

# *Genesis*

**THE  
CHRISTADELPHIAN  
EXPOSITOR**

— A Logos Publication

A VERSE-BY-VERSE EXPOSITION  
OF THE SCRIPTURES

by

**H. P. Mansfield**

with brief additional matter taken from his Bible  
notes and editorial comments

by G. E. Mansfield

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*The  
Christadelphian  
Expositor*



**GENESIS**

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*of short articles and items of interest*

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# Introduction

## WHY THE BIBLE SHOULD BE STUDIED

A Foreword to the magazine series commenced in October, 1972.

Our aim in *The Christadelphian Expositor* is to provide verse by verse expositions of the books of the Bible, commencing from Genesis and ending at Revelation.

Whether we complete this ambitious venture depends upon circumstances entirely out of our control. It will require ability, strength, determination, time and material resources to accomplish it; and we are utterly dependent upon Yahweh for all these blessings. We recognise that no project of this nature will succeed without His aid; but provided it is given, we propose to slowly and patiently pursue our way towards our objective.

We invite readers to share our labours with us. We ask for no slavish deference to what we set before them merely because it is in print, but urge them to exercise their independent thought and careful analysis of it. We hope that these studies may form the basis of personal Bible marking. We know that if this is done, much good will result.

The idea of *The Expositor* was suggested to us by readers of *The Story of the Bible* who, on the termination of that periodical, asked that the early volumes be reproduced in magazine form. We thought it best to do so in volumes rather than in the form of a periodical; and, at the same time, promised to provide an alternative study of the Scriptures, of a more detailed and advanced nature.

Hence the book the reader now holds in his hand.

We trust that *The Christadelphian Expositor* may serve a useful purpose in the brotherhood, for nothing quite like it has yet been attempted.

True, clerical commentaries abound, and, in some cases, they provide grains of truth among heaps of chaff; though frequently they are downright dangerous. In our opinion the most valuable of them is *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, which is almost exclusively limited to comparative Scriptures.

On the other hand, the expositions of brethren John Thomas and Robert Roberts can be consulted with confidence. Whatever they write is based upon a knowledge of the basic doctrines of the Truth, and that is the best guide to the true interpretation of Scripture. They have greatly assisted us in the better understanding of the Word, and the reader will find their influence reflected in what is set forth in *The Expositor*.

Nevertheless, to apply the words of Paul in a different context, we are "a debtor both to the wise and the unwise." *The Expositor* will represent the fruits of many years of study in the Word, in the course of which we have sought for information from various sources. In some cases, we have garnered ideas and knowledge from sources now forgotten, and if this is reflected in our expositions without acknowledgement, it is because we do not know from whence they came. In such cases, we can but apologise for the omission.

The study of the Bible, as distinct from the mere reading of it, is important. It will create in us the mind of the Spirit, as is suggested by the Proverb: "I will pour out My spirit unto you, I will make known My words unto you" (Prov.

1:23). This, in turn, will influence thought and action; transforming character, and determining destiny.

Our position at the Judgment Seat will be determined from what we have done with the Word of God: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). Approved characters will be those that reflect the divine influence; those moulded by God's workmanship. Paul taught: "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). In another place he declared: "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor. 15:10). Again: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (2 Cor. 4:7). And Isaiah, in describing the approved in the age to come, declared that they are "the work of My (Yahweh's) hands; that I (He) may be glorified" (Isa. 60:21).

God's purpose of redemption is not merely to save, but to make people worth saving. Sinful flesh is not worth preserving, and something must be implanted into it before it can be made so. To that end, we are called to build into our lives those divine principles exhibited by the Lord Jesus in his character and life. He was "God manifest in flesh," and we are expected to reflect the mental and moral glory that he revealed.

The Word of God is designed to empower us to that end. It constitutes the dynamics of a true spiritual life; it provides mental food that will nourish us in sound spiritual growth. This requires development. We must be weaned from the milk of the Word and learn to partake of its meat; and the knowledge thus acquired must be so absorbed as to find reflection in a way of life, before it can be said that we have discovered the true purpose of our search.

Therefore the Bible constantly emphasises the importance of study. The Psalmist after meditating day and night upon the Word summed up its need in the beautiful 119th Psalm, declaring: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy word" (Psa. 119:9).

Consider the following prayer offered by Paul on behalf of believers:

"We ... do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing; being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:9-10).

Paul did not pray that the believers of Colosse should have great depth of knowledge, but that they should manifest an increasing knowledge. His prayer implies that we must never be satisfied that we "know enough," but that we should constantly be aiming to add to our understanding.

Consider Christ's prayer:

"Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

The Truth is the means provided by Yahweh for the sanctification of believers. It is designed to separate them as vessels for His use. Thus its knowledge should find its influence in action.

To the Thessalonians, Paul wrote:

"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Thess. 2:13).

He commended them because they so accepted the Word as the authoritative expression of God's will as to cause it to become the motivating power of their life in Christ. This must also be the case with us. We are what we are because of what we believe. If belief is strong enough in us, it will find expression in action. Paul taught that Israel failed because of unbelief, and urged believers to take heed to that fact (Heb. 3:12).

His words are a re-echo of Hosea's rebuke:

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children" (Hos. 4:6).

The great and lasting benefits derivable from Bible study are implied by the words of the Revelator:

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein" (Rev. 1:3).

Upon this verse, Brother Thomas comments in *Eureka*:

"The word *anaginiosko* does not merely mean 'to read' but signifies one who gathers exact knowledge of a matter, hence, in my translation, I have rendered it, 'he that knows accurately'."

Merely to read is not sufficient to obtain the blessing, for it requires a gathering of exact knowledge. Thus we are encouraged to exercise the greatest care in ascertaining the true meaning of Scripture, if we would enjoy the promised blessing.

Yahweh will help us to that end. He has promised to do so, and invites us to use the facilities He has made available. The Psalmist declared: "The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way" (Psa. 25:9). James exhorted: "Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21). He reminds us of available help:

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering" (James 1:5,6).

The Christadelphian Movement is based upon the personal study of the Bible. When a person understands the true teaching of Scripture, and is moved by its importance, he will never be indifferent to it. But let the Word be neglected, and disloyalty to its requirements will follow inevitably. In *Elpis Israel*, Brother Thomas set down the basic principles of the Truth. Concerning the Bible, he wrote:

"God, then, has caused a Book to be written for our information as to His design — His ultimate purpose in the works of creation, providence, and redemption, which are the three grand divisions of His labour; and which are all tending to the development of one great and glorious consummation. This Book, so graciously bestowed, and so inimitably written, is vernacularly styled *The Bible*, or, scripturally, *The Writings*, and sometimes *The Holy Writings*. These are divided into two parts, popularly styled the Old and New Testaments. The appeals made by Jesus and his apostles to the writings were to what is now termed the Old Testament; for there were no other writings acknowledged then. The New Testament was not written in the beginning of the apostolic era. Indeed it was not so much needed then; for the apostles taught orally the things, which afterwards they in part committed to writing. The breathings of the spirit, enunciated through the spiritual men of the churches supplied the place which the New Testament now occupies. The writings of the prophets, which are the

root and foundation of the New Testament, and without the understanding of which the latter is unintelligible aright, are divided into 'the law and the testimony'; or 'the law, the prophets, and the psalms'; altogether they are styled THE WORD. This, with 'the testimony for Jesus' left on record by the apostles, makes the 'word of the Lord' to us, which lives and abides for ever.

"All writers and speakers must be unceremoniously tried by this; for, God hath said, that 'if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' It matters not who the sinner may be: pope, cardinal, archbishop, bishop, minister, or their admirers; or, even one of the saints of God, or an angel himself; nothing he may say, or write, must be received unless in strict conformity to this word; and of this the people must judge for themselves upon their own responsibility; and in the face of their eternal weal, or rejection from the Kingdom of God. To this Book, then, we appeal for light — for information concerning the things which shall be hereafter.

"If we take up an ordinary book, how could we proceed to ascertain the end the author had in writing the book? We should read it through carefully, and thus having made ourselves acquainted with its contents, we should be prepared to answer the question intelligently and accurately. Why do men not do so with the Bible? God is admitted by all sensible persons to be the Author; Moses, the apostles, and the prophets, are but His amanuenses to whom He dictated what to write. If then the questions be put: What end had God in view in the six days' work of the creation; in His subsequent providential arrangements in relation to men and nations; in the propitiatory sacrifice of the Lamb of God? — we proceed in the same way with the Bible in which He tells His own story; and answer according to the light we may have acquired.

"Now the Book of God is peculiar in this — it narrates the past, the present, and *future* all in one volume. We learn from the accuracy of its details in relation to the past and the present, to put unbounded confidence in its declaration concerning the future. In ascertaining, therefore, the ultimate design of eternal wisdom in the creation of all things, we turn to the end of the Bible to see what God hath said *shall be* as the consummation of what has gone before; for what He has said *shall be the permanent constitution of things, must be the end which He originally designed before ever the foundation of the earth was laid.*

"Turn we then, to the last two chapters of the Book of God. What do we learn from these? We learn from them, that there is to be a great physical and moral renovation of the earth. That every curse is to cease from off the globe; and that it is to be peopled with men who will be deathless, and free from all evil. That they will all then be the sons of God, a community of glorious, honourable, incorruptible, and living beings; who will constitute the abode of the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb, the glory of whose presence will evolve a brilliancy surpassing the splendour of the sun. *The globe a glorious dwelling place, and its inhabitants an immortal and glorious people, with the indwelling presence of the Eternal Himself* — is the consummation which God reveals as the answer to the question concerning His ultimate design" (*Elpis Israel* p. 170-171).

Concerning the influence of the Word in forming a character acceptable unto Yahweh, R. Roberts wrote in *The Bible Companion*:

"Salvation depends upon the assimilation of the mind to the divine ideas, principles, and affections, exhibited in the Scriptures. This process commences with a belief of the Gospel, but is by no means completed thereby; it takes a lifetime for its scope, and untiring diligence for its accomplishment. The mind is



naturally alien from God and all His ideas (Rom. 8:7; 1 Cor. 2:14), and cannot be brought at once to the divine likeness. This is a work of slow development, and can only be achieved by the industrious application of the individual to the means which God has given for the purpose; viz., the expression of His mind in the Scriptures of truth. Spiritual-mindedness, or a state of mind in accordance with the mind of the Spirit as displayed in these writings, can only grow within a man by daily intercourse with that mind, there unfolded. Away from this, the mind will revert to its original swinishness. The infallible advice then to every man and woman anxious about their salvation is — Read the Scriptures daily! It is only in proportion as this is done, that success may be looked for. The man who sows sparingly in this respect, will only reap sparingly. Much spiritual fructification is only to be realised in connection with the fructifying influences of the Spirit in the word”.

In *The Christadelphian Expositor* we propose to systematically study the Bible, commencing at the beginning, and moving towards the end. In doing so, however, we need to guard against becoming so engrossed in the fascination of the subject that we lose sight of the object. The object is God-manifestation in the individual; and this will develop as we come to “know God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent” (John 17:3). All aspects of Scripture contribute to that end, and will assist to equip us for the purpose Yahweh has in view in calling us to His truth. May He guide and help us to that end.

— H.P. Mansfield, October, 1972.

### Additional Comments

The intention of Brother Mansfield to “move to the end” of the Scriptures in the exposition that he commenced in October, 1972 was, sadly, interrupted by his death fifteen years later in October, 1987. He had, nevertheless, completed nearly twenty of the books of the Bible, that are preserved in volume form and available from Logos Publications. At the time of his decease he had already produced the exposition on Daniel’s prophecy to chapter 9, and we have been enabled under the providence of God to complete that book and to “continue the work begun” by the regular instalments of the *Expositor* magazine.

In an age when the systematic study of the Word is sometimes discounted, otherwise ignored, and even ridiculed, earnest lovers of the Truth will set an example by a diligent and thoughtful commitment of daily meditation and study. This will prove to be a bulwark against apathy, and a defence against error. We urge the reader to use this volume not only as an exposition of fascinating facts about the Book of Genesis, but as a means of meditative reflection on the divine means of the “new creation” that is being formed through Jesus Christ (Col. 1:15).

That is the value of this *Expositor* — it is designed to provide notes for study and Bible marking with comments that can be used also as a basis for personal contemplation, that the mind might be exercised in matters of divine principles. This edition has been further edited with additional comments included. We welcome further correspondence or questions upon the subject of Genesis.

— G. E. Mansfield, February, 1992.

## *How Readest Thou*

It is one thing to read the Bible through,  
Another thing to read and learn and do,  
Some read it with desire to learn, and read  
But to their subject pay but little heed;  
Some read it as their duty every week,  
But no instruction from the Bible seek;  
While others read it with but little care,  
With no regard to how they read or where;  
Some read it as a History, to know  
How people lived two thousand years ago.  
Some read it to bring themselves into repute,  
By showing others how they can dispute;  
While others read because their neighbours do,  
To see how long it takes to read it through.  
Some read it for the wonders that are there,  
How David killed a lion and a bear;  
While others read it with uncommon care,  
Hoping to find some contradiction there.  
Some read as though it did not speak to them  
But to the people of Jerusalem.  
One reads it as a book of mysteries  
And won't believe the very thing he sees;  
One reads with father's specs upon his head,  
And sees the things just as his father said:  
Some read to prove a pre-adopted creed  
Hence understanding but little as they read,  
For every passage in the Book they bend  
To make it suit that all-important end.  
Some people read, as I have often thought,  
To teach the Book, instead of being taught:  
And some there are who read it out of spite,  
I fear there are but few who read it right.  
One thing I find, and you may find it, too,  
The more you read, the more you find it true;  
But this to find, an open eye is needful,  
With often prayer, and humble heart all heedful;  
The man who reads with pride or inattention,  
Will only find full causes of dissension;  
The man who reads with modest concentration,  
Will find the joy of comfort and salvation.

***Genesis:  
The Book  
of Beginnings***

## The Beginning

*“Genesis is the seed-plot of the whole Bible; and it is essential to the true understanding of its every part. It is the foundation on which the divine revelation rests” — Bullinger.*

*“The narrative is so simple, so much like truth, so consistent everywhere with itself, so correct in its dates, so impartial in its biography, so accurate in its philosophical details, so pure in its morality, and so benevolent in its design, as amply to demonstrate that it never could have had an earthly origin” — A.D.*

*“We must proceed as we would with any other book, or in teaching any of the arts and sciences; namely, begin at the beginning, or with the elements of things. This was the method adopted by the spirit of God in the instruction of the Israelites by Moses. He began His revelations by giving them, and us through them, an account of the creation of the heavens and the earth; of animals; and of man. This then would seem to be the proper place for us to start from; and as we have the system completely revealed, which they had not, we may extend our enquiries into the reason, or philosophy of things further than they. Be this, then, our commencement; and may the Lord Himself prosper our endeavours to decipher and understand His word” — J. Thomas (Elpis Israel).*

# Foreword

## ITS SETTING AND AUTHOR

The Bible opens with a group of five books, generally styled *The Pentateuch*, from a Greek term meaning "fivefold book."

The subject-matter of these books includes history (Genesis), instruction (Exodus), ritual law (Leviticus), government (Numbers), and exhortation (Deuteronomy).

The authorship of these books is generally ascribed to Moses (see Exod. 24:4; 34:28; Num. 33:2; Deut. 1:1; 4:44; 33:1; Mark 12:19, 26; John 1:45, etc.), and normally this is accepted without question. However, the school of higher criticism has challenged this conclusion, claiming that the Pentateuch is mosaic rather than of Moses. It asserts that these books are a combination of various authors, and it gives them mysterious initials, such as J, or E, or P, according to words used, because the true authorship is unknown. Its conclusions are based on the use of words, the grammatical structure of phrases, and so on; as though writers invariably use the same style of language, or limit themselves to a set vocabulary throughout their writings.

These conclusions have been successfully rebutted by conservative students. They recognise only one continuous author throughout: Moses.

However, there are some problems associated with the authorship of the early books of the Bible. For example, Genesis 14:14 gives the name "Dan" to the place where Abraham pursued Chedorlaomer's forces; and yet, it is claimed, this name was not given to it until the time of the Judges (Judges 18:29). Again, Genesis 36:31 speaks of the kings of Edom as reigning before "any king over the children of Israel"; a statement which implies a time of writing after the accession of Saul (1 Sam. 8:5). Further, the work of Moses is sometimes described in the third person, as though written by somebody other than himself. For example, we read in Exodus 11:3 and Numbers 12:3, that "Moses was very great in the land of Egypt," and "the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." In Exodus 16:35; Numbers 32:34-42; Deuteronomy 2:10-12, 20-23 and 34:1-12, references are made to incidents that occurred after the death of Moses.

It has been suggested that these slight emendations have been added by a later hand to complete the record of Moses. This could be true, for the real author of the books is Yahweh, not Moses. Moses was but the amanuensis through whom the divine revelation was made known to man, and if Yahweh required that these additions be added, He would move for it to be done.

However, it could be that Moses did write them. It is not unlikely that Abraham called the place Dan, where he poured out divine judgment on Chedorlaomer, for Dan means *judgment*, and as such the name was appropriate to both circumstances. In regard to the statement of Genesis 36:31, it must be remembered that Israel had been promised kings (Gen. 35:11), and Esau had also been promised dominion (Gen. 27:40); so that the statement was quite in accordance with Moses' knowledge and anticipations. The expressions found in Exodus 11:3 and Numbers 12:3 might well have been written by Moses, by divine inspi-

ration, and recorded in the third person to avoid accusations of self-laudation. Similar explanations can be supplied for the other objections to the writing of Moses. He was a prophet. Yahweh had revealed unto him His intentions; and the language of prophecy is observable in the very definite expressions relating to Israel's punishment, scattering, and restoration such as is found in Deuteronomy 28:64-68; 29:20-29; 30:4-8, and elsewhere. The record of the death of Moses, and the assessment of his value, contained in Deuteronomy 34, may have been added by Joshua; but could have been written by Moses under divine inspiration.

We have met with no valid argument destroying the conclusion that the Pentateuch came from the pen of Moses; even though it may be conceded that such statements as are referred to above, were added by another hand under divine inspiration. However, as we have suggested they might well have been recorded by Moses himself.

## OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

### **The Seedbed of the Bible**

Genesis comprises the seed-plot from whence the rest of the Bible sprang forth. Everything described in the other books had its beginning in this book before us. The most complex subjects are found here in their embryo stage. The Atonement is seen shadowed forth in its early chapters; Armageddon is typed in the invasion of Chedorlaomer (ch. 14); future developments of history, and of God's dealings with men and nations, are set forth in the form of allegory (Galatians 4:24-31); the basic teaching of the Gospel is laid down therein.

In fact, it is safe to say, that it is impossible to properly understand the purpose of God without some comprehension of the book of Genesis.

However, it must be recognised that God has not revealed His purpose in straight-forward language only, but has used type, symbol, metaphor, allegory, parable, prophecy, and so on. Frequently the narrative of Scripture has a typical meaning as well as its literal significance; and this is pre-eminently the case with Genesis. It will be our task to reveal this, as we proceed through the Book.

### **Two Pylons Bridging God's Revelation to Man**

Genesis is pre-eminently the book of beginnings, laying the foundation of God's purpose with man. It reveals how God created the earth originally, how man sinned, how death was imposed, how Abraham separated himself from his people, how Jacob had twelve sons who grew into the twelve tribes of Israel.

Genesis is closely linked with Revelation: the first book with the last. Both books are like two pylons bridging the revelation of God to man; the first telling how it all began, the second revealing how it all will finish.

Genesis speaks of natural creation (ch. 1); Revelation of a spiritual creation (Rev. 3:14); in Genesis the serpent speaks; in Revelation it is restrained (Rev. 20:2). In Genesis, the curse is imposed (Gen. 3:17); in Revelation it is removed (Rev. 22:3). In Genesis, sorrow and death make their appearance (Gen. 3:16-19); in Revelation they are taken away (Rev. 21:4). In Genesis, access to the tree of

life is denied (Gen. 3:24); in Revelation, access to it is opened (Rev. 2:7). In Genesis, the first paradise is closed to man (Gen. 3:23); in Revelation it is opened to him (Rev. 21:25).

And so on. The links between the two books can be increased, because in Genesis there is seen the beginnings of all that which Revelation predicts as the consummation of the divine purpose in the earth.

Both Genesis and Revelation have been subjected to attack more than any other of the books of the Bible; the former by critics who claim that the incidents it records (creation, the confusion of tongues, the flood, and other special occurrences) are impossible; the latter by those who maintain that its vision of future glory is improbable. The former is rejected on the ground that such an account is impossible to believe; the latter on the ground that it is impossible to expound!

### The Parable of the Pentateuch

Every book in the Bible typifies the purpose of God in Christ in some way. Moreover, the various books of the Bible, considered in groups, set forth in sequence the same divine purpose. Thus Inspiration seems not only to have dictated the words in Scripture, but the very setting of the books.

For example, note how Genesis begins and how it ends. It begins with God viewing all that had been made, and pronouncing it "very good". It ends with the four cryptic words: "A coffin in Egypt", speaking of death in exile. In the dramatic beginning and ending of this first book of the Bible, there is expressed the early fall of man from grace. This is really the theme of the whole book.

Consider the significant two words by which the Old Testament ends: "a curse." Does not that epitomise all that is found in that Old Testament through man's failure to keep the Law? And how does the New Testament begin? Why, with an account of the birth of that one destined to remove the curse!

And so the parallels and contrasts continue.

Observe now the parable of the Pentateuch (Greek — *pente*, five; and *teuchos*, book), the five books of Moses, called elsewhere the Law.

Five is the number of grace, and the books of Moses tell the progressive story of grace. This story can be considered from the viewpoint of God, or from the viewpoint of man. Actually the themes of these five books from the divine standpoint set out in order the progressive development of grace:

- Genesis:** ..... speaks of divine Authority and Power — in creating, punishing and selecting.
- Exodus:** ..... speaks of divine Mercy — in choosing and delivering.
- Leviticus:** ..... speaks of divine Holiness — in separating and sanctifying.
- Numbers:** ..... speaks of divine Goodness and Severity — in providing and judging.
- Deuteronomy:** ..... speaks of divine Faithfulness — in disciplining and delivering.

Now, consider, do they not constitute the five steps that we must take to attain unto salvation? Do we not first have to recognise Yahweh's *authority* and *power* before we can experience His *mercy* and so on? And will not His *faithfulness* ultimately be revealed at the coming of the Lord when we will learn the meaning of His *discipline* in our lives, and find *deliverance* in Christ?

Now consider the same five books from the human standpoint, and again see

how they speak of five steps towards divine grace:

**Genesis:**..... speaks of Ruin and divine Selection.

**Exodus:**..... speaks of Deliverance.

**Leviticus:**..... speaks of Fellowship with God.

**Numbers:**..... speaks of divine Guidance.

**Deuteronomy:**..... speaks of Attainment of Hope.

Again these illustrate the five steps that all must take to gain salvation. Mankind must recognize the fallen state of human nature, and the need of redemption therefrom, and so answer the divine Call, passing through the waters of baptism. They must seek true fellowship with Yahweh. They must come under His guiding influence, if, finally, they would attain unto their hope.

And because these five books spell out principles of divine Grace, there are important personal lessons to be learned from the narrative and teaching that they each reveal.

### Dividing The Word

A careful consideration of the book as a whole — a telescopic view of it at a glance — reveals that it is divided into two parts:

PRIMEVAL HISTORY .....Chapters 1 to 11

PATRIARCHAL HISTORY... .....Chapters 12 to 50

The first division records four outstanding events:

1. The Creation .....divine glory in natural life.
2. The Fall .....divine authority in imposing punishment.
3. The Flood.....divine judgment in manifestation of goodness and severity.
4. The Confusing of Tongues .....divine wisdom in enforcing God's will.

Divine glory, authority, judgment and wisdom, set forth the sum of the divine revelation.

Patriarchal history is concerned with four outstanding individuals:

1. Abraham .....Representing a divine call.
2. Isaac .....Representing a divine birth.
3. Jacob.....Representing a divine care.
4. Joseph .....Representing a divine elevation.

