way that He has appointed—we must worship God “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23).*

### Genesis 4

#### **CAIN AND ABEL (Gen. 4:1-4).**

Following their expulsion from the Garden of Eden, Eve conceived and bare Cain, meaning “gotten or acquired”, for, said Eve, “I have gotten a man from the Lord”.

Eve’s second son was called Abel meaning “vanity”. This is the same word used in Ecclesiastes to express the utter futility of all human endeavour (1:2), and it appears that Abel came to appreciate this for he sought to worship God in the way which He had laid down.

Cain and Abel pursued different occupations: “Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground” (v.2).

The difference between the brothers became apparent when they came before God in worship: “Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof” (vv.3-4). God had made it abundantly clear that He required an offering which involved the shedding of blood. Apart from verbal instruction which may have been given by Adam and perhaps the Elohim, the fact that God required such an offering was plain from His rejection of the fig-leaf covering and the provision of coats of skins to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve.

Abel acted on the basis of what he understood and knew to be right: “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh” (Heb. 11:4). Because he acted

in faith, according to knowledge, “God had respect unto Abel and to his offering. But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect.” Cain failed to act upon what he knew to be right and well-pleasing in God’s eyes.

#### **CAIN’S JEALOUSY (Gen. 4:5-7).**

Cain was the firstborn, and he became upset when his offering was rejected. Perhaps it seemed to him that the rights and privileges of the firstborn (Deut. 21:15-17) were threatened. He became jealous of his brother and sullen with God. But needlessly so, for God desired his worship. He had to respect the principles to be observed by sinners in approaching Him. Note God’s rebuke in v.7, where the word “sin” is more properly rendered “sin offering” (i.e. a Lamb). God reminded Cain that he must take and offer the lamb which even then was lying at the door. If he submitted to God he would, as the elder son, continue to have dominion over Abel, his younger brother. In this way, the mercy of God was extended to the sullen Cain.

#### **MURDER! (Gen. 4:8-12).**

Instead of repressing his anger and acknowledging that God was right and just, Cain brooded over his lot. The more he brooded, the more angry and resentful he became. He discussed the matter with Abel, who probably argued from God’s viewpoint, and called upon his brother to submit to Him. This was more than Cain could accept, so he killed his brother (v.8).

When questioned by God in relation to his brother’s whereabouts, he evaded the point (v.9). But he had murdered his brother, and he was charged accordingly (v.10). His punishment is stated in v.12:—

1. The earth would no longer yield to him its full increase.
2. He must wander in the earth as a fugitive and vagabond.

#### **GOD’S MERCY STILL EXTENDED (Gen. 4:13-16).**

Cain was thus driven from the face of God (i.e. the place of His presence) to the land of Nod (which means ‘exile’). Cain sensed his tragic loss, saying, “From thy face shall I be hid” (v.14). He had not been prepared to submit to God in the way appointed, and was now cut off from access to God. It is still true that the man who *will not turn* to God, at last finds that he *cannot turn*, his failure becoming ingrained and indelible. When that happens, there is no point in his continuing in God’s presence — and it is a mercy to remove him. So it was with Cain.

But though driven from God’s presence, and thus deprived of direct access to God, God still shows His concern for Cain. The fact that he had killed his brother did not give others licence to kill him. To prevent this, God set a mark upon Cain, and declared that any slaying either him or

his posterity would be punished “sevenfold” (i.e. completely).

But what of Abel? God raised another son to Adam called Seth who took Abel’s place (v.25). He worshipped God in truth, in contrast with the elder Cain.

Thus commenced two manner of people; the true worshippers of God and the false—the descendants of Cain, and the followers of Seth. These represent two opposite and antagonistic classes of men — the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Genesis 4:16-24 records the deeds and godlessness of Cain’s descendants, while Genesis 5 lists the descendants of Seth, the seed of the woman.

## THE LESSONS TO BE LEARNED.

### (1) At the Personal Level.

Both Cain and Abel were worshippers of God. Both their offerings are stated to have been sacrifices. But Cain’s offering was not accepted. Why? The answer is that in Cain’s offering, worship and sacrifice, there was present the element of human self-will. He wanted things his own way, and stubbornly rejected any argument that required him to conform to God’s way (1 John 3:12).

In Hebrews 11:4 we read, “*By faith* Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. . .” Clearly Abel had heard and noted God’s requirements. When the time for sacrifice came he acted “by faith”, in accordance with what he knew God desired. On the other hand, Cain knew what God had stipulated, but did not believe that what God had requested, He really wanted. He therefore chose to vary the commandment of God, and his offering was refused.

It is not enough that men should recognise that God exists, but that they should worship Him *in truth* and *in the right spirit* (John 4:23; 17:3). A person may DESIRE to worship God but he must do so in the right way. This Cain did not do. He thought God should be pleased merely **because** he worshipped Him.

This raises a first principle of the doctrine of man’s reconciliation to God: that God’s law must be upheld before pardon can be extended (see Rom. 3:26). Without God’s will being honoured, there was no way in which Cain’s offering **could** be accepted. But the same standard applied to Abel’s offering and meant that God’s ways **had been** acknowledged, and mercy could be extended to him.

There is a need at all times to remember the exalted position of God, and our need to be humble within His presence, ever leaning upon Him, and deferring to what He has laid down as truth.

Thus we must study God’s Word, that we might know what He wishes us to believe and do.

## **(2) At The National Level.**

The jealousy and hatred which Cain showed toward Abel was, at a later time, repeated in the attitude of the Jews towards the Lord Jesus Christ. They hated Jesus “without a cause” (Ps. 69:4), refusing to listen to him. Their hatred turned to thoughts of murder and they killed him, as Cain had done to Abel. Jesus himself drew attention to this parallel in John 8:44 (cp. Matt. 23:33-36).

Cain’s punishment involved being sent away from the presence of Yahweh to become a vagabond or wanderer in the earth. The Jewish nation experienced a similar punishment when they murdered God’s son. They were taken away from the Land and scattered throughout all the earth. Until recently the Jew has been a wanderer among the nations, homeless and living in fear of what others might do to him, just as Cain lived in fear that others, finding him, would kill him (Gen. 4:14). To protect Cain, God set a mark on him and threatened with vengeance any who should touch him (v.15).

In the case of the Jews, God has made them a distinctive people and, though they have suffered at the hands of their enemies, He has preserved them so that they have survived nineteen hundred years of persecution. True to the parallel with Cain, and true to His promise to Abraham, God has cursed those who have cursed the Jews (12:3).

Seth replaced Abel, so the line of righteous descendants was preserved. Eve called his name Seth (which means “appointed”) because God had appointed her “another seed instead of Abel” (4:25). The death of Abel and his replacement by Seth foreshadow the murder of Jesus by his brethren and his resurrection to life again.

### **LESSONS FOR US:**

- It is not enough merely to worship God: we must worship Him correctly.
- Only when we honour God’s way, will He extend mercy to us.
- The enmity aroused between Cain and Abel because one worshipped God correctly and the other did not, illustrates that “enmity” which God said would exist between the “seed of the woman” and the “seed of the serpent”. The antagonism exists today between those who follow God’s way, and those who follow the flesh.
- The killing of Abel by Cain and the raising up of Seth point forward to the crucifixion of Jesus at the hands of wicked men and his subsequent resurrection.

### **REFERENCE LIBRARY:**

- “Elpis Israel” (J. Thomas)—Pages 115-120  
“The Story of the Bible” (H. P. Mansfield)—Vol. 1, Pages 54-60

**PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:**

1. *Why was Cain's sacrifice rejected and Abel's accepted by God? ♥*
2. *Upon what basis is our worship acceptable to God? ♣*
3. *In what way has Cain's treatment of Abel, and his subsequent punishment, been repeated in the experience of others? ●*

**ESSAY QUESTIONS:**

1. *Outline the story of Cain and Abel. What lesson do we learn from it concerning our worship of God?*
2. *Hebrews 11:4 reads: "By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous. . .". Explain.*
3. *How was Cain a type of Israel? ●*

*Gen 4:4.*

## 6. NOAH—THE RUIN OF THE OLD WORLD

“Eight souls were saved by water”

*The fourth chapter of Genesis describes what happened when Cain was driven from Yahweh’s presence, and founded a way of life which catered for the will of man. The spirit of Cain was perpetuated in his descendants. It was characterised by city life (v.17), bigamy (v.19), commercial enterprise (v.20), the arts men use to adorn a way of life from which God is absent (v.21), and the art of war (v.22). They were truly “sons of men”.*

*Genesis 4 also describes the birth of Seth. His name means “appointed”, for God appointed Eve another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew (v. 25). Whereas Cain’s line was noted for worldliness, pleasure and violence, Seth’s line preserved God’s way, realising that their future rested in Him. Thus they called upon Him to fulfil His promised redemption (v.27). The descendants of Seth are recorded in Gen. 5. The line culminates in Noah, whose sons were Shem, Ham and Japheth. This line formed the “sons of God”.*

*The aim of this lesson is to show how sin and wickedness were punished when the sons of God failed to remain separate from the world.*

### Genesis 6-9

“BE YE SEPARATE” (Gen. 6:1, 2).

For a long time the descendants of Seth maintained their separateness from the descendants of Cain, self-centred men who cared nothing for worship of God. Cain means “gain”, and he and his descendants sought pleasure in whatever the world would offer to satisfy the senses. They were very successful in their pursuit of wealth and fleshly pleasure; and very brutal in their treatment of whoever stood in their way.

Seth’s descendants were different. They turned away from those things that satisfied the flesh and looked to God. They admired those who were outstanding in righteousness, such as Enoch — he “walked with God; and he was not: for God took him” (Gen. 5:24).

But gradually, the distinction between these two groups disappeared. There was a rapid population increase - and as men began to spread over the earth, the “sons of God” came to look enviously at the life-style of the descendants of Cain. Little by little, the two lines came together. Some of the “sons of God” were seduced by the fair appearance of “the daughters of men”, and married them.

Remember that Cain had been driven from God’s presence (where the sons of God worshipped) to the land of Nod (i.e. exile). Thus for a son of

God to marry one of the daughters of men was to depart from the way of righteousness, and to embrace what would lead to his own exile from God. Marriage outside the truth is always wrong (2 Cor. 6:14), and as in this case invariably leads to greater evils. The alliances proved disastrous — the “sons of God” were completely drawn into worldly ways. The same can happen today to young people who mix with worldly companions. They run the risk of being drawn emotionally into a marriage outside the truth, even though reason decrees otherwise.

### **A WORLD OF EVIL (Gen. 6:3-7).**

In those days, there were “giants” in the earth: not necessarily men of large physique, but giants in crime. They are termed “mighty men” — men of renown — famous for their wickedness. Their attitude can be seen from Job 22:15-17 — “which said unto God, depart from us: and what (good) can the Almighty do for them”.

Wickedness came to abound on every side. Men’s hearts were full of rebellion and evil (v.5). “The earth was corrupt before God and filled with violence” (v.11). So vast was the corruption, God determined to bring that civilisation to an end (vv.5-7).

### **THE CALL OF NOAH (Gen. 6:8-10).**

Alone in that world of ungodliness, “Noah found grace in the eyes of Yahweh” (v.8). His character and conduct are stated in verse 9: “Noah was a just man, and perfect (upright, blameless) in his generation, and Noah walked with God.” Though surrounded by wickedness on every side he maintained his righteous ways, and God looked upon him with favour and accepted him: “thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation” (7:1; cp. Heb. 11:7).

### **THE JUDGMENT OF GOD (Gen. 6:11-13).**

The world was initially to have been under man’s dominion (1:26). But when Adam sinned, mankind came under the dominion of sin. As the generations passed, men became slaves to their own lusts and passion more and more (Ecc. 7:29). Because they departed from God, He gave them up (cp. Rom. 1:28). At length He decided to terminate the life of “all flesh”.

Yet, even in the face of judgment, the long-suffering of God stands out. He determined to give the people of the world 120 years to repent by acknowledging their sin, confessing it and turning to Him (v.3; 1 Pet. 3:20). Throughout this period, Noah, having been instructed concerning God’s impending judgment (v.13), proclaimed God’s word — inviting all who heard him to turn aside and join him. Thus he became “a preacher of righteousness” (2 Pet. 2:5). God commanded Noah to make an ark in which they could find shelter if they heeded his warning of a coming

worldwide flood. The ark served to dramatise his faith and gave visible evidence to all of the message he preached!

### **THE ARK OF SAFETY (Gen. 6:14-21).**

The Ark was a very large boat, even on modern standards. In those days, it must have seemed a mighty vessel. Its size would have been around 150 metres long, 25 metres broad and 15 metres high.

Notice that the details and measurements of the ark were laid down by God. It had to be made of gopher wood, with rooms, pitched inside and out with pitch. It was fitted with a window and a door, and constructed with three stories. Noah, and later generations, were being taught that salvation is offered only if the instructions God has laid down are closely followed.

Every living thing on the earth was to die, except those that entered the Ark of Safety. In order to preserve life, representatives of all kinds of animals and birds, male and female, were to be led into the ark, with Noah and his family. Food also was to be prepared and stored there for the long period they would be shut in.

### **THE CALL OF SALVATION (Gen. 6:22).**

Throughout all these preparations Noah preached to the people. He warned them of the impending judgment, pleading with them to step aside from the sinful ways so much then in evidence (Heb. 11:7). And as he preached, he kept on building the Ark. It must have seemed strange to the people to see this huge boat being built on dry land, so far from water. They must have thought that Noah was mad for doing such a thing. Doubtless they derided and scorned him. No one, it appears, heeded his call for repentance.

The years passed as the Ark took shape. Noah remained resolute throughout it all. But as time went on, without the threatened judgment eventuating, the people worried less and less about what Noah was saying — just as people today ignore the signs of Christ's return and devote themselves to selfish pleasures (cp. Matt. 24:36-39).

As there was then a need for patient endurance, so is there also today. Though apparently delayed, Christ will come at the appointed time (Acts 17:31), to destroy the ungodly and save his elect.

### **THE DELUGE (Gen. 7).**

The ark completed and all of God's instructions faithfully observed, Noah was commanded to enter it with his family (v.1).

Noah was taken out of the world before the flood came (v.4), and in the same way, the friends of the Lord Jesus will be gathered out of the nations before God punishes the world (Isa. 26:20; 1 Thess. 4:16-17; Matt. 24:31).



On God's instructions, Noah took into the ark seven pairs (males and females) of every clean animal and bird, and two pairs of the unclean animals and birds (v. 2; cp. margin). Then "Yahweh shut him in" (v.16), and in so doing, He shut all others out.

Seven days passed. One can imagine the sense of foreboding that overhung the earth. The storm-clouds gathered, deep and black and threatening. Then the storm unleashed with tremendous fury, and the water from above was joined by water from beneath as the fountains of the deep erupted and gushed upon the earth.

It rained and gushed forth incessantly for forty days and forty nights, so that even the high mountains were covered. The ark was borne up upon the waters, which prevailed upon the earth for 150 days, and "every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth; and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark" (v.23).

#### **RELEASED FROM THE ARK (Gen. 8:1-20).**

God stopped the rain and the fountains of the deep, and caused a wind to pass over the earth which caused the water to abate. They gradually diminished, so that on the 17th day of the seventh month the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. On the first day of the tenth month, the mountain tops could be seen. Forty days later, Noah opened the window of the ark and sent forth a raven and a dove to see if the waters were abated. The raven did not return, but the dove did, finding "no rest for the sole of her foot" (v.9). Seven days later, the dove was sent forth again, and returned with "an olive leaf plucked off", whereby "Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth" (v.11 R.S.V.). After a further seven days, the dove was sent out a third time, but did not return.

Noah was in the ark for over a year (cp. 7:11 with 8:13-14). God then commanded him to take his family and all the animals and birds in his care, and leave the ark, to make a new beginning on the earth.

Noah went forth as commanded, and his first act on doing so was to build an altar and offer burnt offerings to God in gratitude for His deliverance.

#### **THE SYMBOL OF GOD'S COVENANT (Gen. 8:21-22; 9:8-16).**

God accepted Noah's sacrifices. He made a covenant and declared that He would not again curse the earth as He had done, destroying all living creatures. The Edenic curse upon the ground, by which it yielded 'thorns and thistles', would remain, but never again would God send a universal flood (cp. Isa. 54:9).

As a token of this covenant, God set His rainbow in the cloud. A

rainbow is formed by the sun shining on falling rain. There are seven colours in a rainbow — seven is the covenant number — and when these seven colours are combined, they make the pure light of the sun. In Bible symbology, the *sun* speaks of Jesus, the “Sun of righteousness” (Mal. 4:2); the *cloud* speaks of the saints (Heb. 12:1); the *rain* speaks of the doctrine of God descending upon the earth (Deut. 32:2). Thus, the token of the rainbow looks ahead to the time when all flesh shall come to know Yahweh. The glory of the Lord Jesus Christ will then be seen through the saints in various ways, all combining to show the pure and complete glory of his reign.

Appropriately then, John, in Rev. 4, gives us a picture of the establishment of the Kingdom, with Christ (v.2) sitting on the Throne, surrounded by his saints (vv.4, 6), with a *rainbow* enclosing them.

Likewise, Rev. 10 presents the picture of a mighty angel (representing Christ and his immortal saints), clothed with the Rainbow, executing God’s judgments on the nations.

### **THE FIGURE OF BAPTISM.**

Peter (in 1 Pet. 3:20) likens the salvation Noah experienced in the Ark to baptism. By belief in Christ and baptism in water our sins are washed away. So, in the days of Noah, the waters of the flood washed away the sins of the old world, that a new world might begin. Baptism signals the commencement of a new life (cp. Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:4). By baptism we enter Christ (Gal. 3:27), who is our ark of safety.

Because we are “in Christ”, we will be saved when God’s judgments are poured out on a wicked world — a world which Jesus said would be the same “as it was in the days of Noah”. The word “noah” means “rest”, and in the day of judgment when God establishes a new order in the earth, there will be “rest” for the faithful (Heb. 4:9).

### **LESSONS FOR US:**

- When the descendants of Seth married the “daughters of men”, the Truth decayed: intermarriage has ever been fruitful of apostasy.
- God determined to judge the earth with a flood, but revealed His long-suffering and mercy by granting the world 120 years within which to conform to His just requirements.
- Noah, although alone, faithfully proclaimed God’s righteousness.
- By accepting God’s way, Noah was able to save himself and his family.
- The world today is “as it was in the days of Noah” — a period marked by “eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage”; a careless materialistic age (Luke 17:26-27).
- As Noah was saved by water, so also we can be saved by baptism into Christ.

**REFERENCE LIBRARY:**

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

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

“Noah—Preacher of Righteousness” (J. Martin)—C.S.S.S. Study Notes

“The Genesis Flood” (Henry M. Morris & John C. Whitcomb Jnr.)

“The Story of the Bible” (H. P. Mansfield)—Vol. 1, Pages 61-74

**PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:**

1. *Describe how apostasy led to the Flood in the days of Noah?*
2. *How did God show his long suffering in the days of Noah? Mention the work of Noah among the people.*
3. *How do conditions in the world today compare with the days of Noah? What must we do in order to escape God’s coming judgments?*

**ESSAY QUESTIONS:**




1. *Write what you know about the work of Noah.*
2. *What lessons do we learn from the Flood in the days of Noah?*
3. *Briefly outline the story of the Flood and outline its lessons.*

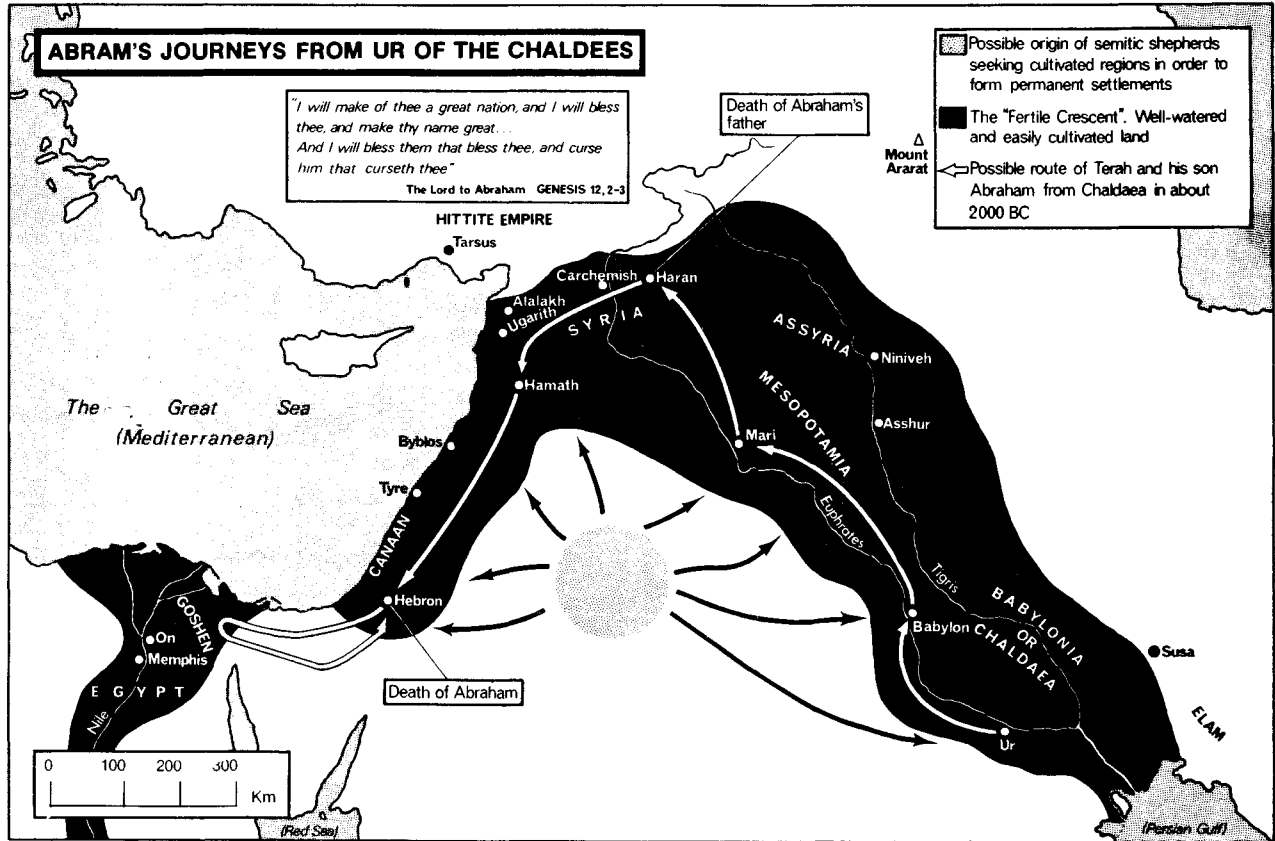
*1 Peter 3:20*

# ABRAM'S JOURNEYS FROM UR OF THE CHALDEES

*"I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great... And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee"*  
 The Lord to Abraham GENESIS 12, 2-3

Death of Abraham's father

-  Possible origin of semitic shepherds seeking cultivated regions in order to form permanent settlements
-  The "Fertile Crescent". Well-watered and easily cultivated land
-  Possible route of Terah and his son Abraham from Chaldaea in about 2000 BC



## **Section 2**

# **THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO ABRAHAM**

The call of Abram (later named Abraham) was the commencement of a new era in God's dealings with men. Scarcely 400 years had passed since the Deluge put an end to the antediluvian world. There followed the Tower of Babel, and the Divine judgment that confused men's tongues and effectively divided them into nations.

But neither the Deluge nor the confusion of tongues managed to stem the tide of wickedness, for lust remained as a principle of evil within human nature, ever ready to transgress God's righteous commandments.

What could be done to give God's truth a continuing voice in the earth? The answer is to be found in the call of Abraham, and the development from him of the nation of Israel. From the outset, it was clearly God's intention to create a sentinel of Divine Light so that others, attracted by its brilliance, might come to it and be saved. The lessons that follow outline the way in which this was done.

## **7. FROM THE CALL OF ABRAHAM TO THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM**

**“By faith. . . he went out, not knowing whither he went”**

*The call of Abram represented a new beginning. It was momentous in its importance for the whole world, for from him arose the nation of Israel as the centre of Divine Truth in the earth, and from which would come, in due course, the Divinely provided Saviour.*

*The following two lessons will summarize the events in Abram’s life as recorded in Genesis 12-22. They will concentrate on the narrative and show the ways of providence in the events and circumstances of Abram’s pilgrimage. Lesson 9 will gather together from the same chapters the glorious hope of the promises given at various times to this great man of faith.*

*The aim of this lesson is to show how great was Abram’s faith when he responded to God’s call and how righteous Lot was saved from Sodom.*

### **Genesis 12-19**

#### **GOD’S CALL TO ABRAM—AND HIS RESPONSE**

**(Gen. 11:26-32; 12:1-9).**

##### **(1) The First Call.**

Abram lived in Ur of the Chaldees, an important city, but a centre of idolatry, on the bank of the Euphrates River. The noted archaeologist, Sir L. Woolley, in his book “Ur of the Chaldees,” has shown that the city had great libraries and an advanced culture. It had a massive temple and it was the headquarters of the worship of the moon goddess.

When God called Abram thence, he had to leave a civilization sunken in idolatry. It is clear from Acts 7:2 that the first call to leave Babylon for the land of promise came to Abram in Ur, before he came to Haran. Similarly, Nehemiah 9:7 shows that the call came to Abram and not Terah his father, even though Terah’s position as head of the family is preserved by his being mentioned first in Gen. 11:31. Terah himself, along with the rest of Abram’s family, was an idolator (Josh. 24:2).

Again, whilst Gen. 11:32 states that “they went forth. . . to go into the land of Canaan”, the land to which they were to go was not at first specified. At the outset, the ultimate destination was unknown, for it is recorded that Abraham “went out, not knowing whither he went” (Heb. 11:8).

Abram left Ur, with Terah his father, Nahor his brother, Lot his nephew, and Sarai his wife. He travelled in a north-westerly direction along the course of the Euphrates River, and eventually came to Haran. Here Abram received further instruction from God, and he sought to instruct and influence those there to join him in his entry into the land to which God was leading him (Gen. 12:1, 5).

## **(2) The Second Call.**

To leave Haran and cross the River Euphrates into Canaan was to quit Babylon's civilisation once and for all. There are those who will go so far in leaving behind the world of sin, but will not make the final break. So it was with Abram's family. It appears that they were reluctant to go any further. Then Terah died, and once more Abram heard the Voice of God commanding him, if need be, to go on alone. Gen. 12:1, which reads "Now the Lord had said unto Abram", should read: "Now the Lord said unto Abram" (R.V.), and the following words, "Get thee out" have the emphasis upon the word "THEE", as if God were saying "Abram — go for THYSELF".

Abram owed no patriotism to Babylon, the land of his birth. Further, family ties must not restrict his obedience to God. He had to leave his "kindred" and go into the land that God would show him (v.1). Thus Abram responded to God's call to enter the land. Of his immediate family, only his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot followed him. They took with them "their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran", and came into the land of Canaan (v.5).

## **(3) Abram The Pilgrim**

Having entered the Land of Promise, Abram was thereafter known as "Abram the Hebrew" (14:13). The word "Hebrew" means "A crosser over". He had crossed over from the ways of idolatry to the ways of God, from the Land of Babylon to the Land of Promise. The symbol of his changed state was his crossing over the River Euphrates, as we today pass through the waters of baptism into Christ.

Notice the process of Abram's spiritual development:

1st — Living in an idolatrous city;

2nd — He hears the call of God and sets out to leave the world behind him;

3rd — He comes to the Land of Promise, where he lives as a stranger and pilgrim, relying on God's care of him (Heb. 11:8-9).

Having entered the land, Abram travelled through it to Shechem (Gen. 12:6), where God renewed His promise (v.7), to Bethel (v.8), and then south again towards Beersheba (v.9). Famine then drove him into Egypt (v.10).

## **SEPARATION OF ABRAM AND LOT (Gen. 13:1-9).**

Time spent in Egypt is not stated, but whilst there, God blessed Abram and Lot, so that their wealth increased greatly. The drought over, they journeyed north to Bethel, where Abram had built an altar (13:3, 12:8).

Specifically the altar had been built "between Bethel (the house of God) and Hai (Ruin)". On one side lay hope, and on the other disaster — all the difference between a wise choice and an unwise one. The place names are thus significant.

When Abram and Lot returned, their greatly increased flocks and herds had to compete for scarce grazing land made scarcer by the presence of “the Canaanite and the Perizite”. Inevitably, strife and contention between their herdsmen resulted, and it became clear to Abram they would have to separate.

Abram found the disagreement unpleasant. As the elder and the leader of the party, he could have commanded Lot to obey his directions, but as a true pilgrim, he was not one to insist on his rights. The land had been promised to Abram, not Lot, who should have directed his herdsmen to cease from strife as soon as it commenced. He should have deferred to his uncle’s judgment in the matter, but he did not. So Abram deferred to Lot. He invited his nephew to take the land of his choice, so that he might take what remained. Eventually all the land would be his. But Abram’s faith was that of the pilgrim who waited patiently for the Kingdom (cp. Heb. 11:13).

### **LOT’S CHOICE AND ITS EFFECTS (Gen. 13:10-18).**

Lot chose the plain of Jordan toward the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and he suffered as a consequence. He left Abram for his new life towards the alluring cities of the plain. Spurred on by what appealed to the lust of his eyes, Lot’s choice commenced a train of circumstances that led him to poverty and near ruin. Follow this train in your Bible. Remember that the same fate can be ours if we allow it. Here are six steps in Lot’s decline following his strife with Abram:

1. He LOOKED towards the well-watered plain (v 10).
2. He CHOSE the luxury of the plain (v.11).
3. He JOURNEYED east (v.11).
4. He PITCHED towards Sodom (v.12).
5. He DWELT IN Sodom (14:12).
6. He WAS ALMOST OVERWHELMED in Sodom’s disaster (Ch. 19).

Life might have had more problems for Abram, seeing his herds and flocks were denied the plentiful pasture of the plain; but in his honest labour and solitude he had communion with God which carried with it real peace of mind and happiness. It was not long before Lot’s involvement in the life of the plain led to him being carried captive in one of its wars — from which Abram delivered him. At that time Abram made it very clear that he himself would have no part with the things of Sodom (14:14-24).