Notice how these four men typically set forth the four steps to salvation: first a call; then, a birth; afterward, guidance; and finally, elevation.

Genesis is full of such typical foreshadowings of the future, and of personal lessons for the student.

### The Eleven Generations Of Genesis

In presenting an analysis of the book of Genesis, a serious mistake would be made if the natural division of the book were to be overlooked. That division is shown by the recurring phrase: "The generation of ..." The phrase occurs eleven times through the book, so that, with the introductory section, Genesis is divided into twelve parts. The Hebrew word translated "generations" is *toledot*, which Hebraists claim signifies "history," "story," or "account," rather than merely a genealogy. Thus when the book refers to "the generations of the heavens and of the earth" (Gen. 2:4) it is the story, or the account, of the creation of the heavens and the earth, and what they brought forth, that is called to attention.



In the bracketed references below, there are listed the places where this phrase is used; and it will be noted that the twelve parts into which this divides Genesis, again illustrate a spiritual development. Thus:

- 1. Creation — Introduction.**  
A foundation laid.....Gen. 1:1-2:3
- 2. The Generations of the heavens and the earth (Gen. 2:4).**  
The manifestation of Law, Sin and Death, and the promise of Redemption.....Gen. 2:4-4:26
- 3. The Book of the Generations of Adam (Gen. 5:1).**  
The development of the human race.....Gen. 5:1-6:8
- 4. The Generations of Noah, a just man (Gen. 6:9).**  
The Flood; the judgment of the old world, and the preservation of a remnant .....Gen. 6:9-9:29
- 5. The Generations of the sons of Noah (Gen. 10:1).**  
The development of nations.....Gen. 10:1-11:9
- 6. The Generations of Shem (Gen. 11:10).**  
The separation of a people for the Name.....Gen. 11:10-26
- 7. The Generations of Terah (Gen. 11:27).**  
The calling out of a family.....Gen. 11:27-25:11
- 8. The Generations of Ishmael (Gen. 25:12).**  
The separation of the natural from the spiritual.....Gen. 25:12-18
- 9. The Generations of Isaac (Gen. 25:19).**  
The development of the Seed of Promise.....Gen. 25:19-35:29
- 10. The Generations of Esau (Gen. 36:1).**  
The development of the Seed of the Man of Sin .....Gen. 36: 1-8
- 11. The Generations of the Sons of Esau (Gen. 36:9).**  
The development of the Seed of the Serpent .....Gen. 36:9-43
- 12. The Generations of Jacob (Gen. 37:2).**  
The development of Israel .....Gen. 37:1-50:26

Again, a careful consideration of these divisions will reveal that they typify the development of the purpose of God, from creation to the Israel of the future. Nations are developed, a people is separated for the Name, then a family is called from out of the people, the segregation of the spiritual from the natural within that family takes place, and so on. This is the way in which the purpose of God has worked out throughout the ages: so that the historical narrative of Genesis comprises a typical foreshadowing of the future.

It is interesting to learn that the phrase “the generations of ...” occurs three times in Scripture, outside of Genesis, making fourteen in all, or two sevens. There are “the generations of Aaron and Moses” (Num. 3:1); the “generations of Pharez” (Ruth 4:18); and “the book of the generation of Jesus Christ” (Matt. 1:1). In each case, the phrase introduces a noteworthy member of the human race, and a further step forward in Yahweh’s great plan of redemption.

The last use of the phrase is significant. The “book of the generation of Jesus Christ” is a fitting contrast to “the book of the generations of Adam” (the only two places where “a book” is referred to in this context). The former relates to the Book of Life; the latter to the Book of Death. We are all written in the “Book

of the generations of Adam” by virtue of our physical birth; but we will only be written in “the Book of the generation of Jesus Christ” if we experience that spiritual birth to which the Lord made reference when speaking to Nicodemus.

### Summary

Genesis is from a Greek word meaning “generation,” and is the name given in the Septuagint translation of the Bible, to the opening book. In Hebrew, the title is *bereshith*, signifying “in the beginning” (Gen. 1:1).

The book begins with the origin of the heavens and earth, and traces the genealogy of God’s people from the earliest times, or “the beginning” of the creation. It is divided into the genealogies of the heavens and the earth (chs. 2-4); Adam (5:1); Noah (6:9); Sons of Noah (10:1); Shem (11:10); Terah (11:27); Ishmael (25:12); Isaac (25:19); Esau (36:1); Sons of Esau (36:9); and Jacob (37:2).

It records the creation of Adam and Eve, the story of the Fall, the Flood, and the confusing of tongues. The writer then confines his narrative to the righteous in their generation, until the formation of the family of God’s chosen people.

Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob mark the five great stages of progress, with Joseph dominating the story of Jacob. There is a decided unity in the whole, revealing that we have in Genesis an inspired sacred history, and not a collection of old-world stories and folklore such as is sometimes claimed.

Some references to Genesis in the New Testament are: Matt. 5:48; 19:4-5; 23:35; Mark 10:6-8; Luke 11:51; 17:26, 28, 32; Acts 7:2-16; Rom. 4:3; 17-18; 9:7, 9, 12; 1 Cor. 6:16; 15:45; Gal. 3:6, 8; 4:30; Eph. 5:31; 1 Tim. 2:13-14; Heb. 4:4; 6:14; 11:3-32; 13:2; James 2:3; 1 Pet. 3:6, 20; 2 Pet. 2:6; 1 John 3:12; Jude 11, 14.

This list is by no means complete, and a most valuable exercise would be to complete it by reading the New Testament with that in mind.

# Analysis

## THE TELESCOPIC VIEW

It will be found most helpful to have a telescopic, as well as a microscopic, view of the books of the Bible. The former provides a general outline of a book, enabling the basic message presented therein to be considered in perspective; the latter gives proper meaning to its words, phrases, and verses. The former will give the background and true context; the latter will fill in the depth and detail.

Therefore, we will first attempt a general analysis, and then, on that background, a more detailed exposition.

We take the book of Genesis, in its simplest outline, thus:

### GENESIS: THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS

#### 1 — PRIMEVAL HISTORY — Chapters 1-11.

##### Four Outstanding Events:

- (1) — THE CREATION: Divine Glory in Natural Creation..... Ch. 1:1-2:3
- (2) — THE FALL: Divine Authority in Imposing Punishment .Ch. 2:4-5:32
- (3) — THE FLOOD: Divine Judgment Manifesting Goodness and Severity .....Ch. 6:1-9:28
- (4) — THE CONFUSION OF TONGUES: Divine Wisdom in Enforcing the Divine Purpose..... Ch. 10:1-11:26

#### 2 — PATRIARCHAL HISTORY — Chapters 11:27-50:26

##### Four Outstanding Individuals:

- (1) — ABRAHAM: Divine Call ..... Ch. 11:27-25:10
- (2) — ISAAC: Divine Birth .....Ch. 25:11-27:46
- (3) — JACOB: Divine Care ..... Ch. 28:1-35:29
- (4) — JOSEPH: Divine elevation .....Ch. 37:1-50:26

In addition to the analysis above which builds the book around four outstanding events, and four outstanding individuals, there is the division of the book into twelve parts as follows:

### GENESIS: THE BOOK OF GENEALOGIES

- 1. Introduction .....Ch. 1:1-2:3
- 2. The Generations of Heaven and Earth (Law, Sin, Death and the promise of Redemption).....Ch. 2:4-4:26
- 3. The Book of the Generations of Adam (The development of the human race).....Ch. 5:1-6:8
- 4. The Generations of Noah, a just man (The judgment of the old world, and preservation of a remnant) .....Ch. 6:9-9:29
- 5. The Generations of the sons of Noah (The development of nations).....Ch. 10:1-11:9
- 6. The Generations of Shem (The separation of a people for the Name) .....Ch. 11:10-26

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| 7. The Generations of Terah (The calling out of a family).Ch. 11:27-25:11                 |                 |
| 8. The Generations of Ishmael (The separation of the natural from the spiritual) .....    | Ch. 25:12-18    |
| 9. The Generations of Isaac (The development of the Seed of Promise) .....                | Ch. 25:19-35:29 |
| 10. The Generations of Esau (The development of the Man of Sin) .....                     | Ch. 36:1-8      |
| 11. The Generations of the sons of Esau (The development of the Seed of the Serpent)..... | Ch. 36:9-43     |
| 12. The Generations of Jacob (The development of Israel).....                             | Ch. 37:1-50:26  |

On the framework of the two analyses outlined above, we provide a more detailed outline of the whole book in which we combine both:

## GENESIS: THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS

### SECTION ONE: PRIMEVAL HISTORY — Chapters 1-11

#### 1. THE CREATION: Divine Glory In Natural Creation — Ch. 1:1-2:3

*(Introduction to the Eleven Generations)*

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| The earth at the beginning .....             | Ch. 1:1-2 |
| The work of the first six days .....         | vv. 3-25  |
| The creation of man and God's covenant ..... | vv. 26-28 |
| Summary of Creation — all "very good" .....  | vv. 29-31 |
| The seventh day rest .....                   | Ch. 2:1-3 |

#### 2. THE FALL: Divine Authority In Imposing Punishment — Ch. 2:4-5:31

*The Generations of Heaven and Earth*

(Law, Sin, Death and the Promise of Redemption) — Ch. 2:4-4:26

##### (a) — Man Under Law

|                                      |           |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| Man before the Fall .....            | vv. 4-7   |
| The Garden established in Eden ..... | vv. 8-14  |
| Man brought under Law.....           | vv. 15-17 |
| The first marriage.....              | vv. 18-25 |

##### (b) — The Fall And Hope Of Redemption

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Temptation and sin .....                   | Ch. 3:1-7 |
| Investigation of the cause.....            | vv. 8-13  |
| Judgment, punishment, and hope.....        | vv. 14-19 |
| The purpose of redemption typified.....    | vv. 20-24 |
| The worship of Cain and Abel.....          | Ch. 4:1-4 |
| The first murder .....                     | vv. 5-8   |
| Punishment of Cain.....                    | vv. 9-12  |
| Protection of Cain.....                    | vv. 13-15 |
| Development of the line of Cain.....       | vv. 16-24 |
| Appointment of Seth in place of Abel ..... | vv. 25-26 |

*The Book Of The Generations Of Adam*

(The development of the human race: sin and death triumphant — Ch. 5:1-6:8)

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| Man mortal and destined to the grave..... | vv. 1-32 |
|---|----------|

#### 3. THE FLOOD: Divine Judgment Manifesting Goodness & Severity — Ch. 6:1-9:28

|                                |           |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| The Antediluvian Apostasy..... | Ch. 6:1-8 |
|--------------------------------|-----------|

*The Generations Of Noah A Just Man*

(The judgment of the world and the preservation of a remnant — Ch. 6:9-9:29)

##### (a) — A Generation Perishes By Flood — Ch. 6:9-9:17.

|                          |          |
|--------------------------|----------|
| Noah and his family..... | vv. 9-10 |
|--------------------------|----------|

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| Noah's contemporaries.....   | vv. 11-13  |
| Noah commanded to build an Ark.....  | vv. 14-22  |
| A Remnant of the earth to be saved.....  | Ch. 7:1-9  |
| Noah's log of the Flood.....   | vv. 10-24  |
| The Flood recedes.....   | Ch. 8:1-5  |
| The message of the birds.....  | vv. 6-12   |
| A cleansed world.....  | vv. 13-19  |
| The divine promise.....  | vv. 20-22  |
| The new order.....   | Ch. 9:1-7  |
| The covenant with all flesh.....   | vv. 8-17   |
| <b>(b) — Sin In The Flesh Survives — Ch. 9:18-29</b>                                     |            |
| The sin of Ham.....  | vv. 18-27  |
| The death of Noah.....   | vv. 28-29  |
| <b>4. THE CONFUSION OF TONGUES:</b>  |            |
| <b>Divine Wisdom In Enforcing The Divine Purpose — Ch. 10:1–11:26</b>                    |            |
| <i>The Generations Of The Sons of Noah</i> (The development of nations) — Ch. 10:1-11:9  |            |
| Descendants of Japheth.....  | Ch. 10:1-5 |
| Descendants of Ham (Nimrod the first Empire Builder).....                                | vv. 6-20   |
| Descendants of Shem.....   | vv. 21-32  |
| Babel and the scattering of the people.....  | Ch. 11:1-9 |
| <i>The Generations of Shem</i> (The calling out of a people for the Name) — Ch. 11:10-26 |            |
| Descendants to Abram.....  | vv. 10-26  |

SECTION TWO: PATRIARCHAL HISTORY — Chapters 11:27–50:26  
 Four Outstanding Individuals

**1: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ABRAHAM — Divine Call — Ch. 11:27–25:10**

*The Generations of Terah* (The calling out of a family) — Ch. 11:27–25:11.

**(a) — Abraham as Stranger and Pilgrim — Ch. 11:27–13:18**

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| Descendants of Terah.....                | vv. 27-30   |
| First call at Ur.....                    | vv. 31-32   |
| Second call at Haran.....                | Ch. 12:1-3  |
| Abram and Lot enter Canaan.....          | vv. 4-5     |
| The promise confirmed in the land.....   | vv. 6-9     |
| Abram in Egypt.....                      | vv. 10-20   |
| Lot leaves Abram.....                    | Ch. 13:1-13 |
| Abram is promised the land for ever..... | vv. 14-18   |

**(b) — Armageddon Foreshadowed — Ch. 14:1-24.**

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| Invasion by a northern confederacy.....    | Ch. 14:1-7 |
| Lot taken captive.....                     | vv. 8-12   |
| Abram rescues Lot.....                     | vv. 13-16  |
| Melchizedek blesses Abram.....             | vv. 17-20  |
| The spoil shared by Abram's followers..... | vv. 21-24  |

**(c) — Birth of Ishmael: The Seed of the Flesh — Ch. 15:1–16:16.**

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Abram promised a multitudinous seed.....                | Ch. 15:1-6 |
| Abram promised his descendants will enter the land..... | vv. 7-16   |
| The boundaries of the promised land defined.....        | vv. 17-21  |
| Abram marries Hagar.....                                | Ch. 16:1-3 |
| Hagar despises Sarai.....                               | vv. 4-6    |
| Hagar in banishment finds help of God.....              | vv. 7-14   |
| Hagar restored gives birth to Ishmael.....              | vv. 15-16  |

**(d) — Promise of Isaac: The Seed of the Covenant — Ch. 17:1–18:15.**

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Abram's name changed to Abraham.....              | Ch. 17:1-8 |
| Circumcision appointed as the Covenant token..... | vv. 9-14   |
| Sarai's name changed to Sarah.....                | vv. 15-16  |
| Birth of Isaac promised.....                      | vv. 17-22  |
| Abraham circumcises the men of his household..... | vv. 23-27  |
| Abraham entertains angels unawares.....           | Ch. 18:1-8 |

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN EXPOSITOR

|       |  |            |
|-------|--|------------|
|       | Sarah's unbelief at the promise of a son .....             | vv. 9-15   |
| (e) — | <b>The Last Terrible Night of Sodom — Ch. 18:16–19:38.</b> |            |
|       | Abraham warned of impending judgment of Sodom .....        | vv. 16-21  |
|       | Abraham pleads for the righteous of Sodom .....            | vv. 22-23  |
|       | Angelic visitation at even .....                           | Ch. 19:1-3 |
|       | Extreme wickedness as night draws on .....                 | vv. 4-11   |
|       | Fear in the night .....                                    | vv. 12-14  |
|       | Escape in the dawn .....                                   | vv. 15-22  |
|       | Destruction in the morning .....                           | vv. 23-29  |
|       | Incestuous conception of Moab and Ammon .....              | vv. 30-38  |
| (f) — | <b>Abraham Intercedes For Gentiles — Ch. 20:1-18.</b>      |            |
|       | Abimelech takes Sarah into his house .....                 | Ch. 20:1-2 |
|       | Abimelech is warned by God not to touch Sarah .....        | vv. 3-8    |
|       | Abimelech's self-justification .....                       | vv. 9-13   |
|       | Abimelech's gift to Abraham .....                          | vv. 14-16  |
|       | Abimelech's restitution .....                              | vv. 17-18  |
| (g) — | <b>Birth of Isaac — Ch. 21:1-34.</b>                       |            |
|       | Sarah's joy at the birth of Isaac .....                    | Ch. 21:1-7 |
|       | The weaning of Isaac and mocking of Ishmael .....          | vv. 8-9    |
|       | Sarah's anger at the mocking of Ishmael .....              | vv. 10-11  |
|       | Ishmael banished but protected by God .....                | vv. 12-13  |
|       | Ishmael's desperate distress .....                         | vv. 14-16  |
|       | Ishmael saved by God .....                                 | vv. 17-21  |
|       | Abraham and Isaac oppressed by Philistines .....           | vv. 22-26  |
|       | Reconciliation at the Well of the Covenant .....           | vv. 27-32  |
|       | Abraham at Beersheba .....                                 | vv. 33-34  |
| (h) — | <b>Offering of Isaac — Ch. 22:1-19</b>                     |            |
|       | Abraham tried by God .....                                 | Ch. 22:1-5 |
|       | Isaac a willing sacrifice .....                            | vv. 6-8    |
|       | Faith triumphant .....                                     | vv. 9-14   |
|       | The Promises confirmed .....                               | vv. 15-19  |
| (i) — | <b>Death and burial of Sarah — Ch. 22:20–23:20.</b>        |            |
|       | Abraham's relations in Haran .....                         | vv. 20-24  |
|       | Age and death of Sarah .....                               | Ch. 23:1-2 |
|       | Purchase of a burying place .....                          | vv. 3-18   |
|       | Burial of Sarah .....                                      | vv. 19-20  |
| (j) — | <b>A Wife for Isaac — Ch. 24:1-67.</b>                     |            |
|       | The commission .....                                       | Ch. 24:1-6 |
|       | Faith in divine guidance .....                             | vv. 7-9    |
|       | Prayer for success .....                                   | vv. 10-14  |
|       | Rebekah's beauty of appearance and character .....         | vv. 15-16  |
|       | Her response to the request .....                          | vv. 17-21  |
|       | Her reward .....   | vv. 22-25  |
|       | Thanks to God for His blessing .....                       | vv. 26-27  |
|       | Rebekah's relations impressed .....                        | vv. 28-31  |
|       | Eliezer proclaims his mission .....                        | vv. 32-49  |
|       | Rebekah bought with a price .....                          | vv. 50-53  |
|       | Eliezer's anxiety to return .....                          | vv. 54-56  |
|       | Rebekah's pilgrimage to the land .....                     | vv. 57-61  |
|       | Her meeting with Isaac .....                               | vv. 62-65  |
|       | The marriage .....   | vv. 66-67  |
| (k) — | <b>The Death of Abraham — Ch. 25:1-11.</b>                 |            |
|       | His family by Keturah .....                                | Ch. 25:1-4 |
|       | His preference for Isaac .....                             | vv. 5-6    |
|       | His death and burial .....                                 | vv. 7-10   |

2. THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ISAAC: Divine Birth — Chapters 25:11–27:46.

|  |                            |           |
|--|----------------------------|-----------|
|  | Isaac blessed of God ..... | Ch. 25:11 |
|--|----------------------------|-----------|

*The Generations of Ishmael:*

The separation of the natural from the spiritual seed — Ch. 25:12-18.

Ishmael's descendants, inheritance and death .....vv. 12-18

*The Generations of Isaac:* The development of the seed of promise — Ch. 25:19-35:29.

(a) — **Jacob Secures the Blessing — Ch. 25:19-27:46.**

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| The prophecy and birth of Esau and Jacob .....       | vv. 19-24  |
| The characteristics of Esau and Jacob .....          | vv. 25-27  |
| Disharmony in the home .....                         | vv. 28     |
| Esau sells his birthright .....                      | vv. 29-34  |
| Isaac's troubles in the land.....                    | Ch. 26:1-5 |
| Isaac's deceit regarding his wife .....              | vv. 6-11   |
| Isaac's prosperity .....                             | vv. 12-16  |
| Isaac oppressed by Philistines .....                 | vv. 17-22  |
| Isaac encouraged by the vision at Beersheba .....    | vv. 23-25  |
| The Philistines submit to Isaac .....                | vv. 26-31  |
| The establishment of the Well of the Covenant .....  | vv. 32-33  |
| Esau's marriages grieve his parents .....            | vv. 34-35  |
| Isaac prepares to bless his firstborn .....          | Ch. 27:1-4 |
| Rebekah's counter-plan.....                          | vv. 5-10   |
| Jacob's deception .....                              | vv. 11-25  |
| The blessing bestowed .....                          | vv. 26-29  |
| The deception discovered .....                       | vv. 30-33  |
| Esau's complaint and reward .....                    | vv. 34-40  |
| Rebekah urges Jacob to flee from Esau's hatred ..... | vv. 41-46  |

**3. THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JACOB: Divine Care — Chapters 28:1-36:43.**

*The Generations of Isaac*

(b) — **Jacob's Family Life in Haran — Ch. 28:1-30:43.**

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Isaac sends Jacob to Padan-aram .....                 | Ch. 28:1-5 |
| Esau marries a daughter of Ishmael.....               | vv. 6-9    |
| Jacob's vision at Bethel .....                        | vv. 10-15  |
| Jacob's response and vow .....                        | vv. 16-22  |
| Jacob at the Well of Haran.....                       | Ch. 29:1-8 |
| Jacob meets Rachel and Laban .....                    | vv. 9-14   |
| Jacob serves Laban for Rachel .....                   | vv. 15-20  |
| Jacob deceived into marrying Leah .....               | vv. 21-25  |
| Jacob again serves Laban for Rachel.....              | vv. 26-30  |
| Birth of Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah (Leah).....      | vv. 31-35  |
| Birth of Dan, Naphtali (Bilhah — Rachel's maid) ..... | Ch. 30:1-8 |
| Birth of Gad, Asher (Zilpah — Leah's maid).....       | vv. 9-13   |
| Birth of Issachar, Zebulun, Dinah (Leah) .....        | vv. 14-21  |
| Birth of Joseph (Rachel) .....                        | vv. 22-24  |
| Jacob bargains for Laban's flocks.....                | vv. 25-36  |
| Jacob's increasing prosperity .....                   | vv. 37-43  |

(c) — **Jacob's Return To The Land Of Promise — Ch. 31:1-33:20.**

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| Jacob plans to leave Laban secretly.....               | Ch. 31:1-18 |
| Rachel steals her father's images.....                 | vv. 19-21   |
| Laban's pursuit.....                                   | vv. 22-24   |
| Laban rebukes Jacob but fails to find the images ..... | vv. 25-35   |
| Jacob reproaches Laban for his harshness .....         | vv. 36-42   |
| The covenant between Jacob and Laban .....             | vv. 43-55   |
| Jacob's vision at Mahanaim .....                       | Ch. 32:1-2  |
| Jacob's message to Esau .....                          | vv. 3-5     |
| Jacob's fear of Esau .....                             | vv. 6-8     |
| Jacob's prayer for help.....                           | vv. 9-12    |
| Jacob's precautions .....                              | vv. 13-23   |
| Jacob's contest with the angel.....                    | vv. 24-32   |
| Jacob and Esau reconciled.....                         | Ch. 33:1-11 |

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Jacob's distrust of Esau.....                                 | vv. 12-16  |
| Jacob's altar at Shechem.....                                 | vv. 17-20  |
| <b>(d) — Jacob As A Pilgrim In The Land — Ch. 34:1–36:43.</b> |            |
| Dinah is defiled.....   | Ch. 34:1-6 |
| Shechem is offered peace on conditions.....                   | vv. 7-19   |
| Shechem agrees to the conditions.....                         | vv. 20-24  |
| Simeon and Levi's treachery.....                              | vv. 25-29  |
| Jacob's reproof.....  | vv. 30-31  |
| Jacob sent by God to Bethel.....                              | Ch. 35:1-6 |
| Death of Deborah, Rebekah's nurse.....                        | vv. 7-8    |
| Jacob blessed by God.....                                     | vv. 9-15   |
| Birth of Benjamin; death of Rachel.....                       | vv. 16-20  |
| Wickedness of Reuben; Summary of Jacob's family.....          | vv. 21-26  |
| Death of Isaac.....   | vv. 27-29  |

*The Generations Of Esau:*

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>[1] The Manifestation of the man of Sin — Ch. 36:1-8.</b>                   |           |
| Esau's wives and family.....   | vv. 1-5   |
| Esau conquers Mt. Seir.....  | vv. 6-8   |
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## Dissertation on the Elohim

The Hebrew name for God in Genesis 1 is *Elohim*. It occurs frequently throughout the Scriptures. In *Phanerosis*, Brother Thomas states:

“The plural of this word (i.e. *Eloahh*) is *Elohim*, and occurs in the Old Testament about 2470 times. In the first and second chapters of Genesis, it is rendered in the English version by the word ‘God’; but in Chapter 3:5, it is translated ‘gods’. In 23:6 it is rendered ‘mighty’, but very incorrectly. In chapter 30:8, it is rendered ‘great’. In 31:30, 32; 35:2,4; and many other places, idols are termed *elohim*, not because they were really anything of power, but were so esteemed by the idolator who styled them so. In Exodus 21:6; 22:8-9; it is rendered ‘judges’. In 1 Sam. 2:25, it is ‘judge’. In 1 Kings 11:5, it is translated ‘goddess’. In Jonah 3:3, it is rendered ‘exceeding’; and in Mal. 2:15, it is rendered ‘godly.’” (*Phanerosis* p. 51,52).