### **THE ANGEL’S VISIT TO ABRAHAM (Gen. 18).**

Time passed. Lot and his family became more closely involved in the city life of Sodom. Meanwhile God had commanded Abram to be circumcised as the token of His covenant with him and his name was changed to Abraham. He was nearly 100 years of age and Sarai (now called Sarah) was 10 years younger.



The time had come for God to judge Sodom and the cities of the plain, and to extend His mercy to Abraham in providing the promised seed. So Yahweh appeared to Abraham, who was sitting in the door of his tent in the heat of the day. Suddenly, looking up, "three men stood by him". They were Yahweh's angels.

Abraham lost no time in offering them hospitality. At first, he did not know who his visitors were (cp. Heb. 13:1, 2), but it soon became clear that they spoke for Yahweh. Sarah found it difficult to accept their message, but they assured Abraham that "at the time appointed. . . according to the time of life. . . Sarah should have a son" (v.10).

Once their mission with Abraham was completed, the angels rose up and went towards Sodom. Abraham went with them. Because of his faithfulness (vv.18-19), they told him of the impending judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah. Two of the angels set out to go there, while one remained with Abraham (v.22).

Although years had passed since their separation, Abraham retained a deep affection for Lot. He knew he was in Sodom, and he greatly feared that he would be overwhelmed in the city's judgment. He also knew Lot was a righteous person who would find no pleasure in Sodom's ways, and that his unwise choice in the beginning had led to him being entangled in its society (cp. 2 Pet. 2:8). So he pleaded for him: "Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?" (v.23). God said that the city would be spared if there could be found 50, 45, 40, 30, 20 and finally as few as 10 righteous persons in its midst (vv.24-32).

#### **LOT SAVED (Gen. 19:1-23).**

It was evening when the two angels arrived at Sodom. Lot was sitting "in the gate of Sodom" — a place of prominence in the city (cp. v.9; Job 29:7-12). Like Abraham, he did not hesitate to offer them hospitality, pressing them to accept it when they would have refused. He knew how wicked the men of Sodom were, and protected his guests from evil. The men of Sodom regarded his action as an insult. They massed outside his home, and demanded that he deliver his guests to them. Lot went outside, and shut the door behind him. He tried to reason with them, but in vain. Such was their anger, that his life was threatened. The angels pulled him inside, struck blind his attackers and so he was saved.

Once inside, the angels informed him that the city would be destroyed. They had satisfied themselves that it was beyond help, but first they had to deliver the one righteous man it contained, and whoever else would listen to his call to separate. Urged on by the angels, Lot gathered together all his relatives, and pleaded with them all night to leave, but to no avail. With the coming of the dawn, the angels were urgent that he should leave with whoever would go with him. When he lingered, they led him, his wife and his two daughters out of the city, saying, "Escape for

thy life: look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed” (v.17). Lot pleaded that he might find refuge in Zoar instead of the mountain and God granted his request. He withheld judgment upon the cities of the plain until Lot was clear of them. When Lot reached Zoar, the sun had risen in the sky. His entry there was the signal God awaited before pouring out His wrath.

### **SODOM DESTROYED (Gen. 19:24-30).**

Suddenly, God’s terrible judgment rained down. Fire and brimstone poured upon the land and cities. The earth erupted, and heaved to and fro. Volcanic ash settled all around, poisoning and sterilizing the land. It was reduced to a barren wilderness.

The attraction of Sodom proved too much for Lot’s wife — she looked back with longing eyes and became a “pillar of salt”. Jesus warned us when he said, “Remember Lot’s wife” (Lk. 17:32).

Early in the morning, Abraham arose and stood in the place where he had pleaded with the angel for Lot. He looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah and “Lo; the smoke of country went up as the smoke of a furnace” (v.28). At the time he did not know it, but God had answered his prayer, delivering Lot for his sake (v. 29).

### **SIGNS OF THE TIMES (Luke 17:28-30).**

The sin of Sodom is described by Ezekiel as “pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness. . .neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy” (16:48-49). Alongside extreme wealth could be found unrelieved poverty — and so it is today, as we are on the eve of the Lord’s second coming. The days of Lot were said by the Lord to be characteristic of those of his second advent. Then, they “ate and drank, bought and sold, planted and builded”. So preoccupied were they with the pursuit of material things, that all thought of God was pushed aside until destruction befell them. It is so today, for the world beckons men to indulge their fleshly appetites to the exclusion of God.

The destruction of Sodom took place primarily because of the prevalence of the sin to which Sodom has given its name, sodomy or homosexuality.

It is notable too, that this gross sin is widespread in our modern Western society, and is even legalised in some countries. The awful end of Sodom has been set forth by God as a lesson to all those who might become involved in this perverted behaviour (Jude 7).

In both the old and new testaments this sin is utterly condemned by God, despite the attempts by some churchmen to justify it, and even ordain ministers who are homosexuals. (Lev. 18:22, 20:13 ; Rom. 1:27 ; 1 Cor. 6:9). These quotations serve to show how far many have strayed from the clear teaching of scripture.

The fact that homosexuality is so widespread and “acceptable” to our modern society is a sign in itself that we are living in the last days. History testifies that this sin becomes widespread when the morals of society sink to a low ebb, and that divine judgements swiftly follow.

Remember that Jesus said “as it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank....But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. EVEN THUS shall it be in the day that the Son of Man is revealed”. (Luke 17:28-30).

#### **LESSONS FOR US:**

- As Abraham was called upon to abandon the superstition of Babylon, so are we.
- Lot, Abraham’s nephew, faithfully followed Abraham into the promised land, but allowed Sodom’s attractions to lure him away from a life of total commitment.
- Lot became embroiled in Sodom and lost all, barely escaping with his life. Jesus has warned us that a similar fate awaits this world and has told us to “Remember Lot’s wife”.

#### **REFERENCE LIBRARY:**

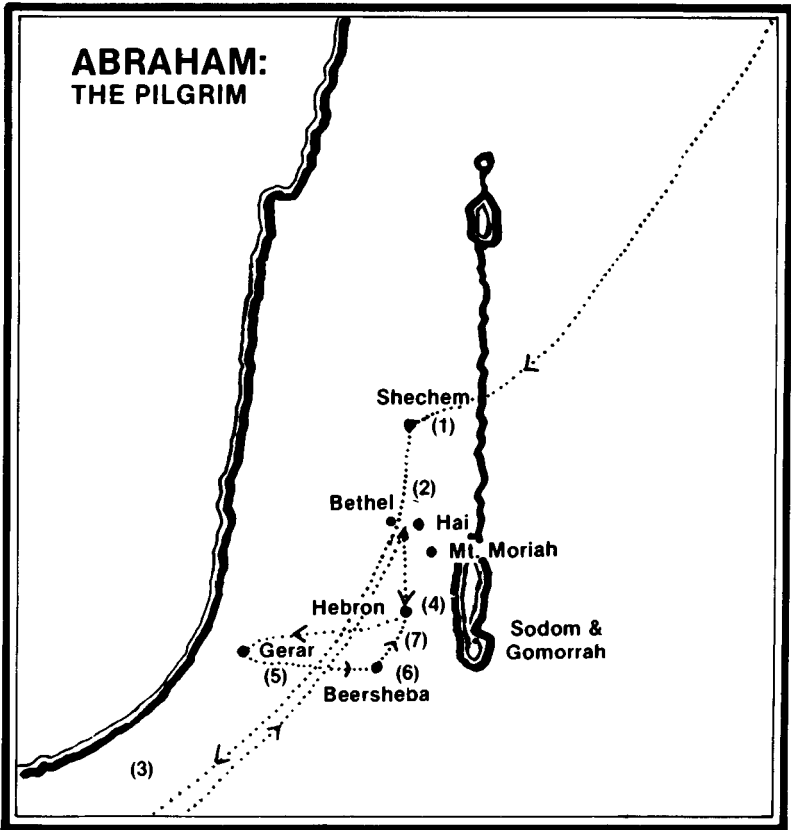
- “The Ways of Providence” (R. Roberts)—Chapter 3
- “The Visible Hand of God” (R. Roberts)—Chapter 7
- “Elpis Israel” (J. Thomas)—Part Second, Chapters 1 and 2
- “Ur of the Chaldees” (Sir. L. Woolley)
- “Story of the Bible” (H. P. Mansfield)—Vol.1, Pages 77-92, 105-110
- “Christadelphian Instructor” (R. Roberts)—Nos. 82-89

#### **PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:**

- ① *Describe God’s call to Abram and how he responded.*
2. *What is the significance of the word “Hebrew”?*
- ③ *What are the steps which led to Lot’s decline?*
4. *Why was Lot saved from destruction in Sodom?*
- ⑤ *What did Jesus mean when he said, “As it was in the days of Lot. . .”?*

#### **ESSAY QUESTIONS:**

1. *Write a short essay on Abraham the pilgrim.*
2. *How did Lot become involved in Sodom? Describe his escape. How does Lot’s situation correspond with our own?*
3. *What lessons can we learn from the life of Lot?*
4. *What does the Bible have to say about the sin of Sodomy? How are God’s judgements against Sodom a warning to modern society?*



- (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) To Egypt to escape a famine and return 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 sojourns in Gerar amongst the Philistines (20:1).
- (6) Removes 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 and later is buried there himself (23:19; 25:8-9).

# LIFE OF ABRAHAM

## Chronology

LOCALITY	CHAPTER	EVENTS
UR	11:27-32	Called out of his country.
HARAN	12:1-5	Called from Haran, after his father's death.
SHECHEM	12:6-7	Promise at Shechem—Builds altar.
BETHEL-HAI	12:8	Builds altar.
EGYPT	12:9-20	Driven by famine into Egypt—Denies Sarah as his wife.
BETHEL-HAI	13:1-4	Returns to altar.
	13:5-13	Strife between herdsmen—Lot separates.
	13:14-17	Promise of the land.
HEBRON	13:18	Builds altar.
	14:1-16	Invasion of Northern Confederacy — Lot rescued at Hobah.
	14:18-20	Meets Melchizedek at Salem.
	14:21-24	Refuses favours of king of Sodom.
	15:1-21	Promise of a son of his own body and an innumerable seed—Covenant made between God and Abraham.
	16:1-6	Strategem of Sarah—Flight of Hagar.
	16:7-16	Rescue of Hagar by angel—Birth of Ishmael.
	17:1-8	Change of name to Abraham—Reiteration of promise.
	17:9-14	Covenant of circumcision.
	17:15-22	Change of Sarah's name—Promise of Isaac.
	17:23-27	Abraham's house circumcised.
	18:1-8	Visit of angels to Hebron.
	18:9-15	Promise of Isaac repeated —Sarah laughs.
	18:16-33	Message of Doom for Sodom—Abraham intercedes.
	19:1-38	Destruction of Sodom—Escape of Lot.
GERAR	20:1-18	Confrontation with Abimelech—Again denies Sarah as his wife.
	21:1-8	Birth of Isaac.
	21:9-21	Casting out the bondwoman Hagar and her son Ishmael.
	21:22-32	Strife with Abimelech over wells.
BEERSHEBA	21:33-34	Dwells at Beersheba.
	22:1-19	Offering of Isaac—Further promise.
	22:20-24	News of family in Padam-Aram.
	23:1-2	Death of Sarah in Hebron.
	23:3-20	Purchase of Machpelah.
	24:1-67	A wife for Isaac—Rebekah brought from Haran.
	25:1-6	Abraham marries Keturah.
MACHPELAH	25:7-10	Death of Abraham—Burial in cave near Hebron.

## 8. ABRAHAM AND ISAAC: THE PROMISED SEED “Abraham rejoiced to see my day”

*Although Ishmael was born well before the destruction of Sodom, his birth has been grouped in this lesson to give a better sequence of thought. We shall see how Abraham’s mind was continually exercised upon God’s revelations to him, even though those revelations were separated by many years. By conscious mental effort he was able to “see” the fulfilment of the promises, through Isaac his son. Thus prepared, he was able to obey God even to the point of offering up his only beloved son. Abraham’s faith in this matter is set forth as the pattern for all true believers to follow.*

*The aim of the lesson is to see how God tested Abraham’s faith.*

### Genesis 16, 21 & 22

#### THE PROMISE OF THE SEED (Gen. 15-17).

Abraham’s faith was developed over many years, but with God appearing to him from time to time. God had promised that He would make of him “a great nation” (12:3). During the early stages of his sojourn in the land, Abram was concerned as to how his seed would be developed. Because he was childless, he even contemplated making his heir one of his servant Eliezer’s children (15:2-3). But God spoke to him and told him that his seed would proceed from his own body (v. 4), and would become as numerous as the stars (v.5).

Despite being childless since marriage, and also the fact that both he and Sarah were now beyond normal childbearing years, Abraham believed God implicitly (Rom 4:19-20 RSV; Gen 12:18). Abraham believed in the “impossible” - that which flesh could not do and which God alone could do. This demonstrated his great faith in God and for this unquestioning attitude, he was accounted righteous by God (v.6; Heb 11:1, 6). So Abraham was justified by faith, without works being taken into account. In this God has set forth the example which shows how man can be just before him - by **faith** in God **apart** from **works** (Rom 4:1-3, 13, 16, 18-25).

In order to assure Abram that he would fulfil this promise, God made a covenant with him by sacrifice (vv.9-10). These sacrifices (birds and animals) were typical of the sacrifice of Christ for by his death the covenant was truly ratified. Thus we are taught that Jesus Christ “confirmed the promises made unto the fathers” (Rom. 15:8).

God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Abram and then he was shown what would befall his seed after he died. Verses 13-16 prophesy the

captivity in Egypt of Abram's immediate descendants. In verse 17 we read of a "smoking furnace" passing between the pieces of the sacrifices. The "smoking furnace" represented God and by passing between the divided sacrifice God made the covenant with Abram (Jer. 34:18). Verses 18-21 define the borders of the land promised.

Genesis 16 records the birth of Ishmael to Hagar, Sarah's maid. This was an attempt by Sarah to anticipate the promise of the seed (Gal. 3:29). Abram set his heart on Ishmael as the seed of promise, but he was "born after the flesh" (Gal. 4:29). The seed of promise was to be born by the power of God; and was to be the seed, not only of Abram, but also of Sarah, who was at that time barren.

Thirteen years later (chapter 17) God appeared to Abram and reaffirmed the covenant that Abram's seed would be multitudinous. To emphasise this, Abram's name ("Lofty Father") was changed to Abraham ("Father of a great multitude"), and there followed the covenant of circumcision which was an outward token of Abraham's inward faith (Rom. 4:11). Circumcision of itself means nothing. It was used by God to indicate that Abraham was a man who had cut off his natural desires and put all trust in God, even in the matter of childbirth (cp. Phil. 3:3). Paul says that the man who obeys God and not the will of the flesh is "circumcised in heart" (cp. Rom. 2:28-29).

The lesson of trust in God and repudiation of the flesh having been impressed upon Abraham, the way was prepared for the birth of the promised seed. God had made known to Abraham that Sarah was to bear a son, Isaac (17:15-22). Abraham, despite the fact that all outward appearances were against it, came to the point of accepting God's promise. He was rewarded in the birth of Isaac (Rom. 4:17-22). Isaac means "happiness", or "joy" and as the Son of Promise, his birth brought happiness and joy to his parents (21:6). They saw in him the fulfilment of all their hopes. Through him would come:—

- (1) The conqueror of sin: the seed promised in Eden who would bruise the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15); and
- (2) "The heir of the world" (Rom. 4:13), in whom, God said, "all nations shall be blessed" (Gen. 12:3).

Realising this, Abraham and Sarah rejoiced in Isaac (John 8:56). They saw in him the assurance of all their hopes.

### **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 in the birth of Isaac. But there were two who did not — Hagar and Ishmael (v.9).

When Sarah made a feast to celebrate the weaning of Isaac, she found

Ishmael mocking him. Sarah asked Abraham to send Ishmael away and God confirmed that this was necessary, “for,” He said, “in Isaac shall thy seed be called” (v.12).

In Gal. 4:24-31, Paul sees this incident as an illustration of how the true seed of Abraham, those baptised into Christ (3:29), would inherit the promises, whilst the natural seed, Israel after the flesh, would be cast out.

### **THE CHALLENGE (Gen. 22:1-2).**

It must be remembered that Isaac was Abraham’s beloved son and the heir of the promises. His life was bound up in the life of his son. It is not difficult, therefore, to understand the great test that was now placed upon Abraham. How long after is not stated, and may only be inferred, but it was “after these things” — some years after Abraham’s 100th birthday (21:5, 34), with Isaac a “lad” (22:5, 12) — “that God proved Abraham” (v. 1 R.V.). Faith had been Abraham’s outstanding characteristic throughout his pilgrimage. That faith was now to be tried to the utmost as God sought Abraham’s co-operation in a mission which would foreshadow the death and resurrection of His own son (cp. 15:6 with James 2:23).

Like the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn. 3:16), Isaac was a “son of promise” (Gen. 21:12; Heb. 11:17-18). As Jesus is described as God’s “only begotten son” and His “beloved son” (Jn. 1:18; Mat. 3:17), so Isaac is described as “thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest.” Abraham was told to take him “into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of” (v.2). “The land of Moriah” was significant in Israel’s later history as the place where David sacrificed to stop the plague (2 Sam. 24:18-25), and where Solomon built the temple of Yahweh (1 Chron. 22:1; 2 Chron. 3:1). Jesus was sacrificed in a place called Golgotha (meaning the ‘place of a skull’ Mat. 27:33) outside the walls of Jerusalem near the site of the Temple. So the place where Isaac was to be sacrificed was very significant.

### **A JOURNEY OF FAITH (Gen. 22:3-10).**

God was not asking Abraham to do something barbaric, but to cooperate with Him in showing how sin would be overcome in His own dear Son. Abraham was called upon to do what God Himself would do in the future in offering His only begotten Son as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. Seeing the trial from Abraham’s viewpoint, one can understand the pain and anguish endured by the Father when His Son was put to death.

The events of verses 2-14 illustrate the great love which existed between God and His Son which enabled the sacrifice for sin to be willingly offered.



Abraham showed no hesitation in service to God, but “rose early” (v.3) and, taking all that was required, made the journey to Mt. Moriah. Some distance from the Mount, Abraham left the servants with the asses and he and Isaac continued on foot (v.5). Abraham’s faith in the resurrection from the dead is clearly seen in his statement to his servants, “I and the lad will . . . come again to you.” Abraham knew that Isaac must live and knew that God would preserve his son in any event.

The action of laying the wood on Isaac’s shoulders (v.6) was remarkably paralleled, for Jesus “bearing his cross went forth” (Jn. 19:17). So also is the statement “they went both of them together” (v.6), for Jesus worked in harmony with his Father to effect man’s salvation (Jn. 12:27-28; Matt. 26:36-39; Heb. 10:5-7).

Isaac now speaks. He has noticed one important omission from the things they have taken. “My father. . . where is the lamb?” Abraham replies in significant terms: “God will provide Himself a lamb” (v.8), so pointing forward to Jesus (Jn. 1:29, 36). Was Isaac aware of the meaning of these words so far as he was concerned? Did he realise that he was to be the lamb? If he did come to this realisation there was still no hesitation — “so they went both of them together” (v.8).

Provision of the sacrifice seems to have required the co-operation of father and son for Abraham was old and may not have been able to compel obedience from Isaac, who was a fully-grown youth (v.9).

### **THE VICTORY OF FAITH (Gen. 22:10-14).**

When Abraham took the knife and raised it to slay his son, Isaac was as good as dead (v.10). At this crucial point the voice of Yahweh came clearly to Abraham and prevented him from slaying Isaac. Isaac was released; he had virtually been resurrected from the dead (cp. Heb. 11:19).

Abraham was shown a ram, caught in a thicket. This he offered up as a burnt offering. That Abraham contemplated the significance of that day’s events and realised they pointed forward to the Christ, is borne out by the statement of Jesus, “Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad” (Jn. 8:56).

A very powerful testimony is given by James in chapter 2:22: “*Seest thou how faith* (based on the promises God made to him) *wrought with his works* (co-operated with or motivated him) *and by works was faith made perfect.*” Abraham’s faith was not dormant but active. The works he did showed that his faith was more than mere profession—they complemented or perfected his faith.

Abraham experienced the grief that God Himself would have to endure when His Son would be put to death. He too would see His Son willingly travail in pain that a seed might be brought forth (Isa. 53:10-12). Abraham

named the place “Yahweh-yireh”, which means “Yahweh will provide” (AV margin). The same word “yireh” occurs in verse 8 in the reply of Abraham, “My son, God will provide himself a Lamb”. In the outworking of time God did provide the Lamb — “He gave His only begotten Son . . .” (Jn. 3:16; Lk. 23:33; 1 Pet. 1:18-20).

### **THE DIVINE REASSURANCE (Gen. 22:15-19).**

Because of his outstanding obedience and faith, God gave Abraham an even greater assurance — He confirmed the covenant with an oath, saying, “By myself have I sworn. . .” (v.16; Heb. 6:17-18). More details of the covenant were then revealed. Yahweh said He would:—

- bless Abraham personally: “in blessing, I will bless thee.”
- grant him innumerable descendants: “in multiplying, I will multiply thy seed.”
- establish world rule through his seed, the Lord Jesus Christ: “thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.”
- extend salvation and blessedness to all nations through Christ: “and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.”

### **LESSONS FOR US:**

- Abraham had to wait thirty years before God gave him Isaac, the promised seed. In this way his faith in God’s promise of a seed was sorely tried.
- Then God revealed to Abraham that his seed, the Christ, would have to suffer death, and be raised again before he inherited the land forever.
- When God required Abraham to sacrifice his beloved son, the promised seed, he obeyed. He believed that God was able to raise him from the dead.
- Because of his obedience the promise was confirmed to Abraham by an oath.
- We can have the same assurance of a part in the Kingdom if we follow Abraham’s faithful example. It will be given at the second coming of Christ.

### **REFERENCE LIBRARY:**

- “Story of the Bible” (H. P. Mansfield)—Vol. 1, Pages 100-144, 111-127
- “Letter to the Hebrews” (J. Carter) — Pages 139-146
- “The Ways of Providence” (R. Roberts)—Chapter 3
- “Elpis Israel” (J. Thomas)—Part Second, Chapter 2

### **PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:**

1. *Briefly discuss the statement “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness” (Gen. 15:6).*

2. *What are the borders of the land promised to Abraham? Give a verse as proof.*
3. *Why was Ishmael not to be the promised seed?*
4. *How was Abraham able to meet the test of offering up Isaac?*
5. *What parallels are there between the sacrifice of Isaac and the sacrifice of Christ?*
6. *How can we develop a faith like Abraham?*

**ESSAY QUESTIONS:**

1. *Describe the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the sacrifice of Isaac.*
2. *In what way did the sacrifice of Isaac point forward to the sacrifice of Christ?*

## 9. THE COVENANT GOD MADE WITH ABRAHAM

**“In thee shall all nations be blessed”**

*The covenant which God made with the fathers of Israel, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, constitutes the second great foundation upon which all of the Divine revelation is built. The first great covenant was made in the garden of Eden following the entry of sin into the world. God then promised that a seed would be born of woman who would destroy sin and restore the harmony that once existed between Himself and Man (Gen. 3:15). The third great covenant was made with King David about one thousand years after the covenant was made with Abraham. He was told that one would arise of his seed who would be the Son of God and who would reign on his throne forever (2 Sam. 7:12-16; Lk. 1:30-33).*

*Our aim in this lesson is to show how the promises made to Abraham comprise the gospel message, and how they are fulfilled in Jesus Christ.*

**Genesis 12:1-3, 7; 13:14-17; 15:12-18; 22:16-18; Gal. 3**

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM.**

The fundamental importance of the covenant which God made with Abraham can be seen from the fact that Paul called its message “THE GOSPEL”: “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’.” This being so, we would expect to find further evidence from the writings of the apostles that their hopes centred upon its fulfilment. There is much evidence to show that this was so: Paul looked to the day when, as “Abraham’s seed”, he would inherit the land of Canaan for ever (Acts 26:6-8). He did not believe that he would go to heaven at death. In fact he taught that the gospel’s hope revolved around the “covenants of promise” and that outside their fulfilment there was “no hope” (Eph. 2:12).

As we might expect, the covenants related to Jesus Christ. The very first words of the New Testament inform us that Jesus Christ was the seed of Abraham and David: he is the one through whom the promises made to them would be confirmed (Mat. 1:1; Rom. 15:8).

### **DETAILS OF THE PROMISE.**

Abraham’s hope was fixed on the future. He looked for the coming kingdom which would be governed by his seed, and although he possess-

ed goods and flocks and herds, he never allowed them to distract him from his eternal hope. He embraced the promises, was persuaded of them, and confessed that he was a stranger and pilgrim in the earth (Heb. 11:13).

The details of the promise were gradually unfolded in the life of Abraham. It is interesting to note that faithful obedience on Abraham's part was rewarded with further details of promise and by stronger assurances. We shall now list the places, in order, where God gave Abraham these details and note the progressive nature and the circumstances of the revelations.

The details are numbered for the sake of simplicity and added details only are mentioned under each new place name. In this way we shall make a comprehensive survey of the promise.

**Genesis 12:2-3:** At UR and HARAN the initial promise was made.

1. Abraham 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 Abram all families would be blessed.

**Genesis 12:7:** At SICHEM or SHECHEM, after Abram left Haran and had crossed the River Euphrates and entered the land of Canaan. There mention is made for the first time of "his seed" and the "land of promise". Abram was promised that:

4. He would have children who would inherit Canaan: "Unto thy SEED will I give THIS LAND."

**Genesis 13:14-17:** These details were given at BETHEL, following his unselfish attitude towards Lot.

5. ABRAM and his seed would inherit the land FOREVER.
6. He is told for the first time that his SEED would be MULTITUDINOUS.

**Genesis 15:** Following his implicit faith in God's promise of multitudinous seed, though at the time he was childless, Abram was rewarded AT HEBRON:

7. GOD MADE A COVENANT by sacrifice with him.
8. God DEFINED THE BOUNDARIES of the land of promise (vv. 18-21).

Note that Genesis 15:13-16 relates to Abram's immediate descendants, to their affliction in Canaan and Egypt, and also to their deliverance under Moses in the fourth generation.

**Genesis 22:16-18:** In the LAND OF MORIAH (v.2), after Abraham showed how great his trust in God was when called on to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac, God rewarded him as follows:—

9. His seed would POSSESS THE GATES OF HIS ENEMIES, i.e. be victorious over his enemies (Psa. 110:1; Isa. 60:12; Gen. 3:15).
10. IN HIS SEED all nations would be blessed.
11. The promise was confirmed by an OATH, “By myself have I sworn. . .” (Heb. 6:13-18).

## EXPLANATION OF THE PROMISE.

### 1. The True Seed of Abraham.

Jesus Christ is the promised seed of Abraham through whom the blessings will be fulfilled. Note that the following quotations prove this — Matt. 1:1; Gal. 3:16.

The land was specifically promised to two people, Abram and his seed, Christ (Gen. 13:15), as an everlasting possession. They were given what we would call today “title deeds”. The question arises, how can others share the promise?

By baptism into Christ we can become part of the “body of Christ”. Hence, seeing Christ is Abraham’s seed, we too can become his seed and “heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:26-29). Baptism constitutes one “IN CHRIST”, who is in turn Abraham’s seed, and the terms of the promise are, “IN THY SEED shall all nations be blessed.” Baptism, then, is the gateway to association with the hope of the promises made to the fathers.

\* Abraham’s seed has a singular aspect, referring to Christ, and also a multitudinous aspect — those baptised into Christ. \*

### 2. The Natural Seed Of Abraham.

Fleshly descent from Abraham does not confer upon one the right to inherit the land. Faith was the great quality of Abraham’s life which commended him to God. Faith and obedience then are the “family characteristics” which link Abraham with his children (Gal. 3:7-9). These children are drawn from “all nations” (cp. Acts 15:14).

Notice how John the Baptist (Mat. 3:9), the Lord Jesus (Jn. 8:33-40), and Paul (Rom. 9:6-13), all repudiate that fleshly descent from Abraham entitles one to inherit the promises.

### 3. What is the Blessing of the Abrahamic Covenant?

1. Firstly the “blessing” relates to JUSTIFICATION OR FORGIVENESS OF SINS for all those who are baptised into Abraham’s seed, the Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:8; Acts 3:25-26).
2. Secondly, those who are so justified will inherit the “hope of the promises,” which entails eternal life in the Kingdom of God (Gen. 13:14-17; Gal. 3:29; Mat. 5:5; Rev. 5:9-10; Rom. 4:13-14).

#### 4. **The Basic Doctrine of the Covenant—Resurrection.**

Resurrection to life from death is the underlying doctrine, without which fulfilment of the promise would not be possible. Resurrection is “taught” by promising something that necessitates it; how can mortal man be promised an eternal inheritance without being brought from the grave and given eternal life? Refer to the following quotations about the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant, all of which imply that inheritance is through the resurrection (Heb. 11:12-16, 35, 39-40; Acts 26:2-9; Lk. 20:36-38; Rom. 4:13).

#### 5. **The Spirit of the Promise.**

The Covenant was a spontaneous GIFT from God. It was neither merited nor earned, for what could any man do to deserve an eternal possession of a land? God said, “I will GIVE the land to thee forever.” The promise was given to Abraham on the basis of his faith and obedience. It was not obtained by “works of law” but by “grace”, so that “no flesh might glory” in God’s presence (Eph. 2:6-8).

#### 6. **The Promise Confirmed by Covenant and Oath.**

In ancient times a covenant was solemnised between two parties by each passing between the pieces of a sacrifice and then eating together. Covenants were very serious matters, being unchangeable. If broken the guilty party would in turn virtually become the sacrifice and be “cut asunder”. To assure Abraham of the promises, God made a covenant with him (Gen. 15:9-18; Psa. 50:5-8; Jer. 34:8, 18; Isa. 42:6; Mat. 26:28; 24:51 “testament” = covenant).

To His covenant God added an oath, which involved His very existence, to show to Abraham the “immutability (unchangeableness) of his counsel.” Thus the promises were confirmed in the most solemn and binding way possible (Heb. 6:13-18; Gen. 22:16; Mic. 7:20; Psa. 105:8-9). It was not until the Lord Jesus came that the covenant was in reality confirmed, for only through his death could it be fulfilled (Rom. 15:8).