In *Elpis Israel* (p. 181-183), the following points are made:

“The principles of universal grammar require in general that a *‘verb agree with its nominative in number and person’*; as, the spirit moves, the waters roar. Here *the spirit* is of the singular number, and third person; and so is the verb *moves*; hence they agree in number and person; ‘the waters’ is of the third person plural, and so is ‘roar’; hence they also agree. But in the first chapter of Genesis, this rule appears to be disregarded by the spirit, under whose guidance Moses wrote. In the first verse it reads, *Berayshith bara Elohim*; i.e., in the beginning Elohim created. In this sentence *bara* is the verb in the third person singular, and *Elohim* a noun in the third person plural; so that they do not agree according to the rule. For an agreement to ensure, either the noun should be *Eloah*, or *El*, in the singular, or it should remain as it is in the plural, and the verb should be changed to *barau*: as *barau ELOHIM (they)* created. But it does not stand thus: it reads literally (the) Elohim (he) created.

“Speaking of Elohim, Dr. Wilson says, ‘That this noun, which is not unintentionally here joined with the singular verb *bara*, is nevertheless really plural, appears not merely from its termination *im*, but by its being frequently joined with adjectives, pronouns, and verbs in the plural. *Vayyomer Elohim nashah adam betzalmainu*, i.e., Elohim said, ‘Let us make man in our image.’” Mr. Parkhurst, in his lexicon under the word *alah*, cites many passages where Elohim is associated with other plurals. Upon close examination there will be found no good reason to question the conclusion, that Elohim is a noun plural, and signifies ‘gods’.

“A first principle with me in all reasonings upon this subject is, that ‘There is one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all’ His spiritual family. Another axiom is, that ‘He is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto;

WHOM NO MAN HATH SEEN, *nor can see*" (1 Tim. 6:15; 1:17). And again, "God is spirit" (John 4:24); and He is "incorruptible" (Rom. 1:23). THE INCORRUPTIBLE SPIRIT DWELLING IN LIGHT is the scriptural revelation of the undefinable essence of the self-existent Eternal One, who is from everlasting to everlasting, God. What His essence consists in, He has not revealed; He has made known to us His name, or character, which is enough for men to know; but to say that, because He is a spirit, He is therefore 'immaterial', is to speak arrant nonsense; for immateriality is nothingness; a quality, if we may so speak, alien to the universe of God.

"No man," says Jesus, 'hath seen God *at any time*'; but Adam, Abraham, Jacob and Moses, saw the Elohim and their Lord; therefore Elohim does not necessarily mean the Everlasting Father Himself.

"Elohim is a name bestowed on *angels* and *orders of men*. It is written, 'Worship him, all ye Elohim' (Psalm 97:7). This is quoted by Paul in the first chapter of Hebrews, as a command of the Everlasting Father to the angels, that they should do homage to the Lord Jesus as His Son, when He shall introduce him into the world again at the opening of the Future Age. It is also written concerning him, 'Thou hast made him a little lower than the Elohim' (Psalm 8:5). Paul applies this to Jesus saying, 'We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels' (Heb. 2:9). He continued inferior to them a little upwards of thirty years, from the birth of the flesh to his resurrection; when he was exalted far above them in rank and dignity, even to the 'right hand of power', which is enthroned in light, where dwells the Majesty in the heavens."

From the above we conclude that when the term Elohim is used in regard to the angels, the word signifies "mighty ones" through whom Deity manifested Himself.

According to Dr. Strong, the word is derived from a root *uwł* meaning "to twist" (as being rolled together), hence to be strong. This definition suggests that Elohim is both plural and singular: plural as signifying a multiplicity of beings; and singular as relating to a company of such united together as one.

Davidson, in his *Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon* aligns it with the Arabic, *Allah*, derived from the root *alaha*, "to reverence, adore, worship, fear."

Parkhurst derives it from the Hebrew root *alah*, "he swore, or bound himself with an oath".

This, again, suggests a number united together as one.

The word occurs some 2,470 times, and is related to *El*, might, power; but being plural (indicated by the additional *im*), it signifies "mighty ones".

It is a word applied to the angels who are *mighty ones*, being strengthened by Yahweh to become such.

It is used of men (Exod. 7:1; 15:11; 1 Sam. 28:13-14; Psa. 45:6-7;

82:1,6; 97:7,9; 136:2 — cp. John 10:33-35); translated “judges” (Exod. 21:6; 22:8-9; 1 Sam. 2:25); “gods” (Gen. 3:5; Exod. 32:8,23,31; Deut. 10:17); “angels” (Psa. 8:5; cp. Judges 13:21-22) etc. Therefore its use, in regard to the Lord, does not support Trinitarian teaching; for though Jesus was called “God” (John 20:28), so also was Moses (Exod. 7:1). The Lord himself went to pains to explain the significance of the term, pointing out the fact that the Old Testament Scriptures applied it to men (John 10:33-35).

Though *Elohim* is in the plural, and signifies “mighty ones,” it is most frequently used with a verb in the singular number, as in Gen. 1:1. This suggests that the Elohim, though constituting a great number of immortal beings, are being motivated by a single power, “the spirit of God” (Gen. 1:2). The Elohim, therefore, comprise a great company united as one, and obeying in unison the motivating power of the great Increate. The Psalmist declared: “Yahweh hath prepared His throne in the heavens; and His kingdom ruleth over all. Bless Yahweh, ye His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word. Bless ye Yahweh, all ye His hosts; ye ministers of His, that do His pleasure. Bless Yahweh, all His works in all places of His dominion” (Psalm 103:19-22).

Yahweh is spirit (John 4:24), and His angels are spirit beings (Psalm 104:4; Heb. 1:7). They are “His family in heaven” (Eph. 3:15), being emanations of Him, and doing His will through His all-pervading spirit (Gen. 1:2). Thus they act as a unit, though being innumerable in number.

In some instances, however, *Elohim* is used with a plural verb (Gen. 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Isa. 6:8 — according to Parkhurst also in Gen. 20:13; 31:7,53; 35:7; Deut. 4:7; Josh. 24:19; 2 Sam. 7:23; Jer. 10:10; 23:36). The use of both singular and plural verbs in relation to this plural noun indicates that though the Elohim are many, and united as one, they also are capable of independent decision and action.

Nevertheless, the power they exercise, and the glory they manifest, both stem from one: even Yahweh. See Job 38:7.

GENESIS:  
BOOK OF BEGINNINGS

*A verse-by-verse  
Exposition*

## ORDER OUT OF CHAOS

### (Chapter 1:1–2:3)

*For brevity and beauty of composition, the Genesis account of creation is unequalled. It expresses in few dramatic words, the acts of God in bringing order out of the original chaos. It underlines an important lesson in that it was by “the word of Yahweh that the heavens were made” (Psalm 33:6); for it is by the same word that His “new creation” is likewise moulded into shape (Rev. 3:14). Thus the physical regeneration of the earth is set forth in Scripture as typical of the moral regeneration of man by the power of the Gospel.*

*God the Creator dominates the scene as the lifeless earth of darkness is first illuminated and then caused to teem with life. Power and majesty mark every sentence as higher forms of creation make their appearance; until the climax is reached with the creation of man “in the image and likeness of God”. Then the destiny of man was declared in the proclamation: “Have thou dominion ...”*

*If it be asked when did God create? the answer is “in the beginning” (Gen. 1:1); if it be asked how He created? the answer is by His spirit (Gen. 1:2-3); if it be asked for what purpose did He create? we are told that it was to fill the earth with life (Isa. 45:18), such as would reflect to His glory. “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for Thou hast created all things and for Thy pleasure they are and were created” (Rev. 4:11). Though these words relate to the “new creation” of the future they apply equally to the physical creation of the past.*

*Everything was done in wisdom (Prov. 8:22-24; 3:19; Psa. 136:5); for Yahweh’s glory (Num. 14:21; Prov. 16:4); and with His ultimate purpose in view (Isa. 45:18; John 1:1-3). The wisdom and power seen in natural creation demonstrates His ability to save (Psa. 147: 3-4). The glory revealed therein was a cause of rejoicing to the Elohim (Job 38:4-12); and as we meditate thereupon, we, too, can rejoice with the Psalmist: “O Yahweh, how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches” (Psa. 104:24); “Sing unto Him, sing psalms unto Him: talk ye of all His wondrous works” (Psa. 105:2).*

## CHAPTER ONE

CREATION:  
DIVINE GLORY IN NATURAL CREATION**The First Day: Light Appears — vv. 1-5**

The earth was originally swathed in darkness, and light was necessary in order to reveal the extent of the work required. This, therefore, became the work of the first day. It was brought into being "by the word of God". The manifestation of light is also the first act necessary in order to bring Yahweh's spiritual creation into being. John refers to this when he wrote: "In the beginning was the word," and that word constituted "the light of men" (John 1:1-5). The seven acts of creation, recorded in the early verses of Genesis, are not merely historical facts, but are typical foreshadowings of the divine purpose with man.

**VERSE 1**

"In the beginning" — The Hebrew has one word, *bereshith*, signifying "in the beginning." It forms the Hebrew title of the book, and is derived from a root, *rosh*, signifying "head", "beginning" etc. When this "beginning" was we are not told. But we are taught that wisdom was revealed in the acts of creation from the beginning. John states that "in the beginning" was the Word or *Logos* (John 1:1). *Logos* signifies the outward expression of inward thought or reason. It represents more than a mere word, for it incorporates the thought behind the word expressed. Elsewhere, we learn that wisdom was with God in the beginning, and was manifested in His acts

of creation (Prov. 8:22). Hence, all that was done, was done with His ultimate purpose in mind, and not as the result of blind force or chance.

"In the beginning God" — God is the primeval force of all creation; everything is out of Him. Paul declared: *ex autou kai di autou, kai eis autou ta panta*, "out of whom, and on account of whom, and for whom, are all things" (Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 8:6). Upon the basis of this, the following comment has been made. "The source or fountain of power in the universe is one. It is a unit. Therefore, everything which exists is *ex autou*, out of Him. Hence the Creator did not 'make all things out of nothing.' This is the teaching of theology, the 'orthodox theology' of the Old Man of the Flesh; and which leads many of his children to affirm that 'matter is God,' understanding by 'matter' that which is cognizable by the five senses. Hence the sun, the moon, and the stars, and all the things they can see, taste, feel, smell, and hear upon earth, are God. They confound that which 'is of Him' with the 'Him' out of whom all things proceed. On the other hand, other children of the Old Man affirm that 'God is immaterial'; by which they mean that He is not matter, or substance, or body; but an inconceivable something they call 'spirit', an incorporeal, unsubstantial, immaterial spirit, which is as near to nothing as words can express. But the Scripture declares that *pneuma ho Theos esti*, literally, 'Spirit is the Theos'. I say simply *Theos*, because we shall yet have to ascertain the New Testament sense of Theos. 'Spirit', then, is the Theos commonly called God. But more than this, this Spirit is the Father, that is, the One *ex autou*, out of whom are all things" (*Phanerosis* pp. 53-54).

The Scriptures, therefore, teach that the Spirit of God is the substratum of all matter; it is the nuclear energy of all cre-

ation. Thus, in the beginning there was God, and out of God came all creation, because His spirit is the basis of it all. And at the end there shall be God, manifested in a perfected earth, and a multitude of perfected beings. This is summed up by Paul in the words: "God all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28). At the commencement God stood out pre-eminent; and at the end He will do so also.

How did the earth and other planets come into existence? Evolutionary science postulates one thing, and the Scriptures another. As far as science is concerned, there are two main theories: (1) the near approach of another star to our sun, resulting in the drawing off of embryonic planets; (2) the condensation of the sun and its planets from a nebular basis. Evolutionary science desires to get rid of God, and therefore postulates theories that permit of the formation of the heavens and the earth by chance rather than design.

On the other hand, the Scriptures speak of the forming of the heavens and earth as a specific act of creation (Isa. 42:5). "He commanded, and they were created" (Psa. 148:5); "God Himself that formed the earth and made it" (Isa. 45:18). Combined with such declarations as these, there are basic problems which remain to be solved by evolutionists. If their theories were true, all the planets should observe the same uniform principles, but they do not. Evolutionists cannot explain why seven of the nine planets connected with the solar system have direct rotation in reference to their revolution around the sun, but Venus rotates slowly backwards, and Uranus rotates at a 98-degree angle from its orbital plane, even though its orbit inclines less than that of any other planet. Nor have they an answer to the problem of retrograde satellites. Of the thirty-two moons in our solar system, eleven orbit in directions opposite to that of the rotational direction of their mother planets.

Were the heavens and the earth created during the period of the six literal days referred to in Genesis 1? There is no reason to claim this. It is true that Exodus 20:11 declares: "In six days Yahweh made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in

them is," but the verb "made" (Heb. *asah*), can signify "appoint" as rendered in Psalm 104:19, and could relate to the ordering of the earth, which had already been in existence for long epochs of time.

**"God created"** — The Hebrew is *bara Elohim*: a verb in the singular number combined with a noun in the plural: "Mighty ones he created" (J. Thomas, *Phanerosis* p. 51). The use of a singular verb with a plural noun suggests one motivating power manifested through a multiplicity of agents. The one motivating power in creation was the "Spirit of God" (v. 2) or Yahweh Who worked through the angels to bring the creation into existence.

"This intimate relationship, so intimate as to constitute a Unity in plurality, (but not a plurality in the absolute and primary Power the source of all) is expressed in Isaiah 45:18, "Thus, saith Yahweh, that created the heavens *hu ha-Elohim*, He the Elohim that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it. He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited. I Yahweh, and none without." In this text Yahweh is twice repeated. This expresses one, being in the singular number; but *Elohim* is plural expressing two or a multitude; and this noun of multitude is prefaced, not by *they* as *they the Elohim*; but by 'He', as *He the Elohim*. This peculiarity is doctrinal not accidental, nor an arbitrary custom of language, but designed. It teaches that the creation was produced from one power *ex ou, out of which*, are all things, and that this one power operated through a plurality of agents, or *Elohim*, who are the spirit-embodiments of its rays" (*Phanerosis* p. 52).

**"The heaven and the earth"** — "*Heaven*" is *hashshamayim* in Hebrew, and is in the plural (heavens), from a root, to be high. It relates to the firmament, the starry expanse above the earth and high up from it. The heaven is put before the earth, because that is the true and natural order. There was a time when there was no earth (Prov. 8:23); but there never was a time when there was no heaven, in the highest sense of God's dwelling place. Nevertheless, heaven, in this verse, relates to something that was specifically created, and



therefore, particularly to the universe in which the earth is a member.

"The earth" in Hebrew is *ha eretz*, and relates to the world as compared to the heavens above it.

## VERSE 2

**"And the earth was without form and void"** — These words are better rendered "waste and empty". The Hebrew expressions are *tohu* and *bohu*. The same expressions are found in Jeremiah 4:23-26, but the context shows that Jeremiah did not have natural creation in mind, but Yahweh's national creation: His people of Israel. The political organisations of the nation were to be overthrown, and the people driven from the land. The depredations and devastations to be wrought by the invading Babylonians, would cause the land of Judah to become politically "waste and empty." The primeval state of creation thus became the type of Judah's overthrow. Jeremiah even saw the mountains tremble before the advance of Nebuchadnezzar's forces, for "mountains," as a symbol, relate to mighty empires, and the force and success of the Babylonian's attack caused even Egypt in all its power, to quake in fright.

In regard to creation itself, the terms "waste and empty" suggest a state of chaos out of which God brought order and life. At first a shroud of impenetrable darkness covered an earth surrounded by water, so that it is described as being "without form" and empty.

Was the earth always like that? The suggestion of pre-Adamic creation is made in *Elpis Israel*, and whilst, we do not subscribe to the teaching that "the angels sinned" relate to that time, there are suggestions in the Word that would support a pre-Adamic creation.

For example, the Elohim declared of Adam and Eve after they had sinned, that they had become like the angels once were: "to know good and evil" (Gen. 3:22). This suggests that the angels were once mortal, and that they gained their angelic state of immortality through probation under conditions of evil. This, of course, does not establish that they

"worked out their salvation" on the earth; but, for that matter, it does not disprove it either. On the other hand, Isaiah 45:18 states concerning the creation of the earth, according to the Hebrew: "He created it not a waste" (*tohu*). This would strongly suggest that the earth was not originally in that state in which it is described in Gen. 1:2. And this is supported by the verb that is used in that place, and translated "was". The verb *hayah* signifies not only to be, but also "to become", "to come to pass." One Hebrew grammarian declares that when a Hebrew writer makes a simple affirmation, or merely predicates the existence of anything, the verb *hayah* is never expressed. Where it is expressed it always must be translated "to become" or some such similar verb, to describe the exact shade of the meaning of the original. (Martin Anstey, *Romance of Bible Chronology*). Dr. Strong gives the verb as future, and elsewhere in the Bible it is so rendered. The same verb, in a similar context, is found in Genesis 2:7: "man became a living soul."

Therefore, we could render Genesis 1:2: "And the earth became waste and empty." This seems to suggest some cataclysmic judgment by Almighty God plunged the earth into the state in which it is described in the early verses of Genesis. Certainly Jeremiah's application of the phrase to the overthrow of the Jewish State would indicate that this was the case. If that be so, it is idle to conjecture as to why the earth was plunged into that state, or the conditions that preceded it.

**"And darkness was upon the face of the deep"** — Impenetrable darkness enshrouded the primeval oceans which covered the earth. "The deep" (*t'hom*) is the watery abyss which at that time enveloped the earth. The same expression is used for the ocean in many parts of the Word. The darkness of the original earth is figurative of that darkness of the natural mind of man before the light of truth penetrates. In the beginning there was darkness, and God said, "Let there be light". A similar appeal is made to all who will hearken. John's use of the work of creation in the early verses of his Gospel,

shows that it typically foreshadowed the purpose of God with humanity. In that sense, God said "Let there be light" when "in the beginning" He proclaimed His plan of redemption (Gen. 3:15).

**"And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters"** — The spirit of God (Elohim) was the spirit of Yahweh, but used by the Elohim (or His agents) for the purpose of creation. God's spirit pervades all creation (Psa. 139:7-12), even in those places where man cannot breathe. His spirit in a concentrated form, however, is used to perform miraculous works (Job 26:13; 33:4). The word for "moved" is *rachaph*, signifying brooded, and is so translated in the margin of the Revised Version. The verb expresses the tremulous motion made by a hen when hatching eggs, or fostering her young. There is the suggestion of care and suppressed watchful excitement in the term. The world-egg was about to reveal life, and the vital principle to that end was the Spirit of God. See Psa. 104:30; 139:7.

### VERSE 3

**"And God said"** — When God speaks, things are done. See Psalm 33:6; 2 Peter 3:5. There is power in His Word, as is evident to all who come under its influence. Peter declares that the world is "willingly ignorant" of this fact. Men are ignorant of the power of the divine Word both in regard to natural creation, and also in relation to His spiritual creation. As the Word of God brought order out of chaos originally; so His Word can bring order out of the chaos of men's minds, replacing it with divine truth.

**"Let there be light; and there was light"** — Light is divine. We read elsewhere, not only that God dwells in light unapproachable by man (1 Tim. 6:16), but also that "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). Thus, the first movement of God's creative power in bringing order out of chaos, was to bring light into being as far as the earth was concerned. This light could have been supplied by the angels easier than man, today, can illuminate a darkened room by manipulating the light switch; or it could have

been the light of the sun, not yet distinguishable as an object in the heavens being caused to penetrate the surrounding darkness caused by the vapours encircling the earth.

Indeed, this is most likely the manner in which light was produced, because the description suggests that day and night followed in rotation.

### VERSE 4

**"And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness"** — The benefit of light as contrasted with darkness is suggested by this statement. It certainly is true as regards the Truth, for everything that is good and noble springs therefrom (see John 3:19-21).

In the same way as light was necessary to bring order out of chaos in physical creation, so it is the first step necessary in the formation of Yahweh's spiritual creation. The light of divine truth must first enter the heart of an individual if he is to be moulded according to the divine requirements (2 Cor. 4:6); and, as in the beginning, this is brought into existence by the Word of God. By such means a person passes from out of darkness into "his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

Most likely the creative act here recorded was done by the rotation of the earth: the sun dimly penetrating the mists and clouds surrounding it. In like manner, the Truth was only simply perceived at first (Rom. 16:25), the full brightness of its significance becoming apparent at the resurrection and glorification of the Lord (Matt. 4:16).

### VERSE 5

**"And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night"** — To whom did God "call" the light and the darkness by these names? No doubt to Adam and Eve who were instructed in the ways of God (see Gen. 2:19). Thus there was a revelation of the divine purpose before that given to Moses (see Gen. 18:19).

**"And the evening and the morning were the first day"** — Evening is stated

first because darkness preceded the light. For that reason, the Jewish day commences at 6 p.m. at night, reminding every Israelite that darkness is his natural inheritance, but should be replaced by light. How long were these days? Some believe that they indicate long epochs of time, during which evolutionary processes worked to bring about creation as we know it today. In *Elpis Israel*, Brother Thomas declares:

“The six days of Genesis were unquestionably six diurnal revolutions of the earth upon its axis. This is clear from the tenor of the Sabbath law. ‘Six days shalt thou labour (O Israel) and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.’ Would it be any fit reason that, because the Lord worked six periods of a thousand or more years each, and had ceased about two thousand until the giving of the Law, therefore the Israelites were to work six periods of twelve hours, and do no work on a seventh period or day of like duration? Would any Israelite or Gentile, unspoiled by vain philosophy, come to the conclusion of the geologists by reading the sabbath law? We believe not. Six days of ordinary length were ample time for Omnipotence with all the power of the universe at command to re-form the earth, and to place the few animals upon it necessary for the beginning of a new order of things upon the globe” (p. 11,12).

The *Companion Bible* makes this observation: “When the word ‘day’ is used with a numeral, it is defined, limited, and restricted to a day of twenty-four hours.” This must be the case particularly when the boundaries of the day are defined, as they are in the text before us, as evening and morning. What would constitute the evening and morning of an epoch of time?

But the point is resolved beyond doubt by the fact that Adam was created on the sixth day, and continued throughout the seventh day! Did he continue throughout this alleged long period of a thousand

years and beyond? Was he a thousand years old before the time of his testing in Eden?

The statement of Exodus 20:8-11 that as Yahweh laboured for six days and rested on the seventh, the children of Israel should do likewise, clearly teaches that the days of Genesis 1 were treated as ordinary days of twenty-four hours; and certainly, as Brother Thomas observes, that provided ample time for Omnipotence to re-order creation in the way described.