#### 7. **The Covenant has Not Yet Been Fulfilled.**

Some say that when Israel inherited the land of Canaan under Joshua the covenant was fulfilled. That this is not true can be seen from the following:

1. Its terms have NEVER been fulfilled (Heb. 11:13, 39; Acts 7:5).
2. God’s prophets declare that fulfilment will be AT CHRIST’S RETURN (Acts 3:20-21, 24-26).

There would be no mention made of a future fulfilment after Joshua caused the people to inherit the land, if he had in fact fulfilled the terms of the covenant.

Compare Micah 7:20, written 1300 years after it was given;  
Luke 1:72-73, written 2000 years after it was given;  
Romans 15:8, written 2050 years after it was given.

## 8. Israel and The Inheritance Under Joshua.

From Note 7 it is clear that the promise was not fulfilled by Joshua. There was however, a token or typical fulfilment (cp. Deut. 9:5; 10:22; Joshua 21:43-44). In particular the terms of Genesis 15:13-16 were fulfilled.

Also under the Law of Moses the land remained God's, and the Israelites were merely strangers and sojourners, having no right to sell the land. They did not possess the "title deeds" (Lev. 25:23; Rom. 4:13), which were in fact promised.

## 9. The Promise Was Also Made 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; Heb. 11:9).

### LESSONS FOR US:

- Abraham, believing God, looked for a future inheritance in the land of Canaan.
- We can become Abraham's seed by faith in Christ.
- Baptism into Christ enables us to be justified from sins and to become heirs of the promise to Abraham.
- We cannot earn God's gift of salvation. God *gave* Abraham the promise and so rewarded faith. Grace can operate only when we come to God in humble trust.
- God has given the greatest assurances possible that He will fulfil His word to Abraham — a covenant and an oath. World history is headed in this direction as can be seen from the restoration of the Jews to Palestine.

### REFERENCE LIBRARY:

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

### PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

1. *What is the blessing referred to in the words of the Abrahamic covenant: "In thee shall all nations be blessed"?*
2. *How did God give Abraham an assurance that His promise to him would not fail?*
3. *List the main points of the promises to Abraham.*



**ESSAY QUESTIONS:**

1. *Outline the details of the promises to Abraham. How do they relate to Christ, and how can we become involved in them?*
2. *Show how the promises to Abraham relate to Christ, and all nations.*
3. *Paul says that the gospel was preached before to Abraham in the words: "In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Gal. 3:8). Explain.*

## 10. A WIFE FOR ISAAC

“A prudent wife is from Yahweh”

*Abraham was anxious that Isaac should have a suitable wife. In view of God's commendation of Abraham in Gen. 18:19, this was to be expected. But Abraham was growing old and he thought that he would soon die. Since the promises made to him depended upon the continuation of his seed, it was vital that Isaac should marry and have children.*

*Forty years had passed since the birth of Isaac (Gen. 25:20), but he had not married, and a suitable wife could not be found for him in Canaan. He needed a wife who would respond to the things of God, be a help to him in his spiritual growth, and bring up his children in “the fear and admonition of the Lord.”*

*Our aim in this lesson is to see:—*

- (i) The importance of wise marriages;*
- (ii) The truth that “a prudent wife is from Yahweh” (Prov. 19:14).*

### Genesis 24

#### THE MESSENGER (Gen. 24:1-9).

Abraham commissioned Eliezer, his eldest servant (15:2), to return to his country and kindred, and to find a wife for Isaac. He made Eliezer swear to him that he would not take for Isaac a wife “of the daughters of the Canaanites” (v.3). Abraham knew how alien marriages had led to the destruction of the sons of God in the past (6:1-3). Israel's later history proved the same point.

He sternly forbade Eliezer to take Isaac out of the land of promise (vv. 7, 8), for God had told him to remain therein as a stranger and pilgrim. He told Eliezer that his mission would be blessed by Almighty God, Who would send His Angel before him.

#### IMPORTANCE OF WISE MARRIAGE.

The contract of marriage is binding, and great care should be exercised from early days to ensure that a wise choice is made. It is important that a man and his wife be of one mind, for otherwise the home will soon become divided and the worship of God hindered or neglected. Arguments will then make the home a place of discord and even of hatred. Hence the importance of Paul's words in 2 Cor. 6:14, and the instruction in such passages as Deut. 7:3-4; Ex. 34:16 and Josh. 23:11-13. These teachings reveal that “mixed” marriages are not only unwise, but also a direct breach of the law of God.

Young people need to remember that true beauty means much more

than a pretty face and true wealth is not measured by a bank balance. True beauty often lies unseen in the heart, and is shown by obedience to God, and in loving, thoughtful actions towards others. A pretty face can hide a vain character and a bad temper that can make life unpleasant and difficult; a good bank balance can be an evidence of selfishness and neglect of others. The years go by, good looks fade, and bank balances often fail, but spiritual beauty increases in loveliness with the passing of time, and wealth in the things of God cannot be stolen or lost.

True love between husband and wife grows with the passing of years as they help each other towards the Kingdom of God. Marriage was instituted by God in order that each party might help the other (Gen. 2:20), but selfishness can destroy that. It is better to sever a friendship with one who does not have a positive interest in the Word of God before it becomes involved. If such an affinity eventually leads to marriage, the end will be unhappiness and may well be at the expense of a place in the Kingdom. Love based upon the Truth is a very wonderful thing, and concerning this, the wise man wrote in Prov. 18:22, "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord."

Note Paul's words in Eph. 5:22-33. Wives are called upon to be submissive and loving to their husbands, as the Ecclesia is to Christ (v.22); husbands are to love their wives as "Christ loved the Ecclesia" (v.25) — this was a self-sacrificing love, that caused him to give his life for the benefit of his bride. This self-sacrificing love should be shown by husbands towards their wives.

#### **ELIEZER'S MISSION (Gen. 24:10-67).**

Eliezer was a man of faith, educated by Abraham in the "ways of the Lord, to do justice and judgment" (18:19). He made his mission a matter of prayer, asking a sign of God which was granted in a remarkable way as Rebekah came to the well to draw water.

Eliezer learned that the girl's name was Rebekah, a niece of Abraham! The sign was complete. He was conducted to the house of Bethuel, Rebekah's father, where he acquainted Laban, her elder brother, with his purpose.

It appears that Nahor, the brother of Abraham and grandfather of Rebekah, was dead, and that Bethuel her father, being old, was inactive, for Laban takes the prominent part in this chapter. (though Bethuel joins Laban in responding to the main issue — vv.50-51).

Eliezer told Laban of his mission and he could see that God had directed his steps. Eliezer presented the family with gifts from Abraham and obtained permission for Rebekah to return with him.

Rebekah thus came into the Land of Promise as the wife of Isaac,

travelling into the south country where Isaac was living at the time. When Rebekah saw Isaac she took a veil and covered her face. This was a custom of the times and indicated modesty and subjection. Rebekah thus showed Isaac that she would be a dutiful wife to him, according to the example commended in 1 Peter 3:6.

### **A FORESHADOWING OF THE SPIRITUAL MARRIAGE.**

There are some wonderful lessons in this beautiful story which illustrate the union of Christ and his Bride. The story is like a parable pointing forward to the time when Jesus Christ (of whom Isaac was a type) will be united with those who have lived according to the commandments of God. They are likened to a "chaste virgin" engaged to be married (2 Cor. 11:2). When the Lord Jesus returns to the earth, these faithful ones will be raised from the dead, given eternal life and united with him. This coming together is likened to a wonderful marriage (Rev. 19:7, 9).

As Rebekah was beautiful (Gen. 24:16), so also will be Christ's Bride, the Ecclesia (Eph. 5:25-31). As Rebekah separated herself from her people to marry Isaac, so the faithful come aside from the world to marry Christ (2 Cor. 6:17). As Laban and Milcah tried to delay Rebekah and she refused to be delayed, saying she would go with the messenger from Abraham, so the faithful also refuse to heed the counsel of those who would hinder them from commencing a journey that will take them to Christ (1 Pet. 1:13; 2 Pet. 3:12). As Rebekah "crossed over" the river and thus became a Hebrew, so the faithful become "Israelites indeed" when they "cross over" from the world to Christ. As Rebekah veiled herself, showing her subjection to Isaac, so the faithful are veiled (i.e. covered, or immersed) at baptism, this being a symbol of their modesty and subjection to their master and Lord. Finally at "evening time" Rebekah first saw Isaac, and, marrying him, was placed in charge of Abraham's house (Gen. 24:67), so in the "last days" of the Gentiles, the faithful will see Jesus Christ, and as Abraham's seed, will "inherit the promise" (Gal. 3:29).

### **A PRUDENT WIFE IS FROM THE LORD.**

An outstanding feature of Abraham's quest for a wife for Isaac is his dependence on God's guidance. Abraham knew that a prudent wife is from the Lord (Prov. 19:14), and he was quite prepared to wait even if this journey of Eliezer's proved fruitless. He was not prepared to compromise in this vital matter (Gen. 24:7-8).

In seeking a partner in this life it is necessary that we do our own part, but always in accordance with God's commandments. We should look for spiritual qualities in a future partner for life, such as faithfulness, loyalty, wisdom, a love of God's ways and His word, meekness,

kindness, justice. If we desire these characteristics in others then we must cultivate them carefully in ourselves as well (cp. David and Abigail, I Sam. 25:23-35, 39-42).

### LESSONS FOR US:

- If Abraham's descendants were to hold fast to the Truth, it was essential that they should make wise marriages.
- Abraham charged Eliezer with the commission of finding a wife for Isaac from among his own people and not among the Canaanites.
- This mission was carried out in a wise and prayerful way, and as a result, God blessed what was done in the provision of Rebekah. She embraced the Truth and married "the son of promise".
- The marriage of Isaac and Rebekah is a pattern of the ecclesia's union with Christ, the true Bridegroom.

### REFERENCE LIBRARY:

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

"Story of the Bible" (H. P. Mansfield)—Vol. 1, Pages 130-137

### PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

- ✕ 1. *Why is it important for us to choose a God-fearing partner in our life?*
2. *Explain briefly what you know of Paul's instructions to husbands and wives in Ephesians 5.*
3. (a) *How did Eliezer find Rebekah?*  
(b) *How does his example provide us with guidance when choosing a partner for life?*

### ESSAY QUESTIONS:

- ✕ 1. *Illustrate how the faithfulness of Abraham and Eliezer was shown when they sought a wife for Isaac.*
- ✕ 2. *How does the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah foreshadow the marriage of Christ and his bride?*

2 Cor 6:14

## 11. JACOB—THE BIRTHRIGHT AND THE BLESSING

**“Two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels”**

*Abraham continued living many years after the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah, and did not die until Jacob, the son of Isaac, was about 14 years of age. Isaac never left the Land of Promise; even in times of drought and famine he remained there (Gen. 26:1-2). God made the same wonderful promises to him that He had made to Abraham (Gen. 26:3-5). Although he was discomfited by the people of the land (as foretold in Gen. 15:13), and was sometimes forced into contention with them, he continued to worship God faithfully, always looking forward to the time when all such bitterness would cease, and the glorious times that God has promised would be revealed in the earth (Heb. 11:9, 13).*

*The aim of this lesson is to show why God preferred Jacob to Esau; and how God's over-riding providence shaped the lives of all concerned in the carrying out of His purpose.*

### **Genesis 25 and 27**

#### **ESAU AND JACOB (Gen. 25:19-28).**

Esau and Jacob were the twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah. Esau the elder was a cunning hunter, a man of the field. He had an ardent, impetuous temperament and was not influenced by spiritual considerations. Isaac loved Esau, particularly for the venison he caught and prepared for him.

Jacob, the younger, was an upright, sincere man, dwelling in tents. He was impressed with the things of God. Note that in Gen. 25:27, the Hebrew word for “plain” is the same word rendered “perfect” in Job 1:1. It means (i) complete, (ii) pious or upright, but (iii) specifically gentle (Strong). He was a prudent, peaceful man, greatly loved by his mother. Before their birth, God told her that “the elder would serve the younger.”

Paul in Romans 9:10-13 draws attention to the fact that Jacob was God's choice. God in His mercy chose Jacob and Jacob subsequently responded to His love and served Him faithfully. Esau did not, although he had the same opportunities. In the following history of the two seeds, God is seen to be right (cp. Mal. 1:2-3). Today, likewise, “God is taking out of the Gentiles a people for His Name” (Acts 15:14). We are included in this call, but we must respond to it in loving and obedient service. If we do, God “will make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom He hath called. . . (out) of the Gentiles” (Rom. 9:23-24).

#### **JACOB'S LIFE—TYPICAL OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY.**

The following summaries of Jacob's life and the experiences of the nation of Israel show how his life was typical of the nation that was called by his divinely changed name (Israel).

Jacob —

- He gained the birthright and the blessing;
- He was driven from his home by the enmity of his brother;
- He suffered in exile working for his uncle, Laban;
- He returned home yet still in fear of his brother, Esau;
- His name was changed to Israel (Prince with God);
- He was reconciled to his brother;
- He settled in peace in the Land of Promise.

Israel —

- They are God's firstborn nation;
- They were driven from their homeland through their own folly and by the enmity of the Gentiles;
- They have suffered in exile;
- Their latter-day return to their land is marked by times of fear (Jer. 30:4-9);
- They are to be changed in heart at Christ's return (Ezek. 36:25-27);
- They are to be reconciled to the Gentiles in the universal kingdom Christ will establish (Isa. 19:24-25);
- They will settle in peace in the Land of Promise (Isa. 60:18, etc.).

Jacob means "supplanter", and the record of his life shows how he supplanted in the first instance through the manipulations of he and his mother, but later through divine elevation.

#### **ESAU—A CARNAL MAN.**

Rebekah was told that her two sons, Esau and Jacob, represented "two nations and two manner of people"; that is, two people of fundamentally different outlooks.

Esau —

- Preferred the things of the flesh to the things of God (Gen. 25:30; Heb. 12:16-17);
- Failed to receive the blessing reserved for the firstborn;
- Persecuted his brother;
- Was removed from the land of Promise to make room for Jacob.

If Jacob represented Israel, then Esau represents the Gentiles who shall yet seek out Israel in the age to come (Zech. 8:23).

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

Esau returned faint from hunting. He had been long away from home and perhaps had caught nothing. Thus without food, he was famished, and appeared on the point of death. He demanded food and was prepared to sell his birthright to gain it. The spiritual advantages of the birthright meant nothing to this man of the flesh. "Feed me with that red pottage," he demanded. "Sod pottage" (v.29) means boiled stew or soup. Jacob's pottage consisted of lentils (v.34). The word "red" in

Hebrew is “Edom” and it is because of this that his name was changed to Edom. In Isa. 1:18 this word is translated “red” and the verse shows that this is the colour of sin. The word “Adam” is a closely related word in Hebrew.

### **THE BIRTHRIGHT.**

The eldest son’s position was one of great respect (Deut. 21:15-17). He was the firstborn, the head of his brethren. He succeeded to his father’s official authority and had a special claim to his father’s blessing, receiving a double portion of his father’s goods. This birthright could be transferred, or withheld by the father for a just cause. Esau surrendered his priceless birthright for a pot of stew!

Notice God’s intention to “make” *Jesus* “His firstborn” (Ps. 89:27). He has been elevated to that position although he is the “second Adam”; the “first Adam” was disqualified because of sin (Col. 1:15; 1 Cor. 15:45).

### **JACOB’S BLESSING AND THE RESULT (Gen. 27:1-40).**

This chapter shows how Jacob, at the instigation of Rebekah, deceived his father and obtained the blessing. According to the message given by God to Rebekah in Genesis 25:23, he was really entitled to this, and he had already obtained Esau’s birthright, but Rebekah took matters into her own hands, instead of leaving them to God.

Whilst Esau was out hunting deer to make venison for his father, preparatory to receiving the blessing, Rebekah prepared a suitable dish and, disguising her son, pretended that he was Esau. Isaac was so feeble that the deception was not detected. Though in fact he continued to live many years, Isaac was ill at the time, and felt death was near.

Thus Jacob obtained the blessing. “Nations” and “his mother’s sons” were to bow to him, and he was to be blessed with the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth. Jacob has not yet received this blessing in its fulness. Like those made to Abraham and Isaac, it will be received in the Kingdom of God.

It is interesting to note that Hebrews says, “By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come” (11:20). Yet the record in Genesis makes it quite clear that Isaac intended to bless the wrong boy!

The explanation can be seen in what follows. When the deception was discovered, Isaac did not vent his anger upon Jacob as might have been expected, but “trembled exceedingly” (v.33). It is obvious that Isaac knew that he was in error, and although He wanted to bless Esau, he accepted that Jacob was the one whom God had chosen. God had overriden his natural desires. Isaac’s faith then rose to the fore, and with Esau looking on in utter dismay he said, “Yea, and he shall be blessed!” He then gave a blessing to Esau but not in the terms of the Abrahamic promise. Thus he acted “by faith”.



## **ESAU'S HATRED (Gen. 27:41-46).**

Esau tried to kill Jacob in order to obtain the blessing for himself. He was moved by envy and jealousy, even to tears, but “found no place of repentance” (Heb. 12:17). The word “repentance” means “change of mind” (see margin). Esau did not repent, in the ordinary sense of the word; he wept before his father in an endeavour to change his father’s mind, but his own mind was already plotting the murder of his brother!

Knowing this, Rebekah urged Jacob to leave home. She reminded Isaac of the unwise marriage of Esau, and suggested that Jacob should be sent to her brother Laban’s home to obtain a wife of her own kindred (cp. Gen. 26:34-35). Thus, Jacob was caused to leave his home for fear of his brother.

Before he left, however, his father blessed him and expressed the desire that:—

1. God would give him the blessing of Abraham;
2. He would develop into a multitude of people;
3. He would inherit the land in which he was a stranger (28:3, 4).

In this prayer the Abrahamic promise was conferred on him. We should remember that Jacob died in Egypt, so that he has not as yet inherited these promises.

So Jacob left his father’s house and commenced a journey that took him back to Haran to the family of Laban.

### **LESSONS FOR US:**

- Jacob and Esau were twins. Esau was the first-born and a man of the flesh, while Jacob was an upright, sincere person.
- Rebekah was told they were “two manner of people”: Jacob represented God’s people and Esau represented the Gentiles. History has shown their seed to be different types.
- At their birth it was said that the elder should serve the younger, but this will not happen fully until the Kingdom of God comes (Jer. 16:19; Zech. 8:23).
- Esau despised his birthright as did Adam, God’s “firstborn” in the Garden of Eden. Jacob succeeded to the birthright of Esau as Christ succeeded to that of Adam (Ps. 89:27; Col. 1:15).
- Esau lost both birthright and blessing, things which relate to the future, because he was a man who lived for the present.
- Though driven to exile by Esau’s desire to kill him, Jacob was protected by God: natural Israel has similarly been protected during the long “times of the Gentiles”.

**REFERENCE LIBRARY:**

“The Ways of Providence” (R. Roberts) — Chapters 5 and 6

“Elpis Israel” (J. Thomas) — Pages 264-269

“The Story of the Bible” (H. P. Mansfield) — Vol. 1, Pages 141-150

**PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:**

1. *What message did God give Rebekah about her twin sons?*
2. *In what way did Esau despise the birthright?*
3. *Why was Jacob selected by God for the blessing?*
4. *What lessons do we learn from Esau?*
5. *How did Isaac show faith when he blessed his sons?*
6. *How was the foreknowledge of God seen before Jacob and Esau were born?*

**ESSAY QUESTIONS:**

1. *How did Jacob steal his father’s blessing from Esau?*
2. *How did Jacob’s life foreshadow that of Israel?*
- 3. *Write an essay contrasting the characters of Esau and Jacob. In your answer relate the incidents involving the birthright and the blessing.*
4. *The Lord said to Rebekah, “Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger” (Gen. 25:23).  
How was this prophecy shown to be true in the lives of Esau and Jacob and their descendants?*

## **Section 3**

# **THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISRAEL**

Israel's development as a nation took 430 years from the call of Abraham until they left Egypt under Moses (Ex. 12:40-41). First Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac begat Jacob, whose twelve sons became the patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Israel.

This period of Israel's history is notable for three outstanding men of faith: Jacob, who clung to God through all his trials; Joseph, whose life was so typical of that of the Lord Jesus Christ; and Moses, whose life was shaped by Providence to fit him for the task of leading Israel from its slavery in Egypt.

Yahweh's hand could be seen in each of their lives. Less spectacularly, but not less effectively, His hand could also be seen in the rapid multiplication of the nation's population whilst they dwelt in Egypt. He "exalted the people" (Acts 13:17). The 75 kindred of Joseph who went into Egypt became approximately two million in the space of little more than two centuries, and the way was made for their constitution as a Kingdom.

## 12. JACOB'S EXILE AND RETURN

**“I will keep thee in all places whither thou goest ”**

*Esau determined to slay Jacob because he had by guile obtained the blessing. When this news reached Rebekah, she advised Jacob to depart. She persuaded Isaac to send Jacob away so he could choose a godly wife. Isaac formally conferred the Abrahamic Covenant upon his youngest son and sent him to Padan-aram to Laban, the brother of Rebekah.*

*The aim of this lesson is to show God's faithfulness in his care of Jacob.*

### Genesis 28-33

#### **THE DREAM AND VOW AT BETHEL (Gen. 28:10-22).**

On his way north, Jacob slept, and in a dream saw a vision of a staircase linking heaven and earth with angels of God ascending and descending upon it. God, who in the dream stood above the staircase, spoke and directly confirmed His promise made to Abraham and Isaac — the land upon which Jacob lay would be given to him and through him would come the seed in whom all earth's families would be blessed. As the staircase joined heaven and earth, so heaven would join with earth in this seed: Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Man (Jn. 1:51). Moreover the staircase served to illustrate God's constant care of Jacob: “I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest” (v.15).

Jacob awoke in trepidation with the words on his lips, “How dreadful is this place!” Knowing God's presence had been there, he named it ‘Bethel’ (House of God). There he made a solemn vow — if God would preserve and provide for him and bring him back to his father's house in peace, “then shall Yahweh be my God” (vv.20-22). Faith had begun to take root and Jacob commenced the road of self-renunciation and reliance upon God, which culminated at the end of his life in complete and implicit obedience, as his confessions reveal (48:15-16).

God honoured His vow with Jacob, later advising him to leave Laban with the assurance, “I will be with thee” (31:3). His peaceful reunion with Esau (33:4), the divine protection afforded him when he left Shechem and came to Bethel (35:5), and at last his return to Isaac (35:27), testify to God's faithfulness and steadfast love.

#### **JACOB IN EXILE (Gen. 29).**

By the hand of providence, Jacob met Rachel beside a well as she came to water her father's sheep. Jacob kissed his cousin and wept. God had

prospered his journey and he was cordially received into his uncle's home.

Laban had two daughters, Leah and Rachel. Rachel was beautiful and Jacob loved her deeply and agreed to serve Laban seven years for her. At the end of this period, however, he was the victim of the same deceit he had first practised against his father — Leah was given to him, for, said Laban, the younger should not be given before the elder! In this way Laban contrived to retain Jacob another seven years. So he served Laban 14 years for his two daughters.

Leah and Rachel were given handmaids, Zilpah and Bilhah. From these four women soon came the twelve sons of Jacob amidst considerable domestic upheaval and rivalry. Jacob was now a man with large responsibilities and he sought release from Laban to provide for his own (30:1-26). Laban had prospered so long as Jacob worked for him, but Jacob found him a hard taskmaster (31:38-42). Despite this Jacob agreed to stay on and work for wages — the inferior sheep and cattle would be his. But God so blessed Jacob that his portion exceeded Laban's (v.43). This aroused the envy of Laban's sons and affected adversely his position among them.

#### **DEPARTURE FROM LABAN (Gen. 31-32).**

The time had come to leave and God advised Jacob to return to his father's house. Rachel and Leah appreciated the problem and agreed to leave secretly so that Laban could not interfere with their plans. Three days later, when Laban realised what had happened, he took his brethren and pursued and overtook Jacob, but God intervened and warned Laban to do Jacob no harm.

Laban accused Jacob of stealth and theft, but he was unable to prove his charges (vv.23-25). So Jacob spoke to vindicate himself. He reiterated his honest and faithful service compared with Laban's injustices: "Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the fear of Isaac had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty" (v.42). Despite these accusations against each other, wisdom prevailed, and they covenanted before God to do each other no harm.

Jacob went his ways, but new fears assailed him; he would soon have to face his brother Esau! And then his messengers returned with the startling news that his brother Esau was coming to meet him with 400 men (32:6). But Jacob was learning to trust in God. Had not God appeared to him in Bethel? Had not God prospered him in Padan-aram and spared him from Laban's vengeance? Surely experience had taught him to hope in God (Rom. 5:2-5). To God he would go. In great humility he pleaded for protection on the basis of the promises of God (32:9-12, cp. 28:13-15; 31:3). After sending a generous gift to Esau, Jacob sent his family over the brook Jabbok and remained alone.

## **JACOB BECOMES ISRAEL (Gen. 32:24-32).**

All night Jacob wrestled with an angel. At the break of day the angel sought release but prevailed not. He touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh as he wrestled and put it out of joint. But still Jacob would not let him go. He greatly desired the angel to bless him in this his hour of fear and need.

The tenacity of Jacob is notable. Divine blessings only come to those who persistently seek them. In reply to Jacob's request, the angel asked him his name. The blessing was contained in a significant change of name — from Jacob (Supplanter) to Israel (a Prince with God). The former spoke of human self-sufficiency, the latter of dependence on God: "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." In these words he was told that as he had prevailed with God (Heb. Elohim, i.e. the angel), he would certainly prevail with men. This answered his immediate need. He could now approach Esau with his 400 men in confidence. God was with him so what could man do to him? In any case what could he do now that his flesh was weak? This is the significance of the name "Israel". Jacob called the name of the place Peniel (the face of God) because he had seen God face to face. Actually he saw the angel (as the Heb. Elohim signifies, cp. Psa. 8:5), for no man can see God (cp. Hos. 12:3-4; Jn. 1:18; 1 Tim. 6:16).

Events that followed portray a graphic picture. When the sun arose Jacob was late but could not hurry because of what the angel had done to his thigh. He hobbled as best he could to catch up with his family knowing now that there was nothing he could do in his own strength to protect them. But without fear now he lifted his eyes and saw Esau approaching with his 400 men. Esau was pleased to see him: "he ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept" (33:4). Surely God was with Jacob as He had promised (28:20-22). In safety he came to the city of Shechem where he dwelt for some time. "Shalom" in 33:18 means "peace" and describes his state of mind and not a place — cp. R.S.V. "Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem".

## **JACOB'S EXPERIENCE PREFIGURES ISRAEL'S HISTORY.**

It was because of his relationship to God that Jacob not only limped and halted for the rest of his life, but also received protection and salvation! This is a parable of the experiences of the nation that developed from him and which took on the name he was given.

Knowledge brought responsibility in Israel. They could not sin with impunity (Amos 3:1-2), and so they suffered more than any other nation. But the promises of God likewise cannot fail (Rom. 11:2, 28, 29). Though

they have suffered, they yet survive as a nation and their destiny is to be head and not tail — at that time God will “assemble her that HALTETH . . . and make her that was cast off a strong nation” (Micah 4:6-7; Zeph. 3:19). But like Jacob, they must learn the condition of divine blessing — self-surrender. Today Israel rests on the arm of the flesh and her pride and arrogance are renowned. When humbled and converted, she shall trust in Yahweh and this song shall be sung in Judah: “We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. . . Trust ye in the Lord forever. . .”.

The lesson reaches down to the individual level. Do we rely on God or self? Constant prayer and daily yearning for the Word of God evidence a life which is God-centred and which will qualify for the blessings to come.

### **LESSONS FOR US:**

- In fear Jacob fled from Esau and God comforted him and promised to be with him. He is with all those who serve him (Heb. 13:5).
- Jacob had deceived his father to obtain the blessing, but he became in turn the victim of deceit at the hand of Laban. “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7).
- Jacob greatly feared Esau’s approach with 400 men, but the angel that wrestled all night with him, taught him to rely on God and not “the flesh”.
- The meanings of “Jacob” and “Israel” are a parable of the history of Israel and contain great personal lessons for today. We, like Jacob, must learn to depend upon God and not upon self (Prov. 3:5-6).

### **REFERENCE LIBRARY:**

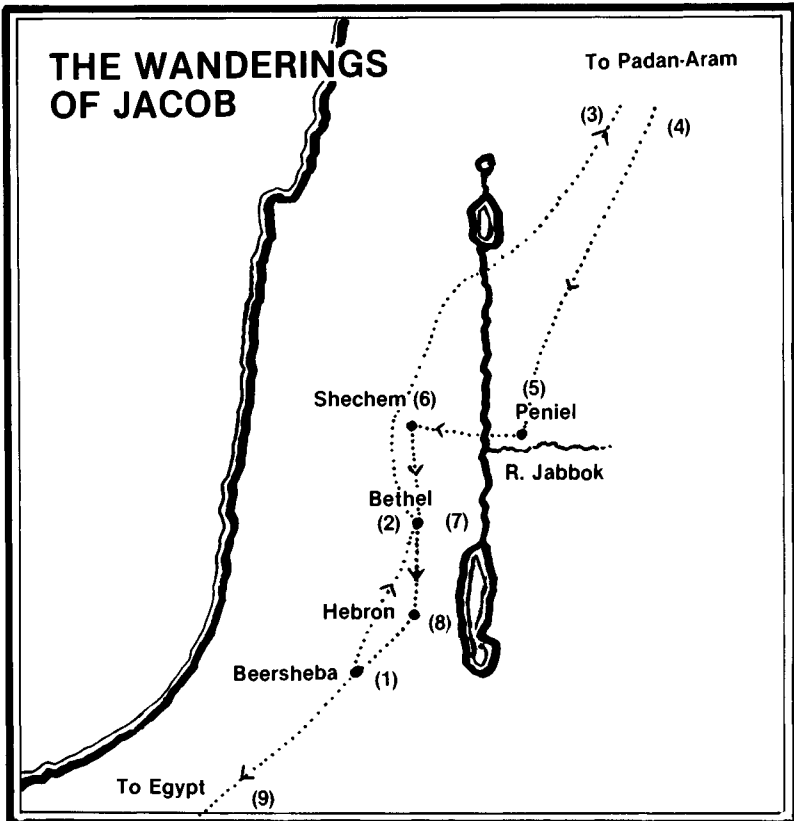
- “Elpis Israel” (J. Thomas)—Pages 270-274
- “The Ways of Providence” (R. Roberts)—Chapter 6
- “Story of the Bible” (H. P. Mansfield)—Vol. 1, Pages 151-176

### **PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:**

1. *What vow did Jacob make with God at Bethel? How was it fulfilled?*
- ② 2. *Briefly describe Jacob’s experiences with Laban.*
3. *Describe Jacob’s encounter with the angel at Peniel.*

### **ESSAY QUESTIONS:**

1. *Explain how Jacob learned to trust in God through his experiences with Laban and Esau.*
2. *How was Jacob deceived by Laban? How did God compensate Jacob?*
- ♥ 3. *What is the significance of Jacob’s change of name:*
  - (a) *in relation to the time when he met Esau?*
  - (b) *in relation to the nation that came of him?*



- (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 several 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 (and providentially) 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 instigation of Joseph (46:1-7).



## 13. JOSEPH'S TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS

**“God did send me before you to preserve life”**

*Jacob dwelt at Shechem, until the slaughter of the Shechemites by Simeon and Levi caused him to leave in shame. He removed to Bethel where God confirmed His word to him. Rachel died in childbirth as Jacob travelled further south to Mamre where he reunited with Isaac. Jacob settled in Hebron and there his family of 12 sons and one daughter grew up. Jacob's affections turned to Joseph, the outstanding son of his cherished Rachel.*

*The aim of this lesson is to show how God increased Joseph and preserved Israel through him.*

### Genesis 37-45

#### **LOVE AND ENVY OF JOSEPH (Gen. 37).**

The integrity and youthful comeliness of Joseph endeared him to his father above his brethren. Being the favourite, he was granted special privileges, among them a coat of many colours (cp. 2 Sam. 13:18-19) or “long tunic” (Roth.). This made his brethren envious. When aged but 17, an event happened that crystallised their hatred: God revealed to Joseph two dreams which spoke of them bowing down to him. Envy and hatred grew in the hearts of his brethren. Then it happened one day that Jacob sent Joseph to his brethren as they grazed the sheep near Shechem. They saw him afar off and conspired to murder him (v.18). But God was with Joseph and intervened. The plea of Reuben to cast him into a pit instead was heeded, but finally Judah's counsel prevailed — that it was better to profit by selling him into slavery than merely to kill him! So they sold him to a band of Midianites for 20 pieces of silver. They dipped his coat in animal blood and showed it to Jacob as evidence that he had been killed.

The years passed. Joseph was 30 when he stood before Pharaoh. Much of the intervening 13 years Joseph spent in prison. Though separated from family and the godly influence of his father, his faith remained strong. He believed God and through all the injustices and reverses that came to him, he never doubted that the vision of his brethren bowing before him would be fulfilled. Indeed God was with him. So has it ever been: “If we suffer, we shall also reign” (2 Tim. 2:12). He had to wait upon God until faith gave way to sight.

#### **POTIPHAR'S HOUSE AND PRISON (Gen. 39).**

In Egypt Joseph was purchased by Potiphar, an Egyptian, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard. God made all that Joseph did to

prosper in his hand. This was soon observed by Potiphar as was Joseph's grace and integrity. He was soon made overseer of all his house and implicit trust was put in him. But Joseph was handsome and this attracted the notice of Potiphar's wife. She sought to seduce Joseph, but he steadfastly refused her and pointed out the great trust her husband had placed in him: "how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (v.9). But she was determined and contrived a scheme whereby Joseph, if he failed to yield, would become the victim of her vengeance. As a result, Joseph was cast into prison, condemned indeed by men, but righteous in the sight of God. Righteousness cannot ever remain bound — "God was with him" and the prison keeper was impressed by his integrity and put him in charge of the prisoners.

There are here two great lessons for God's servants of the 20th century.

1. The way to overcome temptation (see v.12) — flee from it and do not entertain the senses by contemplating indulgence. Otherwise, one is sure to fall. A positive pursuit of righteousness and active involvement in the Truth leave no time for the 'devil' (cp. Rom. 13:14; Gal. 5:16; James 4:7).
2. God is with the righteous in all their afflictions. Though they suffer He will lift them up. Adversity is a preparation for exaltation (read Psalm 34).

### **ELEVATION BY INTERPRETATION (Gen. 40:1 — 41:45).**

In due course, two notable servants of Pharaoh, his butler and his baker, were cast into prison. The two prisoners had dreams which troubled them. Joseph invited their confidence and they told him their dreams. In the name of God, he interpreted their dreams, and his words were fulfilled. The butler was reinstated but the baker was hanged. Joseph asked the butler to remember him when he was restored, but he failed to do this, and Joseph was left in the dungeon to serve two more years. How blind and ungrateful are men who are filled with self-interest.

But God did not forget, and He acted — Pharaoh himself was troubled by two dreams which defied the interpretation of flesh! Circumstances forced memory upon the butler and he related his experiences with Joseph to Pharaoh. The servants of Pharaoh were hastily despatched to the prison; Joseph was urgently wanted by the ruler of Egypt! Shaved and robed, Joseph was taken from prison to the palace. How faithful is Yahweh! His eyes are upon the righteous and His ears open to their cries.

Before Pharaoh, Joseph denied that he had any special ability but said that "God would give Pharaoh an answer of peace." He then explained the two dreams, which were one in meaning. They were "doubled unto Pharaoh twice" (41:32) to emphasize their certainty and imminence. The dreams warned Pharaoh that Egypt was about to experience seven years

of great plenty followed by seven years of famine. This called for foresight and organisation. Joseph advised the appointment of a wise man over Egypt to store food for the time of famine (41:33-36). Pharaoh was impressed. Who could perform this task better than the one before him who had revealed more wisdom than the wise of Egypt? Accordingly Joseph was promoted to second in the land. He was invested with riches, honour and authority. As Prime Minister of Egypt, only Pharaoh was greater than him. Truly promotion comes from God (Ps. 75:6-10). The first great step had been taken for Israel's salvation and also the development of the nation in a strange land (Gen. 45:5; 15:13-16).

#### **EFFECTS OF FAMINE (Gen. 41:53-57).**

Seven years of plenty came and went. Joseph made ample provision for the storage of grain, and so, when the famine commenced, the granaries of Egypt were full. The famine spread over all the countries of the ancient world, and when it was learned that there was grain in Egypt, there was a constant flow of foreigners to purchase corn.

Canaan likewise was affected by the dearth, including Jacob and his family. They decided to send to Egypt. Jacob refused to allow Benjamin to go with his brothers lest mischief befall him — in Jacob's mind, he was his sole surviving link with his beloved Rachel.

#### **JOSEPH'S BROTHERS VISIT EGYPT (Gen. 42:1 — 43:14).**

Thus one day 10 men appeared before Joseph in Egypt. They had bearded faces and were dressed as shepherds. He instantly recognised them as his brothers, but they did not recognise him. This stately prince of Egypt, with royal clothes, shaven face and grand appearance, in no way resembled the young shepherd boy they had thrown in the pit and sold to slavery. In addition, there was a language barrier. They could not speak Egyptian and Joseph's use of an interpreter made it appear that he did not speak Hebrew, so concealing his identity. To Joseph it was an exciting moment for as they bowed before him his dream of earlier years was fulfilled (42:6; 37:5-9). The hand of God was evident before his very eyes.

Joseph treated them abruptly. His purpose was to humble them so that they might realise the error of their previous ways. He accused them of being spies and demanded that they return home and bring Benjamin back as proof of their honesty. Meanwhile he would hold Simeon as hostage. They started for home in fear of the rough prince of Egypt. To their amazement they found their money in their sacks of corn. Their fear increased.

Time passed by and it was not long before the food was exhausted again. It was apparent that the famine was not breaking and they would

have to return to Egypt. But Jacob steadfastly refused to let Benjamin go. The brothers refused to go without him. Reuben tried to pacify Jacob without result. Finally Judah persuaded his father and promised to guarantee the welfare of his youngest brother. With reluctance the old man, Jacob, parted with his young son. He made every provision to ensure that they would find favour with the prince — as though this was necessary!

### **SECOND VISIT TO EGYPT (Gen. 43:15; 44:34).**

They left for Egypt with presents, double money and the prayer of Jacob: “God Almighty give you mercy before the man” (43:11-14). In Egypt they were directed to Joseph’s house where strange events awaited them. Feeling guilty because of the money in their sacks, they were surprised when the steward told them not to worry. Simeon was restored to them. They were honoured by Joseph, especially so Benjamin, over whom Joseph wept secretly with joy. They were astonished at the order in which they were seated, from the eldest to youngest, in the feast the Prime Minister gave them. Thus honoured, their sacks were filled, and they commenced for home greatly wondering at the strange events.

But Joseph was master of this situation and he imposed a further test upon them. He had hidden his special cup in the sack of Benjamin. He would test their affection for Rachel’s son and for their father — had their attitude changed? On their return trip, an Egyptian rode after them, accosted them and accused them of stealing the Prime Minister’s cup! They denied this and the sacks were searched, beginning at the eldest! At the end Benjamin’s was opened, and alas, there was the cup. Hastily returning to Egypt they pleaded the mercy of Joseph. Judah personally appealed to Joseph to be punished in the place of Benjamin for the sake of his father. Here was true repentance — a vast change in a man who earlier had sold his younger brother with no regard for the effect upon his father (37:33-35).

### **JOSEPH REVEALS HIMSELF (Gen. 45:1 — 46:7).**

Joseph could contain his passions no longer. He commanded all Egyptians to leave the room and then, to the utter astonishment and dismay of his brothers, he revealed his identity: “I am Joseph.” They were dumbfounded and troubled. Joseph wept aloud and calmed their fears. He had no plan or desire for retaliation: “Now therefore be not grieved nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life” (45:5). Love covers a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8). His attitude was free of bitterness and revenge.

Joseph spoke to their hearts and explained God’s purpose in the matter. He had been sent to “preserve a posterity of Israel in the earth” and to “save them by a great deliverance” (45:7). As they began to perceive

that this lordly young prince was indeed their brother, he told them to hasten home and bring his beloved and aged father back to Egypt that he might care for him, and provide food and pasture for their cattle in the years of famine.

The brothers hurried home and told Jacob the joyous news. “Jacob’s heart fainted, for he believed them not.” But when he saw the presents and wagons, he was compelled to believe and his spirit revived. With thankfulness and great joy he worshipped God in Beersheba. God comforted him and advised him to depart. “God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20).

### **LESSONS FOR US:**

- Though Joseph suffered, God never left him in his adversity. Even in darkest Egypt, “God was with him.”
- Though well out of sight of his family, Joseph would not commit immorality with Potiphar’s wife for he knew that such an act would be a sin against God Who sees all. The same attitude should control our lives.
- Joseph knew that fleeing from compromising situations is the best way to avoid sin and its evil consequences.
- Suffering prepared Joseph for elevation. Difficult times in our own lives can mould us to be fit for the kingdom.
- Joseph perceived God’s purpose with him and forgave his brothers their crime against him. We should not harbour bitterness against others who have harmed us, but should seek to elevate them, as Joseph did with his brothers.

### **REFERENCE LIBRARY:**

“The Ways of Providence” (R. Roberts)—Chapter 8

“Joseph and His Brethren” (P. Pickering)—C.S.S.S. Study Notes

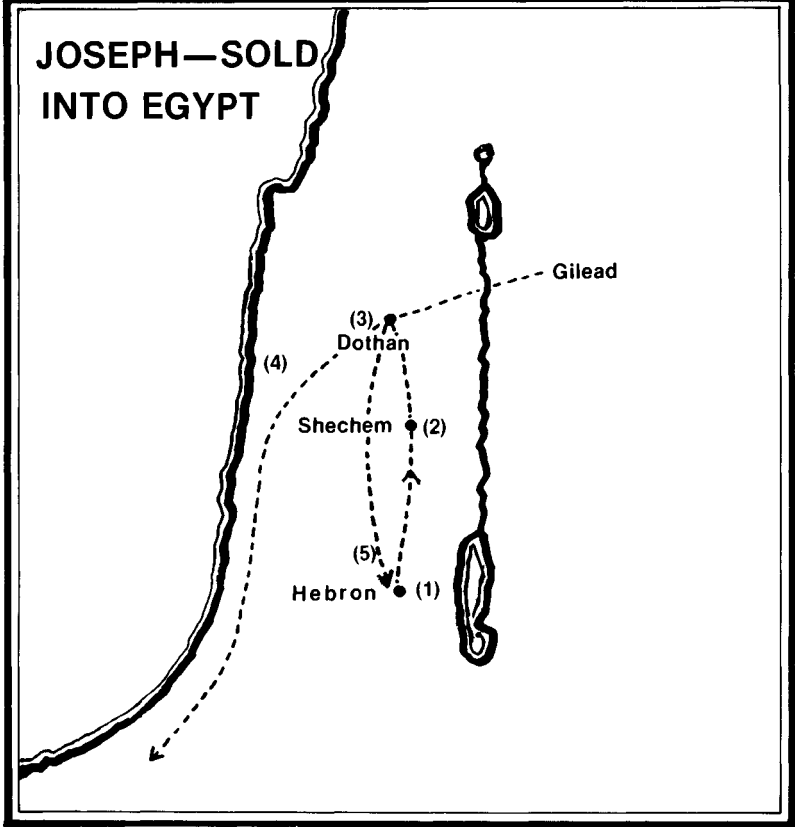
### **PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:**

1. *What happened to Joseph in the house of Potiphar? What lessons can we learn from the incident with Potiphar’s wife?*
2. *How did Joseph’s brethren change when they came to him to buy corn in Egypt?*
3. *What ultimate purpose did Joseph see in his sufferings in Egypt?*

### **ESSAY QUESTIONS:**

1. *Briefly describe the various events in Joseph’s life which showed that God was with him.*
2. *How did Joseph treat his brethren when they came to Egypt to buy bread? Mention the various events which occurred and explain why Joseph acted in this way.*
3. *How is Joseph an example to the followers of Jesus Christ today?*
4. *Write a character study of Joseph.*

## JOSEPH—SOLD INTO EGYPT



- (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

“These things happened unto them for ensamples”

*The previous lesson traced the major events in Joseph's life. The sufferings he experienced at the hand of "Jew" and "Gentile" gave way in the purpose of God to the glory of being Prime Minister of Egypt and the Preserver of his Kindred. When the lives of Joseph and Christ are compared, the parallel is striking. It is apparent that the life of Joseph is a dramatic enacted parable. It was carefully superintended by the Most High, so as to set forth in detail His plan with His Son for the benefit of Israelites with spiritual vision.*

*Our aim in this lesson is to see how the events of Joseph's life foreshadowed those in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

### Genesis 37, 42, 45

#### INSTRUCTION FROM TYPES.

A type is a shadow of an approaching reality. As the purpose of God from creation centred in Christ, divine education in Old Testament times was largely concerned with portraying God's purpose with him. "The Law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ", Paul could say (Gal. 3:24). The Law's sacrificial code, tabernacle, feasts, etc., prefigured the principles to be revealed in Christ. They all pointed forward to and concentrated on him, and so, when he came, they waxed old and vanished away: he was the **Word** made Flesh. Likewise the lives of other famous leaders in Israel, e.g., Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, Isaiah, etc., were in certain respects examples or types, of what would be seen in fulness in Jesus Christ.

After relating the sins of Israel during the wilderness wanderings, Paul says, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples (margin = types)" (1 Cor. 10:11). The record of Israel's wanderings and failures have not been recorded merely as history but as a graphic lesson teaching God's principles in His dealings with man. They thus constitute a grim warning for all generations. This is so because God's ways change not, even as the lusts of men today are the same as then. Seeing Flesh and Spirit are constant, their inter-action in one generation must provide ensamples (types or lessons) for all generations.

But the types were "shadows", and not the "substance" or the real thing (Heb. 8:5; Col. 2:17). The shadow of something outlines the image but lacks the details.

Thus the Old Testament types are broad outlines and care should be taken when aligning the similarities to remember the differences. It is

possible to take the types too far, and likewise, not far enough. There is a proper balance to be noted and a propriety to be observed.

### CHRIST AS SEEN IN JOSEPH'S LIFE.

Joseph's sufferings prepared him for glory. On the road to Emmaus, Jesus said, "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" And beginning at Moses. . . he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (Lk. 24:25-27). He may well have instanced the life of Joseph, which demonstrates the suffering and glory.

When Stephen, in his defence before the Sanhedrin, referred to the malice of Joseph's brethren and how that, in their time of need "Joseph was made known" to them "the *second time*", it is clear that, in his mind, history would repeat itself (see Stage 5, Lesson 6). The Jews had rejected Jesus but at his **second** advent, when utterly weakened by the hostile invasion of Gog, they will welcome him as a Saviour and say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Acts 7:9-13; Matt. 23:39).

The following chart lists the incidents in which Joseph foreshadows Christ, and Joseph's brothers, the nation of Israel.

#### THE FIRST ADVENT

<b>Joseph</b>	<b>Jesus</b>
1. He was a shepherd.	He is the Good Shepherd (John 10:11, 14).
2. His name means "The Increaser".	John said of Jesus: "He must increase" (Jn. 3:30). Isaiah said, "He shall see his seed" (53:10; cf. 22:21).
3. "Joseph brought unto his father their evil report" (37:2).	Jesus challenged Israel's leaders with being "the children of them that killed the prophets"; and he added: "fill ye up then the measure of your fathers" (Matt. 23:31-32; cf. Jn. 8:37, 40, 44, 54-55).
4. His "father loved him more than all his brethren" (37:4).	"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17).
5. "His brethren said: 'Shalt thou indeed reign over us?'" (37:8).	"We will not have this man to reign over us" (Lk. 19:14). "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15).
6. "They hated him" (37:8).	"They hated me without a cause" (Jn. 15:25).
7. "Because of his dreams" (37:8).	"When the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them" (Matt. 21:45).



8. "I will send thee unto them" (i.e. thy brethren—37:13). "He sent unto them His son" (Matt. 21:37).

### BETRAYAL AND DEATH

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. "They conspired against him to slay him" (37:18).  | "They consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty" (Matt. 26:4).  |
| 2. "Behold the dreamer" (37:19).  | "They mocked him" (Matt. 27:29).   |
| 3. "Let us slay him" (37:20).   | "Let us kill him" (Matt. 21:38).   |
| 4. "They stripped Joseph of his coat (37:23).   | "For my vesture they did cast lots" (Jn. 19:24).   |
| 5. "Cast him into a pit—lifted up out of the pit" (37:24, 28).                                    | "He brought me out of an horrible pit" (the grave — Ps. 40:1-3). "He was not left in hell (the pit, or grave) neither did his flesh see corruption" (Acts 2:31). |
| 6. "The pit was empty — no water in it" (37:24).  | "The pit wherein is no water" (i.e. the grave — Zech. 9:11).   |
| 7. "Judah said. . . 'Come, let us sell him'" (37:26, 27).   | "Judas (Greek for "Judah") communed how he might betray him" (Lk. 22:4).   |
| 8. "Twenty pieces of silver" (37:28).   | "Thirty pieces of silver" (Zech. 11:12; Matt. 27:3).   |
| 9. "They dipped Joseph's coat in blood" (37:31).  | "He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood" (Rev. 19:13), a symbol representing the sacrifice of the Lord (Jn. 19:34).                                       |
| 10. "This blood-stained coat have we found" (so deceiving Jacob—37:32).                           | "Say ye, His disciples came by night and stole him away while we slept" (Matt. 28:13).   |
| 11. Imprisoned in Egypt—rejected by his brethren, and now by the Gentile, Potiphar (Gen. 39, 40). | "He (Pilate) delivered him to be crucified" (Matt. 27:26), rejected by both Jew and Gentile.   |
| 12. Butler (restored)— Baker (executed) (Gen. 40).  | "Two thieves crucified with him" — one forgiven (Matt. 27:38).   |

### RESURRECTION

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. "At the end of two full years" (41:1). | "He rose again the third day" (1 Cor. 15:4).                                    |
| 2. "Changed his raiment" (41:14).         | "I will clothe thee with change of raiment", symbol of immortality (Zech. 3:4). |

### ELEVATION

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. "Thou shalt be over my house" (41:38-40). | "Sit thou on my right hand" (Acts 2:34). "As a son over God's house" (Heb. 3:6 R.V.). |
| 2. "Made him ruler" (41:43).                 | "All power is given me" (Matt. 28:18).  |

3. "Joseph's brethren came and bowed down to him" (42:6). "Ye shall not see me until ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh. . ." (Matt. 23:39).

## SECOND ADVENT—WHEN THE JEWS RECOGNISED JESUS AS THEIR MESSIAH

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. "His brethren knew him not" (42:8).                               | "One shall say, what are these wounds in thine hands?" (Zech. 13:6). "Who is this king of glory?" (Ps. 24:8).               |
| 2. "We are guilty; therefore is this distress come upon us" (42:21). | "Thou shalt call to mind (thy sins) among the nations whither the Lord shall drive thee" (Deut. 30:1).                      |
| 3. "Joseph made himself known to his brethren" (45:1).               | "They shall look upon me whom they pierced" (Zech. 12:10).  |
| 4. "They were troubled at his presence" (45:3).                      | "And they shall mourn for him" (Zech. 12:10).   |
| 5. "Be not grieved" (45:5).  | "He shall comfort all that mourn" (Isa. 40:1, 2; 61:3; cf. Rom. 11:26).   |
| 6. "God did send me before you to preserve life" (45:5).             | "He shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation", both national and individual (Heb. 9:28).                     |
| 7. "To preserve to you a posterity in the earth" (45:7).             | "My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the preserved of Israel" (Isa. 49:6).                              |
| 8. "To save your lives by a great deliverance" (45:7).               | "There shall come out of Zion the deliverer" (Rom. 11:26).  |
| 9. "It was not you that sent me hither, but God" (45:8).             | "The stone which the builders rejected; the same is become the head of the corner; this is the Lord's doing" (Matt. 21:42). |

## GENTILES UNDER CHRIST

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| "Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh" (47:20). | "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish" (Isa. 60:12). "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Psa. 72:8). |
|--|--|

## LESSONS FROM JOSEPH.

Joseph recognised the hand of God guiding and controlling the circumstances of his life in order to accomplish His purpose (Gen. 45:5-7; 50:20). Likewise Jesus realised early in life his vast responsibilities as Son of God and Messiah (Lk. 2:49). We also as sons and daughters of God must endure chastening as a preparation for glory, honour and immortality. Through much tribulation we shall enter the Kingdom of God

(Acts 14:22). We must pray and perceive the hand of God in our lives and allow Him to abide in us and direct us through His Word (Jn. 14:23).

#### **LESSONS FOR US:**

- The parallel between Joseph and Christ is obvious and striking; both suffered and then were glorified.
- Joseph's brethren answer to the nation of Israel. As the murderers of the Christ, they shall be humbled when in a time of national peril, they are forced to recognise him whom they pierced.
- The final vision in both cases is one of privilege — Jacob and his family dwelling in the best land, and Israel in the promised land restored as Eden, with Christ as God's vice-regent and their King.

#### **REFERENCE LIBRARY:**

“Elpis Israel” (J. Thomas)—Pages 274-279

“The Story of the Bible” (H. P. Mansfield)—Vol. 1, Pages 179-207

#### **PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:**

1. *What is a scriptural type? What purpose do types serve?*
2. *How were Joseph's brethren a type of the Jews who put Jesus to death?*
3. *When Joseph made himself known to his brethren he foreshadowed the conversion of the Jews when Christ returns. Explain this.*

#### **ESSAY QUESTIONS:**

1. *Show how Joseph's life foreshadowed that of Jesus Christ.*
2. *Show the hand of God in Joseph's life. What lessons can we learn from this?*
3. *Make a brief list of points from Joseph's life which show that he was a type of Christ.*

## 15. GOD PROVIDES A DELIVERER FOR ISRAEL

“Choosing to suffer affliction with the people of God”

*Jacob was overjoyed when reunited with Joseph. His love for his favourite son had been sorely tested when all hope for Joseph appeared to be lost, but now at the end of his life, Jacob's heart rejoiced at the hand of Providence guiding and blessing their lives. Pharaoh was pleased to grant Joseph's request and he authorised them to occupy the land of Goshen. There Jacob's family prospered and multiplied. In the rest of Egypt, however, the famine forced people to sell their lands and their lives into slavery under Pharaoh (Gen. 47:14-22).*

*Events though were soon to take a dramatic turn to the dismay of Jacob's people, but a crisis developed out of which Israel was delivered.*

*The aim of this lesson is to show how God raised up Moses to deliver Israel, His chosen people, and lead them out of Egypt.*

### Exodus 1 and 2

#### DEATHS OF JACOB AND JOSEPH.

Though Jacob died in Egypt, he had been assured that God would “bring him up again” (Gen. 46:4). This found an initial fulfilment in the deliverance of his seed, the nation of Israel, out of Egypt. But its true fulfilment to Jacob personally will occur when he will be resurrected from the dead, a hope which he shared with that of the fathers (Acts 2:26; cp. Lk. 20:34-38). To show the reality of this hope, Jacob requested a burial at Hebron with Abraham and Isaac and their wives (Gen. 47:29-31; 49:29-31).

Later, Joseph died also, but not before he assured his people that the God of their fathers would “surely visit” them and deliver them out of Egypt and bring them into the land of promise (50:24; cp. 15:13-16).

He also left specific instruction as to his burial. They were not to bury him in Egypt, but to carry his remains with them from Egypt and bury him in the land of promise (see Ex. 13:19; Josh. 24:32). Joseph in this way revealed his faith in the promises of God. These two points alone, out of all his life's experiences, are singled out for special mention in Hebrews 11:22!

Israel was called upon to carry Joseph's coffin throughout the 40 years wilderness wanderings. This would impress them with his faith in the promises and belief in the resurrection from the dead. That generation perished in the wilderness, except for Joshua and Caleb. But Joseph will live again, together with those whose lives reveal his faith (Heb. 11:39-40).

## **ISRAEL IN BONDAGE (Ex. 1).**

Joseph's prophecy of deliverance lay dormant for over 150 years. In this time his people lost their vision and hope in Yahweh's promises, though they multiplied and prospered (v. 7).

But then "arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph" (v.8). The kings who had reigned over Egypt in the days of Joseph were the Hyksos or "Shepherd Kings". They were of Semitic origin and viewed the Israelites favourably. When the Egyptians overthrew this dynasty of kings, the Israelites no longer had protection and began to be persecuted.

The Egyptians feared the numerical strength of the Israelites and decided to put them to hard labour and bondage (vv. 9-11). When this failed to stop their numbers from multiplying, they "made them serve with rigour." Then they appointed the Hebrew midwives to slay every male child at birth (vv.12-16).

## **THE BIRTH AND EARLY LIFE OF MOSES (Ex. 2:1-10). *Read***

In the midst of these tragic happenings, Moses was born. He was the third child of Amram and Jochebed of the tribe of Levi. Aaron and Miriam were his elder brother and sister. Moses was by lineage the representative of the fourth generation of the children of Israel in Egypt about whom God spake to Abraham (Ex. 6:16-18; Gen. 15:16).

His parents realised that he was a "proper child" (Heb. 11:23), for he was "exceeding fair" (see Acts 7:20 margin, which reads "fair to God").

Acting by faith (Heb. 11:23), Amram and Jochebed hid Moses for three months at which time Moses was "cast out" (Acts 7:21). Stephen uses a word meaning to "set forth" or "expose", which is different from the word used in verse 19. Thus it would seem they acted by careful determination, choosing the place and the time to put the baby in the ark near the bathing place of Pharaoh's daughter. Miriam could be on hand to assist when the baby was discovered. They were not abandoning the baby in despair, but were displaying great faith and courage. This act of Moses' parents finds notable mention in Heb. 11:23.

In response to their faith God intervened to bring about His will. Moses was saved and at Miriam's suggestion, Pharaoh's daughter provided Jochebed as a nurse for her own son. In so doing, Moses was blessed with the loving care of his mother and with thorough instruction in the promises of Yahweh at the hands of a woman of faith, whilst being brought up in an Egyptian court.

## **MOSES MAKES A CHOICE (Heb. 11:24-26). *Read***

As the son of Pharaoh's daughter, Moses was given the best Egyptian education and training. Josephus records that he prospered as a leader,

commanding the Egyptian army with honour. He was set for a life of distinction, luxury and power, perhaps in time even becoming Pharaoh. But he knew from the instruction of his mother that his spiritual allegiance lay with the down-trodden Israelites. As time passed by, the need to make a choice pressed itself upon him. The issues facing him were glory and riches, or suffering and affliction with the people of God. With great faith in God he elected to suffer with his own people. He knew that the “pleasures of sin” in the Egyptian court were but for a season, but the reward of the God of his fathers was an eternal inheritance in the land of promise (Gen. 13:15; Heb. 11:24-26).

In so doing Moses sets before all a good example. The same choice lies before us today. Either we decide to follow the world or Christ. We shall inevitably make this decision. If we are wise, we like Moses, will perceive the vanity in all this world has to offer and choose to walk in Christ toward that “inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away” (1 Pet. 1:4).

### **MOSES VISITS HIS PEOPLE (Ex. 2:11-22). *Read***

Moses had perceived that his remarkable deliverance, education and position had fitted him uniquely for a great work. Stephen tells us that it was clear to him that God would deliver Israel by his hand (Acts 7:25).

Israel, however, had become contaminated with the idolatry of Egypt (Josh. 24:14; Ps. 106:7), had lost faith in the promises and was unprepared for deliverance at the hand of Moses (Acts 7:25).

When Moses saw an Egyptian ill-treating an Israelite, he rescued and avenged him; but when he would have separated two Israelites striving together, one of them charged him with the death of the Egyptian (Ex. 2:11-14)! Moses had tried to conceal this and was shocked to discover that it was known. Fearing Pharaoh’s wrath, Moses fled to Midian in the Sinaitic Peninsula (vv.16-22). The Midianites were descendants of Abraham and Keturah (Gen. 25:2).

There, at a well, Moses met seven daughters of Reuel (also called Jethro), priest of Midian, who gave him hospitality and one of whose daughters he married. The first 40 years of his life had been spent in the court of Egypt. During the next 40 years he was a shepherd in the harsh region of Mount Sinai. By leading the sheep he was learning how to lead the people. He learned to trust in God, and to have patience and self-control. When Moses appeared to Israel the second time, 40 years later, he allowed God to direct him. Human anger and passion, as on the previous occasion, played no part.