In the parable of Creation, the first day foreshadowed the first thousand years of man’s history. This epoch witnessed a separation of the Sons of God from the descendants of Cain. It saw the death of Adam, dramatising the mortality of the human race that his action brought to it, and the translation of Enoch “that he should not see death” (Gen. 5:3-4; 23-24; Heb. 11:5), as though to remind man that though he was related to death he could find life if he sought it through the example left him. In this figurative “first day” of human history, therefore, there was effected a separation between the sons of light and the sons of darkness.

### **The Second Day: The Firmament Formed — vv. 6-8**

*The second act in re-forming the earth, was to cause a separation between earthly and heavenly waters. This was done by establishing “a firmament” between them. Whilst this was accomplished in the course of the second day, figuratively it points forward to the second great epoch in the development of the divine purpose and programme of 7,000 years, symbolised in the seven acts of creation (cp. 2 Pet. 3:8). The first act was the diffusion of light throughout the world (see Gen. 1:15; John 1:1; 2 Cor. 4:6; Psa. 119:105,130; Isa. 45:7). The second act was to divide mankind into two groups: those who were drawn to the light, and those who rejected it. Two thousand years after creation, such a division was made, in that Abram was called out of the darkness of Ur, and constituted the father of all those who would be separated from Gentile darkness to the marvellous light of*

*truth (1 Pet. 2:9). As waters are symbolical of people (Rev. 17:15), mankind was then separated into heavenly and earthly waters; the former designed to rule in the political heavens of the Age to come, and the latter becoming the subject nations of the Kingdom.*

#### VERSE 6

**“And God said, Let there be a firmament”** — The word translated “firmament” is ‘*rakia*’, from a root signifying “to beat, stamp, spread, or stretch forth”, and therefore an expanse (see Strong, A.V. mg.). Elihu asked Job: “Hast thou with Him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking glass?” (Job. 37:18). In this question, the verb *spread out* is from the root *rakah*. Elihu referred to the vast canopy of sky above, suggestive of immensity and eternity; the tremendous arch of heaven that encircles the earth.

The firmament is used figuratively in Scripture of the site of the ruling powers of the earth, and prophecy looks forward to the “new heavens” that Yahweh intends to establish upon the earth (Isa. 65:17-18). The purpose of the Gospel is to separate a people from out of the nations to occupy the symbolic firmament of the future (Acts 15:14; Daniel 12:3).

**“In the midst of the waters”** — Before the formation of the expanse, or the firmament above, clouds evidently rested on the seas that covered the earth filling the space above, and completely swathing it from the light of the sun.

**“And let it divide the waters from the waters”** — The formation of the firmament above the earth effectively brought about the separation thus described. In that way, the water in the sea below was divided from that in the clouds that now floated in the heavier air of the firmament above, formed by the creative hand of God.

#### VERSE 7

**“And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so”** — The English word “firmament” is

from the Latin *firmamentum*, which in turn rests upon the Greek *stereoma*, both of which carry the idea of solidness. However, the emphasis in the original Hebrew word, ‘*rakia*’, is not on the material itself but on the act of stretching out, or the condition of being expanded. In several places in the O.T. the act of stretching out the heavens is prominent (see Job 9:8; 26:7; Psa. 104:2; Isa. 45:12; 51:13; Jer. 51:15; Zech. 12:1). Waters above, denote clouds and mists; those beneath, the “deep” that then spread over all the earth.

#### VERSE 8

**“And God called the firmament Heaven”** — This was not heaven as God’s dwelling place, but the expanse immediately above the earth in which the clouds float. The word in the Hebrew is *shameh*, and signifies “to be lofty.”

**“And the evening and the morning were the second day”** — This second day foreshadowed the change that took place in the second thousand years of history from the epoch of creation. This witnessed the division effected at the time of the Flood and onwards in the days of Peleg (Gen. 10:25), being made absolute by the call of Abram and his family from out of Ur of the Chaldees (Gen. 11:31). In Bible symbology, water represents humanity (Rev. 17:15), and in the second millennium there was a separation effected therein dividing God’s people from those of flesh.

#### The Third Day: Growth Upon the Earth — vv. 9-13

*Before this time, water covered the entire earth; so now God caused terrestrial upheavals which deepened the ocean bed, and caused the water to be gathered together, so that continents appeared. Growth followed. This heaving up of continents, and the first appearance of life, is a figure of resurrection, and represented the first stage of completion in creation. For that reason, the number three in the Bible often has the figurative signification of resurrection, or completion. The first appearance of land was also of great significance in the development of Yahweh’s purpose. In the prophetic Scriptures, Gen-*

*tile powers are often represented by "seas" (Isa. 57:20; Rev. 17:15), and Israel by "earth" surrounded by the sea (e.g Hag. 2:6). In accordance with the seven thousand years of unfolding divine purpose, Israel, as a nation, appeared in the midst of the other nations during the third millennium from creation.*

**VERSE 9**

**"And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so"** — In Creation's Hymn (Psa. 104), David refers to this act of creation: "Thou coveredst it (the earth) with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. At Thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of Thy thunder they hasted away. They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which Thou hast founded for them. Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth" (vv. 6-9). These references to the bringing forth of mountains, the fleeing of water at God's rebuke, the gathering together of oceans, and the establishment of continents, give some idea of the nature and vastness of the work of God when His decree went forth.

**VERSE 10**

**"And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called He Seas: and God saw that it was good"** — The word earth, (*eretz*), according to Dr. Strong, is from a Hebrew root signifying *to be firm*; whereas *Yam*, or "Sea", is from a root meaning *to roar*; and therefore implies the restlessness of the ocean. In Bible symbology, earth is descriptive of natural Israel (cp. Hag. 2:6 with Heb. 12:26), and "seas" that of Gentile powers (Isa. 57:20; Rev. 17:15). In illustration of this, notice how Paul excludes Haggai's reference to "the sea" when he applies the prophet's statement to Israel (Heb. 12:26).

**VERSE 11**

**"And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed"** —

The Creator placed within the ground all the potentials for plant life. Figuratively, the earth is a symbol of the human heart; capable of being sown with good seed, and bringing forth abundantly; or of producing thorns and thistles (Matt. 13:3-9, 19-23; Heb. 6:7).

Three kinds of vegetation are named in this verse. The first is grass. The Hebrew *deshe*, from a root signifying to sprout, is applicable to every kind of verdure in the state of sprouting. Grass is shortlived, and withers under the fierce heat of the sun. In that regard, it speaks of the transient nature of flesh (Isa. 40:6-8).

The second kind of vegetation is "herb yielding seed." Here the word is *eseb*, and denotes a higher form of plants propagated by seed. This form of vegetation is edible, for it formed part of man's original diet (v. 29).

**"The fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so"** — Many different kinds of fruit trees were caused to grow, each producing "fruit after his kind."

**VERSE 12**

**"And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good"** — The first forms of life appeared upon the earth, brought forth by divine decree. The Word of God can cause people of the earth to bring forth fruit unto incorruptible life. Such are begotten of "incorruptible... seed, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. 1:23). In contrast, flesh is "as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away. But the word of the Lord endureth for ever"; that is, the word as proclaimed through the Gospel (1 Pet. 1:24-25). The appearance of life upon the earth is described as being "good".

**VERSE 13**

**"And the evening and the morning were the third day"** — The antitype of this third day in the parable of the Creation Week foreshadows the developments

of the third millennium after creation. That period saw the complete separation of Israel as a nation from Gentile powers (the earth appearing in the midst of the seas), and it witnessed the development of spiritual life from out of the "earth" as Israel took hold of the covenant at Sinai, answering to the crops and fruit that the plants and trees of the third day provided. The Exodus from Egypt occurred about 2500 years after creation, so that by the end of the third millennium, Israel as a nation was well established in the sight of all other powers.

### The Fourth Day: Sun, Moon and Stars — vv. 14-19

*The darkness of the primeval state had been partially penetrated on the first day; but apparently the clouds that formed on the second day (v. 6) still shrouded the earth in gloom. These were now dispelled, and the earth came under the influence of the direct rays of the sun and moon. The fourth day, therefore, constituted a parallelism with the first day. The six days can be divided into two parts of three days each. Each part deals first with light, next with water, and finally with dry land. At the conclusion of the fourth millennium from Creation, typed by this fourth day, the Lord Jesus appeared as the "light of the world" (John 1:9; 8:12).*

### VERSE 14

**"And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven"** — In previous verses (vv. 3-5), the word for "light" is *owr*, but here it is *meourouth*, and denotes luminaries, or *light-bearers*. It is the same word, though in the plural, as that which describes the lampstand in the tabernacle (Exod. 25:6; Lev. 24:2; Num. 4:9,16). This is most significant, for it describes the Sun and the Moon as the great Lampstands of the heavens, displaying divine light. The Sun has light of itself, but the Moon has none, and has to reflect that of the Sun. In the symbology of Scripture, the Sun represents Christ (Mal. 4:2), and the Moon, the Ecclesia, the Bride of Christ (Song. 6:10) reflecting the light of her Lord.

They are described in this verse, in their relation to the earth.

As the light of the Sun and that of the Moon are shed abroad upon the earth, so the light of truth was dispersed, first by Christ, and afterwards by the Ecclesia. In performing this service the Ecclesia reflects the light from the Sun, becoming "the epistle of Christ known and read of all men — (2 Cor. 3:18; 4:4,6).

As the light of the Sun and Moon was shed abroad upon the earth on that fourth day, so the light of truth has been set before all mankind since the days of Christ through the widespread proclamation of the Gospel to let "him that heareth" (Rev. 22:17). And, significantly, Christ appeared in the fourth millennium from creation.

**"To divide the day from the night"** — This is better rendered: "To divide between the day and between the night." The difference between the present glory of Yahweh on earth in the preaching of the Gospel, and that yet to be manifested in the earth, can be compared with the difference between the light of the moon and that of the sun (Isa. 30:26). At present the feeble light of the Ecclesia-moon is seen; whilst in the day to come the light of the Christ-sun will shine forth from the political heavens in the fulness of covenant glory (Mal. 4:2).

**"Let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years"** — This statement, also expresses both literal and spiritual truths. Firstly, it is appropriate for a rural community, such as God intended man to be (cp. Gen. 2:15; 3:19), to heed the positioning of the heavenly bodies in the manner suggested. The word *owth*, "sign" or "flag" signifies the appearing of a certain condition or thing, the flag denoting the presence of that represented by it. Agriculturally, the positioning of the sun and moon indicates the correct periods of sowing and of reaping. Spiritually, they also teach the people. The time appointed for celebrating the Passover was governed by the moon. It shines at its full at that time, and as such is representative of Israel in the full glory of its spiritual light.

In addition, the sun and moon are used as signs of the Creator's power and pur-

pose. They are symbolic of His plan, foreshadowing the glory of the coming age (2 Sam. 23:4). The prophetic Scriptures use the heavens in that way (Psa. 19:1; Isa. 30:26; Jer. 31:35; 33:19-21). Concerning David, it is recorded: "His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before Me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven" (Psa. 89:36-37). These words describe the coming "day of Christ" when his glory shall shine forth from Jerusalem illuminating all mankind with his truth.

Unlike the sun, the appearance of the moon is never stable. It is always waxing or waning. This "sign" in the heavens is important to the people of Yahweh. The waxing and waning moon is symbolic of the fluctuating spiritual state of ecclesias. There are both encouragement and warning in this. When the moon is at its full, when it seems that the ecclesia is spiritually strong; take heed, for it can wane; when it is at its lowest ebb, take encouragement, for it can wax larger. The moon is never constant; nor is the ecclesia. The silvery moon, proclaiming its bright message of redemption in the midst of the dark vault of heaven, is a remarkable sign of the Gospel.

The heavenly bodies excited the interest of early man. It is obvious that astronomy was a subject in which Job had delighted (Job 9:9; 38:31-32; see also Amos 5:8). Gesenius suggests that the word *Mazzaroth* (Job 38:32) relates to the Zodiac, and this is supported by the margin of the A.V. The twelve signs of the Zodiac, answering to the twelve months of the year, are connected with different seasons, and these, in turn, speak of Yahweh's purpose. For example, winter is often related to death, and springtime to resurrection.

However, studying the heavens without the guidance of God's revelation, resulted in many of the ancients perverting the Truth. This led to the building of the Tower of Babel, whose top imitated the heavens, for its dome was probably decorated with the signs of the Zodiac. The Tower of Babel is described as "reaching unto heaven" which probably means that it was so built and decorated as to imitate

and represent heaven. This ungodly ambition on the part of man probably stemmed from a perverted study of the heavenly bodies. There is a right and a wrong way to study the heavenly luminaries as expressing the signs of God's purpose, as Jeremiah warned (see Jer. 10:2).

*Seasons* relate to the times of the years as governed by the relationship of the earth to the sun, providing for summer, autumn, winter and spring. The word is *mowada*, and signifies "appointed times". The word is used in regard to the Hebrew festivals, and is translated *feasts* in Lev. 23:2 and elsewhere. Many of those festivals synchronised with spring and harvest, and were identified with those times of the year. Hence the sun, moon and stars, shining as lamps in the dark vault of heaven, were established for "signs" and "seasons" and are expressive of Yahweh's purpose "at the appointed time".

#### VERSE 15

**"And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so"** — The literal rendering is "light-bearers" (v. 14). The literal sun and moon act as such. They are also used symbolically for Christ and the Ecclesia. Christ is described as "the sun of righteousness" (Mal. 4:2), and whilst on earth declared that he was "the light of the world" (John 8:12). Whilst he is absent, "night" reigns on the earth (John 9:4-5). But as the moon casts its silvery glow over the darkened earth, so the Ecclesia has been elevated into the "heavens in Christ" (Eph. 1:3), that it may "give light upon the earth." So Paul exhorts: "Be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life" (Phil. 2:15-16).

The natural teaches the spiritual in the creation of God.

#### VERSE 16

**"And God made two great lights"** — Critics of the Bible point to an apparent contradiction here. God had commanded

light to shine on the first day; and had divided each day into day and night (implying revolutions of the earth around the sun), and yet, on the fourth day, "made two great lights to rule day and night." Can there be light without the sun? the sceptic triumphantly enquires. Most certainly there can! We have it today when we switch on the electric light, and turn night into day. The light source is there, even though the switch has not been activated. What mortal man can do, God can more effectively accomplish.

Did the sun pre-exist before the fourth day? We believe that it did. We see no reason to differ from the exposition of *Elpis Israel*, pp. 12, 13:

"On the first day, light was caused to shine through the darkness, and disclose the face of the waters; on the second, the atmosphere called Heaven was formed, by which the fog was enabled to float in masses above the deep; on the third, the waters were gathered together into seas, and the dry land, called the *Earth* appeared. It was then clothed with verdure, and with fruit and forest trees, preparatory to the introduction of herbivorous creatures to inhabit it. On the fourth day, the expanded atmosphere became transparent, and the shining orbs of the universe could be seen from the surface of the earth. Our globe was then placed in such astronomical relation to them as to be subjected by their influences to the vicissitudes of day and night, summer and winter; and that they might serve for signs, and for years. Thus, the sun, moon, and stars which God had made, by giving the earth's axis a certain inclination to the plane of the ecliptic, became diffusive of the most genial influences over the land and sea. It was now a fit and beautiful abode for animals of every kind. The dwelling-place was perfected, well aired, and gloriously illuminated by the lights of heaven; food was abundantly provided; and the mansional estate waited only a joyous tenantry to be complete".

This exposition is endorsed by the narrative in Genesis which does not say that God "made two great lights" on the fourth day, but that, on that day, He "made them

to rule the day and the night." In other words, He appointed their position and influence in relation to the earth.

In that regard, it should be noted that the verb used in v. 16 is different from that used in v. 1. There the word is *bara*, to create; here it is *asah* which bears the meaning of appoint, as well as to form. The verb occurs in Psalm 104:19:

"He appointed (*asah*) the moon for seasons". Using the same meaning here, we conclude: "God appointed two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night."

Again, Brother Thomas comments:

"The Mosaic account is not a revelation to the inhabitants of other orbs remote from the earth, of the formation of the boundless universe; but to man as a constituent of the terrestrial system. This will explain why light is said to have been created four days before the sun, moon and stars. To an observer on the earth, this was the *order of their appearance*; and in relation to him a *primary creation*, though absolutely pre-existent for millions of ages before the Adamic era. The *duration* of the earth's revolutions round the sun previous to the work of the first day is not revealed; but the evidences produced by that strata of our globe show that the period was long continued" (*Elpis Israel*, p. 10).

The theory of Evolution challenges the teaching of the Bible on Creation, and though it remains but a theory and lacks proof, is eagerly adopted by the materialistic modern world which refuses to acknowledge any responsibility towards God. To accept the Bible account, is to endorse the reality of a Creator; and when that is done, there is a tacit acknowledgement that He should be respected, listened to, and obeyed. Sophisticated mankind does not want to do that, and so attempts to explain Creation in terms that leave out God. This, we believe, is the reason why there is such a preponderance of evolutionists in scientific and educational establishments, and an effective monopoly of evolutionist opinion in modern textbooks. In turn, this has led to a Theistic theory of evolution that is popular in some religious



circles, and, unfortunately, has found favour among a few philosophical Christadelphians.

There is no need to feel ashamed of the doctrine of Creation. Granted the existence of a Creator, it is more logical than the theory of evolution. To imagine that the wonderful, complex Creation about us came about by mere chance from nothing at all is to propose a theory that demands more credulity than anything advanced by Scripture, including the most remarkable of miracles. Every aspect of biology (the scientific field in which the theory of evolution flourishes most) can be explained in the terms of Bible Creation more easily than in those of the theory of evolution which still lacks many "missing links!"

If any doubt this, we direct their attention to the textbook on Biology, specially written for schools by scientists who believe that God created life upon the earth in six diurnal days about 6,000 years ago. The 548 page book, entitled: *Biology: A Search for Order in Complexity*. The preface to this textbook includes the following comments:

"The majority of modern biologists prefer the evolutionary philosophy of origins as the explanation of the factual data of biology. In fact, many have been so confident in this position that they have even insisted that evolution is a fact of science. But this assertion has never been proved and in fact, in the very nature of things, is quite incapable of even being tested.

"There also exists today a significant body of biologists and other scientists who are convinced that special creation provides a more reasonable and satisfying philosophy of origins than evolution. Many of these men are members of the Creation Research Society, an organisation of approximately 350 scientists (with at least the M.S. Degree, and representing most of the disciplines in the physical and biological sciences) dedicated to research and publication in support of creation versus evolution as the most likely explanation of origins".

"**The greater light to rule the day**"  
— The Hebrew, *meowr* (singular form of

*meourouth*, v. 14) is the same word used for the light of the lampstand in the Tabernacle — Exod. 25:6; Lev. 24:2; Num. 4:9, 16. The function of this greater light, the sun, was to reign as a monarch; for it was appointed to "rule the day." The Psalmist refers to the sun as a "bridegroom" and a "warrior" emerging from obscurity and dominating all under its influence (Psalm 19:5-6). The sun, as the great ruler of the heavens, figuratively represents Yahweh (Psa. 84:11), and, the Lord Jesus Christ as the great ruler of the Millennial Heavens. Thus the throne of David is said to be as enduring as "the sun before Me" (Psa. 89:36). David, anticipating the reign of his greater Son upon his throne, declared: "He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds" (2 Sam. 23:4); and Malachi predicted: "The Sun of righteousness will rise with healing in his wings" (Mal. 4:2). John described the Lord as "the true light" (John 1:9); and in discoursing with his disciples, Jesus declared: "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). Again, on another occasion, he declared: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (John 9:4-5). Figuratively, night came when the Lord departed into heaven, and day will dawn when he returns therefrom. As the sun rules the day, destroying darkness, and creating light, so will the Lord at his future advent. He will destroy the works of darkness, and will reveal the light of knowledge, bringing warmth, joy and life to mankind.

The sun was appointed to this position on the fourth day, and at the conclusion of the fourth millennium after Creation, the Lord Jesus, as the "light of the world" made his appearance among men.

"**And the lesser light to rule the night**" — The moon is the figure of the Ecclesia, the bride of Christ, described as being "fair as the moon" (Song 6:10). What a wonderfully appropriate symbol! The moon has no light of its own, but is entirely dependent upon the light of the

sun, which it reflects from out of the darkness of the surrounding heavens. It is a satellite of the earth, a small piece of that planet, separated from its bulk, and shining with the glory of the absent sun. It is described as "a faithful witness in the heaven" (Psa. 89:37). In what way is it such? Its pure white light, shining brightly from out of the darkened heavens, testifies to the existence of the sun when it is absent. So does the Ecclesia in its witness concerning the coming of Christ in his absence. The moon reflects only a seventh of the full glory of the sun, as the saints reflect only a portion of the fulness of the glory of Christ. Even the fact that the moon is constantly waxing and waning has its lesson to teach. It speaks of the spiritual condition of the Ecclesia either on the increase or decrease. There is both warning and hope in this. The moon at its full speaks of the Ecclesia in the full glory of spiritual virility and light. But the moon does not stop in that condition, it gradually wanes. And that has been the inevitable record of the Ecclesia, whether represented by Israel as a nation, or by the various communities that have been established out of the Gentiles. Thus, at times, when the Ecclesia is "at its full," let us remember that it is no time for complacency, for the light may wane. And when the Ecclesia is weak, and its light fading, let us remember that the moon does not remain in that condition, and so play our part in developing the Ecclesia to the full.

The moon is frequently used symbolically in Scripture. Consider the beautiful symbolism of Isaiah 30:26: "Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that Yahweh bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." In that day, the bride of Christ shall shine forth in the full glory of her Beloved; whilst his glory shall be complete, as "sevenfold." The verse can only be interpreted symbolically, for if it applied to the literal sun and moon, and taught that the sun would be seven times hotter than today, life would be completely destroyed from off the surface of the globe.

Meanwhile the moon rules the night. It does so in a literal sense: for the tides of the sea are governed by the joint action of the sun and moon: and the ebb and flow of the tides are essential to life upon the globe. What of the spiritual significance? The seas represent nations and peoples (Isa. 57:20; Rev. 17:15), and the ebb and flow of such (see Acts 17:26), are "for your sakes" (the elects) (2 Cor. 4:15). The rise and fall of nations are according to the purpose of Yahweh in relation to the saints.

**"He made the stars also"** — Moses is not describing the act of creation, but the appointment of these heavenly bodies as "signs" (v. 14). Stars are figuratively used in Scripture for princes. Thus those who turn many to righteousness, are promised that they will shine in the political heavens of the future "as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3). The seed of Abraham is described as "the stars for multitude," and, though no man can number the stars, we are told that Yahweh has done so, and called them all by names (Psalm 147:4). He knows the number of the redeemed; and knows each one so intimately as to "call them all by names." Paul uses the stars as symbolical of the saints, and declares that "one star differeth from another star in glory" (1 Cor. 15:41). Thus Christ described in his parable how that greater rewards will be given to those who have laboured more assiduously and effectively in his service (Luke 19:16-26).

#### VERSE 17

**"And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth"** — This verse relates to the "two great lights" of v. 16. They are light-bearers designed to illuminate the earth. That, also, is the function of Christ and the Ecclesia as the symbolic sun and moon. When an Ecclesia fails to give light, it fails in its essential function. What would we think of the sun or the moon if they failed to shine and reveal the beauty of the creation.

#### VERSE 18

**"And to rule over the day and over the night"** — The natural sun and moon

exercise dominion over the day and night; and so also do the figurative sun and moon. See note on v. 16 above.

**“And to divide the light from the darkness”** — The sun destroys darkness as Christ will destroy the gloom of ignorance and error at his return. The Ecclesia should do the same now; clearly discriminating between truth and error, and the ways of righteousness and wickedness. Paul wrote: “Ye, brethren, are not in darkness ... ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness” (1 Thess. 5:4-5); “walk as children of light” (Eph. 5:8).

**“And God saw that it was good”** — He saw that it was good that the light of the sun dominated and destroyed darkness, no matter whether it streamed forth direct from that orb, or was reflected from the moon. In a spiritual application of this fact, John comments: “And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended (lit. “to lay hold of” so as to destroy) it not” (John 1:5). The function of light is to rule over darkness and to destroy it, and it was this that God proclaimed to be good. The Ecclesial “moon” must see that it reflects sufficient light of the sun in order to do that; for otherwise it is not “good.” “If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness” (Matt. 6:23).