In Hebrews 11:27 we are told that Moses by faith “forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.” This is a reference to his utter repudiation of Egypt when he came

back to plead for Israel before Pharaoh. The word translated “forsake” means “to leave thoroughly or utterly”. Such a word well describes Moses’ strong demands before Pharaoh as he sought that every Israelite with their flocks and cattle should be allowed to go.

### **THE CHARACTER OF MOSES.**

Moses was one of the greatest men who ever lived (Deut. 34:10). He is called:—

1. The Servant of God (Ps. 105:26); compare with Christ (Isa. 53:11).
2. The Chosen of God (Ps. 106:23); compare with Christ (Isa. 42:1).
3. The Man of God (Ps. 90); compare with Christ (Ps. 80:17).
4. The Shepherd of God (Ps. 77:20; 78:52); compare with Christ (Heb. 13:20).
5. The Prophet of God (Deut. 34:10); compare with Christ (Deut. 18:18).
6. The Mediator of God (Ex. 24:2); compare with Christ (1 Tim. 2:5).
7. The Deliverer of God (Ex. 3:10); compare with Christ (Gal. 4:5; Jn. 3:17).
8. The Lawgiver and Ruler of God (Deut. 33:4, 5); compare with Christ (Jn. 5:22; 1:49).

It must be borne in mind that great as Moses was, he was pre-eminently a servant (Ex. 14:31), whereas Jesus was a Son over God’s house (Heb. 3:5-6), and therefore he was greater.

### **MOSES AS A TYPE OF CHRIST.**

Moses’ life was a type of the life of the Lord Jesus (Deut. 18:15-19, cf. Acts 3:22-26). As Pharaoh slew the male Hebrew children at the time of Moses’ birth (Ex. 1:22), so Herod did when Jesus was born (Matt. 2:16). As Moses had to flee, so did the Lord, for at his birth, his mother carried him to Egypt (Matt. 2:13-15). Moses led his people from Egypt (Ex. 13 and 14). So, in a spiritual sense, does Jesus (Heb. 3). Moses’ people were baptised in the Red Sea (1 Cor. 10:2). Those whom Jesus leads must also be baptised (Mark 16:16). Israel under Moses was to be “a kingdom of priests” (Ex. 19). Under Christ, spiritual Israel is a “royal priesthood” (1 Pet. 2:9). Under God, Moses was Israel’s lawgiver (Ex. 20). Christ was God’s lawgiver to supersede Moses (Matt. 5:21-28).

In the events of Moses’ life we see an outline of the mission of Christ.

Thus:—

1. Moses appeared to Israel twice as a deliverer; so will the Lord Jesus.
2. At first Moses was rejected by Israel; and in the same manner Jesus

was first rejected.

3. Moses fled into a far country, the Lord ascended into heaven.
4. Moses returned to deal with Egypt and deliver his people, so will the Lord.

But Moses as a type, cannot be pressed too closely. The general typical outline is there — not the detail. Unlike Jesus, when Moses first came to his people, his spiritual education was not perfected. Moses fled, having apparently failed, but Jesus ascended to heaven in triumph (Acts 1:9; Eph. 1:20, 21). Moses was reluctant to return, but Jesus sits on God's right hand "from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool" (Heb. 10:12, 13). It is essential to recognise this difference between the type and the reality. The type can teach us much, but we must look at the real thing for the complete picture.

#### **LESSONS FOR US:**

- The instruction of a wise and faithful parent prevailed over all the wisdom of Egypt when Moses made his choice to serve God and help his people.
- By faith Moses could see that the prizes this world has to offer are vain, but that the reward of God is eternal, and therefore to be preferred (2 Cor. 4:18). If the hope of the promises was greater than the prospect of ruling as Pharaoh, it is certainly greater than anything we can endeavour to achieve today.
- Quietness and meditation are essential for a balanced understanding of God's ways. In the remote parts of Sinai, while caring for sheep, Moses developed the qualities of compassion and patience, so essential in those called upon to lead.

#### **REFERENCE LIBRARY:**

- "Elpis Israel" (J. Thomas)—Pages 286-287
- "The Ways of Providence" (R. Roberts)—Chapter 9
- "The Visible Hand of God" (R. Roberts)—Chapter 9
- "Moses My Servant" (H. Tennant)—Chapter 1
- "Letter to the Hebrews" (J. Carter)—Pages 151-156

#### **PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:**

1. *What was there about the deaths of Jacob and Joseph which taught the Israelites about the hope of the promises made to the fathers?*
2. *Why did Moses flee from Egypt?*
3. *What lessons did Moses learn during his forty years as a shepherd in Midian.*
4. *Of Moses it is said: "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the*

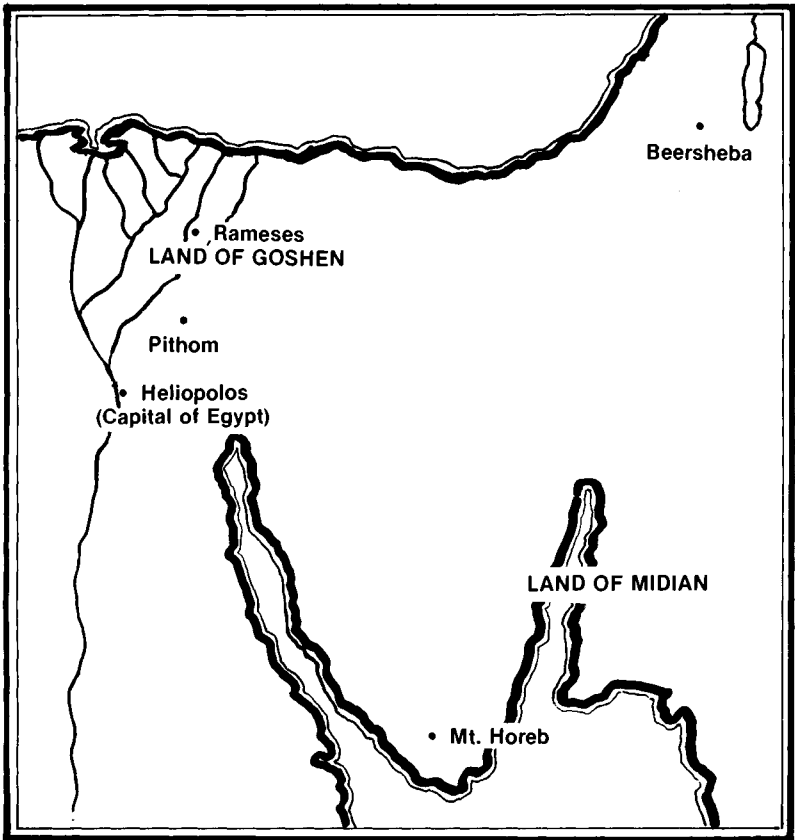


people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (Heb. 11:25). How does this apply to us today?

**ESSAY QUESTIONS:**

1. Write an essay about Israel’s bondage in Egypt and God’s provision of the deliverer, Moses.
2. How was Moses prepared for his work of deliverance? What lessons can we learn from his early circumstances?
3. In what way did the work of Moses foreshadow that of the Lord Jesus?

Heb 11:24-25



## 16. THE REVELATION AT THE BUSH

“This is my name for ever”

*Since Moses' flight from Egypt, almost 40 years had elapsed. The children of Israel were stricken with cruel bondage and their cries were heard of God (Ex. 2:24-25). The time had now come to commence a further development in His plan as foretold in Gen. 15:16.*

*The aim of this lesson is to show how God's Memorial Name revealed His intention to redeem His people and how He set about securing His objective.*

### Exodus 3 and 4

#### AT MT. SINAI (Ex. 3:1-12).

Moses, as shepherd of Jethro's flock had led his sheep to the “backside of the desert” near Mt. Horeb (next to Mt. Sinai) in search of grazing land. In this unpopulated and desolate region, man's insignificance in the face of God's awesome power is to be seen and felt. Towering mountains and rugged hills, coupled with silence apart from the restless wind, make an unforgettable impression on the mind of the human travelling in this area.

In a subdued and receptive state of mind, Moses saw a remarkable sight. He saw a bush ablaze with fire but the bush was not consumed. Moses was astonished and resolved to “turn aside” and see this wonder at close quarters.

As he approached, he was called by the Angel, and upon answering was told not to come any further but to remove his shoes, as he stood on holy ground. The Angel spoke further to him, declaring himself to be the representative of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

<sup>3:15</sup> In the presence of God, Moses always exhibited a proper respect and fear (see Heb. 12:18-21), and this occasion was no exception. Moses was afraid. As he stood trembling he was told of his part in God's plan. God was to deliver his people from Egyptian oppression by Moses' hand, and lead them to Sinai where they would worship Him (verse 8-12).

There is no doubt that the bush has a deep significance. God's plan was expressed from the midst of the bush which blazed and shimmered in intense heat, yet was not destroyed. To find the meaning of this symbol we must look at Israel.

1. They were called to be God's people (Ex. 6:7).
2. They were to proclaim His righteousness to the nations (Deut. 4:6-8).
3. They continuously rebelled against Him and suffered affliction

because of it (Deut. 9:24).

4. Though afflicted, they were never to be destroyed (Jer. 46:28; Mal. 3:6).

The parallel is clear. The bush portrayed Israel, whose history of affliction displayed the righteousness of Yahweh's judgment to the world, and, despite terrible national calamities, survive as a separate people. The Divine purpose, with Israel at its centre, cannot be extinguished (Isa. 43:1-7).

### **THE MEMORIAL NAME (Ex. 3:13-15).**

Moses, in asking God his Name, was seeking more than an authority with which to approach Israel. In certain instances a name in those times revealed a person's mission or purpose in life. The name 'Abraham' means "Father of a great multitude" (Gen. 17:5 margin). 'Moses' means "drawn out" because he was drawn out of the water (Ex. 2:10 margin). 'Jesus' means "Salvation of God" because that is his mission (Isa. 49:6). Moses was in fact asking God to reveal His purpose, expressed in a Name (see Jer. 16:21; Ps. 8:1; Ezek. 36:22).

God's answer (v.14) is translated in our Authorised Version of the Bible as "I am that I am", but the Hebrew words "Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh" are more correctly rendered, "I will be who I will be (R.V. mg.). Verse 14 should then read:—

"And God said unto Moses 'I WILL BE WHO I WILL BE,' and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, 'I WILL BE' hath sent me unto you."

(Notice that EHYEH in verse 12, "certainly I WILL BE with thee", has been correctly rendered). The meaning of God's name then becomes:—

"I will extend My being in others whom I will become".

The name of God then is a far-reaching prophecy — the "I will" points forward, and the name was said to be God's "memorial to all generations" (v.15). Its fulness will be seen in the Kingdom Age and beyond, when God will be revealed in a glorified host who will display His character and glory and in whom God will dwell. Hence the phrase used by Paul, God will "be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28).

The Lord Jesus Christ was the first man to whom apply the words "whom I will become". Jesus was the "word made flesh", the expressed mind of God walking on earth as a man. As the only begotten Son of God, he displayed the Father's glory, revealing His ways perfectly in the days of his flesh (Jn. 1:14). All that he said and did showed the mind and character of God (Jn. 5:30; 14:10), so that anyone seeing him "saw the Father" (Jn. 14:9).

The name thus points forward to the time when God would be revealed as a Father, manifesting Himself first in a Son, and then in sons (Rom. 8:19).

God's Name, as spoken by Himself, is EHYEH, "I WILL BE." But when spoken of by others, it becomes YAHWEH, in the third person, meaning, "HE WHO WILL BE".

To Moses, the Name indicated that the work of God manifestation was to commence in Israel, God's firstborn nation, whom God would redeem to be a people displaying His character. God's purpose would not involve all men, for He will only reveal Himself in those "WHOM I will become" (cf. Ex. 33:19). When He linked His name of Yahweh with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (3:15, 16; 4:5), He showed that the channel of His purpose would be through Israel and that outside Israel there would be no hope (Eph. 2:12). God had previously been seen by the fathers as an Almighty power, but now in their deliverance from Egypt the nation would see Him as Yahweh, "He who will" redeem His people, so that, as His people, they might manifest their God (Ex. 6:2-8).

The memorial name of God is always rendered "LORD" or "GOD" in our Bibles, and much is lacking because of this. It is combined with other words to make several titles of God. Here are a few of the most common titles:

1. **LORD God**—Yahweh Elohim —"He who will be mighty ones"
2. **Lord GOD**—Adonai Yahweh —"He who will be rulers"
3. **LORD of hosts**—Yahweh T'zvaoth—"He who will be armies"

It can be seen that these titles all have their fulfilment in the Kingdom, and that the various developments, whether Israel called to manifest Him (Deut. 28:10), or the Ecclesia "taken out from the Gentiles as a people for his name" (Acts 15:14), are all designed to bring about His purpose. In the fullest sense, those counted worthy will inherit God's own nature, and manifest Him in fact and in truth (Rev. 3:12; Eph. 1:1; 1 John 3:2).

The characteristics of God, which we must put on when we are baptised into the name of the Father, were revealed to Moses at the foot of Mount Sinai when he wanted to know God's way. Read Exodus 34:6-8 carefully. There are three stages of regeneration through which we must pass:

1. **Mental Regeneration:** by the understanding and belief of His Word (Jn. 3:16).
2. **Moral Regeneration:** by building into our lives, the character God approves; love, mercy, faithfulness, etc. (Jn. 14:23).
3. **Physical Regeneration:** by transformation from mortality to immortality at Christ's second coming (Phil. 3:20, 21).

When all stages are complete, God will be “all in all”.

### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR MOSES (Ex. 3:16-22).**

Having made His great Name known to Moses, God told him to return to Egypt, call the elders of Israel together, tell them of the purpose He had with them, and then go boldly before Pharaoh and demand that he let Israel go to worship in the wilderness. At the same time, God told Moses that Pharaoh would refuse his request, but that ultimately he would be forced to let the people go.

When the time of the Exodus finally arrived they were to “ask” or “demand” (not “borrow” as in 3:22) jewels and raiment from the Egyptians, and God assured them that they would willingly give them. They had laboured for many years as slaves, and God demanded their pay!

In all this, God determined to vindicate His power over the might of Egypt and its gods (9:16).

### **MOSES' RELUCTANCE (Ex. 4:1-17).**

In spite of God's promised help, Moses lacked confidence to act the part of deliverer. Forty years in the wilderness tending sheep had drastically changed Moses. No longer had he the self-assurance of youth. He was now humble and thoughtful, but in God's eyes ready to do the great work of bringing Israel out of Egypt.

Moses would have remembered how Israel had rejected his help 40 years earlier, and doubtless felt they would do so again. God endowed him with special signs with which to prove his authority:—

1. The rod that became a serpent;
2. The hand that turned leprous and was healed;
3. The turning of the waters of the river into blood.

Still Moses was reluctant to act. He claimed that he was not a ready speaker (v.10). But notice God's reply, particularly the words: “Go, and I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say” (vv.11-12). Still Moses hesitated so that God's anger was roused (vv.13-14). Aaron was thereupon appointed as Moses' spokesman and Moses was instructed to return, rod in hand, to perform the signs (vv.15-17).

Meanwhile, Aaron went out, as he had been told, and met and communed with Moses in the Mount of God (vv.27-28). Returning they called together the elders of Israel and Aaron told them about God's purpose. When the people heard the words of Moses, and saw the signs he showed them, they realised that God was indeed with him: “The people believed. . .they bowed their heads and worshipped” (vv.29-31).

### LESSONS FOR US:

- The burning bush, which was not consumed, was a symbol of God's eternal purpose with Israel. Throughout the centuries He has preserved them and today their regathering in Palestine shows plainly that God rules in the kingdom of men.
- God's Name memorialises His purpose to redeem men. God purposes that all the world shall be filled with His glory and then the meaning of His Name will have been fulfilled. We are privileged in being "taken out of the Gentiles as a people for His Name" (Acts 15:14).
- God chose Moses to lead His people after he had matured during forty years in which he was a shepherd in the awesome surroundings of Mt. Sinai.

### REFERENCE LIBRARY:

- "Elpis Israel" (J. Thomas) — Pages 288-289
- "Phanerosis" (J. Thomas) — Pages 56-59
- "The Visible Hand of God" (R. Roberts) — Chapters 10 and 11
- "Christadelphian Standards" (H. P. Mansfield)—Pages 35-54
- "The Story of the Bible" (H. P. Mansfield)—Vol. 1, Pages 236-257

### PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

1. *What is the significance of the burning bush?*
2. *What was God's Name that he revealed to Moses. What does it mean?*
3. *How did the Lord Jesus Christ reveal God's Name?*
4. *What signs did God give Moses to prove he had been sent by Him?*
5. *Why was Moses reluctant to lead Israel out of Egypt? How had he changed during the 40 years in Midian?*

### ESSAY QUESTIONS:

1. *Explain the meaning of God's Memorial Name. What did it teach and how does it relate to us?*
2. *Describe the events which took place when the angel of God appeared to Moses at the burning bush.*

Ex 3:14

## 17. THE PLAGUES AND THE PASSOVER

“Let my people go”

*Moses had been absent from the court of Pharaoh for 40 years and now, at the age of 80, he returned to deliver the message from Yahweh: “Let my people go,” to the end that they might be a “people for His Name”, redeemed from slavery and brought to the land of promise (Deut. 6:12, 21-24). But there was more in this than merely the deliverance of a nation from bondage. Yahweh’s purpose was also to display His power over Egypt, the most powerful nation of the day (Ex. 9:16).*

*Moses was given the task of conveying Yahweh’s Word to Pharaoh. It was no easy task, for Pharaoh, Egypt’s supreme ruler, was a man of flesh: arrogant, hard, idolatrous. It was not until that final terrible plague — the death of the firstborn — that he relented long enough for Israel to escape through the Red Sea. Even before they had reached the Red Sea, he again hardened his heart and pursued after them.*

*The aim of this lesson is to show how God demonstrated His supremacy over the gods of Egypt and wrought Israel’s deliverance through the blood of the Passover lamb — through whom today we may still find deliverance from spiritual “Egypt”.*

### (Exodus 5-12)

#### PHARAOH’S HEART IS HARDENED.

Pharaoh angrily rejected the request of Moses (5:1-4), and, to show his arrogant contempt, increased the burdens of his slaves (vv. 5-14). Again under instruction from Yahweh, Moses appealed for their release, and demonstrated his authority by a sign that God had given him. This sign was imitated by the Egyptian sorcerers, who were skilled in trickery and sleight-of-hand, and as a result, Moses and Aaron, appointed by God as His spokesman, were dismissed from the court of Pharaoh (7:8-13).

The Israelites’ plight had now become desperate. Pharaoh was cruel, obstinate and unyielding, and at the direction of Yahweh, the first plague occurred.

#### THE PLAGUES.

It is highly significant that every plague, in some way, concerned the religion of Egypt. Many of them directly affected the deities of the people; Yahweh thereby demonstrating their utter inferiority and worthlessness and His own supremacy.

**1. Water Into Blood (Ex. 7:14-25):** The Nile was worshipped as a god and its waters were said to be sweet, refreshing and healthy; it was

certainly the lifeline of Egypt's agriculture, something still true of Egypt, for it receives practically no rain (Zech. 14:18). By this miracle, however, the Nile's sacred waters became putrid and all life in it died (7:18).

**2. Frogs (Ex. 8:1-15):** The sacred frog, normally revered, was now loathed as the land swarmed with them. Pharaoh pleaded for their removal and, to impress him with the power of God, Moses invited him to nominate the time that they should go (vv.9-10). But when the frogs were gathered and lay in rotting heaps throughout the land, Pharaoh refused to let Israel go (see Isa. 26:10).

**3. Lice (Ex. 8:16-19):** This plague also affected the religious observances of Egypt, for priests covered with lice would be unable to officiate, and the lice was "in man and beast". Up to this point, the magicians of Egypt had been able to produce an imitation of the plagues Yahweh had sent; but from here on they were unable to copy them or do anything to relieve the effects of them. They were, in fact, forced to acknowledge the superior power vested in Moses (v.19). Thus the first great objective of the plagues was proved.

**4. Flies (Ex. 8:20-24):** The first three plagues had been suffered by the Israelites as well as the Egyptians, but now there was a division made between the land of Goshen and Egypt. God was about to prove His second great objective — that Israel was His special people. Swarms of flies invaded the land; and not ordinary flies but probably the loathsome Egyptian black beetle which is described as "destroying the land" and "devouring" (or biting) the Egyptians (Psa. 78:45).

Afflicted along with his people, Pharaoh told Moses, "go ye sacrifice to your God IN THE LAND" (v.25). But Moses was unable to accept this compromise because God had commanded otherwise and the proposed sacrifices involved the death of animals revered by the Egyptians. After being forced to agree to Moses' demands (v.28) Pharaoh hardened his heart as soon as the plague was removed and refused to let Israel go (v.32). The record says later that God hardened Pharaoh's heart (9:12; 10:1). While Pharaoh was reacting according to his own free will, God had specifically raised up a man of Pharaoh's arrogance and obstinacy so that His power might be revealed to all (9:16; cp. Rom. 9:16-18).

**5. Murrain (Ex. 9:1-7):** Murrain is a disease among cattle, and it now swept through the animals of Egypt. Here again, God was demonstrating His superiority, because the cattle were deified by the Egyptians. However, while the plague ravaged the cattle of the Egyptians, Pharaoh, on enquiry, found out that the land of Goshen was free of this contagious disease (v.7).

**6. Boils (Ex. 9:8-12):** Agonising boils broke out on man and beast



(v.10), affecting even the magicians (v.11). Yet with all the torment that he and his people were suffering, and the pain of these burning ulcers, Pharaoh refused to let Israel leave.

**7. Hail (Ex. 9:18-26):** Before this plague Pharaoh was warned (vv.15-16). He, who at the time wielded more power than any other mortal, and who was worshipped by his subjects, was told by the leader of his slaves that he was only permitted to live by the favour of the God whom he despised. The following day, a fearful hailstorm (unheard of in Egypt) rained down upon the land. It had the desired effect; Pharaoh pleaded for mercy (vv.27-28), but again, on its removal, he hardened his heart (vv.33-34).

**8. Locusts (Ex. 10:1-20):** Locusts, like an army on the march, stripped the land of Egypt of all vegetation, except in the land of Goshen. Pharaoh's servants now appealed to him to be reasonable. They were exhausted. But although he almost relented upon certain conditions (vv.7, 9), his obstinate nature was clearly evidenced when Moses insisted upon HIS terms being granted; "You have some evil purpose", he declared (v.10), and refused to let them go.

**9. Darkness (Ex. 10:21-29):** The Egyptians were also sun-worshippers, and Yahweh showed His command of even this great force of nature when He caused the sun to be blotted out. The darkness was such as could be felt. Only in Goshen was there light. Pharaoh sent for Moses and tried to bargain on his conditions, but Moses repeated his Divine demand. An enraged Pharaoh refused and threatened Moses with death if he again showed his face in his court. This obstinate egotist had shown his contempt for Yahweh and His servant, and now Yahweh would pour out His wrath upon Pharaoh and his people "without mixture".

**10. Firstborn (Ex. 11 and 12):** The tenth and most dreadful plague would compel Pharaoh to obey Yahweh (11:1). Death was to fall upon every family in the land for all the firstborn would die. But in the land of Goshen, the Israelites could be exempt from the awful plague, if they trusted in God and kept the Passover as He commanded.

#### **THE PASSOVER (Ex. 12:1-27).**

Detailed instructions concerning the Passover were given to Moses and these he faithfully relayed to the people. The instructions were as follows:—

1. The month Abib was to be the new beginning of the year for them (v.2) and on the tenth day of this month, each household in Goshen was to carefully select a lamb, without blemish, from the flock, and pen it up for four days (vv. 3-5).
2. On the 14th day, at evening (that is, between 3 and 6 o'clock), they

- were to kill the lamb and catch its blood in a basin (v.6, note margin).
3. They were then to dip a bunch of hyssop in this blood and sprinkle it upon the doorposts and lintels of their houses (v.7).
  4. As evening drew on, they were to roast the lamb whole and then eat it with bitter herbs and unleavened bread (vv.8-9). Not a bone of the lamb was to be broken (v.46).
  5. They were to remain indoors all night (v.22).
  6. No stranger was allowed to eat with the Israelites unless he had joined himself completely with them (v.48).
  7. None of the Passover lamb was to be left until the morning. What they were unable to eat, was to be burned (v.10).
  8. They were all to eat in haste with their shoes on and staff in their hand, ready to leave as soon as Moses gave the word (v.11).

Moses explained to the Israelites what all this meant. He told them that Yahweh was about to smite all the firstborn of the land of Egypt, but when the Angel of Death saw the blood upon the lintels and doorposts of the houses of the Hebrews, he would spare the "firstborn" of Yahweh (4:22; 12:23). So that they might never forget its lessons, the Israelites were commanded to keep this feast as a memorial every year (vv.14, 24-27).

#### **THE NIGHT THE FIRSTBORN WERE SLAIN (Ex. 12:28-39).**

Faithfully the Israelites sprinkled the blood of the Passover lamb on their lintels (Heb. 11:28). As night came on and the people went to their homes, a quietness came over the land; an uneasy, troubled quietness, for Moses' words had brought a great fear to the princes of Egypt, who had learned to respect the warnings of God.

But in Goshen, there was expectancy and excitement, as each family, together with any who had joined themselves to the "hope of Israel", gathered around their tables to partake of the Passover lamb as instructed. As the firstborn sons of Yahweh stood in readiness to flee at His command, a terrible cry arose out of the heart of the land of Egypt; in each Egyptian family the Angel of Death had performed his terrible work. In every household the firstborn lay dead, and Pharaoh's house was not exempt. A terrible panic and anguish gripped the people. Messengers were sent at once to Moses in Goshen to implore him to depart with his people immediately from the land of Egypt. No longer would Pharaoh refuse the conditions of Moses.

For the Hebrews, the time of deliverance had come at last. Jubilantly, but with trembling hands because of the fearful things that had been done to acquire their deliverance, they snatched their belongings, including the "borrowed" precious articles from the Egyptians. They followed Moses into the night — 600,000 men with their women and children, their flocks and herds and those who had thrown in their lot with Israel. Before the

plagues began Pharaoh had asked, “Who is Yahweh that I should obey his voice and let Israel go” (Ex. 5:2). Now God had given him an answer. He had demonstrated His power and vengeance such as Pharaoh had never believed possible (12:12, cp. Ps. 78:43-53).

### **CHRIST, THE TRUE PASSOVER LAMB.**

The apostle Paul says, “Christ, our passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor. 5:7). He was like the Passover lamb in that:—

1. On the 10th day of the first month of the Jewish year, he entered Jerusalem (Matt. 21:10).
2. From the 10th to the 14th day he was “penned up” in Jerusalem, teaching in the temple all day, and retiring each night to the Mt. of Olives (Luke 21:37, 38).
3. During these four days he was “inspected” by the leaders of the people and shown to be without fault or blemish (Matt. 27:24; Luke 23:13-16).
4. On the 14th day at the 9th hour, he was slain (Lk. 23:44-46; compare Ex. 12:6 margin).
5. He knew the bitterness of suffering (bitter herbs) and he himself was without the “leaven of wickedness” (unleavened bread) (1 Cor. 5:6-8).
6. As the blood upon the doorposts brought salvation for the Hebrews, so personal redemption is through the sprinkled blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:18, 19; Heb. 12:24; Rev. 7:13, 14).

Thus the Passover lamb pointed forward to the Lord Jesus Christ; all the shadows of this observance found their substance in him.

### **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PASSOVER FEAST.**

The Passover is also meaningful for us today. Yahweh declared to Moses, “When I see the blood, I will pass over” (Ex. 12:13). We identify ourselves with this promise through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ in baptism, and by this act, we make figurative contact with that “precious blood” (1 Pet. 1:19).

By placing the blood upon their doors, Israel indicated their acceptance of the principles of the atonement as expressed in sacrifice (Heb. 11:28). Blood is a symbol of the life of the flesh which has to be poured out in obedience to God (Lev. 17:11). Our acceptance of the same principles requires that we identify ourselves with his life of sacrifice.

In Exodus 12:13, Yahweh promises to all who observe His requirements, “I will pass over you”. In Romans 3:25, Paul tells us that God has “set forth” (literally “placed in front”, as was the blood on the doorposts) Christ Jesus, that through faith in his blood we might obtain

“remission of sins”. The word “remission” literally means “passing over” (see margin). So Yahweh is prepared to “pass over” our past sins through the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, even as the Angel of Death “passed over” the houses in Goshen.

We are also commanded to keep the feast of remembrance (Lk. 22:13), knowing that Christ’s blood provided the only way for forgiveness of sins and redemption from “Egypt”. We must separate ourselves from the world (1 Jn. 2:15), even as Israel was separated from Egypt in the land of Goshen. We must “purge out” the leaven (evil) from our lives, and realise that through suffering and trial (bitter herbs), God has provided the way to salvation.

### **LESSONS FOR US:**

- Pharaoh was arrogant and obstinate and rejected Yahweh’s claims. At length, however, he was humbled and compelled to acknowledge Yahweh’s supremacy, as will the whole world.
- Christ is our passover lamb and unless we have taken upon ourselves the sin-covering name of Christ, we shall perish, as surely as the firstborn of Egypt did, in the day of judgment which is coming.
- The sprinkling of the blood of Christ enables us to escape the bitterness of bondage to sin.
- As Egypt was judged, so the world of today (which is of Egyptian character) will be over-thrown at Christ’s return.