#### VERSE 19

**“And the evening and the morning were the fourth day”** — Whereas Day Three witnessed *separation*, Day Four saw *dispersion* in the light that streamed from the sun and moon to illuminate the earth. In the antitype, this was fulfilled in the proclamation of the Gospel to all the world (Acts 28:30-31; Col. 1:23). Christ appeared at the conclusion of the fourth millennium from Creation, and with his manifestation in the earth, the light of truth shone forth with greater power than it ever had before.

#### The Fifth Day: Aquatic and Aerial Animals — vv. 20-23

*On the fifth day, there was a further extension of the Divine work: the sea*

*began to swarm with life, and the singing of birds was heard in the firmament above. Elsewhere in the Word, aquatic and aerial animals are used symbolically of Gentiles. In accordance with the Divine purpose foreshadowed in the six days of creation, the fifth millennium saw the Gospel extended to the Gentiles. It is significant that the number five is always associated with grace. In the mercy of Yahweh, the scope of His salvation was broadened during the fifth millennium from creation, to incorporate Gentiles in His scheme of redemption.*

#### VERSE 20

**“And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life”** — This reads as though the habitants of the deep were made out of water! However, the words “bring forth abundantly” are translated from one word, *sheretz*, signifying “to swarm”. Darby renders: “Let the waters swarm”. The RV margin gives: “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures.” The aquatic animals were made out of the “dust of the ground” in common with all other earthly creatures, and the reference in Genesis is not to their formation, but to their extraordinary fertility, which continues to be a phenomenon of fish life ever since. The oceans provide a tremendous source of food for humanity; countless millions of fish are extracted therefrom every year, and yet the seas continue to swarm with life, except where pollution has destroyed its potential. In blessing Ephraim and Manasseh, Jacob said, “Let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth” (Gen. 48:16). The literal Hebrew, as expressed in the margin is, “As fishes do increase.”

The word “moving” is again the word *sheretz*, signifying “swarming” or creatures that swarm. “Creature that hath life” is translated from *chayah nephesh*, living souls. Thus the phrase can literally be rendered: “Let the waters swarm with a swarm of living souls.” In *Elpis Israel*, p. 32, Brother Thomas comments on this in refutation of the theory of immortal soulism. He writes:

"A man then is a body of life in the sense of his being an animal, or living creature — *nephesh chayiah adam*. As a natural man, he has no other pre-eminence over the creatures God made than what his peculiar organization confers upon him. Moses makes no distinction between him and them; for he styles them all living souls, breathing the breath of lives. Thus, literally rendered, he says, 'The Elohim said, the waters shall produce abundantly *sheretz chayiah nephesh*, the reptile living soul'; and again, '*kal nephesh chayiah erameshat*, every living soul creeping.' In another verse 'Let the earth bring forth *nephesh chayiah*, the living soul after its kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth,' etc.; and '*lekol rumesh ol eretz asher bu nephesh chayiah*, to every thing creeping upon the earth which (*has*) in it living breath' (Gen. 1:20,21,24,30), that is breath of lives. And lastly, 'Whatever Adam called *nephesh chayiah*, that was the name thereof' (Gen. 2:19)."

On this evidence, fish, birds and animals possess "living souls" in common with man, demonstrating that the theory of the so-called immortal soul is a figment of the imagination, and unknown to Scripture. For a sound exposition concerning "souls" see *Eureka*, vol. 2, pp. 246-253.

**"And fowl that may fly above the earth"** — Notice the marginal rendition: "Let fowl fly above the earth". The verse describes the intentions of God, and not His creative acts by which they were brought into being. His intentions were, that the ocean should teem with fish-life; and that birds should fly above. The A.V. implies that the water would produce fish and birds, but that is corrected by the Hebrew text, as the margin shows.

**"In the open firmament of heaven"** — Literally the verse reads: "Let the waters swarm (with) swarms of living souls, and fowl that may fly about over the earth, over the expanse of the heavens" (see *The Interlinear Hebrew Greek English Bible*). The verse describes the great multiplication of life, particularly in areas previously uninhabited. It foreshadows the great increase in world population, and the age of discovery and extension that was a

feature of life in the fifth millennium of the history of the world. The proclamation of the Gospel was no longer limited to Jews, but was extended to Gentiles on all sides.

#### VERSE 21

**"And God created"** — The verb is *bara* as in v. 1, and describes how God brought about His intention expressed in v. 20.

**"Great whales"** — *Tanninim*, from a root, *tan*, signifying to elongate, or stretch out (Strong); and thus indicating the size of the creature thus created. The R.V. renders it "sea-monsters," and, as the word has been variously translated throughout the Bible, it is a general term for large sea creatures including whales, crocodiles, and so forth.

**"And every living creature"** — This term (*nephesh chayiah*) includes all other aquatic forms of life.

**"That moveth"** — This is the distinction between the plant life created on the third day, and the animal life now brought into being.

**"Which the waters brought forth abundantly"** — This can be literally rendered: "With which the waters swarmed." The waters did not "bring them forth," for they were made of the "dust of the earth"; but the waters were caused to swarm with all kinds of aquatic life.

**"After their kind"** — This is a very important statement, and disposes at once with all variation of evolutionary theories.

There was no provision of transition from one specie to another, but all brought forth "after their kind." This statement provides no room for divergence as mutants from a common ancestor, but shows that each form of life was independently created. However there is scope for development within a species, so that it is possible, by breeding, to improve the quality of a particular species of animal, but a horse remains a horse, a sheep remains a sheep, a dog remains a dog, even in spite of cross-breeding.

**"And every winged fowl after his kind"** — See v. 20. The "every fowl of the air" of Ch. 2:19.

**“God saw that it was good”** — He designed Creation that the earth might be inhabited; and His original act provided a balance in nature that man, in his greed and ignorance, has destroyed. By very wantonness man has destroyed many animals originally created, and today the continued existence of some of those that remain is in jeopardy through human greed and indifference.

**VERSE 22**

**“And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth”** — Multiplication and extension was commenced on this fifth day. See note on v.20 above.

**VERSE 23**

**“And the evening and the morning were the fifth day”** — In the antitype this “day” points to the epoch of the first millennium after the introduction of Christ to the world. The proclamation of the Gospel became more widespread. It was also a period of great multiplication of population as well as of increasing exploration and discovery.

**Sixth Day: Terrestrial Animals****— Vv. 24-27**

*The sixth day witnessed the creation of animals leading up to man. Its climax was the appearance of man “in the image and likeness of God,” followed by the formation of woman, with the decree: “Let them have dominion.” The conclusion of the sixth day witnessed a marriage between the two thus created, that they might be united as one, and exercise dominion over the lower creation. This final creative act foreshadowed the intentions of Yahweh at the completion of the sixth millennium from Creation, when, again, there will be a marriage between Christ and his Bride, and they, united as one, will exercise dominion over the mortal inhabitants of the earth. We shall see that this last creative act, and its accompanying divine declaration, forms the basis of God’s purpose as proclaimed in the Gospel, and that it is frequently alluded to*

*throughout Scripture.*

**VERSE 24**

**“And God said, Let the earth bring forth”** — Like the plants (v. 12), they are said to be produced by the earth, their bodies being part of earth’s substance; this could not be said of fishes in relation to the water, and hence a different form of expression had to be employed in v. 20.

**“The living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so”** — This is *nephesh chayiah*, as in v. 21 (see notes), and is here a generic name for *land* animals, being restricted by what precedes: “living creatures that spring from the earth.” Three classifications are given in v. 25.

**VERSE 25**

**“And God made”** — The verb is not *bara*, create, but *asah*, to make, do, or appoint. There are three appointments in the verse: wild animals, domestic animals, and reptiles.

**“The beast of the earth after his kind”** — Literally “living thing” of the earth (Heb. *chayiah*), and generally understood of wild beasts as opposed to tame, or domestic beasts.

**“And cattle after their kind”** — The word *behemah* has a wider meaning than our term cattle, and doubtless refers to larger, domestic quadrupeds. It is from a root signifying “to be dumb,” thus dumb domestic animals in contrast to man.

**“And every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good”** — The Hebrew *remes*, rendered “creeping thing,” refers to reptiles, snakes, lizards, worms, and such like.

**VERSE 26**

**“And God said, Let us make man”** — As we have noted on pp. 26-28, the plural noun *Elohim* is sometimes used with a singular verb, and on other occasions, with a plural verb. The use of both singular and plural verbs in relation to this plural noun is significant. It indicates that though the *Elohim* are many, and united as

one, they also are capable of independent decision and action. Nevertheless, the power they exercise, and the glory they manifest, are from One, even Yahweh. In the verse before us the verb is in the plural, indicating a plurality of agents. The use of the plural pronoun "us" is misunderstood by Trinitarians as supporting their teaching; but there is nothing in its use to denote a trinity of agents any more than any other plurality. The reference to Creation found in Job 38:7 would suggest that the "us" relates to the "morning stars" and "sons of God" who shouted for joy at the glory of Creation. A similar use of language in relation to the Elohim is found in Gen. 3:22; 11:7; Isa. 6:8 and elsewhere. In Genesis 3:22 the statement is recorded: "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil." The man could not become as one of the Trinity; but he could become as one of the angels, for it is obvious that they gained their present exalted status through probation. Christ promised that the approved shall become "equal unto the angels" in the Age to come (Luke 20:36). In Psalm 8:5, the same word *Elohim* is translated "angels." And a comparison of Numbers 12:8 with Acts 7:38, or of Genesis 32:30 with Hosea 12:3-4, will show that the word *Elohim*, translated "God" relates to the angels, the representatives of the great Increate.

**"In our image"** — That is, in the image of the Elohim whom the Father used in the work of creation. See the section in *Elpis Israel* entitled: *Man In the Image And Likeness Of The Elohim*, pp. 37-41. The word *tselem* means a shadow, or an image, a likeness. The word is reproduced in Daniel 2 in relation to the image, and thus relates to form or appearance. Genesis 5:3 states that "Adam begat a son in his likeness after his image" which illustrates its use here.

Man was made "in the image" of the Elohim, and inasmuch as they are "sons of God," the image is divine (though the nature of man is not). James makes the point that "we are made after the similitude of God," "even the Father" (James 3:9). Of the Lord Jesus Christ also, we read that he is "the express image of His

(God's) person" (Heb. 1:3). Yahweh has corporeal existence in heaven.

**"After our likeness"** — This is a very important statement teaching that man was created in the divine image and likeness, to reflect the divine character. Likeness is *demuth* in Hebrew, from a root *damah*, to bring together, to compare. It is translated "likeness" in Ezekiel 1:5, and is there used in regard to the cherubim. In Isaiah 40:18, 25; 46:5, it is used in connection with Yahweh. A consideration of these passages will show that *damuth* defines capacity, authority and status. Man was made in the image of the Father, given a status similar to His over creation and granted a capacity to reflect the divine character. Therefore, a man's character should conform to his Godlike shape, as James suggests (see James 3:9). But whereas Adam was made in "the image and likeness of the Elohim," the descendants of Adam inherit the consequences of the Fall. Seth was "in the likeness after the image" of Adam (Gen. 5:3), and not that of God. Therefore, since the Fall it has been impossible for man to reflect the divine excellence in its fullness, and this has required the formation of a New Man who should exactly reveal the divine image and likeness. This Christ accomplished by conquering the flesh (Rom. 1:3; Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:15). Brother Thomas writes:

"While *image*, then, hath reference to form or shape, 'likeness' hath regard to mental constitution, or *capacity*... Adam's mental capacity enabled him to comprehend and receive spiritual ideas, which moved him to veneration, hope, conscientiousness, the expression of his views, affections, and so forth. Seth was capable of the like display of intellectual and moral phenomena; and of an assimilation of character to that of his father. He was therefore in the likeness as well as in the image of Adam; and, in the same sense, they were both 'after the likeness of the Elohim.'

"But, though Adam was 'made in the image and after the likeness' of the 'Holy Ones,' the similitude has been so greatly marred, that his posterity present but a faint representation of either. The almost

uncontrolled and continuous operation of 'the law of sin and death' (Rom. 7:23), styled by philosophers 'the law of nature,' which is an indwelling and inseparable constituent of our present economy, has exceedingly deformed the image, and effaced the likeness of God, which man originally presented. It required, therefore, the appearance of a New Man, in whom the image and likeness should re-appear, as in the beginning. This was 'the man Christ Jesus,' whom Paul styles 'the last Adam.' He is 'the *Image of the invisible God*' (Col. 1:15), 'the effulgent mirror of the glory, and the exact likeness of His person' (Heb. 1:3)" (*Elpis Israel*, pp. 39-40).

**"And let them have dominion"** — It was the Creator's intention that man should exercise dominion over the rest of His creation, but sin delayed the attainment of that objective. Nevertheless it was never abandoned. The decree was quoted by David after his defeat of Goliath (Psalm 8:6), to teach that the power that enabled him to gain the victory over the giant would likewise triumph over sin, and bring about the promised dominion at last. This triumph was won by the Lord Jesus (Heb. 2:14), and in obtaining it he laid the foundation for the exercise of dominion over the rest of creation by those who are his. In Hebrews 2:8, Paul quotes Psalm 8:6, and comments that the fulfilment is not yet accomplished. This Elohist decree, expressed the Divine will and purpose in creation. God designed that mankind should be found in the image and likeness of the Elohim, and exercising dominion over all lower forms of creation. This dominion was partly exercised before sin entered the world (Gen. 2:19); but the incidence of sin prevented its complete manifestation. Nevertheless, God has not abandoned His purpose. The ultimate accomplishment of the decree will be at that time when the Psalms will be fulfilled: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heaven for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Psa. 2:8); "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Psa. 72:8).

Complete dominion over creation implies a state of equality with the Elohim on the part of those exercising it. Eve grasped at this, and lost it (Gen. 3:16). Her attitude is contrasted by Paul with the willing submission of the Lord Jesus, who, recognising that "equality with God" was "not a thing to be grasped at," subjected himself to the Divine will, and received a name and status above all others.

In this decree: "Have thou dominion," the Gospel was preached to Adam and Eve so clearly, that the declaration forms the basis of much of New Testament exposition. See *Have Thou Dominion* (p. 52).

**"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"** — Whilst Adam and Eve represent the Second Adam and his multitudinous bride, the lower creation represents the mortal populations over which the former are to exercise dominion. The symbolic use of fish, fowl, animals, etc., for mankind, is frequently found in Scripture. Jesus told Peter that he would make him a fisher of men; and in the parable of the haul of fish, the different classes of men who are caught in the Gospel net are represented by different types of fish. It is significant, that in the covenant that God made with Noah, and which reaches forward to the millennium, He specifically included all who were in the Ark, both Noah's family (representative of Christ's family), "and every living creature of all flesh" (Gen. 9:15). Obviously, the lower creation in the Ark represented the mortal populations in the millennium over whom Christ and his glorified followers will exercise dominion. God did not enter into covenant relationship with the animals as such, but did so on the basis of their typical significance. Thus, the formation of Adam and Eve "after the image and likeness of the Elohim," their marriage together, and the decree of dominion granted them, provided a typical foreshadowing of the Divine purpose with mankind. At the conclusion of the sixth millennium, there will be a Man (the Lord Jesus) and a Woman (his multitudinous Bride) united

in marriage, and they will be granted dominion over Yahweh's creation figurative of the nations (e.g. see Dan. 4:11-12, 20-22).

### VERSE 27

**"So God created"** — This is the third and last time that this word, *bara*, occurs in this chapter (see vv. 1,21). In each case it implies something different from that stated before, and certainly does not suggest continuity with that which previously existed, as evolutionists suggest. On the contrary, its emphasis is on a new departure caused by creation. In Numbers 16:30, the words, "Make a new thing" represent in literal Hebrew, "Create a creation." There is no room for evolutionary development from the lower animals in the declaration of Genesis 1:27. Any such theory whether Theistic evolution or otherwise is at variance with the Word of God.

**"Man in his own image"** — It is important to notice the difference in the pronouns of this verse. The personal, masculine "him" denotes man who is in the image of God, the plural "them" is a development from the original man, as explained in chapter 2. It is man who is in the image of God, and who should exercise dominion over the female. His status in his family is the status of Yahweh in the family of God. Paul taught that God's position should be made obvious, particularly in worship, at which time the status of man should be acknowledged. He commented: "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head (i.e. in worship), forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man" (1 Cor. 11:7-9).

The work of the sixth day prefigured the crowning work of God in His new creation. In the old creation, it saw man created in the image of God. In the new, it will see the image of Christ perfectly manifested in the believer: "He shall come to be glorified in his saints" (2 Thess. 1:10); "When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John

3:2). As the Bride of Christ, believers have been predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's son (Rom. 8:29), as he is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15). Meanwhile, through the power of the Spirit-word (the same word that went forth at creation), Christ is being formed in us (Gal. 4:19).

**"In the image of God created he him; male and female created he them"** — This statement tells us the second of the two fundamental facts about mankind. The first is that man is made in the image of God; the second is that he was in two sexes. God had two main purposes in creation: first, that it should *reflect* His glory; and second, that the whole earth should be *filled with this glory*. The creation of Adam in the image and likeness of God made the first possible; and the power of reproduction made the second possible. However, sin intervened to delay the manifestation of the full purpose of God.

The creation of man and woman also established a relationship between both on a far higher level than that existing between the male and female of the lower creation, as we will see when we discuss this more in detail in chapter 2. The Apostle Paul, in expounding upon this relationship of husband and wife in Eph. 5:25-33, shows that it should reflect the affection, love, mutual confidence and status of their spiritual counterparts in Christ and his Bride.

Christ cited the verse before us in proof of the sanctity of marriage (Matt. 19:4; Mk. 10:6). For him the statement implied the life-long, exclusive relationship and mutual faithfulness of husband and wife in the marriage state.

### VERSE 28

**"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it"** — It was not God's intention that man should be alone, and hence the command of this verse. In a spiritual sense, the Bride of Christ is likewise commanded to "be fruitful and multiply." "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples," the Lord told the



Apostles (John 15:8). And though it was said of Jesus "Who shall declare his generation?" when he was "cut off out of the land of the living," it was also decreed: "He shall see his seed ... and the pleasure of Yahweh shall prosper in his hand" (Isa. 53:8, 10).

Man was told to "replenish the earth, and subdue it." The Hebrew verb, *maleh*, signifies "to fill," and not necessarily "to re-fill." Nevertheless, it does not exclude the latter idea, as is implied by its use when Noah was told to "multiply and replenish the earth" (Gen. 9:1). It could be, as we have suggested in our comment upon v. 2, that there was a pre-Adamic creation that was brought to its end before the work of the six days as described in Genesis 1. Man also was told to "subdue the earth." His fall has prevented the suc-

cessful accomplishment of this command, though he instinctively seeks to carry it out, as, by exploration or invention, he pushes further back the barriers that hem him in. The earth will not be properly subdued until the Lord returns to accomplish it and fulfil this decree.

**"And have dominion over the fish of the sea, and the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth"** — The verse limits this to the lower creation. Man has no God-given dominion over his fellow man. Concerning man's insignificance in God's sight in contradiction to the claims of philosophy which stresses the importance of the individual, see Isaiah 40:15-17; James 3:14-15; Psa. 144:3-4; 103:14-16; Dan. 4; James 1:9-10; Eccl. 3:18-20.

### **"HAVE THOU DOMINION" — Genesis 1:28**

Adam and Eve were promised "dominion" over the lower creation, and this was partly fulfilled when the various species of animals were brought before Adam to be named (Gen. 2:19).

But those same animals are used symbolically in the Bible for various species of humanity, and therefore the decree typically looks forward to the time when the "second Adam" will exercise dominion over the mortal population of the Age to Come.

Before they could exercise this dominion, the human pair had to show themselves obediently subject to the will of God. Instead, Eve grasped at equality with God and sinned, and Adam followed her in her presumption (Gen. 3:6); the result was the punishment of mortality, and a delay in the attainment of the promised dominion. The attainment of dominion now had to await the conquest of sin and death. And in this the Lord Jesus was victorious in his contest with such (Heb. 2:14).

In contrast to the action of Adam and Eve, he humbly submitted to the will of his Father, even unto the death of the cross. But that was also the moment of his triumph, and accordingly, there was given him "a name... above every name" (Phil. 2:5-9). For what purpose? That he should exercise the dominion promised from the beginning. Paul thus continued: "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven (immortalised saints elevated to the heavenlies in Christ upon earth — see Eph. 1:3), and things in earth, and things under the earth (mortals, figuratively the lower creation consisting of leaders and subjects), and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10-11). The resurrection and glorification of the Lord Jesus comprised the firstfruits of the promised dominion (Heb. 2:8).

The decree of Genesis 1:28, therefore, is not a matter of mere passing

interest relating only to Adam and Eve, but is fundamental to the Divine purpose expressed in the Gospel, and to be fulfilled by the Lord Jesus as “the second Adam”, and his glorified Bride, as the second Eve (2 Cor. 11:1-3), in the future Age.

The decree as a whole is typically expressive of the purpose of God in the Gospel:

1. *“Be fruitful and multiply”* — This decree will be fulfilled by Christ when he shall “see his seed” (Isa. 53:10) in the great company of the redeemed (Rev. 7:9-12), elsewhere described as “the children God hath given me” (Heb. 2:13). The “mother” through whom these children have been brought to birth is the Ecclesia described as the second Eve (2 Cor. 11:2), the “mother of us all” (Gal. 4:26).

2. *“Replenish the earth and subdue it”* — Antotypically this will be accomplished after the purging fires of Armageddon and its aftermath have cleansed the earth. The earth will be replenished and subdued at the “times of the restitution of all things” (Acts 3:21).

3. *“And have dominion”* — Dominion will be exercised by the second Adam and his multitudinous and glorified Bride in the Age to Come: “I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession” (Psa. 2:8).

4. *“Over fish, fowl, beasts”* — In Scripture these are used symbolically to represent mortal nations and peoples (Cp. Dan. 4:12). Therefore, in the typical foreshadowing of Genesis, the decree proclaiming dominion over them points forward to the subjugation of the nations in the Age to Come.

The incidence of sin and death in Eden, however, delayed the attainment of the promised dominion. The exercise of this power had to await the conquest of sin and death. The warfare and victory were typically dramatised in David’s contest and triumph over Goliath (1 Samuel 17). He recognised this as typical of the greater victory to be won by his greater Son, through which the promised dominion would be attained. He gave expression to this in the words of Psalm 8:5-7 composed after he had slain Goliath and delivered Israel from the oppression of the Philistines:

“Thou hast made him (the Son of Man) a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field ...”

These words are prophetic of the time when Yahweh’s Name is “excellent in all the earth” (vv. 1,9). Accordingly, Paul, in quoting the Psalm, comments: “But now we *see not yet all things put under him*. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour” (Heb. 2:8,9).

The fulfilment of the Psalm, awaits the Lord’s return and the establishment of the Kingdom of God. David’s victory over Goliath was a triumph of faith. As he confidently strode across the field of Elah to do battle with the giant, he represented the antitypical David, the Good Shepherd, whilst Goliath represented sin in the flesh in all of its various manifestations both personal and political. The defiant words that David flung at Goliath when they con-

fronted each other are significant in view of the decree proclaimed at creation, and the work of redemption wrought by Christ in fulfilment thereof. David told Goliath:

“This day will Yahweh deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; (the conquest of sin will deliver mortals from its domination in the future Age), that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly (*gahal* — the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek, *ecclesia*) shall know that Yahweh saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is Yahweh’s, and He will give you into our hands” (1 Sam. 17:46-47).

Goliath, as the seed of the serpent, was “bruised in the head” by David, a seed of the woman, and significantly, after the battle, David took the head of his enemy, and buried it at Jerusalem, giving rise to the name Golgotha — “the place of a skull”.

### **The Application Of The Decree In the New Testament**

The decree of Genesis 1:28, therefore, is fundamental to the purpose of God in the earth, and, accordingly, becomes the prevailing theme of the New Testament. It is alluded to, or directly quoted, throughout the Gospels, the Epistles and the Revelation, more than any other Old Testament Scripture.

The Lord quoted it to express his confidence in the outcome of his impending contest with the Goliath of his day. To the Apostles he declared: “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

He was referring to his impending death and resurrection: the triumph through which he would “overcome the world” and exercise the promised dominion. He saw this as the fulfilment of the decree of Gen. 1:28. Shortly after he addressed these words to the Apostles, he prayed to the Father:

“Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee; as Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given him” (John 17:1-2).

The word “power” is *exousia* in Greek, and signifies jurisdiction or dominion. “All flesh” is a Hebraism which is inclusive of the brute creation (see Gen. 6:12; 7:15, 16, 21; 8:17; 9:11, 15, 16, 17). The statement of Christ’s prayer, anticipating the impending victory over sin and death, acknowledges the “dominion” that would be granted over the “lower creation” in contrast to the “eternal life” that would be given to “as many as God gave him”, and who would constitute the antitypical Eve who was given to Adam. Hence the Lord’s prayer expresses his thanks for the fulfilment of the promised dominion granted in the decree of Gen. 1:28.

When the Lord triumphantly rose from the dead and was glorified, he again referred to the decree. He told the Apostles: “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:18).

This power is expressive of the dominion promised at the epoch of creation.

### **Death Conquered — 1 Corinthians 15:27**

The decree of Genesis 1:28 is fundamental to the teaching of Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians. In 1 Cor. 15:27, he quotes Psalm 8:6 (David's comment on Gen. 1:28) to teach that the dominion promised included the conquest of death: "He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For (then follows the citation — see margin) 'He hath put all things under his feet.' But when he saith, 'all things are put under him', it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under him" (1 Cor. 15:25-27).

### **Christ's Conquest Of The Gentile Heavlies — Ephesians 1:9, 22**

The creation decree forms the basic theme of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. He quotes it to show that Christ has been promised power over the Gentile heavlies, and in anticipation thereof, he has elevated his disciples into the "heavlies" of his making (Eph. 1:3; 2:6). At present those "heavlies" are engaged in a battle of words, pitting the Gospel against the philosophy of the world, proclaiming unto the Gentile "heavlies" the "manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10). He refers to the armoured warriors of faith doing battle with "the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness" in the heavlies of Gentilism (Eph. 6:12-13). But this is also anticipatory of the time when complete dominion will be exercised by Christ and the elect in fulfilment of the decree of Genesis.

Therefore, in Ephesians 1:9,22, he quotes Psalm 8:6 which is based on Genesis 1:28:

"Having made known unto us the (secret) of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, He might gather together in one 'all things' (quoting Psalm 8:6) in Christ, both which are in the heavlies (see mg.), and which are on earth; even in him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance". "He hath 'put all things under his feet' (citing Psa. 8:6), and gave him to be the head over all things (i.e. dominion) to the ecclesia" (Eph. 1:9-11, 22).

The Epistle refers to two mutually antagonistic "heavlies" or political powers: those in Christ (see Eph. 1:3; 2:6, mg.), and those in the world (Eph. 6:12). There is a state of warfare between these two opposing systems so Paul wrote: "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in the heavlies" (Eph. 6:12, mg.).

At present, the warfare is one of doctrine (Eph. 3:9), and for that purpose, the soldier in Christ must be properly equipped (Eph. 6:13-18). But at the return of Christ, the warfare will be intensified, and will result in the Gentile heavlies being supplanted by those in Christ; at which time, the latter will exercise dominion over the former.

### **The Power To Conquer Is From Yahweh — Philippians 3:21**

Philippians 3:20-21 comprises a key passage of the Epistle. It discourses upon heavenly citizenship, the return of Christ, the change of nature to be granted the righteous and the subduing of "all things" unto the Lord Jesus.

The phrase "subdue all things" is a reference to Psalm 8:6 based upon the decree of Gen. 1:28. The conquest of Christ is changing the vile bodies of the redeemed as well as resulting "in every knee" bowing down before him. The power to do this having come from Yahweh will enable him to "subdue all things" under him, so as to exercise dominion over all. Accordingly, this Epistle also is based upon the decree of Gen. 1:28.

Why should Paul cite the creation decree as evidence of these matters? In what way does it illustrate that "our vile body" or "the body of our humiliation" must be changed?

Because the present state of human nature was conditioned by the Fall, and the fulfilment of the decree was delayed by the manifestation of sin. Adam's disobedience of the Edenic Law revealed him as unfit in that state, to exercise the promised domination. Paul declared: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God (image and likeness) thought it not robbery to be equal with God (unlike Eve — see Gen. 3:5-6) ... but became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him ... that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth (the lower creation typical of mortal nations in the Age to Come)" (Phil. 2:5-11).

Concerning the antitypical Eve, the Bride of Christ, he wrote: "For our conversation (citizenship — R.V.) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to 'subdue all things' unto himself" (Phil. 3:20-21).

### **The Means Of Victory: The Provision Of A Firstborn — Col. 1:15-23**

Reference to the creation decree is basic also to the theme of the Epistle to the Colossians. In chapter 1:15-23, Christ is described as "the image of the invisible God" recalling the description of the original creation of Adam in "the image and likeness of God". The comments in *Elpis Israel* are to the point:

"'The law of nature,' which is an indwelling and inseparable constituent of our present economy, has exceedingly deformed the image, and effaced the likeness of God, which man originally presented. It required, therefore, the appearance of a New Man, in whom the image and likeness should re-appear, as in the beginning. This was 'the man Christ Jesus,' whom Paul styles 'the last Adam.' He is 'the Image of the invisible God' (Col. 1:15); 'the effulgent mirror of the glory, and the exact likeness of His person' (Heb. 1:3)" (p. 40).

Paul furthermore states that Christ is "the firstborn of every creature" (Col. 1:15), or of "all creation" as the Greek has it (see *Diaglott*). How was it possible for the Lord, who had no corporeal existence until 4,000 years after creation, to be called the "Firstborn of all creation"? Because the status of firstborn was a legal title, and not one necessarily governed by accident of birth. A younger son could be elevated to legal firstborn over his older brother, if the latter proved incompetent or unworthy of the honour (cp. Exod. 13:1-2; 22:29; Deut. 21:15-17; 1 Chron. 5:1; 26:10). The first Adam proved unworthy of this position and was ultimately supplanted in it by the second

Adam, concerning whom Yahweh had declared: "Also I will make him My firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth" (Psa. 89:27).

Consider the quotation from Col. 1:19-20 in the light of the creation decree: "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness (image and likeness of God) dwell, and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile 'all things' (Psa. 8:6) unto himself; by him I say whether they be things in earth (mortals) or in heaven (immortal rulers of the Age to Come)".

In his reference to "all things," Paul was quoting generally from Psalm 8:6 and Genesis 1:28, explaining the process by which dominion will be exercised over all.

### **The Full Extent Of The Dominion — 1 Peter 3:22**

In this passage, Peter cites the words of Christ (Matt. 28:18) which are drawn from Psalm 8:6, to illustrate the full extent of dominion today exercised by the Lord, which power he is using to bring others to glory. Peter wrote: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us ... by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject (Gen. 1:28) unto him" (1 Pet. 3:21-22).

The decree of Gen. 1:28 is thus fulfilled in Christ.

### **The Praise To Be Ascribed To The Second Adam — Rev. 5:12**

Being an extension of the creation decree of Genesis 1:28, and in the light of its background (the victory of David over Goliath), Psalm 8, reveals that the dominion promised will be attained only through warfare both personal and political. It will be established at a time when the name of Yahweh will be glorified in the earth (Psa. 8:1), and the Son of Man has been "crowned with glory and honour" (v. 5).

On the eve of the crucifixion, the Lord declared to the Father, "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4). However, as Paul points out, the prophetic requirements of Psalm 8 have not yet been fully met (Heb. 2:8-9). That time will come at the second advent of the Lord, when glory and honour will be ascribed to the Son of Man by all upon earth, as outlined in Revelation 5:9-14. There seems an echo of the words of Psalm 8 and of Genesis 1:28 in the ascription of "power" and glory expressed in Rev. 5:11-13: "I heard the voice of many angels ... saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

In this symbolic picture of future glory, the Elohim join with the lower creation in rejoicing at the dominion afforded the Son of Man, and ascribing unto him the praise due to his holy name.

The citations of Psalm 8 and Genesis 1:28 found in the New Testament sum

up the statement of the risen Lord to the two whom he met on the way to Emmaus: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" (Luke 24:26). He opened their understanding to the requirements of Scripture to that end, drawing particularly upon Moses and the Psalms (Luke 24:27, 44). This would involve an exposition of both Genesis 1:28 and Psalm 8.

### Summary

Our references to the citations and allusions of Genesis 1:28 and Psalm 8 in the New Testament are not intended to be exhaustive, and a search will reveal other applications. Each reference to it has been used in a special relationship as illustrating a particular facet of the manner in which the triumph of the Son will be established, and the scope of the dominion he shall exercise in conjunction with his Bride, the second Eve.

The references we have cited can perhaps be placed in order as expressing the following: In Ephesians: the challenge; In Philippians: the victory; In Colossians: the elevation; In Peter's Epistle: the power; In the Revelation: the glory; In 1 Corinthians: the final result: death destroyed.

### Summary of Creation — vv. 29-31

*God provides for man's continuance, and summarises the work of creation showing it to be a parable of His great purpose with mankind.*

#### VERSE 29

**"And God said, Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat"** — God graciously cares for man's needs. Originally, he was given a vegetarian diet. It was limited to "herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth," and the fruit of trees. This provided man with ample food for his need. After the Flood, Noah was told "every living thing that moveth shall be meat for you" (Gen. 9:3). From this it is thought that the antediluvians were vegetarians, and that the addition of meat in their diet came only after the Flood. But that is not necessarily so. Noah recognised the distinction of clean and unclean animals when he entered the Ark, and took more of the former than of the latter, doubtless to provide him with food. Moreover, sacrifice was offered before the Flood, and doubtless worshippers ate the flesh of the offering as was normal under the law of Moses. The limitation of a vegetarian diet was more

likely limited to before the Fall than to before the Flood. Incidentally, the word "meat" in such a context as this verse is an old English expression for "food".

#### VERSE 30

**"And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so"** — The word in the Hebrew for life is *nepshesh*, or soul, as in the margin. The verse thus teaches that all moving forms of life possessed "souls" in common with man.

#### VERSE 31

**"And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day"** — The word *tob* signifies "beautiful" so as to reflect to one's credit. That was the state of creation before the Fall, but not afterwards, God Himself being witness. The description, "very good" is never after ascribed by God concerning man. Instead, in recognition that man would go astray, Yahweh declared: "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen. 8:21). "God hath made man upright," declared Solomon (Ecc. 7:29), "but they have

sought out many inventions." All creation was affected. This is indicated in the eating habits of the lower creation. Originally, beasts, birds and reptiles possessed a vegetarian diet (Gen. 1:30), but that is not the case today, though it will be re-established in the future, when Edenic conditions will be restored (cp. Isa. 65:25; Isa. 11:6-8). The "very good" state of man had relation to his nature, but not to his character which was then unformed. The "law of sin and death" which afterwards "worked in his members" had not then commenced to do so (Rom. 7:23; 8:2). After the Fall man no longer was classified as "very good," but the reverse: Jer. 10:23; Mark 7:21-23. Even the Lord, when addressed as "good master" replied: "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God" (Matt. 19:17). He evidently had in mind his own nature, which was identical with that of all humanity, and of which Paul declared: "In me (that is in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18); "The creature (creation) was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature (creation) itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:20-23). The incidence of sin had a physical reaction on human nature as God had warned it would (Gen. 2:17; 3:10-11, 14-19).

## CHAPTER TWO

### The Seventh Day Rest — vv. 1-3

*The chapter division at this place is unfortunate. It is obvious that the first three verses belong to the record of chapter 1. The balance of the chapter gives a more detailed account of the creation of Adam and Eve, commencing with the introduction of v. 4. God rested on the seventh day, for which reason it was after-*

*wards set aside for special observance by the children of Israel.*

### VERSE 1

**"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished"** — The Hebrew word rendered "finished" (*kalah*) combines the two ideas of cessation and completeness as revealed in all that was accomplished. In a typical sense it teaches that Yahweh will bring to completion His great work with humanity and creation. Through His suffering servant, He brought to successful completion the requirements of redemption. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" (2 Cor. 5:19); so that on the eve of his sacrifice, the Lord was able to report: "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4). On the cross itself, he uttered the words: "It is finished" (John 19:30).

We have the assurance of the accomplishment of the work of redemption in us, for Paul taught: "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). He will perform it, if we give ourselves readily to him. And so Paul continues: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12-13). The finished work of the natural creation typifies that of the spiritual creation, so that the Spirit introduces Christ as the "beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3:14).

**"And all the host of them"** — All the stars. The word in the Hebrew is *tsebaah*, which we meet in the familiar title of "Lord of Hosts" or Yahweh Sabaoth, or Yahweh of Armies. The word has a military connotation, and thus suggests martial precision in marching order, probably relating to the regular movements of the stars in the heavens above. See Neh. 9:6. See notes on Genesis 1:16.

### VERSE 2

**"And on the seventh day God ended His work"** — The Septuagint gives this as the sixth day: the day upon which the last



of the creative acts was completed.

**“And He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made”**

— The word for “rested” also signifies to cease, or desist. God is never physically weary (Isa. 40:28), and needs no rest for recuperation. The work was finished, and having been completed, the Elohim ceased from labour. This period of rest continued until it was broken by the advent of sin, requiring further activity on the part of the Father and the Elohim (Heb. 1:14). So, when the Jews condemned the Lord Jesus because he healed on the Sabbath day, he replied: “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (John 5:17). Sin having been committed, the Father’s rest was broken, and through the Elohim, and later the Lord Jesus, He commenced again to labour on behalf of His family.

In Hebrews 3:7-4:11, Paul comments at length upon this original rest. He shows that it was typical of what God had in store for His people (Heb. 4:4-5), and then he quoted from Psalm 95 to show that the promised rest was not attained by rebellious Israel. The promise remains open under the Gospel, but will only be obtained by those who “rest from their own works, as God did from His” (Heb. 4:10). The believer’s sabbath, therefore, is a daily resting from the works of sin, and a dedication of life unto God.

The word “rest” is from the Hebrew verb *shahvath* from which is derived the noun *shabbath* or sabbath. Sabbath signifies “rest”, not seventh, as some imagine. Under the Law there were sabbath days celebrated on days other than the seventh day.

**VERSE 3**

**“And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it”**

— The seventh day was “blessed” in regard to what it was designed to bring forth; it was “sanctified” in being set apart for a special purpose. Typically, it pointed forward to the millennium (Heb. 4) when there will be a general rest from the sinful works of flesh and the era will be set apart unto Yahweh. But though blessed and sanctified, there was no command originally to keep it in the

manner defined under the Law. That came later, and was limited to Israel (Exod. 20:11; 31:17; Deut. 5:14). The day was blessed in regard to what it was designed to bring forth. The Lord taught that “the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath” (Mark 2:27). It was designed to bring forth fruit to the glory of the Father. It governed and limited the activities of an Israelite, requiring him to cease from normal labour and to devote the time to spiritual meditation and worship. Yahweh was to be honoured by Israelites ceasing from pursuing their own ways, seeking their own pleasure, and speaking their own words (Isa. 58:13), and by them replacing these activities with pursuing God’s ways, seeking His pleasure, and speaking His words.

Possibly the spiritual lessons of the seventh day rest, as explained by Paul in *the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Ch. 4), were revealed to mankind prior to the Law, so that the principle of a daily resting from the works of the flesh would have been comprehended by the sons of God.

Nevertheless, the command to “keep the sabbath” had not then been issued. This is obvious from the fact that Moses was in ignorance of the Law of the seventh day rest prior to receiving the command to observe it (see Exod. 16). He had to instruct the Israelites in its use (vv. 23-30). Prior to then the nation ignored it. Later, when one was found breaking the sabbath, Moses himself was ignorant of the penalty attached to such infraction, until it was revealed to him by Yahweh (Num. 15:32-36). It is also clearly obvious, from the reasoning of the Lord, that the law of circumcision (the token of the Abrahamic covenant), predated and took precedence over the law of the sabbath (John 7:22-23).

In recording that God “blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it,” Moses, who wrote Genesis, could have had in mind the purpose of Yahweh in setting aside the seventh day under the Law. He does not record that God “blessed and sanctified” it in Eden as was later incorporated into the national law of Israel and may have recorded the fact in this place

for the instruction of the Israelites who had been brought under the Law prior to the writing of Genesis.

F. Farrar records:

“Though mankind was not commanded to keep the seventh day as a Sabbath, as Israel was later commanded to do, it is quite obvious that the seven day week became the chronological basis of life on earth as Divinely established (cp. Gen. 4:3; 8:6-12; 29:27-28). The ancient Persians, Indians, Phoenicians, Greeks and Germans esteemed the number seven as sacred. The Assyrians, Babylonians and

Egyptians used it for the dividing of time. Travellers have detected traces of it among African and American aborigines. Thus nations widely separated both geographically and chronologically observed it, arguing a common origin or association of ideas.”

The number seven is a basic number in Scripture. The Hebrew word *sheba* does service for both “seven”, and “oath,” so that in spiritual numerology, seven is the covenant number completing a matter, as does an oath.

## THE GENERATIONS OF THE HEAVENS AND OF THE EARTH

### Law, Sin, Death and the Promise of Redemption

#### Chapter 2:4–4:26

#### incorporating THE FALL:

#### Divine Authority in Imposing Punishment

#### Chapter 2:4–5:31

*Our Analysis (see p. 17) shows that the Book of Genesis is divided into eleven parts, each headed by the statement: “The Generations of...” The first of these “generations” is announced in Genesis 2:4 and incorporates the narrative to Ch. 4:26. This second section sees man under probation, and tells how he fell from grace, and inherited the consequences: a nature impregnated with the law of sin and death, and hence sin-prone and death-doomed. However, the mercy of God is also manifested in the promise of redemption that He proclaimed before driving the sinning human couple from the Garden of Eden. Then follows the tragedy of the first murder in Chapter 4 when Cain killed Abel and so revealed himself as a seed of the serpent. This chapter dramatises the attitude of the religious world towards Christ as is evident in the bitter hostility that it shows towards the Truth to this day. The death of Abel is made good by the birth of Seth.*

*The section is divided into two parts:*

- 1. Man under Probation — Ch. 2:4-25;*
- 2. The Fall, and Hope of Redemption — Ch. 3:1-4:26.*

## CHAPTER TWO

### PROBATION

*Adam is formed of the dust of the ground, and placed in the Garden of Eden with the pleasant duty of caring for it. He is instructed in the way of righteousness, and given a law which restrains his use of Eden's products. The animals and their mates are paraded before him, so that he may name them; and as he is without suitable companionship, one is built up out of his side, whom he names Woman.*

#### MAN UNDER LAW — Ch. 2:4-25

*This section describes man's duties in Eden, the law to which he was subjected, the formation of the woman, and the first marriage.*

#### Man Before The Fall — vv. 4-7

*The formation of man is recorded in greater detail than in the first chapter. Whereas the creative work of chapter one is associated with the word Elohim (it occurs 35 times beforehand). The expression of "power" or "strength" that enabled the work to proceed; that of chapter two incorporates the name of Yahweh Elohim — as the purpose of creation is stressed.*

#### VERSE 4

**"These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth"** — The word *toldath*, "generation" is from *yaladh*, "to bear, beget", but also denotes *development*. It is obviously in that sense that it is used in this place. Thus "the generations of the heavens and the earth" relates to developments that took place from creation onwards.

**"When they were created, in the day"** — In this context, the word "day" implies more than a single day of 24 hours, as it does also in Num. 7:84, where the term is used to describe a ceremony that took at least twelve days. It is to be noted that the restrictive words "the evening and the morning" are absent in contrast to the days described in Chapter 1. The omission appears to be due to the "rest" that, commencing on the seventh

day, continued for some time afterwards. Hence that which was established on the seventh day was not brought to a completion, or an end, as were the previous creative acts. The "rest", which commenced on the seventh day continued until the advent of sin caused it to be broken, and compelled the Elohim to labour again for the redemption of man (Heb. 2:5).

**"That Yahweh Elohim made the earth and the heavens"** — At this point, Moses introduced the covenant Name of Deity for the first time. Evidently this was because the record now moves on to describe those events that led to the proclamation of the covenant.

The word "made" is *asah* as in Gen. 1:16, and does not of itself signify "create."

In the A.V., the verse ends with a comma, but the Revised Version concludes it with a full stop, and commences a new thought with v. 5. This is evidently correct. Having referred to the heavens and the earth, and so to the work accomplished on the second and third days, the next verse describes the barren state of the earth before God moved to bring forth life thereupon. At that stage, the earth had appeared above the waters, but it was completely devoid of life. Not a plant, not a single green blade was visible. The land, newly sprung from the waters (Gen. 1:10) presented a vista of bare hills and desolate mud flats. God had to bring forth life to His glory, which He proceeded to do; a token of the spiritual life that He has developed in mankind (described as being

“of the earth, earthy”, 1 Cor. 15:47) by the germinating power of the word, described as His seed to that end (1 Pet. 1:23).

#### VERSE 5

**“And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew”** — The R.V. renders this, “And no plant of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet sprung up”.

**“For Yahweh Elohim had not caused it to rain upon the earth”** — Until that time, the atmospheric conditions, and the normal provision of rain, familiar to us today, had not been established. Life had to be Divinely introduced to the dead earth, as the seed of Truth must be implanted in flesh before any fruit to the glory of God can be expected.

From this statement, some suggest that rain did not fall until the epoch of the Flood. But the statement does not teach this. If there were no rain before the Flood, from whence did the water come to form the rivers referred to in vv. 10-14? Furthermore, the sun and the moon were placed in such astronomical relationship to the earth as to provide for the various “seasons” (Gen. 1:14), a statement that implies, if it does not directly teach, a rainy season as well as a dry. After the Flood, Noah was promised: “While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease” (Gen. 8:22), implying that these seasons were familiar to the antediluvians from the beginning.

**“And there was not a man to till the ground”** — This was a need that had to be provided, and was done so in Adam. The word “till” denotes work in any sense, and is usually labour consigned to a servant. In that regard, there is a Gospel-field to be served today. In one of his parables, the Lord explained, “the field is the (whole) world” (Matt. 13:38). Into that field was sent the second Adam, as Yahweh’s servant, to tend it.

#### VERSE 6

**“But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground”** — This describes the power of

evaporation, also mentioned by Solomon (Ecc. 1:7). Vaporous exhalations ascended to the aerial regions, where they were formed in the shape of rain, to return and water the earth.

#### VERSE 7

**“And Yahweh Elohim formed man”** — The “covenant name” significantly is again introduced, because man is made in the “image and likeness of God”, and so designed to reflect His glory. The verb “formed” is better rendered “moulded”. Additional care was taken in his creation. He was carefully moulded out of dust (clay), and then the breath of life breathed into him.

If the “breath of life” provided man with an immortal soul, all other forms of life, including “creeping things” must possess immortal souls also — which is, of course, ludicrous. The very word by which man is described in the Hebrew memorialises his earthy origin. The word for “man” is *ha-adam*, “the adam”. It is related to *adamah*, ground, and also to *adom*, red, suggesting red earth.

**“Of the dust of the ground”** — The word *of* is in italics, indicating that there is no equivalent word in the Hebrew. The margin renders the literal Hebrew: “dust of the ground”. This teaches that man is but animated dust, a definition endorsed by other Scriptures: Gen. 3:19,23; 18:27; Psa. 103:14; Eccles. 3:20; 12:7; 1 Cor. 15:47.