### **REFERENCE LIBRARY:**

- “Visible Hand of God” (R. Roberts) — Chapters 11-13
- “Elpis Israel” (J. Thomas)—Pages 290-291, 295-298
- “The Ways of Providence” (R. Roberts)—Chapter 10
- “Law of Moses” (R. Roberts)—Chapter 21
- “Law and Grace” (W. F. Barling)—Pages 41-43, 89-91, 137-140
- “Moses My Servant” (H. Tennant)—Chapter 2
- “The Story of the Bible” (H. P. Mansfield)—Vol. 1, Pages 258-277

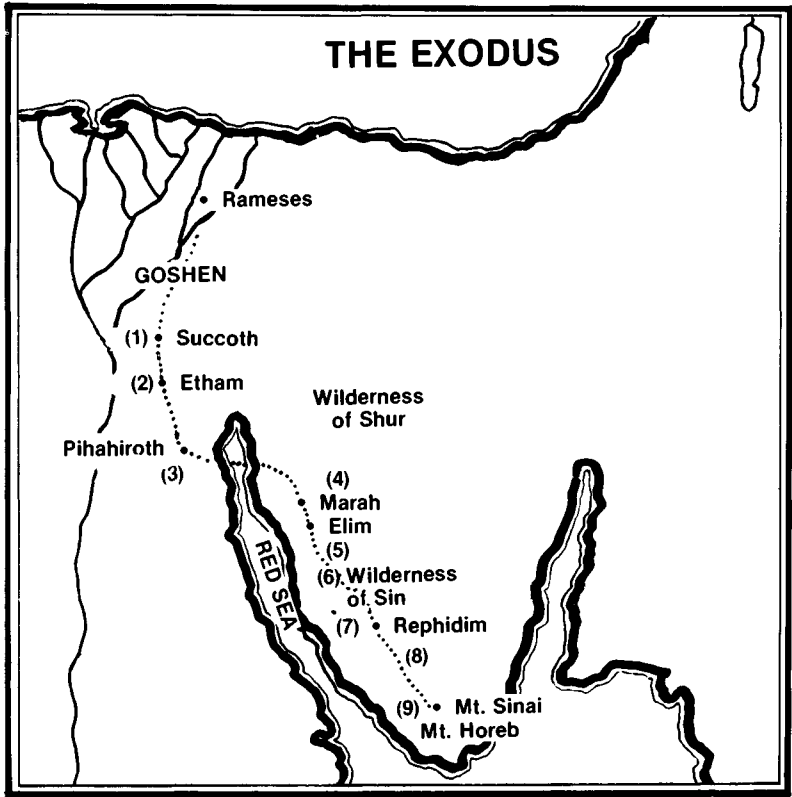
### **PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:**

1. *What specific objectives did Yahweh prove in:—*
  - (a) *the first 3 plagues?*
  - (b) *the last 7 plagues?*
2. *“And Yahweh hardened Pharaoh’s heart.” Explain briefly this statement.*
3. *List ways in which the Passover Feast typifies the Lord Jesus Christ.*

**ESSAY QUESTIONS:**

1. *What was the purpose of the plagues upon Egypt and how did they demonstrate the supremacy of Yahweh?*
2. *Explain how Christ was seen in the Passover in Egypt.*
3. *In what ways does the Passover have a message for us today?*

*Deuteronomy  
6:21*



- (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 encamped at Elim where there were 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) Arrival at Mt. Sinai where the Law is given through Moses (19:1-6)

## 18. BAPTISED INTO MOSES

**“Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord”**

*Later on, Yahweh was to say to Israel, “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagle’s wings, and brought you unto myself” (Ex. 19:4). The wondrous miracles God wrought for His people at this time and His continued deliverance of them were constantly brought before Israel in later years to remind them that they owed their existence to Him. The most dramatic of these was the opening of the Red Sea which provided an escape for Israel and doom for the Egyptians.*

*The aim of this lesson is to show how God separated the people of His Kingdom to Himself.*

### Exodus 13-15

#### DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT (Ex. 13:17 — 14:12).

From Exodus 13:17-22 we learn that God chose the route and directed the march of the Hebrews out of Egypt. At the head of the marching columns were Moses and Aaron (Ps. 77:20) and before them there advanced a pillar of cloud, which at night turned into a pillar of fire. This was the symbol of God’s presence through His Angel (Neh. 9:19).

They did not proceed directly to the Promised Land for God had a prior purpose with His people. They had to be educated in God’s ways and trained for what He desired. The hardness of desert life and the education that He would give them in the Law, were first necessary. Seeing they had been recently liberated from slavery they lacked discipline, organisation and fighting efficiency. God’s care for them is seen from the fact that He brought them through a way where they would not encounter enemies (Ex. 13:17-18).

He brought them first to Succoth where they rested (13:20; 12:37-39). The women made unleavened bread, the men cut down boughs of trees to shelter their families from the sun. They rejoiced together because God had delivered them by His mighty arm. Succoth means “Tabernacles” and this joyous occasion was afterwards celebrated in the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:39-43).

Then they came to Etham (Ex. 13:20), which means “Edge” for it was on the edge of the wilderness and on the border of Egypt. They saw for the first time the terrible nature of the wilderness which they would have to traverse. It was as though God, having first revealed unto them the joy of the truth, now showed to them some of its difficulties before bringing them to the point of baptism (1 Cor. 10:1-2).

Israel could have continued their journey from Etham down the eastern side of the Red Sea without having to cross it, but the cloud turned and led the way down the western side for a distance of 25 kilometres. This brought them to Pihahiroth (14:2). Here, they saw a place of rugged desolation. Harsh, barren mountains, with steep valleys between them, ran right down to the edge of the sea itself. Along one of these deep valleys, the children of Israel marched, until they halted by the waters of the Red Sea.

### **PHARAOH PURSUES ISRAEL (Ex. 14:5-14).**

News of this was brought to Pharaoh. He could only see in this that a terrible mistake had been made by the leader of Israel. "They are entangled in the land", he exclaimed, "the wilderness has shut them in". Preparing his chariots, he set forth to destroy the hated Hebrews.

Thus the Israelites were presented with a terrible predicament. Hemmed in by mountains on either side, and the sea in front, they saw the chariots of Pharaoh coming upon them. They forgot the mercy of God, and His wonderful works. They turned with anger upon Moses, accusing him of bringing them out of Egypt to die (vv.10-12). See the wonderful reply of this great leader in verses 13 and 14: "Fear ye not, **stand still** and see the salvation of the Lord. . .". The Egyptians they had seen that day would be seen again no more. Moses turned to God for assistance, and was told to lift up his rod and stretch it over the sea and divide it, that the children of Israel might go through dryshod (vv.15-16).

### **ACROSS THE RED SEA (Ex. 14:15-31).**

Meanwhile the angel went between Israel and Egypt, and the pillar of cloud brought darkness to the Egyptians, but to Israel it was a pillar of light. Moses lifted up his rod and stretched it towards the sea. God caused an east wind to blow all that night, the sea was divided and the path through became dry land. On either side were huge banks of water, standing upright and "congealed" (14:22; 15:8; Ps. 78:13). Across this path the Israelites marched to safety, but the Egyptians, attempting to do likewise, were drowned (Ps. 78:53).

God had hardened the hearts of the Egyptians to pursue Israel through the sea in a foolhardy thrust to recapture their slaves (v.12). But when their chariot wheels miraculously fell off, they feared and sought to escape from the walls of water beside them (v.28). It was too late. In obedience to the voice of God, Moses again stretched forth his rod, and the sea returned to its former place and completely destroyed the host of Pharaoh (vv.23-29).

Israel's passage through the Red Sea had been an act of great faith (Heb. 11:29). On the eastern side of the Red Sea, the children of Israel



stood safe, delivered from the terrible fate that could have been theirs. The things they saw filled them with awe. Those who had murmured against Moses, bowed themselves before him and sought his pardon and in the hearts of all was the realisation that God was indeed powerful to save. "They believed the Lord, and his servant Moses" (Ex. 14:31).

A song of thanksgiving commemorating the occasion was composed and sung by Moses and the people (15:1-19), with Miriam and the women of Israel playing musical instruments and answering with the refrain: "Sing ye to Yahweh, for He hath triumphed gloriously, the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea" (15:20-21).

It is as well to note the rapid changes that took place in Israel's reactions. They first rejoiced in their freedom from Egypt, but when faced with adverse circumstances, they despaired and reproached Moses. Once delivered, however, despair turned to triumph as they celebrated the victory of the Red Sea. Human nature is fickle, but God is steadfast and faithful.

The deliverance of the Red Sea became symbolic of God's great care and was recounted with gratitude by subsequent generations (Ps. 106:9-11). At other times God reminded them of this event (Amos 2:10; 3:1). But an even greater deliverance is yet to come when Israel will be brought out of a reluctant Russia and from all other countries and returned to the land with great joy and gladness (Jer. 16:14-16).

### **A NEW LIFE.**

Israel was now a free people commencing a new life. The slavery, the taskmasters, the idolatry of Egypt were behind them. They now followed God, Who became their Ruler and Guide. And in all this there is presented a wonderful lesson. In 1 Cor. 10:1-5 Paul shows that in crossing the Red Sea, Israel was baptised into Moses. They were "buried" in water, hidden from view by cloud and sea. They rose to a new life on the opposite shore.

The Apostle says that these things are recorded as examples or types (v.6 margin). It is a type of our baptism into Christ. When a believer submits to baptism, he leaves behind his old life. The old man of flesh is destroyed (Rom. 6:6), just as were the Egyptians. In Christ, he follows the guidance of God whom he accepts as his Guide and Ruler. Previously he lived in slavery to the flesh, following its dictates and seeking its satisfaction, but now, that is no longer the case (see Rom. 6:16-18; Matt. 6:24).

Firstly, notice that Israel came to know that they were in danger of death. Secondly, they had to acknowledge the saving power of the Passover Lamb. Thirdly, they were then baptised. On all occasions, the urgency of their need was completely borne in upon them. They realised

the need of the means of salvation, and so they followed what God commanded. They had to do so, or else be destroyed. In the things of the Truth, God commands and it is imperative for us to obey. Having come to a knowledge of His will, we must act in accordance with it (Lk. 12:47; Jas. 4:17; Jn. 12:48; 9:41; 15:22).

### **LESSONS FOR US:**

- When God brought Israel out of Egypt, they were not led at once to the promised land, but directed rather by stages to the wilderness where hardship would have to be faced. In the same way, we are subjected to discipline and hardship, so necessary to character formation, before obtaining the prize.
- Like Israel, who were protected from their enemies by being taken into the wilderness, we also experience the protective Hand of God, Who saves us from those who would destroy us.
- 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. Men must “stand still” and see God’s salvation.
- Threatened by death but believing in God, Israel went through the Red Sea, and were thus “baptised into Moses” (1 Cor. 10:2). We also, once we come to a knowledge of the Truth, should be baptised into Christ Jesus our Lord.

### **REFERENCE LIBRARY:**

- “Elpis Israel” (J. Thomas) — Page 292-293
- “The Visible Hand of God” (R. Roberts)—Chapter 14
- “Moses My Servant” (H. Tennant)—Chapter 3
- “The Wilderness of Life” (J. Martin)—C.S.S.S Study Notes

### **PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:**

1. *What words did Moses use to calm Israel’s fears as the Egyptians approached them on the banks of the Red Sea? What lesson do these words have for us?*
2. *Of Israel, Paul said, “They were all baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (1 Cor. 10:2). Explain.*
3. *How did God bring about the destruction of the Egyptian host in the Red Sea?*

### **ESSAY QUESTIONS:**

1. *Describe the crossing of the Red Sea and the fate of the Egyptians.*
2. *Why was the crossing of the Red Sea so important to Israel?*
3. *What was the significance of the departure of Israel from Egypt and their crossing of the Red Sea?*
- 4. *How is the crossing of the Red Sea a type of baptism into Christ?*

## 19. SUSTAINED BY GOD IN THE DESERT

**“The Lord thy God bare thee as a man doth bare his son”**

*The Greek word “Exodus” used by the Septuagint translators to name the second book of the Bible, simply means “the way out”. But to leave Egypt behind truly, God’s people had to learn to turn away from “self” and depend upon their Maker. It was to teach this lesson that God brought them into the wilderness (cp. Deut. 8:2). It is a lesson that should not be lost upon us, for once we receive the message of the Truth, we must come into covenant relationship with the Father, through the blood of the Passover Lamb (cp. Ex. 12:13 with Jn. 1:29), and begin our journey, under Yahweh’s direction and with Christ at our head. It will take us on “the way out” from sin and death and bring us in due time to an inheritance in the Kingdom of God. The “wilderness” through which we must pass is the sinful world about us, and its fleshly ways will destroy us as surely as it destroyed Israel unless we turn to Yahweh to sustain us (Num. 14:29-30; cp. Heb. 3:17-19).*

*The aim of this lesson is to show how God cared for His people day by day, and answered their prayers.*

### Exodus 15-17

#### **MARAH AND THE TREE OF HEALING (Ex. 15:23-26).**

The lessons of dependence upon Yahweh were driven home to Israel immediately after their departure from Egypt. Having crossed the Red Sea, for three long days they struggled onward, through harsh and uninhabitable territory. Supplies of water were depleted. Their situation had become quite desperate by the time they arrived at Marah (“bitterness”). But there, at Marah, they found water! They thought their troubles for the moment were over. But were they? In the hour of their desperate need, they found the water to be bitter and undrinkable! What could they do? Nothing.

Yet, Yahweh had led them to this place. Why? To “prove them” and to know what was “in their heart” and “to humble them” (Deut. 8:2). Their problems were far from over. They would die of thirst, unless God provided for their needs. Moses, the mediator, cried unto God and upon His instructions, a certain tree, with astonishing healing powers (cp. Gen. 3:22; Rev. 2:7; 22:14), was hewn down and cast into the waters.

Yahweh had clearly made the point that irrespective of outward appearances, either for good or ill, they would be dependent upon Him to sustain them throughout the entire journey to the land of promise.

The lesson of Marah was further taught by God's direct word: "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of Yahweh thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am Yahweh that healeth thee" (v. 26). God reveals in this statement His omnipotence: as Maker of man's body. He can sustain it, afflict it with disease or heal it. The promise of health was given upon the condition of Israel hearing and doing the commandments. This principle in its ultimate bearing is fulfilled in Christ. On the basis of faith he healed many of their diseases (Acts 10:38; Matt. 9:2). But the greatest disease man suffers is mortality, with which he has been smitten because of sin (Rom. 5:12). If we hear and do His commandments, He has promised to remove this curse from us and "swallow up" death in the victory of eternal health and life (1 Cor. 15:52-57).

#### **ON TO ELIM (Ex. 15:27).**

In contrast, the next resting place was a very pleasant oasis in the desert called Elim (a name meaning "Mighty Ones"). Here the twelve tribes found 12 wells of sweet water surrounded by 70 palm trees, which remind us of the 70 nations of Genesis 10 and the statement of Moses in Deut. 32:8. The 12 wells of water typify Israel as the medium through which (in the Kingdom) the nations will draw the water of life (cp. Jn. 4:13-14; 7:37-38). Elim was, for the spiritually minded in Israel, a symbolic picture containing a vision of hope — Israel finally at rest and refreshed, with the nations of the world at peace, and drinking from the hope of Israel, in the presence of the Mighty Ones of the future age (cp. Zech. 8:13, 23).

#### **MANNA FROM HEAVEN (Ex. 16).**

Journeying onwards through inhospitable country, Israel entered the wilderness of Sin, a place of ravines and cuttings running through harsh red granite mountains that thrust steeply upwards. The ravines are deep and narrow, twisting and turning in awful confusion among the mountains, giving them a rugged and wild appearance. Just one month had passed since leaving Egypt (v.1), and now notwithstanding God's pillar of cloud suspended before them, they were bewildered and they "murmured against Moses and Aaron" (v.2). With food running low, they accused Moses of leading forth the nation to kill them, but he replied that it was God who had brought them there (v.6). In token of this, they would eat flesh that evening, and in the morning they would receive bread (v.12). And that evening, a miracle occurred. Quails were drawn to the spot, and the people gathered sufficient for their needs. Next morning, after sunrise, they found small, round flat cakes everywhere about them, in rich profusion. In the A.V., verse 15 reads, "It is manna", but the R.V.

has “What is it?” — a question which revealed their wonder and amazement. Since they did not know what it was they named it after their question, for “manna” means “What is it?” (v.31).

Moses explained that this was the bread of God’s providing. He sent the people to gather it up, and when measured out, an omer (about two litres) was provided for each person, which they cooked and ate in various ways. Provision of the manna was a continuing miracle, appearing six days of every seven, throughout the 40 years’ wilderness wandering until they reached the Promised Land. It then stopped, as suddenly as it began (Josh. 5:12). Like the Passover Lamb, it had to be eaten, leaving nothing for the next morning, except on the sixth day of each week, when the bread of two days was collected — none being permitted to be gathered on the seventh day. Bread left over on the first five days corrupted, but miraculously this was not so on the sixth day, when what was kept for the seventh day did not corrupt.

God instructed Aaron to place some manna in a golden pot which was later placed in the Ark of the Covenant when it was built. This manna was miraculously preserved (Ex. 16:20-26, 33; Heb. 9:4).

#### **A TYPE OF CHRIST (Jn. 6:31-38).**

The great lesson in all this is that “man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word. . .of Yahweh” (Deut. 8:3). Something greater than ordinary bread is needed to sustain man for life eternal. That “something” is the word of God. Hence the manna is to be seen as a type of the Spirit-word (cp. Jn. 6:30-35; Matt. 4:4; Rev. 2:17). And when that Word is manifested in the flesh (Jn. 6), as it was in the Lord Jesus Christ, then man is feeding upon that which will sustain him eternally.

Many of the incidents relating to the manna point forward to the Lord Jesus Christ. “What is this?” was the question asked of Jesus, first when they could not understand him (Jn. 9:29), then on his entry into Jerusalem (Matt. 21:10). Like the manna, Jesus came from God (Jn. 8:23), for he is God’s Son (Lk. 1:32-33). Like the miraculously preserved manna, God’s Word is “incorruptible seed”; it “endureth forever” in the sense that obedience to it will lead to life eternal (1 Pet. 1:23, 25). As the golden pot of manna was kept within the Most Holy Place (Heb. 9:4), so Christ, the “Word made flesh” (Jn. 1:14), has entered the Most Holy, never to see corruption (Heb. 9:24). As the manna was provided at the beginning of a new day, so the Lord speaks of the hidden manna to be revealed at his second coming and given to the faithful, that they may have life in the fullest extent (Rev. 2:17). As the manna had to be gathered every day, so we must “eat” of Christ daily, absorbing his teachings so that they become part of us, causing us to think and act as God would have us to. Then shall we be “taught of God” (Jn. 6:45), as Israel was “fed of God” in the wilderness.

Through daily reading of the Bible, meditating thereon, and prayer, Christ will become our spiritual food and drink. By a figure we will thus “eat” him as the Israelites did the Manna in the wilderness, and we will be strengthened for life’s journey “through the wilderness”. But we must do this daily, and thus learn the lesson, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”.

#### **WATER FROM THE ROCK (Ex. 17:1-7).**

When they came to Rephidim (“Places of Rest”), the people were tired and thirsty. But “there was no water to drink”, and the people chided with Moses, and murmured against him. They were so angry, Moses feared he would be stoned, and crying to God, he was instructed to take the elders with him to a rock in Horeb, and smite it with his rod. Immediately he did so, water gushed forth for the people to drink. This rock pointed forward to Christ (1 Cor. 10:4). Christ is frequently styled in Scripture the Stone of Israel (Gen. 49:24; Ps. 118:22; Isa. 8:14; 28:16; Rom. 9:33; 1 Pet. 2:6-8). He was smitten by the Jews when he was crucified, but the smiting of Christ is the means by which “streams of living waters” (the Truth in him) have poured out to refresh men and women in their walk of life (Jn. 4:14; 7:37, 38; 19:34; 1 Jn. 5:4-6).

#### **HOW PRAYER DEFEATED THE AMALEKITES (Ex. 17:8-16).**

It was while the people were resting, faint and weary, that the Amalekites suddenly attacked them from the rear, striking at the stragglers, their weaker members (cp. Deut. 25:17-18). The initial attack repulsed, Moses immediately appointed Joshua to “go forth on the morrow” and fight against Amalek. Israel was not at this time trained or equipped for war, but they went forth in faith, relying on the strength of Yahweh. While the battle raged in the valley below, Moses, Aaron and Hur watched its progress. Israel’s fate seemed to hang in the balance.

Then, as he watched, Moses assumed the attitude of prayer, lifting his hands to heaven, beseeching Yahweh’s help (cp. Ps. 141:2). Instantly, Amalek was driven back and Israel’s soldiers pressed forward in attack. But when his hands drooped through very weariness, Amalek prevailed and Israel was driven back.

Recognising Yahweh’s help gained through prayer, Aaron and Hur took a stone, sat Moses on it, and held up his hands “until the going down of the sun”. By this means Joshua and Israel defeated Amalek, and Moses built an altar to commemorate the event, and named it “Yahweh my ensign”. This altar pointed forward to Jesus Christ (Heb. 13:10), who is called the Ensign of Yahweh (Isa. 11:10-12). Prayer to God through him will ultimately gain the victory for us.

## **A PICTURE OF A FUTURE VICTORY.**

In this wonderful victory over the mighty nation of Amalek (called the “first of the nations” — Num. 24:20), there is represented a picture of the coming victory of Christ over the evil forces that are in the world, for Amalek stands for the enemies of Israel. Further the incident reveals to us how we can overcome the many difficulties that face us from day to day. It is by the power of prayer through the Lord Jesus Christ. The picture of Moses resting on the stone, with Aaron and Hur supporting his hands in prayer, whilst below the Israelites struggled for the mastery, teaches that lesson. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Stone of Israel (Gen. 49:24; Matt. 21:42), and the Apostle Paul said, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:13). Moses represented the Law, Aaron the priesthood, and Hur, who was a prince of Judah, the civil power of Israel. The Lord Jesus Christ is our Lawgiver, High Priest and King. God has appointed him as our mediator (1 Tim. 2:5), and prayers offered in his name, He will answer (Jn. 16:23).

### **LESSONS FOR US:**

- Though Israel was delivered from Egypt through the blood of the slain lamb and by baptism in the Red Sea, they had yet to endure the perils of the wilderness before entering the Promised Land.
- Each point in their journey taught them fresh lessons of their dependence upon God and these lessons point forward to the redemption to be wrought through Christ:—
  - The healing tree of Marah has obvious connection with the cross of Christ (Gal. 3:13).
  - The picture of Elim is what will yet happen to Israel in the Kingdom of God.
  - As “bread from heaven”, the manna stood for the Word of God dispensed by Jesus Christ, the daily study of which is necessary to fit us for the Kingdom of God.
  - The smitten rock symbolised Jesus Christ “the Stone of Israel” (Gen. 49:24; 1 Cor. 10:4), “who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification” (Rom. 4:25).
  - Moses, when flanked by Hur (of the royal tribe) and Aaron (the priest) mediated for Israel with his hands outstretched to God, and the Amalekites were driven back. Christ is the antitype and ever liveth to make intercession for us in our warfare against the flesh (Heb. 7:25; 1 Tim. 2:5).
- Whilst faith in what God reveals will help us, and hope in Christ will give us a vision of the future, God’s help is needed to sustain us in the way. This help is given in answer to prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**REFERENCE LIBRARY:**

“The Visible Hand of God” (R. Roberts) — Chapter 15

“Elpis Israel” (J. Thomas) — Pages 294-295

“The Wilderness of Life” (J. Martin) — C.S.S.S. Study Notes

“The Story of the Bible” (H. P. Mansfield)—Vol. 1, Pages 290-312

**PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:**

- ① *The bitter waters at Marah were healed. What lessons does this incident teach us?*
2. *How was Israel’s encampment at Elim a vision of the Kingdom of God?*
3. *Explain briefly the spiritual lessons taught by the provision of Manna.*
4. *In what way was the smitten rock in the wilderness typical of Christ?*

**ESSAY QUESTIONS:**

1. *What lessons do we learn from the experience of the Israelites after they had crossed the Red Sea and before they arrived at Sinai?*
2. *In what way was the Manna in the wilderness a type of Christ?*
- ③ *Explain how Israel’s victory over the Amalekites revealed the power of prayer.*

Math 4:4.



## **Section 4**

# **THE CONSTITUTION OF THE KINGDOM**

With their enemies destroyed, and they themselves delivered by demonstrations of miraculous power, Israel could never doubt that it was Yahweh Who had made them, preserved them and to Whom their loyalty and devotion were due.

The privileges belonging to the priestly nation, however, were conditional upon its continued loyalty to the truth. In order to develop this loyalty the Law of Moses was given, the Tabernacle was set up, priests and Levites were appointed and a sacrificial code instituted that bound Israel to Yahweh daily, weekly, monthly and yearly.

## 20. ISRAEL AT SINAI— CONSTITUTED A KINGDOM

**“Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation”**

*For the first time in their history, the people of Israel were beginning to feel that they had indeed become a nation. They had never experienced such feelings in Egypt. But now they had been united by their God, and given a leader, Moses. As one Body, they had been led out of Egypt to commence a journey that would transform them into the Kingdom of God.*

*Our aim in this lesson is to see how God established His Kingdom upon the basis of His law.*

### Exodus 19-20

#### ARRIVAL AT MT. SINAI (Ex. 19).

For nearly three months Israel journeyed, arriving eventually in the plain at the foot of Mt. Sinai. Here they encamped. An awe-inspiring sight met their gaze. Up through a narrow valley, a gentle ascent had brought them out into a plain three kilometres long and about one kilometre wide. Ahead of them and towering majestically skyward, were the rugged granite peaks of the mountain. They were to remain at Sinai for about 11 months (Ex. 19:1; Num. 10:11).

Here Moses went up to the mount, and God explained to him the Divine purpose behind the difficulties Israel had suffered (Ex. 19:4-6). It was to educate them and discipline them for the great work He had for them. It was to make them hardy and reliant, recognising the power of God to save and help in time of need. “I bare you on eagles wings and brought you to myself.” The eagle thrusts her young out of the nest to force them to fly, but carefully watches over them that no hurt will come to them. As the young birds flutter helplessly down to certain death below, the mother bird swoops down and bears them aloft upon her wings. Thus they learn to trust the mother bird and also, eventually to fly.

Priests are mediators and teachers, and it is clear that God’s purpose in choosing Israel to be a “kingdom of priests” involved them being a lightstand of God’s Truth for the whole world, teaching other nations God’s way (Deut. 4:6).

The people accepted the covenant God outlined to Moses (Ex. 19:7-8). Since this required Israel to obey God’s voice, Moses then told them to prepare themselves to hear in three days time what God would declare as the basis of the covenant (Deut. 4:13-14; Heb. 9:4). They were to be clean in mind and body (Ex. 19:10-11). God was holy, and they, His children,

were to be holy, also. Barriers were set around the mount because it was a holy place. They were warned not to touch it on pain of death (vv.12-13).

On the third day, in a terrible thunderstorm, accompanied by earthquakes and supernatural trumpet blasts, with the whole mountain enveloped in smoke and capped at the top with terrifying flames, Moses brought the people before God (v.17). As their leader he spake, and God answered (v.19). As their representative, he ascended into the mount, and receiving further instructions from the angel of God, returned with them to the people. And then, in awful majesty, the people heard 10 great and important commandments.

### **THE TEN COMMANDMENTS (Ex. 20:1-17).**

#### **1-4 Relate to God:**

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. . .
3. Thou shalt not take the Name of Yahweh thy God in vain. . .
4. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. . .

#### **5 Relates to Parents:**

5. Honour thy father and mother. . .

#### **6-10 Relate to Fellow-man:**

6. Thou shalt not kill.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Concern works.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness. . . Concerns words.
10. Thou shalt not covet. . . Concerns thoughts.

All ten commandments clearly show man's obligations and responsibilities **to others**. First to Yahweh; second to family; third to all humanity. Note that there is no commandment which draws attention to **self**. Selflessness is therefore one of the dominating features taught by the ten commandments. In every commandment there is the call to deny self, and live only to serve others.

While the commands given to Moses were meant for the nation of Israel, the principles behind them apply with equal force today. Jesus showed that the essence of the law is to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . and to love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matt. 22:36-40). During the course of his ministry, Jesus reaffirmed all the 10 Commandments (giving them an even greater meaning, e.g. Matt. 5:19-22) except for the 4th concerning the sabbath. Our "sabbath", or rest from the ways of the flesh, must be kept seven days a week (Heb. 4:10).

## **THE REST OF THE LAW.**

In addition to the Ten Commandments, further statutes and judgments were given. These expressed God's will on a variety of matters, and provided laws, judgments and penalties which regulated the attitude of the Israelites to God and His worship, to each other, and to the nations among whom they dwelt. These various laws and ordinances together came to be known as the Law of Moses. Obedience to the Law would have guaranteed Israel continued occupation of the Land of Promise until Messiah appeared.

## **THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW—A SCHOOLMASTER.**

One reason why God gave the Law was to establish Israel as a unique people, directing their minds along the channel of His thoughts and ways, so that other nations would admire them (Deut. 4:6-8), fear them (Deut. 28:9-10), and follow them (cf. Jer. 16:16; Zech. 8:23). This Law disciplined the people in Divine thinking. It brought God to the mind of the people in every way — in the home, in their education, in the field, in the workshop, and in their daily (not just weekly) worship.

But, above all, the Law was designed to direct the nation to Christ, the Divinely promised Redeemer (Gal. 3:24). It did this in the sacrifices and offerings which pointed forward to the one great offering that God had promised in the covenants made in Eden (Gen. 3:15), and to Abraham (Gen. 22), and which was fulfilled in Christ (Col. 2:16-17). The Law very effectively revealed to man that he was a sinner before God and in need of redemption (Rom. 5:20; Gal. 3:19). And as the Law cursed all who did not obey it in every detail (Gal. 3:10), so it revealed that there was no hope of life apart from the promised Messiah (Rom. 3:21, 22), for no man was able to live a life without committing sin (Rom. 3:23). The true Israelite, therefore, was found ever looking for that one who would thus deliver him from the bondage of sin and death, and from the curse of the Law (Gal. 3:13). Every time a faithful Israelite offered a sacrifice, he was directed to think of the promised Seed, and in faith to look forward to the time when he would come. Because the offeror showed faith in God, as we must do today, his sins would be forgiven in Christ (though Christ had not yet appeared), and he could live in hope of eternal life.

## **BY GRACE YE ARE SAVED, THROUGH FAITH.**

Men cannot save themselves by keeping law; if they could, they could do without God. So it is "by grace (i.e. unmerited Divine favour) are ye saved through faith" (Eph. 2:8). Faith is belief — an implicit confidence and trust that God will fulfil His promises (Heb. 11:1; Rom. 4:20). Faith comes through hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17), and thus has within it the idea of complete dependence upon God instead of self. When men have faith, they try to please God because they understand

that, without God, they can do nothing. God in turn is pleased when men recognise their need of Him and when, in love, they seek to obey His laws, He forgives their sins for Christ's sake (Eph. 4:32).