**“Breathed into his nostrils the breath of life”** — The words, *nishmath chayim* are literally “breath of lives”. The expression is not limited to man, but is used generally for all things living, showing that the “breath of lives” is shared by all. Animals possess it as much as man (Gen. 7:22). It is a principle of natural life, and not of spiritual. Yet the Apostasy teaches that when God breathed into man’s nostrils the breath of lives, a particle of the Divine essence was imparted to him in the form of an immortal soul. Fatal to this theory, however, is the statement of Isaiah who uses the same expression to describe man’s low estate. He urged: “Cease ye from man, whose *breath is in his nostrils*: for wherein is he to be

accounted of?" (Isa. 2:22). It is recorded that, at the Flood, "All in *whose nostrils was the breath of life*, died ... both man, and cattle, and the creeping things" (Gen. 7:22-23). Obviously they lacked immortal souls and all consequently perished (cp. 1 Cor. 15:28).

**"And man became a living soul" —** Man became a "living soul" and not an immortal soul. The word *nephesh*, soul, denotes the body; elsewhere it relates to the life: "the life (*nephesh* — soul) is in the blood" (Lev. 17:11, 14). In the O.T., *nephesh* occurs some 754 times. It is translated "soul" 476 times; "life" 119 times; "person" 25 times; "heart" 16 times; "mind" 15 times; and by 37 other words, none of which occur more than ten times, and many only once but which are all sub-ordinately related to the foregoing. In this large number of occurrences, the soul (*nephesh*) is specifically related to death some 326 times. In Hag. 2:13 it is rendered "dead body," and is likewise used of the dead in Lev. 19:28; 21:1; 22:4; Num. 5:2; 6:11; 9:6, 7, 10, etc.

In the N.T., "soul" is represented by the Greek *psuche* as the equivalent of the Hebrew *nephesh*. Of the 106 places where it occurs therein, in 45 places it is specifically said to be subject to death. In Matt. 6:25 where it is rendered "life", it is taught that from the soul spring the appetites of our present existence on earth. Both *nephesh* and *psuche* are derived from roots signifying to *breathe*; hence "a living soul" denotes a living, breathing creature.

Certainly the theory of an inherent immortal soul cannot be sustained by the teaching of the Bible. It declares that "the soul that sinneth shall die" (Ezek. 18:4). Of Christ who never sinned: "He poured out his soul unto death" (Isa. 53:12). And Paul adds the conclusive comment that apart from the bodily resurrection "they also that are fallen asleep in Christ are perished" (1 Cor. 15:18). How could he reason that such people are perished apart from a resurrection if they possessed immortal souls? Whether or not Christ rose from the dead, whether or not there be a resurrection of the dead, it could not be claimed that those "in Christ" perish if

they possess immortal souls; decisive reasoning demonstrating that Paul knew nothing of such teaching.

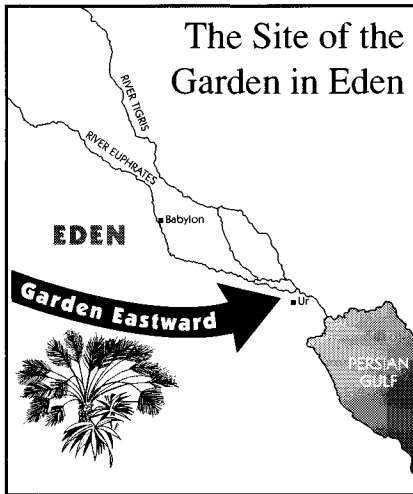
The statement "man became a living soul" is quoted in 1 Cor. 15:45 by Paul to prove that there is a "natural body" in contrast to the "spirit body" received as the ultimate inheritance of the righteous. From Paul's use of this reference to the body that descends into the grave, it has been reasoned that the state of "the natural body" today is exactly the same as it was at the epoch of Creation when pronounced "very good" by God. But that is not so. Whilst human nature is essentially the same today as then, namely, a flesh and blood body animated by the breath of life, its condition is not as formerly. It was originally "very good" in kind and condition, but sin marred the original condition so that it became sin-prone and death-doomed. Whereas previously death was set before man only as a possibility consequent upon sin, he afterwards became subject to death, so that his decease became inevitable. In the beginning man was neither mortal (subject to death) nor immortal.

### The Garden Established In Eden — vv. 8-14

*An enclosed garden is established eastward in Eden for the habitation of man. Its location, according to the description in Genesis, is established as being adjacent to the conjunction of the Euphrates and the Tigris. The Garden foreshadowes the conditions to be expected during the Millennium (cp. Isa. 51:3; Rev. 2:7).*

### VERSE 8

**"And Yahweh Elohim planted a garden" —** In Hebrew, the word is *gan*, and denotes a place protected by a fence, underlining the principle of separation. Adam, made in the image and likeness of the Elohim, was set apart from the lower creation, and designed for a higher destiny. The Septuagint (Greek translation of the O.T.) renders the word as "paradise", the word used by the Lord in his promise to the thief on the cross (Luke 23:43), and found also in the symbology of Rev. 2:7. Paradise, or *paradeisos*, is a loan-word from the Persian language, and denotes a



garden or a park. The “paradise” of Eden is typical of that state yet to be established on earth when Christ rules, and particularly in the Promised Land (Isa. 51:3).

**“Eastward in Eden”** — The Garden was geographically located eastward of what today is called the Middle East. This location is established by the rivers and lands named in this chapter, as well as by other passages of Scripture relating to Eden. Sennacherib made reference to the “children of Eden which were in Telassar” (2 Kings 19:12; Isa. 37:12), which was adjacent to Syria. Pharaoh’s possessions extended to Eden (Ezek. 31:9, 18), and Tyre was found there (Ezek. 27:23; 28:13). Eden, therefore, was an area well known to the ancients. The word signifies *Delight*; thus the Garden of Eden was the Garden of Delight. Elsewhere it is called “the Garden of Yahweh” (Gen. 13:10). It evidently was a place of great fertility and beauty in which man could find satisfaction and delight.

**“And there He put the man whom He had formed”**— God provided man with all his needs, and hedged him in with delights.

#### VERSE 9

**“And out of the ground made Yahweh Elohim to grow every tree”** — Food in abundance was provided, for the nour-

ishment and pleasure of the occupants.

**“That is pleasant to the sight and good for food”** — In the Garden of Delight everything was provided to satisfy Adam’s needs: both culturally and physically. That which was “pleasant to the sight” such as flowers or foliage excited the interest and delight of Adam, whilst that which was “good for food” satisfied his physical needs.

**“The tree of life also in the midst of the garden”** — Adam’s spiritual requirements were also provided for in the tree of life. From Rev. 2:7 it appears that the tree of life was a symbol of immortality, and this is supported by a description of its life-giving qualities as described by the Elohim (Gen. 3:22). The tree of life is likened to the Divine Wisdom (Prov. 3:18), the fruit of the righteous (Prov. 11:30), a wholesome tongue (Prov. 15:4), and so forth. They all, being related to the Truth, lead to life eternal (1 Pet. 1:23-25).

The Tree of Life occupied a place in the “midst of the garden” with the “tree of knowledge of good and evil” (cp. Gen. 3:3). Here were symbolically provided the two choices for mankind: obedience or sin; life or death.

**“And the tree of knowledge of good and evil”** — *Good* and *evil* represent the extremes of knowledge and thus serve as an idiom for completeness, comprehending all within the two opposites. In Deut. 1:39 and Isa. 7:14-17, lack of knowing good and evil indicates immaturity, whereas in 2 Sam. 14:17; 1 Kings 3:9 knowledge of such denotes maturity. In 2 Sam. 19:35 the expression is used with regard to the virility of the body to respond and enjoy such experiences. The ability to discern between good and evil is treated as a Divine attribute (2 Sam. 14:17; 1 Kings 3:9; Prov. 15:3).

The expression, therefore, denotes the attainment of adulthood. Before they partook of this tree, Adam and Eve were in a state of innocence and immaturity, in that they did not comprehend experimentally the things that make for good and those that make for evil. It probably was the intention of the Elohim to introduce Adam and Eve to the tree at the right time, so

that their sin lay in partaking of it before being permitted to do so (cp the obedient example of the Lord Jesus: Phil. 2:6). The change was instantaneous: "they knew that they were naked." They were suddenly projected into a state of maturity by their own indiscretion, without being properly prepared for it. In *Elpis Israel*, Bro. Thomas comments: "All the posterity of Adam, when they attain the age of puberty, and their eyes are in the opening crisis, begin to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil. Previous to that natural change, they are in their innocency."

The word "knowledge" in the Hebrew is from a root signifying to know from personal observation. Eating of the forbidden fruit brought the human pair into close proximity to good and evil. Their eyes were opened to moral principles, to discern that they were no longer in innocency; and physically they were made conscious of a change or difference in body. The evil they experienced was the working of the law of sin and death; the "good" brought home to them included a recognition of the need of a covering. Adam was warned against eating of this tree because, though an adult in stature, he was not sufficiently developed in mind or experience to use the resultant knowledge properly; that is "to refuse the evil and choose the good." Indeed, Christ alone has done that (Isa. 7:15). The exhortation to Adam's descendants is to "seek good, and not evil, that ye may live; and so Yahweh Sabaoth shall be with you. Hate the evil, and love the good that Yahweh Sabaoth will be gracious" (Amos 5:14,15).

The experience in Eden teaches that there is certain knowledge that is best kept from immature minds until they are able to properly receive it. Worldly philosophy rejects that conclusion, however, but the result of doing so is not good. For further notes, see Gen. 3:22.

#### VERSE 10

**"And a river went out of Eden to water the garden"** — This river is typical of the river that feeds the "wood of life" (Rev. 22:1-2; Ezek. 47:1,12) and which is represented as providing the means of food and refreshment for man (Isa. 33:21).

In referring to the mercy, righteousness, and lovingkindness of God, the Psalmist stated prophetically: "Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy Eden" (*pleasures or delights*; Psa. 36:8). In fulfillment of this, Christ declared: "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38).

**"And from thence"** — The Hebrew word *shawm*, in its secondary sense, signifies "outside of" or "distance from." This suggests that a single stream flowed through Eden dividing into four parts. As the river was both literal and typical, and in the latter relationship stands for the Truth, it is appropriate that it divide into four heads; for the hope of Israel has a four-fold division, and the Gospel record of the Lord Jesus is recorded in four parts: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; answering to the four faces of the Cherubim (Ezek. 1), the combined glory of which was manifested by the Lord.

**"It was parted and became into four heads"** — The Hebrew *roshim* signifies principal ones or chief ones.

#### VERSE 11

**"The name of the first is Pison"** — Pison signifies *full flowing* or *increase*. It is identified by some with the Phasis which flows west of the Euphrates. It is described as "first" because it was nearest Moses who wrote this record in Arabia.

**"That is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold"** — To "compass" is to separate, to turn about or encircle. The circle is a symbol of eternal life. Havilah, itself, can signify "circle," from a root *giyl* (cp. Zech. 9:9), to whirl around in an excess of joy or travail. The land of Havilah is later identified with Arabia (Gen. 25:18; 1 Sam. 15:7) and comprised a portion of the land promised to Abraham (Gen. 13:14; 15:18).

The whole description is strange if considered only geographically. That it provides a literal description of the locality of Eden and its garden, there is no doubt. But the Spirit evidently requires us to see something more in the description: it has a hidden typical meaning. If we con-

sider the Garden of Eden typically, and view the river that ran through it as a foreshadowing of the River of God (Psa. 46:4) expressive of the Truth in Christ Jesus, the four chief streams typically illustrate lessons that one must learn in order to partake of the Tree of Life (Rev. 2:7). What is the first lesson? It emphasises the principles of separation (compasseth), eternal life (Havilah, circle), and faith represented by gold (see I Pet. 1:7).

#### VERSE 12

**“And the gold of that land is good”** — This would be a strange statement in such a context if it were only to be interpreted literally. There is also a typical foreshadowing of something greater. As to the literal significance, the gold of that land is described as “good” as relating to native gold free from the admixture of earthy substance because of the cleansing action of the water. Faith, likewise, is associated with water, and the gold of faith is good.

**“There is bdellium”** — There is confusion as to what bdellium is. Gesenius identified it as a precious stone, and some have rendered it as “pearl”. On the other hand, Kitto, adopting the opinion of Josephus, defines it as a costly aromatic gum, famous for its medicinal qualities. Significantly, in Numbers 11:7, it is associated with the manna which is described as “the colour of bdellium.” Its costliness, pleasant odour, healing qualities, and connection with manna, all point forward, in a figurative sense, to the Lord Jesus, the true manna of life (Rev. 2:17).

**“And the onyx stone”** — The onyx stones are described as “stones of memorial” (Exod. 28:12). Two of them were placed on the shoulders of the ephod worn by Aaron, and inscribed with the names of the children of Israel. The onyx was a very precious stone (Job 28:16), and, from its Hebrew name, it was evidently a very brilliant stone. Therefore, it is not to be confused with the onyx of modern times which is neither precious nor brilliant. The Hebrew word *shoham* is from a root signifying “to shine with the lustre of fire” (Soltau). On the breastplate, the onyx rep-

resented Asher, whose name means “blessing.”

Thus the first of the divisions into which the main river was divided speaks of separation, eternal life, faith, healing and blessing.

#### VERSE 13

**“And the name of the second river is Gihon”** — The word signifies “the bursting,” or “the bubbling forth.” It suggests the force by which this river gushed forth from the main source.

**“The same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia”** — It encircles, or separates the land of Ethiopia of which no words of commendation are added. Cush or Ethiopia was to the east of the Euphrates. It was named Khuzistan, or the land of Khus or Cush. Cush signifies “black” or “hot,” a symbol of that which is evil. The gushing waters of the Gihon divided off the dark land of Cushistan.

#### VERSE 14

**“And the name of the third river is Hiddekel”** — The Hiddekel is the Tigris. The name, according to some (see *Smith's Dictionary*) signifies “the darting arrow”. In Isaiah 49:2, Christ is likened to “a polished shaft,” which, as a darting arrow, will be aimed at Gog, the political man of sin, at the coming of the Lord.

**“That is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria”** — The Hebrew is literally “goeth east of Assyria”. The word signifies “the front” and is so rendered in the R.V.: “which goeth in front of Assyria.” Assyria, or Asshur, according to Dr. Strong, signifies *straight* or *successful*, and perhaps relates to the ruthless development of that nation. There is a latter-day Assyrian (Mic. 5:5), the Russian Gog, which ruthlessly pursues an aggressive policy of conquest, but which is to be overthrown by the arrow of Yahweh’s providing. It is significant that when Daniel saw the vision of the multitudinous man, representative of the saints in glory, he was “by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel” (Dan. 10:4). He also describes this multitudinous man as being “upon the waters of the river” (Dan. 12:6-



7), as though guiding its course. He was told that there is a time limit to the power of the nations, at the conclusion of which they will be subdued (v. 7).

**“And the fourth river is Euphrates”** — Euphrates signifies *The Sweet*, so called, it is said, from its pleasant flavoured waters. It is frequently referred to in Scripture as “the river,” or “the great river.” It forms the northern boundary of the land promised to Abraham, which is said to stretch from the Nile to the Euphrates. The Garden of Eden, with its Tree of Life, and its Water of Life, links the paradise of un-fallen man to that of redeemed man. That latter, too, is fed by a stream of living water “springing up into everlasting life” as the Lord told the woman of Samaria (cp. John 4:14; John 7:37-38).

The river in Eden was divided into four parts, and, significantly, the spring of living water, representative of the Truth in Christ Jesus, has come to us in four parts, answering to the four Gospel accounts. Those Gospel records are *full flowing* as the Pison, revealing the hope of eternal life, the gold of faith, and the sustaining manna. They *gush forth* with enthusiasm like the Gihon, separating those who partake of its message as that river did from the land of Cush who was cursed of God. They reveal the identity of the *Darting Arrow* who is destined to destroy the latter day Assyrian. Finally they are *sweet* like the Euphrates, satisfying to the thirsty soul (Psa. 19:7-8; Isa. 55:1-2; Matt. 5:6).

A careful consideration of the description of the four rivers of Eden strongly implies that it is intended as being typical of Yahweh’s purpose as suggested above. This is reinforced by the fact that *The Apocalypse* takes hold of some of the features of Genesis, using them as symbols of the Divine purpose in Christ. Hence the Lord made use of the Tree of Life and of Paradise, or the Garden in Eden, as typical of his purpose (Rev. 2:7).

#### **Man Brought under Law — vv. 15-17**

*In the Garden man is given two tasks: to dress and to keep it. He is also made subject to law, and prohibited from partaking of the Tree of Knowledge of Good*

*and Evil. In doing so, God made clear His own sovereign dominion over man, and man’s subordinate relationship to Him. God has this right because He is Creator and man is creature. The exercise of that which is right gives man the opportunity of demonstrating his loyalty and love of God Who has provided all things for his benefit.*

#### **VERSE 15**

**“And Yahweh Elohim took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it”** — In an agricultural context, *dress* means to cultivate and tend in any way necessary, whilst to *keep* denotes to keep an eye upon, observing and providing any help that is necessary. So man was set to do tasks which contributed to his wellbeing and happiness. Mankind needs labour and interests outside of himself to attain unto real happiness and contentment, and hence Adam was given these simple duties to perform which contributed to the supply of his own needs. True happiness is found in harmonious co-operation with God; not in idleness. Paul taught that “if any would not work, neither should he eat” (2 Thess. 3:10). He also exhorted that “not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified” (Rom. 2:13). James taught that faith without works is dead (James 2:20,24). Adam was offered both opportunities in the Garden of Eden.

#### **VERSE 16**

**“And Yahweh Elohim commanded the man saying, Of every tree of the garden, thou mayest freely eat”** — God’s first commandment is recorded in this and the following verse. It was simple and direct, and such as was appropriate to the inexperience of Adam. He could eat of all trees except one: the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Note the margin: “eating thou shalt eat”.

#### **VERSE 17**

**“But of the Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof**

**thou shalt surely die**” — Being made in the “likeness of the Elohim”, Adam was capable of moral development. To that end, it was essential that he be subjected to law, and accordingly, a prohibition was placed upon eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, at least until the time that God adjudged that Adam was capable of doing so without harm. The command was a negative one, setting forth what he must avoid; but his education was not limited to this prohibition, for he was also to “dress and keep” the garden, and doubtless he would require some guidance in that direction. Indeed, there are hints given of other instructions given him at that time. It is obvious, from Gen. 3:8, that the Elohim were in the habit of visiting Adam to converse with him, and doubtless they would teach him of the purpose of God in creation. Some such education was essential for his moral development. Though Adam, in accordance with all creation, was “very good” in physical condition, he was still “of the earth, earthy”, and though, unlike the rest of creation, he was made in the “likeness” of the Elohim, and therefore capable of manifesting their intellectual and moral qualities, these had to be developed in him. They required the motivation of God’s Word in which he had to be instructed. In *Elpis Israel*, Bro. Thomas suggests:

“The interval between their formation and their transgression was the period of their novitiate. The Spirit of God had made them; and during this time, ‘the inspiration of the Almighty was giving (them) understanding’ (Job 33:4; 32:8). In this way, knowledge was imparted to them. It became power, and enabled them to meet all the demands of their situation. Thus, they were ‘taught of God,’ and became the depositories of those arts and sciences, in which they afterwards instructed their sons and daughters, to enable them to till the ground, tend the flocks and herds, provide the conveniences of life, and subdue the earth” (p. 72).

Again, note the margin, “dying thou shalt die”. It would not be an instantane-

ous, summary execution “in that day”.

### **The Formation of Woman — vv. 18-22.**

*“Adam... had no companion who could reciprocate his intelligence! none who could minister to his wants, or rejoice with him in the delights of creation; and reflect the glory of his nature. The Elohim are a society, rejoicing in the love and attachment of one another; and Adam, being like them though of inferior nature, required an object which should be calculated to evoke the latent resemblances of his similitude to theirs. It was no better for man to be alone than for them. Formed in their image, he had social feelings as well as intellectual and moral faculties, which required scope for their practical and harmonious exercise. A purely intellectual and abstractly moral society, untempered by domesticism, is an imperfect state. It may be very enlightened, very dignified and immaculate; but it would also be very formal, and frigid as the poles. A being might know all things, and he might scrupulously observe the Divine law from a sense of duty; but something more is requisite to make him amiable, and beloved by either God or his fellows. This amiability the social feelings enable him to develop; which, however, if unfurnished with a proper object, or wholesome excitation, react upon him unfavourably, and make him disagreeable. Well aware of this, Yahweh Elohim said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a help fit for him’” (Gen. 2:18) — *Elpis Israel* p. 47.*

### **VERSE 18**

**“And Yahweh Elohim said, it is not good that the man should be alone”** — Complete isolation is not beneficial; man needs companionship to provide scope for the development of such Divine qualities as love, consideration, sympathy, responsibility and mutual understanding.

**“I will make him an help meet for him”** — The Hebrew words, *ezer kenegdo* are literally “one as his front,” that is, his counterpart. The margin renders it, “one as before him.” Bro. Thomas gives, “a help fit for him.” The *Berkeley Version* has, “a

suitable helper, completing him." Eve was the female counterpart of Adam, so that together they made one whole or complete unit. Each was designed to bring out the best in the other, and by their mutual co-operation to reflect a way of life that would be to the glory of their Creator. In *The Law of Moses*, p. 219, Bro. Roberts comments:

"Man is for strength, judgment and achievement; woman is for grace, sympathy and ministrations. Between them, they form a beautiful unit: 'heirs together of the grace of life'."

The formation of Eve has a powerful spiritual lesson. What does Christ, the second Adam, desire to see in his perfected Bride? Exactly what Yahweh designed in Eve for Adam: a feminine counterpart of himself (cp. 2 Cor. 11:2-3).

#### VERSE 19

**"And out of the ground Yahweh Elohim formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air"** — As this statement stands in the A.V., it would imply that the beasts were formed after Adam, and this has caused some to conclude that in Chapters one and two, Genesis contains two conflicting accounts of creation. However, the Hebrew can be translated in the past tense. Rotherham renders: "Yahweh had formed."

**"And brought them unto Adam"** — The pronoun *them* is printed in italics as the translators' indication that there is no comparable word at this place in the Hebrew text. As it stands in the A.V., the statement would suggest that every creature was brought to Adam to be named prior to the formation of woman, all of which took place on the sixth day (Gen. 1:26-31). It would have been a tremendous task within such a short compass of time, for Adam to inspect and name every one of the various forms of animal life that had been brought into being; and the Hebrew does not require it. If the pronoun *them* is eliminated (as the Hebrew text would permit), the reading would suggest that only certain species were brought before Adam. They were brought to him by the Elohim, as later, the animals were gathered unto

Noah, to be taken into the Ark. Adam was able to view and name the lower creation over which he had been promised dominion. At that time, none of the beasts were carnivorous (cp. Gen. 1:29-30), as afterwards some of them became. The fierce preying of beast upon beast was not then in evidence as it was after the curse was imposed upon the lower creation (Gen. 3:14). In Eden, the wolf dwelt with the lamb, the leopard lay down with the kid, and the lion ate straw like the ox — as will be the case again when the Kingdom is restored (Isa. 11:6-7).

**"And whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof"** — The Elohim did this to "see" what Adam would call them. Moreover they obviously found pleasure in what they saw and heard, for they endorsed the names that Adam gave to those living creatures brought before him for his inspection. The Elohim evidently rejoiced in the mental acumen and insight displayed by their protegee, and recognised in this a mental ability "in their likeness" transcending the lower creation. Names in the Bible are not artificial, as they are among Gentiles. They generally express the real characteristics of the person, living creature, or object named. Adam, in his unfallen state, must have possessed an instinctive perception of the true nature of the animals brought before him, such as has been lost in this artificial and sophisticated age.

#### VERSE 20

**"And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him"** — This does not mean that the animals were paraded before Adam to ascertain from among their number as to whether there was a "help fit for him," but rather, at the conclusion of the inspection, there was a sense of loneliness as far as Adam was concerned. He observed that all the creatures brought before him came in pairs; each had its mate. But Adam had no counterpart of himself. The Elohim had stated

that this was "not good;" and now the fact was brought home to Adam himself.