To be saved, it is necessary that we:

1. Believe the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ.
2. Be baptised into Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.
3. Seek earnestly thereafter by obedient and holy living to follow the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ.
4. Confess our sins, forsake them and be forgiven.

Those who accept the Lord in the way laid down are accounted in God's sight, as "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people," as was Israel under Moses (cp. 1 Pet. 2:9 with Ex. 19:5-6). To come unto the Lord truly, however, one must not only take upon oneself his yoke — one must also learn of him (Matt. 11:28-30). This requires the daily study of God's Word, and a willingness to walk in God's ways. The world about us is constantly placing us under pressure to conform to its ways; we need the daily influence of God's thinking to change our ways and overcome the world.

#### **LESSONS FOR US:**

- The Law of Moses served several purposes:
  - It established Israel as a unique nation, a lightstand of truth to attract others to God's ways.
  - By its various laws, it pointed to a promised redeemer who would bring salvation.
  - It taught men, because they could not keep the Law, that salvation would have to come some other way.
  - It was thus a "schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" (Gal. 3:24), enabling us to understand that it is "by grace ye are saved through faith" (Eph. 2:8).
- As Israel was called to be a "kingdom of priests", so the ecclesia is a "royal priesthood" which is to teach the gospel and bring others to Christ.
- Faith in Christ requires us to believe the gospel, be baptised and by study, prayer and good works, to walk in God's ways.

#### **REFERENCE LIBRARY:**

- "The Law of Moses" (R. Roberts)—Chapter 12
- "The Visible Hand of God" (R. Roberts)—Chapter 16
- "Elpis Israel" (J. Thomas)—Pages 298-299
- "Christadelphian Instructor"—Nos. 96 to 102

**PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:**

- ① *List the 10 commandments. What relevance do they have to us?*
2. *To whom did the Law direct faithful Israelites? How did it do this?*
3. *Paul says, "By grace are ye saved through faith" (Eph. 2:8). Explain.*

**ESSAY QUESTIONS:**

1. *Tell the story of the giving of the Ten Commandments.*
2. *What purpose did God have in giving Israel the Law of Moses?*
- ③ *Salvation is by faith in Christ and not the Law of Moses. Explain.*

Exodus 19: 5-6

## 21. THE GOLDEN CALF

**“Thou shalt have no other gods before me”**

*God visited and delivered Israel from Egypt. They were His people in every sense of the term. It was His purpose to establish them as a beacon of light to attract others to His truth (cp. 2 Pet. 3:9). They were intended to be “a kingdom of priests” (Ex. 19:6), radiating the light of God’s truth to the world. It was to emphasise Israel’s role in the world, that God said He would dwell among them, enthroned in their midst (Ex. 25:8; 29:45, 46). It would be no more possible, however, for God to dwell among them if they continued a sinful and idolatrous people, than it would be possible for “Light” and “Darkness” to co-exist (cp. 2 Cor. 6:14-18; Eph. 5:8).*

*The aim of this lesson is to show how changeable is human nature; not long after Moses had disappeared into Mt. Sinai, Israel forgot the lesson of the plagues and all of God’s wonders, and turned back to idols.*

### Exodus 32

#### **MOSES ASCENDS THE MOUNT (Ex. 24).**

The sin of the golden calf occurred on the occasion of Moses’ fifth ascent into Mount Sinai (vv.9-18), while he was being shown the pattern of the Tabernacle.

The occasion of this fifth ascent was a momentous one. After his fourth descent, the covenant had been solemnly ratified (vv.3-8). Now he was to receive the two tables of stone inscribed with the ten commandments by “the finger of God” (Deut. 9:9-11), and also the details of the Tabernacle. It was a big assignment, so leaving Aaron and Hur in charge of the camp (v.14), and taking Joshua with him at least part of the way he remained there forty days and forty nights (v.13; cf. 32:17).

#### **THE PEOPLE IN APOSTASY WHILE MOSES ABSENT (Ex. 32:1-6).**

Moses had probably been away about a month when signs of restlessness began to appear among the people of Israel. The pillar of cloud was removed from the camp and abode upon the mount (24:15). The impatient people thought Moses was dead, contemptuously dismissing him as “this Moses”. As day followed day, their impatience grew, and before long murmuring and discontent were everywhere in evidence. The people presented themselves before Aaron and demanded that he make them a god to go before them (v.1).

Aaron capitulated before the threats of the people. He ordered them to

bring their golden earrings and with them he fashioned a golden calf or young bull (vv.2-4). Their ears had truly been turned away from hearing the words of Yahweh (contrast Prov. 25:11-12). The voice of Yahweh, which they had heard but weeks earlier, forbidding them to have any gods before Him and condemning the worship of molten idols, had either been forgotten or set aside (Ex. 20:1-4).

The calf, or young bull, was one of the gods of Egypt. This fact seems to have been in the minds of the people, for Stephen says that “in their hearts they turned back again into Egypt” (Acts 7:38-41). Later in their history, the ten tribes in their apostasy adopted this Egyptian idol as the centre of their worship: and almost the same words were uttered, “Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt” (1 Kgs. 12:28-30).

The people could hardly wait for the next day to dawn, for “early on the morrow” they rose to continue with their riotous merrymaking (v.6). Paul comments on their idolatry in I Cor. 10:7 (Note v.14).

### **THE DESTRUCTIVE NATURE OF IDOLATRY.**

The first of the ten commandments is, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me”; and the second is, “Thou shalt not make thee any graven image” (Ex. 20:3-4). Aaron does not appear to have regarded his actions as a breach of these commandments. He may not have thought of the calf as an idol, but as a reminder to Israel of Yahweh—for the feast he proclaimed was a feast to Yahweh, not the calf (v.5). But it was certainly on his part a breach of the second commandment, and in Ex. 33:8 the people were charged with deserting Yahweh for another god. One sin led quite naturally to another. Worship of God by means of images degrades God in the eyes of the worshippers, in whose mind the images come to usurp God’s place.

Man is reluctant to accept discipline from God upon his actions—so he “changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things” (Rom. 1:23; Psa. 106:19-20). When man refuses to obey the true God who holds men responsible to Him, he creates a “god”, dictates the standards he wishes to observe and he then bows before its throne (Col. 3:5).

### **THE INTERCESSION OF MOSES (Ex. 32:7-14).**

Up on the mount, Moses was unaware of the apostasy. God informed him of it and urgently charged him to go down. Yahweh, through His angel with whom Moses was communing (Acts 7:38), pointed out that the covenant had been broken. He told Moses He would blot Israel out of existence and make a fresh start with him, as He had earlier done with Abraham.



Moses' noble character shines forth in his reply in which he intercedes for Israel, without in any way minimising their sin. He pointed out that—

- (1) they were the people God had redeemed from Egypt;
- (2) the Egyptians would regard their destruction as a triumph;
- (3) it would make of none effect the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Israel—this name being used in preference to “Jacob”, because it suggested “the prince that had power with God and prevailed” (cp. Gen. 32:28).

Because of Moses' intercession, God turned from His purpose and did not destroy them (Psa. 99:6).

### **THE SUPPRESSION OF THE IDOLATRY (Ex. 32:15-29).**

Moses hurriedly descended. In his two hands he carried the tables of stone inscribed by God with the ten commandments (Deut. 9:15). On the way down, he was met by Joshua. As they descended they could hear the noise of shouting in the camp. Joshua mistook it for the noise of war. But Moses knew better (cp. vv.7-8). He said, “It is not the voice of them that shout for the mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear” (v.19). As they neared the camp, Moses “saw the calf and the dancing,” and in anger at their waywardness, “he cast the tables out of his hands and broke them beneath the mount.”

In three deliberate steps, Moses then set out to overcome the idolatry:

1. He destroyed the idol, grinding it to dust and casting it into their drinking water. They were made to drink their own “god” (v.20)!
2. He then dealt with Aaron, whose weakness promoted the idolatry (when a demonstration of strength may have stopped it). He was spared and pardoned because Moses prayed for him (Deut. 9:20).
3. He then sought out those primarily responsible for the idolatry, and with the assistance of the tribe of Levi, which stood faithfully with him, he executed 3,000 idolators (vv.26-28).

### **MOSES' SECOND INTERCESSION FOR ISRAEL (Ex. 32:30-35).**

Moses punished Israel's sin, but was still conscious of the division between God and His people. What was needed was reconciliation, and on the morrow Moses ascended the Mount for the sixth time—this time pleading for Israel's forgiveness. He was prepared to die himself if it meant the pardon of their sins, and their salvation. This God rejected on two main grounds:

1. Atonement through a substitute is no part of God's method (v.33; Ezek. 18:4); Israel had sinned, therefore they should be punished. The same principle applies in the case of salvation in Christ. He died that

our sins might be forgiven, but it is also necessary for us to “die unto sin” in baptism into his name. In this way we associate ourselves with the principle of the cross—we put aside the way of sin and instead render obedience to God (Rom. 6:4-6). As Jesus said, we must also take up our cross and follow him (Matt. 16:24). It is not correct to say, as do the churches, that Jesus died instead of us, or as our substitute.

2. Sin itself may be pardoned (as indicated by the commandment to go forward to the land), though its effects remain. They could not expect matters to be the same as if they had not sinned. On the contrary, they would suffer because of it (vv.34-35).

The struggle against sin must be individual and personal, and we dare not voluntarily give ourselves to any sin (Rom. 6:15). At all moments of the day we must be on guard, lest the sin which “so easily besets us”, finds expression in our thoughts, words or deeds.

#### **LESSONS FOR US:**

- Moses ascended the Mount to receive directions from God; in the same way, our Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven for a season (Lk. 19:12; Acts 1:7, 11).
- Moses was away so long that Israel doubted whether he was still alive. In the same way, scoffers say of Christ’s return, “Where is the promise of his coming?” (2 Pet. 3:3-4). We must not consider our Lord’s absence to be an opportunity to indulge in worldly pursuits and ambitions — we must not be like the evil servant who said in his heart, “My Lord delayeth his coming” (Matt. 24:48-51).
- The desire to satisfy their lusts caused Israel to worship idols. Covetousness can lead to the same thing today (Col. 3:5). The world has much to offer in terms of ease and pleasure, and we should be aware of the dangers in these things to our faith.
- When Moses returned he judged those who were guilty of sin, but he interceded with God in order to save those who were faithful. Christ will do the same (2 Cor. 5:10).

#### **REFERENCE LIBRARY:**

“The Visible Hand of God” (R. Roberts)—Chapter 17

“The Story of the Bible” (H. P. Mansfield)—Vol. 1, Pages 321-327

#### **PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:**

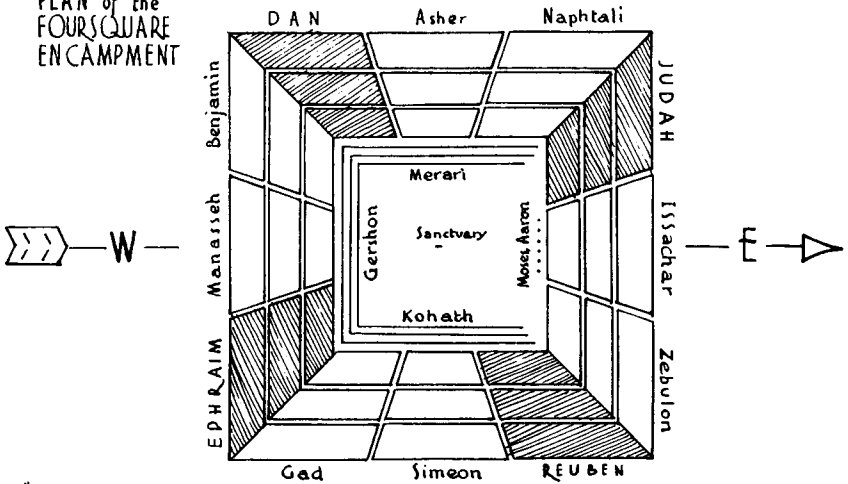
1. *Why did Moses ascend the mount on the fifth occasion? Whom did he take with him?*
2. *Why did the people want to construct the golden calf? Why was it wrong for them to do so?*

3. *What was Moses' reaction when God wanted to destroy the nation after their worship of the golden calf and to make of him a great nation?*

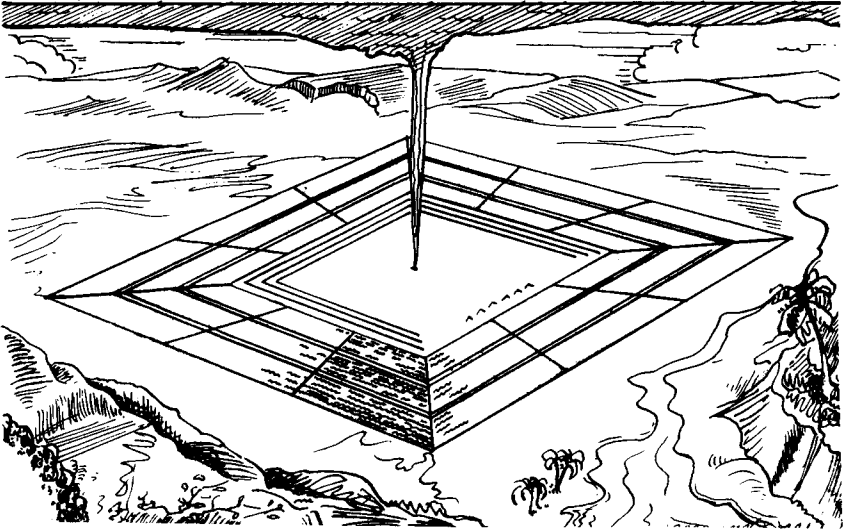
**ESSAY QUESTIONS:**

1. *Describe the incident of the golden calf. What lessons does it teach us?*
2. *What parallels between the days of Moses and our time emerge from the incident of the golden calf?*
3. *What lessons do we learn from Moses' intercession to God on behalf of the people, when they had sinned in the matter of the golden calf?*
4. *Explain 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?*

PLAN of the  
FOUR SQUARE  
ENCAMPMENT



"Far off about the Tabernacle... shalt thou pitch thy tents"



## 22. THE TABERNACLE—GOD'S MEETING PLACE WITH ISRAEL

“Let them make me a sanctuary”

*Israel had been called out of Egypt, baptised in the Red Sea and gathered together as a body of believers. They were to be educated so that their lives might reflect the character of Yahweh. In this way they might attain salvation. The Tabernacle and the worship associated with it were intended to provide this education.*

*The aim of this lesson is to show how the details of the Tabernacle in its position, its court and its Holy Place point forward to Christ. The Most Holy Place will be considered in the next lesson.*

### Exodus 25:1-22 and Exodus 40

#### THE CENTRE OF THE LAW.

The Law of Moses was Israel's God-given code for life and worship. Their formal worship of God was centred at the Tabernacle.

When Moses ascended Mt. Sinai to receive the Law, he was shown a “pattern” of the Tabernacle. He was told that he must make the items of its furniture according to the “pattern which was shewed him in the Mount” (Ex. 25:9, 40; 26:30; 27:8; Num. 8:4, etc.). This shows that whilst God desires us to worship Him, we cannot do as we please. The *explicit* instructions given to Moses show that God expected everything to be carried out in the way He laid down.

Israel was expected to worship Yahweh at all times and in all places. But the Tabernacle was designed as the place where Israel might come before Yahweh and commune with Him (Ex. 25:22): “Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them” (25:8). “Sanctuary” means “separate place” and as we shall see, the Tabernacle where God dwelt was kept separate from Israel. In the same way, we need to keep our hearts as a “separate place” or “sanctuary” wherein God might dwell. We do this when we are conscious of His continuing presence, and by obeying His laws (cf. Isa. 66:1).

#### THE POSITION AND SIZE OF THE TABERNACLE (Ex. 27:9-19).

The Tabernacle was placed in the midst of the camp of Israel (Num. 2:17), but was separated from Israel by a wall of white linen supported by brazen uprights. Taking a cubit as 46 cm long, the Tabernacle was in the midst of a rectangular, curtained enclosure 46 metres long by 23 metres wide (v.18).

The Tabernacle itself, a tent like structure, was 13.8 metres long, 4.6

metres wide and 4.6 metres high. It was divided into two compartments—the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. The latter was a perfect cube; 4.6 metres high, long and wide.

### **PARABLE OF THE POSITION OF THE TABERNACLE.**

The camp of Israel was arranged in a square about the Tabernacle. On the east side were Judah, Issachar and Zebulun; on the south were Reuben, Simeon and Gad; on the west, Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin; on the north, Dan, Asher and Naphtali (Num. 2). Inside this square was a further square, made up of the tents of the Levites, for the Tribe of Levi itself was also divided into four divisions (Num. 3). The Tabernacle was placed at the very centre of the square made up of Levites. From the house of Aaron, the officiating priests of the Tabernacle were taken.

Israel's encampment about the Tabernacle was a symbol of what God desired of every true Israelite; their devotion and service were to be directed to Him. But they were also cut off from direct contact with the Tabernacle by the presence of the Levites and the Priests. God was thus showing His people that He was holy or separate, and even though they had been selected above all other nations, they must not presume to be too familiar with the Holy One they worshipped. As God later pointed out when certain of the sons of Aaron disgraced their honoured calling, "I will be sanctified in them that draw near to me" (Lev. 10:3). Contact was possible, but only through His appointed priests and in the way in which He had laid down. God must be honoured in all things.

The tents of Israel were black; but the curtain surrounding the Court of the Tabernacle was white—this was a deliberate contrast intended to teach a lesson. "White" is the symbol of righteousness (Rev. 19:8), even as "black" speaks of the darkness of sin (Eph. 5:8, 11). Those who come to God must leave the spiritual darkness of the world and turn to the light of God's Truth that they might be clothed with the garments of righteousness, pure and white (Rev. 3:4; 1 Jn. 2:10-11).

The Tabernacle faced east, the direction of the rising sun. In this way also it directed attention to the coming Son of God, the Sun of righteousness who will arise with healing in his beams (Mal. 4:1-2). Jesus is the "Light of the world" (Jn. 8:12). Without him there would not be hope for the future, nor a way out of the dilemmas facing mankind.

### **THE COURT OF THE TABERNACLE.**

#### **(a) The Court**

At the centre of the linen curtain facing the east there was a door in the form of a curtain of fine linen embroidered with blue, purple and scarlet, so arranged that it could be pulled aside (Ex. 27:16, 17). The Tabernacle

was constructed in such a way that it pointed forward to Christ. The door represented Jesus Christ who said, "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture" (Jn. 10:9).

The colours also foreshadowed him. Blue speaks of *God* and of Israel's heavenly calling (Num. 15:38); scarlet or red refers to *man* and is the colour of sin which arises from the lust of the flesh (Isa. 1:18). Jesus came in the same nature as all men, the same flesh and blood as those he came to save (Heb. 2:14-17). This was one of the essential requirements for him to be a suitable sacrifice for the sins of the world. Thus blue and scarlet both have reference to Jesus as the Son of God and the Son of Man respectively. Purple is a mixture of blue and red (scarlet) and refers to the way in which God and Man can be brought into harmony, i.e. it symbolises redemption, mediation, priestly intercession.

#### **(b) The Brazen Altar**

The Tabernacle itself was placed at the far end of the court. The first object that could be seen from the entrance was a large square altar made of wood, and overlaid with brass. It rested on four short feet of brass. The four corners of the altar projected upwards, so as to resemble horns, and to these the animals were bound. On the south side was an ascent to the altar made of earth heaped up (Ex. 20:26; Lev. 9:22). By its side were various vessels for use in the sacrifice.

The fact that the altar was placed first, showed Israel that God desired sacrifice (Ex. 27:1-8). Christ is our altar, if we are baptised into his name (Heb. 13:10). Then we can present our sacrifices to the Father through him, as Israel did through the altar He provided. God kindled the fire on that altar, and the priests were commanded to keep it burning continually (Lev. 9:24; 6:12-13). The sacrifices presented on that altar would thus be wholly consumed by the fire of God. They pointed forward to the offerings we can make through Jesus Christ our altar (Heb. 12:29; Rom. 12:1).

#### **(c) The Laver**

But before the brazen altar offerings could be made, the Laver had first to be approached for cleansing (Ex. 30:20; Psa. 26:6). The Laver was placed between the altar and the Tabernacle proper (Ex. 30:17-21). It was a huge brazen bowl, at which the priests washed their hands and feet. At baptism our sins are "washed" away (1 Cor. 6:11), and as we are guided daily by the Word of God, we are represented by Paul as being cleansed by the "laver" of water by the Word (Eph. 5:26; Ps. 119:9; Jn. 15:3). The way we walk (i.e. with our feet), and what we do (i.e. with our hands), are purified by the knowledge of God's will revealed in His Word. It is like a laver in cleansing us from the evil and defiling influences of the world, and of the flesh.

#### **(d) The Tabernacle Building**

The Tabernacle came last (Ex. 26:1-20, 36, 37). It had no windows, so that inside it was completely dark except for the light of the lampstand. The priest entering the Holy Place had to turn his back on the natural light of the sun, just as we have to turn our back on the wisdom of this world in order to accept Christ. The priest entered the Tabernacle through a curtain which was made of the same materials as the door of the court.

### **INSIDE THE TABERNACLE.**

#### **(a) The Lampstand**

Immediately inside on the left of the Holy Place was a seven-branched lampstand (Ex. 25:31-40). It was fed by oil which all Israel was to supply (Lev. 24:2). It had to be filled morning and evening. It pointed forward to the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God" which "shone in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6), which must also be reflected in our lives. This is only possible by the study of the Bible — in which is found the oil. As all Israel had to help in gathering olives and in beating them small to obtain the oil, so it is our personal duty and responsibility to study the Bible (Ex. 27:20-21).

Note the difference between the things of the Court of the Tabernacle and those of the Holy Place and Most Holy Place. Whereas the former were made of brass, the latter were made of gold. Gold speaks of that which is enduring and precious (Heb. 10:34). It was thus a fit symbol of God and the incorruptible state. Gold also is spoken of as "tried faith", in so far as a faith which has "endured unto the end" is precious and will lead to eternal life (1 Pet. 1:7; Rev. 3:18). Brass in the Outer Court represents Israel or Man, and corresponds to scarlet in the colour scheme (see chart). Significantly the brassen looking glasses of the women (representative of the vanity of human life) were melted down to make the laver (Ex. 38:8); while the brassen censers of sinners were used to make a covering for the altar (Num. 16:38). Thus brass stands for man, or "Sin's flesh."

As the Lampstand gave forth its light amidst the complete darkness of the Holy Place, so must we in the world about us (Phil. 2:15).

#### **(b) The Table of Shewbread**

On the right hand side was the Table of Shewbread (Ex. 25:23-30). This was a wooden table overlaid with gold, upon which were placed 12 unleavened loaves which were changed each week. The bread was called the "shewbread", or bread of the presence, i.e. of God, indicating that in the Holy Place was divine fellowship. The twelve loaves represented the fruit of the labours of the twelve tribes of Israel dedicated before God.



Frankincense was placed upon them showing that the labours must be prayerfully offered in order to be acceptable to God. The loaves were eaten by the priests, who represented God. In eating the loaves, God's acceptance of Israel's labours was indicated (Lev. 24:5-9).

### (c) The Golden Altar

The Holy Place was divided from the Most Holy by another curtain (Ex. 26:31-33), likewise embroidered blue, purple and scarlet and made with fine-twined linen. Close to this curtain but within the Holy Place, was the Golden Altar (Ex. 30:1-10). Each morning and evening the priests were required to burn incense upon this altar of gold. The sweet smell of incense is likened to prayer ascending to God (Psa. 141:2). The incense (taken from upon the loaves on the Table of Shewbread) was burned with fire taken from the altar of sacrifice. This taught that there was a connection between PRAYER, FAITH and SACRIFICE. Prayer can only be accepted when it is offered in faith, and it must be offered through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Faith comes by HEARING the Word of God (Rom. 10:17), and when we accept Jesus Christ by baptism, we commence DOING the will of God.

### LESSONS FOR US:

- The Tabernacle teaches us that we must be careful to worship God in the way He has laid down, in "sincerity and truth".
- The furniture of the court and the Tabernacle teaches us that in order to approach God acceptably we must:
  - enter at the door (Christ)
  - walk with clean hands and feet (the laver—the washing of the Word)
  - sacrifice at the altar of sacrifice (baptism, in which we are crucified with Christ)
  - replenish our lamp (constantly study God's truth)
  - attend to the shewbread, placing before God the fruits of our labours (bread), prayerfully carried out (frankincense)
  - burn incense morning and evening (constantly be engaged and strengthened by prayer).

### REFERENCE LIBRARY:

- "Law and Grace" (W. F. Barling)—Pages 58-63
- "The Visible Hand of God" (R. Roberts)—Chapter 17
- "The Law of Moses" (R. Roberts)—Chapters 14-16
- "The Story of the Bible" (H. P. Mansfield)—Vol. 1, Pages 335-362
- "The Tabernacle" (C.S.S.S.)

### PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

1. Explain the significance of any two of the following:
  - a) the Brazen Altar;

- b) the Table of Shewbread;
- c) the Lampstand.

2. Explain the significance of any one of the following:
  - a) the Laver;
  - b) the Golden Incense Altar.
3. Contrast the outer court of the Tabernacle with the Holy Place by explaining the significant differences.

**ESSAY QUESTIONS:**

1. Without dealing with the items of furniture of the Tabernacle, explain generally why God placed the Tabernacle in the midst of Israel.
2. What do the items of the Outer Court of the Tabernacle teach about Christ?
3. Explain the significance of the furniture in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle. How does it point forward to Christ?
4. What is the significance of the three metals and three colours used in the construction of the Tabernacle?

*Ey 25-8-9.*

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE METALS AND COLOURS**

	God	Redemption	Man
Metals (Exod. 25:3)	Gold	Silver	Brass
Colours (Exod. 25:4)	Blue	Purple	Red

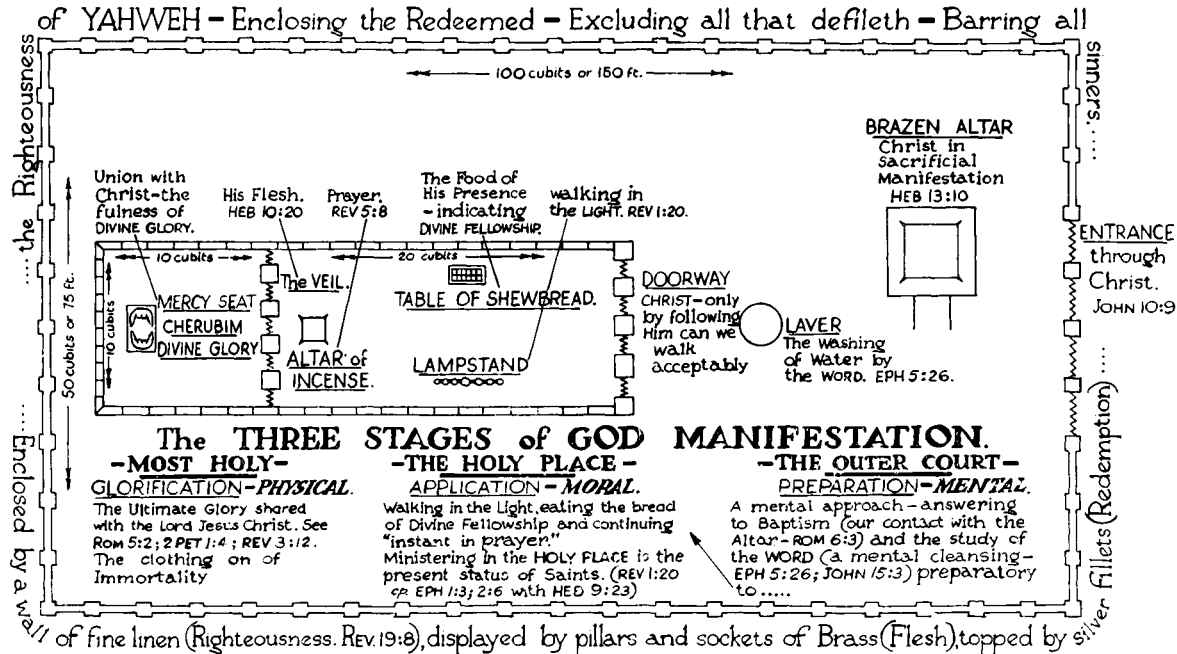
There are three colours and three metals representing God, Man and the way in which man might be reconciled to God. The order in which these colours and metals are mentioned is highly significant (Exod. 25:3-4). Blue and Gold are mentioned first, and both represent God. Red and Brass are mentioned last, and both represent Man. Purple and Silver are "in between", and both represent the way in which man might be reconciled to God. This order and teaching is in fact stated when God declares the purpose of the tabernacle to be: "that I may dwell among **them**" (Ex. 25:8).

In the previous chapter, mention is made of red blood, which stands for the life of man (24:6-8); and also of sapphire stones which were blue and were seen under the feet of the "God of Israel" (24:10). In this way the significance of these two colours is impressed upon us in the immediate context.

# 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.



## 23. THE MOST SACRED PLACE IN ISRAEL

**“The way into the holiest of all was not yet manifest”**

*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 special conditions had been fulfilled. 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 would find approval in His sight.*

*Our aim is to see the lessons embodied in the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle.*

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

#### **THE MOST HOLY PLACE.**

The Tabernacle was divided into two rooms by an embroidered curtain, known as the Veil (Ex. 26:31-37). The Most Holy Place was a perfect cube, 4.6 metres high, wide and long. It was at the far end of the Tabernacle. It was the dwelling-place of Yahweh in Israel: from here He would commune with Israel (read Ex. 25:22; Num. 7:89). There His glory shone forth and illuminated the otherwise dark interior of the Most Holy Place (Ps. 99:1; 80:1; Ex. 40:34).

#### **THE ARK OF THE COVENANT (Ex. 25:10-22).**

The only furniture in the Most Holy Place was a simple chest made of wood, which was covered with gold within and without. Its lid or covering was called the Mercy Seat. It was made of pure gold, and two Cherubim or figures with outstretched wings, one at each end, were beaten from the same piece of gold as the Mercy Seat. The faces of the Cherubim looked down towards the Mercy Seat (v.20). Inside the Ark there were placed three items — the two tables of stone on which the Law was inscribed (v.21), a golden pot containing manna, and later, Aaron's rod that budded (Heb. 9:4-5).

The Cherubim represented Israel in future glory (Rev. 4:7; 5:9-10). They were made entirely of gold, and the “precious sons of Zion” are “comparable to fine gold” (Lam. 4:2). They do not represent the complaining, disobedient Israel we read of in the Bible, but the true Israelites, those men and women of all ages who have embraced the Hope of Israel and so have become “Israelites indeed” (Gal. 3:26-29). Their faith has been tried in the fire of affliction and they have “come forth as gold”; they will be Yahweh's messengers in the Kingdom (Job. 23:10).

The Mercy Seat pointed forward to Jesus Christ. In Romans 3:25, he is called our Mercy Seat, for the word there translated “propitiation” can

be rendered “mercy seat”. Note well that the Cherubim and the Mercy seat were beaten out of the same piece of gold (Ex. 25:18-19). The Cherubim are “one” with the mercy seat as true believers should be “one” with Christ Jesus (Jn. 17:20-21). Notice, too, that the faces of the Cherubim are turned towards the Mercy Seat (Ex. 25:20), as the faces of the true believers should always be towards their Lord (Psa. 27:6-9).

From the mercy seat God spoke to Israel, even as He has spoken to us in His Son (cp. Num. 7:89; Heb. 1:1-2); there He “met” Israel, and Jesus Christ is alone the one through whom we can approach God (Jn. 14:6; 1 Tim. 2:5).

### **BLOOD IN THE MOST HOLY PLACE.**

When the High Priest entered the Most Holy Place once every year, on the day of Atonement, he was commanded to sprinkle the Mercy Seat with blood (Lev. 16:14). If he presumed to go into the Most Holy Place without doing this, he would be killed by God (Lev. 16:2). The Cherubim looked down, their faces turned toward the Mercy Seat sprinkled with blood. Likewise our eyes turn to the Lord Jesus Christ, and we remember his sacrifice. We “see” his great offering for us, and we realise that without it, we could not be saved.

The holiness of God is emphasised by the limited access into the Most Holy Place. In fact, as the Most Holy Place was approached, fewer in Israel were involved: thus:

1. Outside the Court were the thousands of Israel;
2. Inside the Court only the Levites and Priests could come;
3. In the Holy Place only the Priests could officiate;
4. Into the Most Holy only the High Priest could enter, and then only once a year.

### **CONTENTS OF THE ARK.**

Everything in the Most Holy Place emphasised ultimate perfection, that state of perfect fellowship and harmony with the Eternal God. Gold, the only metal used, symbolises that which is precious and enduring or immortal. It also speaks of a tried faith which is required of those who shall attain to the ultimate state.

Consider also the contents:

1. *The Two Stones*, on which the law of God was engraved, were of an enduring material.
2. *The Golden Pot* contained the manna which kept forever and did not corrupt. See Rev. 2:17.
3. *Aaron’s Rod* which rod budded after being “dead” to show that God had chosen his family alone to be the priests (see Num. 17). So, too,

Jesus has been brought from the dead and given eternal life, and this fact proves that he alone is the mediator between God and man (Heb. 7:23-25).

## THE GLORY OF YAHWEH.

No outside light entered the Most Holy; even the light of the seven-branched lampstand was cut off by the dividing curtain. It was illuminated, however, by the glory of Yahweh, which shone from between the Cherubim and above the Mercy Seat (Ex. 29:43; 40:34; 25:22; Ps. 80:1).

When Jesus appeared 1900 years ago, he was likened to the LIGHT or GLORY of God SHINING IN A DARK PLACE (Jn. 1:5). He revealed the moral glory of the Father unto men. In all he said, and did, as well as in his wonderful character, there was to be seen a reflection of the Divine Glory. Now, however, following his resurrection and glorification, he reveals in **all** aspects the DIVINE GLORY. As the High Priest saw the glory of God above the Mercy Seat, we can visualise it displayed by the Lord Jesus. John says that the disciples beheld in him “the glory of the Father” (Jn. 1:14). All the world will see this at his second advent.

The glory of Yahweh that shone above the Mercy Seat symbolised moral perfection, the thing to be aimed at by God’s people, as Jesus taught in Matt. 5:16. We reflect the moral glory of the Lord now when he dwells in our hearts by faith (Eph. 3:17). If we are faithful, we will attain to a glorious body like that which the Lord Jesus now has (Phil. 3:21; 1 Jn. 3:1-3). We live “in hope of the glory of God”. When Jesus returns and changes our “vile” mortal bodies into glorious immortal bodies, men will behold in us the physical glory of God, in addition to the moral glory (Phil. 2:15).

## THE PATH OF VICTORY.

Our walk towards ultimate perfection is depicted in a parable in the various stages of the Tabernacle—

### 1. Preparation

- a) The first requirement is knowledge. All must recognise in Jesus Christ the *door* through whom entrance is gained.
- b) Though the *Brasen Altar* was the first object seen in the Outer Court, the priests had to bypass it and first wash their hands and feet at the *Laver*. The water of the Word of God cleanses our minds and so purifies our walk (feet) and deeds (hands). In baptism our sins are washed away.
- c) Then we can partake of the *altar* of Christ, and our worship and offerings are acceptable to God because we are in him (Heb. 13:10). Only then we are able to minister in the *Holy Place*, the Ecclesia.

## 2. Dedication or Walking in the Light

A person does this when, having accepted Christ in the way appointed, he determines that he will walk with Christ in all his ways.

- a) He knows he must walk in the light of the *Lampstand*; he must be morally sound, living in conformity with Divine Truth.
- b) He must provide the *shewbread* for God with the *frankincense*, that is, he must offer to God the fruit of his labours, prayerfully and humbly.
- c) He must be a man of prayer (*incense*).

## 3. Exaltation or Sharing the Glory

The *Veil* symbolised “his flesh” (Heb 10:20). Beyond the veil immortality and perfect fellowship with God is symbolised, when “the flesh” shall be put aside.

The ultimate glory of the perfected saints may be seen by considering Jesus when he was transfigured before his brethren (Matt. 17:2), or when he appeared to Saul on the Damascus road (Acts 9:3; 22:6; 26:13). As he is, so we may become (1 Jn. 3:1-3).

### LESSONS FOR US:

- The three sections of the Tabernacle correspond to the steps by which God’s glory might be attained:
  1. Outer court—Preparation—mental glory;
  2. Holy Place—Walking in the light—moral glory;
  3. Most Holy Place—Sharing the glory—physical glory.
- As the Most Holy Place was approached, fewer in Israel were permitted to officiate. God is holy and separate from flesh.
- Jesus has told us that many are called but few will be chosen. Only they will enter the immortal, divine state, represented by the Most Holy Place. Let us strive so that we might be accounted worthy of an entrance into the Kingdom of God.

### REFERENCE LIBRARY:

- “The Visible Hand of God” (R. Roberts)—Chapter 17
- “The Law of Moses” (R. Roberts)—Chapter 13
- “Law and Grace” (W. F. Barling)—Pages 63-66
- “The Tabernacle” (C.S.S.S.)

### PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:

1. Explain briefly the lessons contained in the contents of the Ark of the Covenant.
2. What is the significance of the Veil separating the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place?

3. *What were the Cherubim, Mercy Seat and the Ark? What were they made of and how were they connected?*
4. *How does the Tabernacle illustrate the three steps in our calling?*

**ESSAY QUESTIONS:**

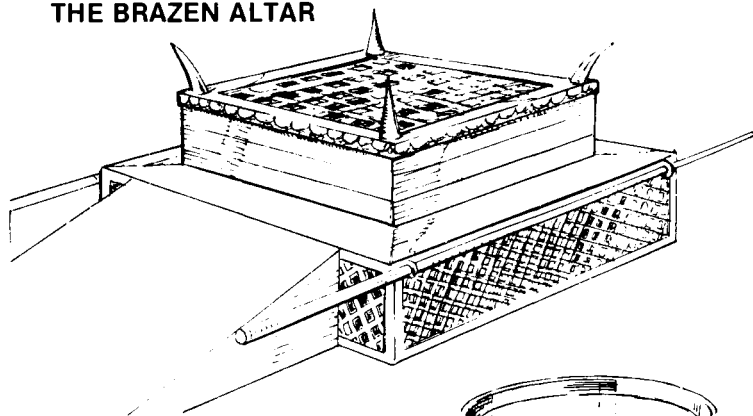
1. *Explain the connection between the Cherubim, the Mercy Seat and the sprinkled blood in the Most Holy Place and give their significance?*
2. *Describe how the glory of Yahweh is progressively revealed in the Tabernacle.*
3. *How does the Most Holy Place and its contents teach us about the future?*

Ex 25 22

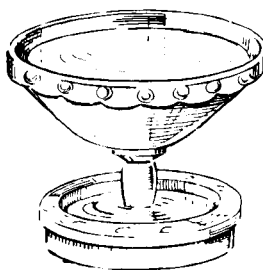


# THE FURNITURE OF THE TABERNACLE

## THE BRAZEN ALTAR

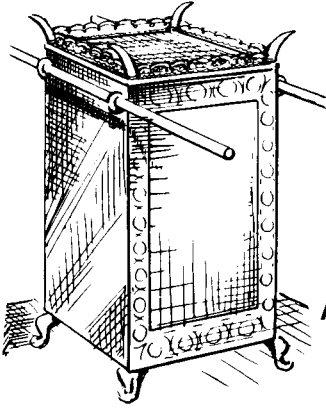
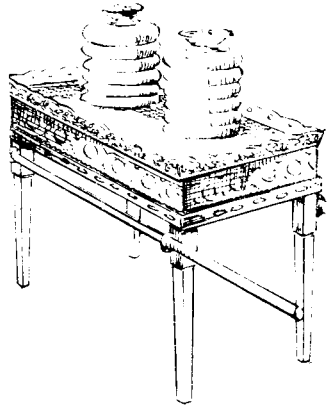


## THE LAVER



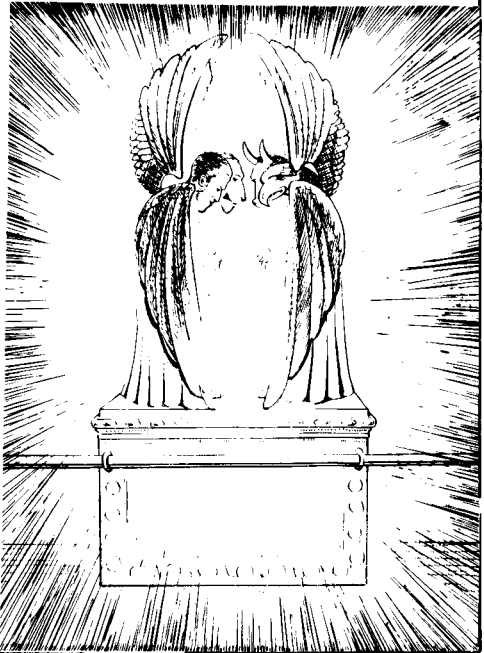
## THE SEVEN BRANCHED LAMPSTAND

**TABLE OF SHEWBREAD**



**ALTAR OF INCENSE**

**THE ARK  
OF THE COVENANT**



## 24. TEACHERS IN ISRAEL

“The priest’s lips should keep knowledge”

*Frequently we come upon the phrase “the Priests and Levites”. The former were the descendants of Aaron and the latter were the rest of the tribe of Levi from which Aaron came.*

*Aaron and his sons were appointed as High Priest and Priests respectively. On the death of the High Priest, his eldest son inherited the position. The Levites were appointed to assist the priests. Thus the whole tribe was set apart for the work of Yahweh, but each part had its own order.*

*The aim of this lesson is to show how God taught his people and to show the significance of the sacrifices.*

### Exodus 40:13-16; Numbers 18

#### THE WORK OF THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES.

At the Tabernacle the duties of the Priests were to watch over the fire on the altar of burnt offerings, to attend to the sacrifices offered there, and to keep the charge of the sanctuary. Amongst other things, 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 each week, and burnt the incense.

The Levites acted as their assistants. In the service of the Tabernacle the Levites were allowed into the outer court, but they were denied access to the altar, or entrance into the Tabernacle itself (Num. 18:3).

#### SUPPORT FOR THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES.

The Priests and Levites were given no inheritance in the land (Num. 18:20-23). They were taught thereby to rely entirely upon Yahweh 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), which they did every three years (Deut. 14:28-29). And, in turn, the Levites gave to the Priests a tenth part of the tithes they received from the people (Num. 18:26-28).

This “tithe” was called a “heave offering” (Num. 18:24). The word “heave” means “lifted up” or “raised”, i.e. as a gift, offering or oblation (Ex. 25:2, 3; 30:13, 14; Lev. 7:32; 22:12). The priests were God’s representatives doing His work and teaching His Law. Thus in giving the tithe to them, the people were in effect giving it to God (Num. 18:8). When they did not give it (as sometimes happened), it amounted to robbing Yahweh of what was His due (Mal. 3:9-10), for all that the people received, came from God, and was really His.

In addition to the tithes, the Priests were given, as food, certain portions of some of the sacrifices (Num. 18:9-13).

### **INSTRUCTORS OF THE PEOPLE.**

The Priests and Levites were expected, in turn, to give their lives unto God. They studied and expounded the Law (Lev. 10:11; Deut. 24:8); they acted as judges (Deut. 17:9; 19:17); and when Israel was established in the land, they were given 48 cities that scattered them throughout the whole nation (Num. 35:2-8). Thus they were always on hand to teach and instruct the people (Mal. 2:7). In the times of the kings they were termed "teaching priests" (2 Chron. 17:7-9). In this they were like believers today among the nations of the earth (1 Pet. 2:9).

### **SACRIFICES.**

A large part of the work of the priests had to do with offering sacrifices. To make a sacrifice to God entails giving something to Him. Only the best is good enough for God (see Mal. 1:7-8).

Israel was commanded to make various sacrifices for different purposes. Whilst some were compulsory, others were free-will offerings. Animals, birds, flour and oil were offered according to requirements, and almost all had to be perfect and without blemish.

Sacrifices formed a large part of Israel's worship. They were divided into two main categories:—

#### **1. NATIONAL SACRIFICES**

These were offered on behalf of the nation as a whole:—

1. Daily sacrifices—morning and evening (Num. 28:1-8).
2. Weekly sacrifices—every Sabbath (vv.9-10).
3. Monthly sacrifices—every new moon (vv.11-15).
4. Annual sacrifices—Festivals (Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles), Trumpets or New Year and Day of Atonement (vv.16-31; 29:1-38).

#### **2. INDIVIDUAL SACRIFICES**

These comprised sin and trespass offerings, burnt offerings, peace offerings, meal and drink offerings.

##### **(i) Sin Offerings—Lev. 4:1-5, 13; 6:24-30.**

When a person sinned through ignorance and later became aware of his sin, he was required to make this offering. The animal was slain, and its blood (or most of it) was poured out at the Altar of Burnt Offering. This blood represented "the life of the flesh" (17:11), and when poured out, stood for the surrender of life to the will of God. The sinner placed his hand on the head of the animal (4:4, 24, 29), thus identifying himself

with it. He made confession of his sin (5:5), acknowledging the right of God to punish him by death (which was the fate of the animal), but asking for mercy and forgiveness. And God was pleased to forgive.

**(ii) Trespass Offerings—Lev. 5:14-19; 6:1-7; 7:1-7.**

When a person sought forgiveness for a trespass, which amounted to an act of “deceit and violence” in which the rights of another were trespassed (6:4), he was required to make this offering which closely resembled the sin offering (7:7). It has associated with it the ideas of:—  
(a) restitution—he had to restore in kind to the one he had wronged; and  
(b) penalty—he also had to add to the thing restored one fifth of its value.

**(iii) Burnt Offerings—Lev. 1:7-17; 6:9-13; 7:8.**

This offering followed naturally the Sin-offering, and was itself followed by the Peace-offering (8:14, 18, 22). Whereas the Sin-offering denoted forgiveness of sin, the Burnt-offering carried the idea of total surrender, and giving of oneself in complete service to God (i.e. dedication). So the animal or bird was carefully prepared, placed in order upon the altar and completely burnt. It was a sacrifice of a fragrant odour to God, as our lives are when spent in His service (1:9, 13, 17; Eph. 5:2).

**(iv) Peace Offerings—Lev. 3:1-17; 7:11-21, 28-34.**

These stood at the end of the sacrificial code to indicate restoration of fellowship with God that had been broken by sin. They were offerings in which God, His priests and the offerer “ate” food together, a symbol of peace and friendship. The slain animal was divided so that God received the fat (3:11, 16); the priests, the breast and right thigh (7:30-34); and the offerer and his family, the balance of the carcass.

The simple lesson of the Peace Offering is that peace with God can only come after recognition and abandonment of sin, and the necessity of a consecrated life.

**(v) Meal and Drink Offerings—Lev. 2; Ex. 30:9; Num. 15:10.**

These were of meal mixed with oil and baked without leaven; and wine, respectively. Together they spoke of a desire to make the will of God one’s “food and drink,” i.e. always to live by the principles of God’s Word.

**WHAT THE SACRIFICES TAUGHT.**

As well as teaching the unchanging moral principles upon which God’s servants must base their lives, the sacrifices all pointed forward to Jesus Christ. He was without blemish, being perfect in character (Eph. 5:1-2;

Jn. 1:29; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 9:12; 13:12-13). He offered himself willingly and God accepted the sacrifice as a covering or atonement for the sins of those who come unto Him through Christ (Rom. 4:7; Gal. 3:26-29).

When we are baptised into his name, we are baptised into his death (Rom. 6:3). Like the sinner under the Law, we figuratively put our hand on the head of the offering and, confessing our sins, plead forgiveness. We see the death of the Lord as a symbol of what is due to those who break God's law and we ask for mercy. And this is freely given by a loving heavenly Father and sins are forgiven.

There is a difference between the animal sacrifices and Christ's offering. The former, once killed, remained dead. But Christ rose from the dead and was clothed upon with immortality. He thus became a symbol of hope for us (Rom. 4:25). True Israelites saw in the sacrifices they offered, a type of the salvation which God would finally reveal in the one He appointed as Saviour of the world (Gen. 22:14).

### **OUR SACRIFICE.**

We must sacrifice our desires, our will, our thoughts, our wishes to what God requires (Rom. 12:1). And all this should be done through the offering (the Lord Jesus) whom He has provided. Only the best is good enough for God, and we should be prepared to give this to Him. The requirements of the Truth and the ecclesia should be put first, before the other activities of our lives.

When Israel was delivered from Egypt through the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb and went forward to the Promised Land, they passed through the waters of the Red Sea, and in so doing were "baptised unto Moses" (1 Cor. 10:2). In the same way, Christ our Passover, has died that we might be delivered from the sinful world around us, and we too must pass through the waters of baptism (1 Cor. 5:7; Rom. 6:3-4).

This is the first act of obedience, but it must be followed by a life of sacrificial devotion to God—as Israel's sacrifices revealed and taught.

### **LESSONS FOR US:**

- Although we are no longer under the system of tithes, we should remember the principles of rendering to Yahweh that which is His due, "for the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof".
- We are constituted priests under the new covenant (1 Pet. 2:9), with the same responsibility to teach and show forth the light of God's truth.
- There are many lessons we can learn from the sacrifices under the Law. God requires of us only the best; we must dedicate ourselves wholly to His ways. Upon this basis we can have fellowship with Him.

### **REFERENCE LIBRARY:**

"The Law of Moses" (R. Roberts)—Chapters 24-25  
"Law and Grace" (W. F. Barling)—Pages 94-121

**PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:**

- ①. *How were the priests and Levites supported, materially, under the Law of Moses? What does this teach us?*
2. *The priests had different duties to the Levites. Explain the differences.*
3. *What main principles do we learn from the sacrifices under the Law of Moses?*

**ESSAY QUESTIONS:**

1. *Describe the important functions carried out by the priests in Israel.*
2. *Review the individual sacrifices under the Law of Moses and outline the lessons they teach us.*
- ③. *How do the sacrifices under the Law of Moses point forward to Christ? Give examples.*

*Malachi 2:7*

## 25. THE FEASTS OF YAHWEH

“Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year”

*In the wisdom of God, worship in Israel was regulated in part by their agricultural year. In this way the nation was constantly reminded that they depended upon Him for their existence and prosperity, and was taught to thank Him for all His goodness.*

*The aim of this lesson is to show how the three annual feasts of Israel were designed to teach deep spiritual lessons.*

### Leviticus 23

#### **A LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY (Deut. 8).**

The Promised Land to which God led His people on their escape from Egypt was called “a land flowing with milk and honey.” They were instructed to keep the commandments of God, to walk in His ways and to reverence Him, “for Yahweh thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass” (vv. 7-9).

Having eaten and been satisfied with the goodness of the land God had given them, they were to return thanks to Him (v.10). But they were to be careful lest in their material prosperity they should forget God (vv.12-15). They were not in danger while they remembered what God had done for them and given them. But prosperity is deceitful. Israel “would wax fat, and kick” in the years of prosperity, so Moses warned (32:15). In imagining that their wealth had been gained by their own strength, and not Yahweh’s, they would soon fall away to idolatry and perish (vv. 17-20). The terrible result would be that they would not have a “latter end” (v.16), i.e. a hope. Instead of entering God’s eternal rest in Christ, they would perish as the nations who know not God. Hence there was the need for constant remembrance of how Yahweh was their Saviour — the feasts of Yahweh fulfilled this need.

#### **THE FEASTS OF YAHWEH (Lev. 23).**

The word rendered “feasts” can be misleading. It is more correctly understood as “festivals”. They were periods in the year that God claimed as His (vv.2, 4); 11 times in Lev. 23 they are called “holy convocations” (vv. 2, 3, 4, etc.). On these occasions the tribes came together from all parts of the land, with the object of rejoicing together on account of

*“To call together,  
to assemble.”*



their wonderful spiritual heritage and their covenant relationship with the God of heaven and earth. In an atmosphere separated from their daily work and business, they were able to devote themselves to the worship of Yahweh. They entered into the more elaborate sacrificial requirements of these occasions, and together communed joyously about their common hope.

Apart from the weekly Sabbath (v.3), there were three main festivals of Yahweh:—

- (1) Feast of Passover or Unleavened Bread (vv.4-14);
- (2) Feast of Pentecost or Firstfruits (vv.15-22);
- (3) Feast of Tabernacles or Ingathering (vv.33-36).

Attendance was compulsory at Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles for all male Israelites (Ex. 23:14-17; Deut. 16:16). God assured Israel that their borders would be protected during their absence at the feasts (Ex. 34:22-24).

God deemed it necessary for His people to make three annual pilgrimages to the place where He would set His Name, so that they might be refreshed in spiritual things, and gain the necessary stimulus to continue in faithful service.

### **THE FEAST OF PASSOVER OR UNLEAVENED BREAD** **(Lev. 23:4-14).**

The Passover was the first of Israel's annual feasts, and was sometimes called "The Feast of Unleavened Bread" (v.6). It commemorated the events which took place when Israel was delivered from Egypt by God's hand.

The Passover lamb was selected on the tenth day of the first month and slain on the fourteenth. Its blood was sprinkled on the upper lintels and sides of the doors of Israel's dwellings. In this way the destroying angel appointed to destroy the firstborn of Egypt, would "pass over" Israel's firstborn (Ex 12:13). The lamb whose shed blood had "saved" them, was roasted whole and eaten that night with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. By eating it, the lamb, whose death had saved them, also sustained them in life. In order to teach the lesson that the antitypical "slain lamb", the Lord Jesus, would be raised from the dead, they were not to break "a bone thereof" (Ex 12:46; Psa 34:19-20).

The destruction of the firstborn of Egypt broke Pharaoh's stubborn resistance, so giving Israel the opportunity to be released from bondage. Thus the Passover marked the commencement of their national existence; it was the birthday of the nation (Ex. 12:2).

The events were also an elaborately enacted parable of the ultimate deliverance from death in Jerusalem. Its spiritual fulfilment is found in

Christ, “our Passover” (1 Cor. 5:7). He was a “lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet. 1:19), whose “blood of sprinkling” (1 Pet. 1:2) gives us protection from the “Angel of Death” (Rom. 5:21; 6:23). As the Passover lamb was “penned up” on the tenth day of Abib and slain on the fourteenth, so likewise was Jesus in Jerusalem before dying on the fourteenth day. Even when he was dead on the cross, his legs were not broken that the scripture should be fulfilled: “A bone of him shall not be broken” (Jn. 19:36). In these and other ways, Jesus Christ fulfilled the type of the Passover lamb (refer Lesson 17).

Just as Israel ate of the Passover lamb with “unleavened bread” and “bitter herbs”, so also must we put away sinful ways (leaven) and follow Christ’s example of service and self-denial (bitter herbs — 1 Cor. 5:8). As Israel partook of the Passover lamb, so we partake of the emblems of the bread and wine. In this way Christ abides “in us” and he sustains us in our walk from “Egypt” to the Promised Land (Jn. 6:56).

### **THE FEAST OF PENTECOST OR FIRSTFRUITS (Lev. 23:15-22).**

This feast fell in two parts. Firstly, the sheaf of barley was offered during the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread or Passover and specifically, “on the morrow after the Sabbath”. Then, seven full weeks later, or 50 days after the same Sabbath, in addition to sin, burnt, peace, meal and drink offerings, there were to be offered “two wave loaves. . . of fine flour. . . baked with leaven” (v.17).

Barley was the first grain harvested, even as Christ was the firstfruit to rise from the dead (1 Cor. 15:23). The single sheaf, representative of Christ, was offered “on the morrow after the sabbath”. The sabbath mentioned is the 15th day of Abib which was the “first day” of the feast of unleavened bread in which Israel was to have an “holy convocation and do no servile work” (Lev. 23:6-7). The “morrow after the sabbath” was then the 16th day, the day on which Christ rose from the dead (Matt. 28:1; Mk. 16:1-2; Lk. 24:21; 1 Cor. 15:4).

Seven weeks later, two loaves were offered. These were to be made of fine flour, and significantly they were to be “baked with leaven” (v.17). Whom did they represent? We have to look at the events of the day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2 to answer this question. On that day 3,000 believed the gospel when it was first publicly proclaimed by Peter (Acts 2:41). Thus the “two loaves” speak of multiplicity. In its outworking the gospel at length embraced Jews and Gentiles and so for this reason also “two loaves” were offered.

But why were the loaves “baked with leaven”, the symbol of sin (1 Cor. 5:8)? Whereas Christ was raised on the first day (16th day of Abib) to immortality, those who believed at Pentecost were still “in the flesh”. They would have to wait until the second coming of Christ for their

change to immortality. This teaching is summarised by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:21-23, "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order — *Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming*".

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

The seventh month was a busy one for Israel. On the 10th day the "Day of Atonement" was observed, while from the 15th to 23rd the Feast of Tabernacles was kept. We shall briefly consider the Day of Atonement and then study the Feast of Tabernacles, the third great feast in Israel's calendar.

The Day of Atonement was the most solemn day in Israel's calendar. It was a fast more than a feast. Its distinctive purpose was to bring the collective sin of the year to remembrance, so that it might be atoned for in one offering. Work of any sort was forbidden therein (v.28). On the contrary, it was to be a day of affliction (v.27), and excommunication faced anyone refusing self-humiliation (v.29). As Leviticus 16 explains, it was on this day that the high priest entered the Most Holy Place, while the people waited his return outside. They prayed that God *would* accept their offering and forgive their sins.

Paul expounds the significance of these things in Hebrews 9. When Jesus died, the veil separating the Holy and Most Holy Place was split from the top to the bottom (Matt. 27:51). In this way God indicated that the way into the Holiest, i.e. "heaven itself", was now possible. He accepted Christ's offering, raised him from the dead and exalted him to His right hand, the Most Holy Place. As the true High Priest we can be represented before God by him, and we have our sins washed away by the offering of his blood (Heb. 9:8, 12, 14, 24). As Israel awaited the emergence of the High Priest to see if their offering was accepted, even so we look for his appearance from heaven so that we might receive salvation (Heb. 9:28).

### **THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES OR INGATHERING (Lev. 23:33-44).**

The Feast of Tabernacles celebrated Israel's redemption from the bondage of Egypt. At that time God made them dwell in booths (Lev. 23:43; Ex. 12:37). These were hastily erected dwellings made from the boughs of thick trees (v.40). They were flimsy and unstable, but served to emphasise that Yahweh was their true protection and deliverer. Compare Psalm 27:3-5. In verse 5 the word for "tabernacles" is "succoth", the word so translated when reference is made in the Old Testament to the Feast of Tabernacles. In Psalm 31:20 the word "pavilion" is also "succoth" and again the significance of this feast becomes clear.

During the course of the feast seventy bullocks were offered (Num.

29). "Seventy" is the number of the nations recorded in Genesis 10. The number appears to foretell the day when all nations will celebrate the redemption from oppression and sin, during the millennial reign of Christ. Christ will destroy Gog and free the world from its slavery, even as Israel was redeemed from Egypt (Psa. 72:12-14). Then shall the whole world rejoice in God and His Son: "And it shall come to pass, that everyone that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles" (Zech. 14:16).

#### **LESSONS FOR US:**

- We need to remember, like Israel, that prosperity is a gift of God, to be used rightly and wisely in developing His glory in our lives.
- The Passover Feast reminds us of our deliverance in Christ, and our life of self-denial in following in his steps.
- The Feast of Pentecost reminds us of our grafting into the stock of Israel. We must offer ourselves to God as Israel did the firstfruits (Jas. 1:18; Rev. 14:4).
- We, too, must "crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts", if the atoning work of Jesus Christ is to be effective for us.
- We can celebrate in our hearts the deliverance from slavery to sin made possible by Christ, even as Israel kept the Feast of Tabernacles in remembrance of their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt.

#### **REFERENCE LIBRARY:**

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

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

#### **PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS:**

1. *When Israel became prosperous they turned from Yahweh to idolatry. What lessons can we learn from this?*
2. *Explain how the Feast of Tabernacles will be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.*
3. *Why did God require Israel to keep the three great feasts every year?*

#### **ESSAY QUESTIONS:**

1. *Briefly outline the significance of the three great Feasts of Yahweh.*
2. *Explain the significance of Yahweh's feasts in their application to the Lord Jesus Christ.*
3. *The Feast of the Passover commenced the national existence of Israel. Explain both the origin and the significance of the feast.*
4. *What major events occurred in the 7th month of Israel's religious year? What lessons do we learn from these?*

*Lev 23: 4*