### VERSE 21

**"And Yahweh Elohim caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept"** — Paul refers to the formation of Eve as typical of the formation of the Bride of Christ (see 2 Cor. 11:1-2; Eph. 5:25-26). Upon this theme, *Elpis Israel* beautifully comments as follows:

"Previous to the formation of this help, God caused 'every living soul' (*kol nephesh chayiah*) to pass in review before Adam, that he might name them. He saw that each one had its mate: 'but for him there was not found a suitable companion.' It was necessary, therefore, to form one, the last and fairest of His handiworks. The Lord had created man in His own 'image and glory'; but He had yet to subdivide him into two: a negative and a positive division... male and female, yet one flesh. The negatives, or females, of all other species of animals, were formed out of the ground (Gen. 2:19); and not out of the sides of their positive mates; so that the lion could not say of the lioness, 'This is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; therefore shall a lion leave his sire and dam, and cleave unto the same lioness for ever.' The inferior creatures are under no such law as this ... they have no second selves; the sexes in the beginning were from the ground direct; the female was not of the male, though the male is by her: therefore, there is no natural basis for a social, or domestic, law to them.

"But in the formation of a companion for the first man, the Lord Elohim created her upon a different principle. She was to be a dependent creature; and a sympathy was to be established between them, by which they should be attached inseparably. It would not have been fit, therefore, to have given her an independent origin from the dust of the ground. Had this been the case, there would have been about the same kind of attachment between men and women as subsists among the creatures below them. The woman's companionship was designed to be intellectually and morally sympathetic with 'the image and

glory of God', whom she was to revere as her superior.

"The sympathy of the mutually independent earthborns of the field, is purely sensual; and in proportion as generations of mankind lose their intellectual and moral likeness to the Elohim, and fall under the dominion of sensuality; so the sympathy between men and women evaporates into mere animalism. But, I say, such a degenerate result as this, was not the end of her formation. She was not simply to be 'the mother of all living;' but to reflect the glory of man as he reflected the glory of God" (pp. 47-48).

The sleep of Adam, during which Eve was formed, is a typical foreshadowing of the death of Christ, through which his Bride was, and continues to be, brought into being (cp. Eph. 5:25). The same expression is used in regard to Abraham, who likewise experienced a sleep, which typified his death (Gen. 15:12). Such a "deep sleep" was brought to bear upon Adam as may be experienced by a patient under the influence of an anaesthetic; and so the first operation was conducted.

**"And He took one of his ribs"** — The word *tsela*, from *tsala* "to incline," is nowhere else used for "rib," but is translated "side" (e.g. Exod. 25:12). Exactly what part, or how much, of Adam's side was taken from him is not revealed. But whatever part it was, it transferred the feminine qualities of the man to Eve, his wife (Eph. 5:22). She became his counterpart; and she, complementing him, made him complete.

**"And closed up the flesh instead thereof"** — Adam was healed of any disadvantage connected with the operation, and completely restored. So also was the second Adam in being raised from the dead, and changed into an immortal being. All this is typical of the formation of the second Eve, the Bride of Christ. The Lord was put to death, his side was pierced by the soldier's spear, and through his perfect sacrifice, his Bride, the second Eve, was brought into existence. There will, therefore, be found in her a mutual sympathy with the aspirations, objectives, and purposes of her Lord. She will be in submis-

sion to him, as wives are divinely instructed to be; and she should aim to be a counterpart of what he is.

In Christ, of course, the Bride is made up of male and female members so that these words must apply to both.

#### VERSE 22

**“And the rib, which Yahweh Elohim had taken from man, made he a woman”** — To emphasise the uniqueness of what had been done, a different verb is now used. It is the word *yiben*, from *banah*, signifying “to build” (see margin). The gradual development of Eve from the living part of that which Adam supplied is thus implied. The Bride of Christ is still being built, and will not be completed until she becomes perfected (Eph. 5:27) in becoming “a partaker of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4). The Ecclesia, as constituting many “living stones,” is being built into a holy temple (1 Pet. 2:4-5), an habitation of God by the Spirit (Eph. 2:20-22).

**“And brought her unto the man”** — The purpose being to secure his appraisal and approval. In like manner, the Elohim have been supervising the development of the Ecclesia throughout the ages (Heb. 1:14), and in the time appointed will present the Bride to the second Adam for his appraisal and approval.

#### The First Marriage — vv. 23-25

*The marriage in Eden foreshadows the marriage of the Lamb referred to in Revelation 19:7-8, and described in the Song of Solomon. Both marriages are unique, for both parties to it owe their existence to a common parent, and in each case, the formation of the Bride is out of her husband. On the eve of his death (his deep sleep), Christ prayed to the Father on behalf of his multitudinous Bride: “That they may be one; as Thou Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me” (John 17:21). There was a unity in the marriage in Eden, and there will be a unity in the marriage of Christ and his Bride, quite unlike any other. Adam submitted to the “deep sleep” and the surgical operation in order that*

*his wife might be formed; and Christ willingly submitted to a sacrificial death and rose for the same reason. Each could describe his Bride, as could no other husband: “This is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.” A great sacrifice was paid by each that his Bride might be formed. The Apostle exhorts: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Ecclesia, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious Ecclesia, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such things; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:25-27). The record in Genesis should be studied in conjunction with the Song of Solomon, Revelation 19, Psalm 45, and Paul’s exposition in Ephesians 5:29-33.*

#### VERSE 23

**“And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh”** — He recognised that Eve was built up out of himself, and claimed her as his own in a very real sense. Christ likewise will be able to describe the perfected Ecclesia in the same terms. Paul quotes this statement in Ephesians 5:30, and applies it to the relationship that is sustained between the true Ecclesia and Christ, but not to the normal relationship that exists between husband and wife. No husband can say of his wife that she is “bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.” Only Adam could say that of Eve, and Christ of his Bride. Normally, in Western countries at least, marriage is a matter of mutual agreement; it was not so in Eden, nor is it in relation to Christ. Each of the two Brides owes her existence to her husband. Therefore a careful consideration of Paul’s words will reveal that though he has been previously expounding upon normal marital relationships, he does not relate this passage from Genesis 2:23 to such, but limits its application to Christ and the Ecclesia (see v. 32). He specifically states: “This is a great secret; but I speak concerning Christ and the Ecclesia.” The same union, fellowship, mutual sharing of ideals and objectives as one would expect to find in two so closely

related as Adam and Eve will exist between Christ and the Ecclesia. He demonstrated the extent of his love by dying for his beloved that she might be brought into existence; what is she prepared to do for him?

**“She shall be called woman because she was taken out of man”** — The Hebrew for “woman” is *Isha*, and signifies *out of ish*, or man. Previously the word Adam had been translated man; here we have *ish*. It denotes a higher status of manhood than does the earth-bound Adam. *Ish* is Adam’s name for himself. It implies that he comprehended the higher destiny set out for himself in being made “in the image and likeness of the Elohim.” Moreover, when Adam submitted to the deep sleep and the operation necessary to the formation of Eve, he demonstrated that he was prepared to sacrifice for his wife, and, by so doing, claimed the name *Ish* rather than mere Adam (red earth). *Ish* is the title used of God wherever He is referred to as a man (see e.g. Exod. 15:3). The second Eve, though of Adamic nature, has been developed out of the side of *Ish*, the “man” Christ Jesus, and ultimately will possess the Divine nature that is his today.

#### VERSE 24

**“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother”** — The whole of this verse is quoted by the Lord Jesus to explain the marriage state as God designed it (Matt. 19:5; Mark 10:7-8); whereas Paul cites this section of it (Eph. 5:31) to illustrate the separateness demanded of a person in embracing the Truth.

The relationship between Christ and the Ecclesia is similar to that existing between husband and wife. The figure is even applied to the establishment of a family. It is the will of the Father that the Ecclesia should have a numerous offspring (see Isa. 53:10; Gal. 4:26). To that end, men and women are called by the Gospel to separate themselves from worldly aspirations, and to take on the name of Jesus Christ, as a woman assumes the name of her husband (Acts 15:14; Rom. 7:4). Paul taught: “For this cause (i.e. to become part of the multitudinous Bride of Christ) shall

a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great secret: but I speak concerning Christ and the Ecclesia” (Eph. 5:31-32).

When a person renounces the religious and social world about him for Christ, he fulfils the requirements of this verse. He figuratively leaves his “father and mother,” and “is joined unto his wife.” This wife (Christ’s Bride) in her full glory, and on her marriage day, is prophetically set forth in Psalm 45 in such a way as to show that separation and dedication are basic to her beauty:

*“Hearken, O daughter, and consider,  
and incline thine ear;  
Forget also thine own people, and thy  
father’s house;  
So shall the king greatly desire thy  
beauty,  
For he is thy Lord; and worship thou  
him”* (vv. 10-11).

A contrast to this figure is that of the spiritual adulteress (see James 4:4; Rev. 2:14). An adulteress in that sense, is one who is unfaithful to Christ, setting aside her vows of separateness, and seeking to cultivate the friendship of the world or embrace a false religion (Jer. 3:1-2; Hos. 2:1-5). Separation and faithfulness are essential to an acceptable life in Christ. “Wherefore,” wrote Paul, “come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:17-18).

This Father-child relationship is predicated on separation, apart from which the Father will not accept any as His own. Thus Abram was commanded to “come out” from his father’s house (Gen. 12:1-2) and this has been the condition of Yahweh’s call ever since. The principle is illustrated in the requirements of true marriage.

The decree in Eden, however, not only states that a man “shall leave his father and his mother,” but in addition that he “shall cleave unto his wife.” He takes her unto himself in a very real and personal

union which should be quite unique in his relationship .

**“They shall be one flesh”** — The Septuagint Greek version, together with other versions, reads, “they two,” and this is the way in which the passage is quoted in the N.T. Most likely, the original Hebrew reads that way, and is cited in the N.T. Scriptures.

The cleaving of a man to his wife, and the consequent union of them both as “one flesh,” constitutes true marriage. It implies complete identification each with the other both intellectually and physically.

The passage teaches that marriage is a life-time contract. The Lord quoted it, together with Gen. 1:27, in his discussion with the Pharisees and his disciples, when replying to their questions concerning divorce and remarriage. When they quoted the concession granted by Moses on divorce, he pointed out that this was only provided because of “the hardness of heart” on the part of mankind, and stated that it was not according to the will of the Father (see Mal. 2:16). To prove his point, Jesus quoted this original commandment of God, and declared that “what God had joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matt. 19:5; Mark 10:6).

On the other hand, Paul quotes these words to illustrate how two actually become one, and as to what constitutes real marriage. Marriage is not a mere legal, or contractual union, but an actual one based upon a vow made and a physical union achieved. This “union of the flesh” is a very intimate and involving compact, by which the two become one. The principle of a physical union is emphasised by Paul when he states that intercourse with a prostitute makes both parties “one” (1 Cor. 6:16); such harlotry thereby imitates the physical union which is properly achieved in the marriage bonds.

Marriage was designed to perpetuate and extend the human race in accordance with the will of God. God so constituted man and woman from the beginning that

an instinctive urge causes them to seek each other in marriage; and a natural act, for which God has made provision in the constitution of the sexes, is the means of effecting His purpose of making both one, and extending the human race. There is nothing evil in the sexual act when legitimately engaged in; it is designed to produce life to the glory of a father. It becomes itself a type of that personal, intimate relationship between Yahweh and true worshippers by which the seed of Truth is implanted in them by the Father (1 Pet. 1:23), which produces a new life to His glory. It is rather significant that when the Lord declared: “This is life eternal that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” (John 17:3), he used an expression that describes the most intimate act between two persons: “to know” (i.e. in such a way as to produce seed — cp. Gen. 4:1).

Thus marriage, as instituted in Eden, required an intellectual, moral and physical unity between the two parties, such as would produce fruit in the form of offspring.

It should be noted that whereas these words appear at first glance to have been from Adam’s lips, as a continuation of verse 24, the Lord makes it clear that they actually were pronounced by Yahweh Himself (see Matt. 19:5), thus adding tremendously to their full import. The word rendered “cleave” is from the Heb. *dabak* carrying the meaning “to cling to”; “to adhere” (see Job 38:38; Jer. 13:11). When the Lord quoted these words, he used the Greek equivalent word *proskolaomai*, meaning “to join fast together”; “to glue”; “to cement”.

## VERSE 25

**“And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed”** — They were innocent without sin, both in their relations with each other, as well as in their fellowship with the Elohim. They had no sin on their conscience, nor shame in their countenance.

## The Privileges and Responsibilities of Marriage

Christ's use of Genesis 2:24 teaches that marriage is for life, and should not be sundered by man (see Matt. 19:4-6; Mark 10:5-9). A husband and wife should be "one," mutually sharing each other's hopes, joys, sorrows, aspirations and ideals; and thus, "as one flesh," should not be separated. Yahweh "hates" putting away (Mal. 2:15-16).

Paul quoted Genesis 2:24 to show that the "unity" therein expressed is fully established when marriage is consummated by sexual intercourse (see 1 Cor. 6:16); which thus should play an important part in married life (1 Cor. 7:5).

In Ephesians 5:31, he uses this verse to illustrate the personal, intimate relations between Christ and the Ecclesia. These provide guidelines to normal marriage. Let the wife be in subjection to her husband as the Ecclesia is to Christ; let her revere him as she would the Lord; and let the husband respect his wife, and render to her due benevolence in the manifestation of a true sacrificial love that seeks her good before his own. As a man seeks his bride, so Christ has sought the Ecclesia (Acts 15:14; 2 Cor. 11:2-3). She is now espoused to him, so that each might develop in their appreciation and understanding of each other, but when the marriage is come (Rev. 19:7), he will be united forever with her.

In Galatians 3:28 Paul implies that originally there was a greater unity and equality between Adam and Eve than afterwards existed, when the woman was placed in greater subjection to her husband (Gen. 3:16). This full unity and equality will be restored in Christ.

God declared that "it is not good" for a man to remain single — the responsibilities, the need for mutual understanding and consideration, the exercise of unselfish love that successful marriage demands, helps in a practical way to develop Christ-like qualities (Eph. 5:24-32). Paul, of course, was not married in the normal sense, but was married in a spiritual sense — to the Ecclesia. He manifested to the Ecclesia the same consideration, forbearance, and love, as a husband should do towards his wife (1 Cor. 7:32-34). Paul taught that "the woman was made for man" (1 Cor. 11:9); thus she was designed to bring out in him the best qualities of social behaviour. She will do this providing she observes her obligations in a successful marriage (Eph. 5:22-24).

We should always remember that God established marriage (Gen. 2:24), designing it as the channel of the fulfilment of the Divine purpose (1 Tim. 2:15; Gen. 3:15). Christ endorsed this by gracing a marriage with his presence (John 2:1-2), re-affirming the original Edenic ordinance (Matt. 19:4-9), and blessing the fruits of it (Matt. 19:13-15).

Marriage types the union between Yahweh and Israel (Isa. 54:5; Hos. 2); between Christ and the Ecclesia (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:22-23).

Even better than physical marriage is spiritual espousal to Christ (Mat. 19:12; 1 Cor. 7:1, 8, 32-38); though celibacy for Christ's sake, is only advocated under certain conditions (Matt. 19:12; 1 Cor. 7:9). Nevertheless, in view



of this superior union, there should not be over-anxiety for marriage (1 Cor. 7:34-38); rather it is better to recall that the sin of the antediluvians stemmed from an unwise desire for marriage that made their unions sinful (Gen. 6:1-2) and that this would be a characteristic of the last days (Matt. 24:38), and an attitude to avoid. Thus marriage should be only in the Lord for those who have embraced Christ (1 Cor. 7:39).

Finally, Paul makes the point that if an unbelieving partner will not live peaceably, or in a manner to permit the functions of proper worship, it is best to separate (1 Cor. 7:10-16; Ct. 1 Pet. 3:1-6).

## CHAPTER THREE

### TEMPTATION

*This chapter records how the serpent beguiled the woman and she fell. She, in turn, beguiled the man and he fell. The result was tragic, adversely affecting the whole plan of God in creation. Death, which previously had been only a possibility is now made a certainty. The law of sin and death asserts itself so that humanity is death-doomed and in need of redemption. However, hope is also given to the human pair by the Divine promise of a seed who would overcome the effects of sin. Nevertheless, this demands something of man, and hence Adam and Eve are taught the principles of sacrifice as necessary for forgiveness and redemption.*

#### **THE FALL OF MAN AND THE HOPE OF REDEMPTION — Ch. 3:1-4:26**

*It was essential that the human pair be put under trial in order that character might be developed in them. They clearly understood the terms of the divine edict that would have produced willing obedience, and to fulfil Yahweh's purpose in them, but they chose to listen to the serpent's carnal suggestions — and therefore the divine trial is changed into human temptation.*

*The temptation by the serpent causes the human pair to fall, and to earn the just punishment of death; but Divine grace triumphs over justice in extending mercy to the multitudinous seed of the woman. The means of redemption is foreshadowed in the murder of Cain and the replacement of Abel with Seth.*

#### **Temptation And Sin — vv. 1-7**

*The serpent is introduced and described. His carnal reasoning shows that the human pair could respond to animal thinking, and pervert the great destiny that was placed before them. Eve falls to his temptation and Adam follows her in her folly. The immediate results of sin are described.*

#### **VERSE 1**

**“Now the serpent”**— We meet with the serpent throughout Scripture (see Rev. 12:9; 20:2); sometimes as an animal, on other occasions as a symbol. The importance of the theme is shown in Yahweh's use of the serpent in outlining the Edenic covenant (Gen. 3:15), forming the basis of His plan of redemption. The Hebrew word is *nachash*. Gesenius defines it as a ser-

pent, so called from its hissing. He derives it from the verb which, he declares is “an onomatopoeic word,” signifying “to utter a low hissing sound, to whisper, especially of the whispering or muttering of sorcerers ... in a wider sense, to divine, prognosticate”.

“Onomatopoeic” means imitating the sound indicated by the word. In this case, the serpent is called *nachash* because the very sound of the word suggests the hiss of a snake. The root is translated “enchanter” in Deut. 18:10.

Davidson’s *Hebrew Lexicon* gives its meaning as “to perceive, observe,” “to use enchantment, divination.” The serpent was used by the ancients for the purpose of divination, and, in consequence, was viewed attentively. Under this heading, therefore, its name signifies *to acquire knowledge by experience* in contrast to receiving it by Divine revelation.

Gesenius and Davidson, therefore, both see the meaning of the name as suggesting the whispered, seductive voice of the serpent, as well as describing its powers of observation. Dr. Strong in his *Exhaustive Concordance* gives the meaning of *nachash* as “a snake (from its hiss),” so that he, also, draws attention to its voice. The tongue is a serpent characteristic. See Psa. 12:4; James 3:5-8. Solomon likened a babbler to a serpent (Eccles. 10:11).

Significantly, from the same root, *nachash*, is derived *Nechosheth*, “brass, brasen (i.e. copper).” This is a base metal which figuratively represents the flesh. In Jer. 39:7; 52:11 the word is translated “chains” (of Babylon). In Judges 16: 21; 2 Sam. 3:34; 2 Kings 25:7; 2 Chron. 33:11; 36:6, it is rendered “fettters of brass.” In Ezekiel 16:36, it is translated “filthiness.”

Thus, in all of these places, it is related to the flesh.

Davidson gives as the meaning of the root word, “To acquire knowledge or experience by attentive observation,” and this is indicated in Gen. 30:27, where the phrase, “I have learned by experience” is derived from *nichashiti* — which, according to Davidson, is derived from *nachash*. Thus the word signifies: to gaze, view

attentively, pry into, observe narrowly; as well as to talk, babble, etc.

On the basis of this significance of the word, the following comment from *Elpis Israel* is to the point:

“How did the Serpent know that the Lord God knew that these things would happen to them (Adam and Eve) in the day of their eating? How came he to know anything about the gods, and their acquaintance with good and evil? And upon what grounds did he affirm that they should not surely die? The answer is by one of two ways — by *inspiration*; or by *observation*. If we say by inspiration, then we make God the author of the lie; but if we affirm that he obtained his knowledge by observation — by the use of his eyes and ears upon things transpiring around him — then we confirm the words of Moses, that he was the shrewdest of the creatures the Lord God had made” (p. 82).

The word *nachash* has been used to describe various animals: the crooked serpent (Job 26:13), the crocodile (Isa. 27:1; Amos 9:3, etc.). However, the reference to the serpent in Isaiah 65:25, “Dust shall be the serpent’s meat,” shows that the animal referred to in Genesis 3 was the serpent of the snake family.

**“Was more subtil than any beast of the field which Yahweh Elohim had made”** — The serpent was shrewder than all other “beasts of the field.” This attribute of subtility, shrewdness, or wisdom is commended by the Lord Jesus, who advised his disciples to be “as wise as serpents” (Matt. 10:16). Therefore, at this stage, together with all other forms of creation, it was “very good” (Gen. 1:31).

“It was, probably, because of this quality of shrewdness, or *quickness of perception*, that Adam named it *nachash*; which is rendered by *drakon* (dragon) in the New Testament, from *derkomai*, to see (Rev. 20:2)” (*Elpis Israel*, p.80).

**“And he said unto the woman”** — He challenged the “weaker vessel” (1 Pet. 3:7). This has been a characteristic of human serpents ever since (cp. Rom. 16:18-20). Evidently, the serpent awaited a moment when Eve was on her own; whilst, for her part, she should have direct-

ed the enquiry to her husband, or have considered it in conjunction with him. But her feminine curiosity got the better of her, and led to the tragedy of the Fall.

**“Ye, hath God said?”** — This is a half-reflective exclamation, as if the serpent had brooded long over the matter, and come to an unwelcome conclusion. It reasoned on completely earthy principles; it was the logic of flesh speaking, very good of its kind, but not adapted to reasoning upon Divine principles.

**“Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”** — This is a deliberate exaggeration, as though to excite comment, and arouse criticism of God. The Revised Version renders the question: “any tree of the garden?”

#### VERSE 2

**“And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden”** — The woman recognised her association with her husband in this prohibition. The Elohim had declared the law to Adam before her formation (Gen. 2:17), and he had faithfully passed on the teaching to her; a responsibility husbands have towards their wives (1 Cor. 14:35).

#### VERSE 3

**“But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden”** — There were two trees strategically placed in the midst of the garden (Ch. 2:9), though the prohibition rested only on one of them.

**“God hath said”** — Whereas the serpent reasoned from fleshly motives stimulated by observation, she expressed the mind of God, given by revelation.

**“Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die”** — This is additional to the strict letter of the law (Ch. 2:17), but it does express the spirit of it. No doubt Adam and Eve had received further instruction from the Elohim on the application of the law, and they had stressed the danger of even touching the tree; and now this, in turn, was faithfully expounded by the woman, who in declaring the mind of the Spirit thus opposed the mind of the flesh.

Yet the text indicates a “watering

down” of the Divine edict, as is so often done by people today. Yahweh had said “dying thou *shalt* die”. But Eve said “Lest ye die”. The Hebrew word *pen* has the indication “peradventure”; “in case” — see Ch. 3:22; 19:15,17,19; 38:11,23.

#### VERSE 4

**“And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die”** — This was a lie. See John 8:44. On what grounds could the serpent make such a contradictory claim? Only by reasoning the matter on a fleshly basis, and in the absence of belief in the revealed Word of God. From normal observation, there was no reason to believe that Eve would experience any physical deterioration of nature as the result of partaking of the forbidden fruit; and therefore why assert the contrary! The serpent either disbelieved the Divine decree, or by his subtle reasoning adduced that it could be defeated. In what way? The serpent did not say, but he hinted that the wisdom that would be released by partaking of the forbidden fruit would enable the human pair to counter it, for they would become “as Elohim, to know good and evil.”

The Hebrew text reads “dying ye shall not die” (G.R. Berry, Interlinear Hebrew-English Old Testament; R.V.; Young’s Literal Translation). There is no word in the Hebrew text for “surely” in either 2:17 or 3:4.

#### VERSE 5

**“For”** — Then follows the serpent’s faulty reason why death would not take hold on Eve if she ate.

**“God doth know”** — The serpent does not use the Divine Name which Moses has introduced into the narrative; and this is appropriate to the circumstances, not only because it had not then been revealed as it was later (Exod. 6:3), but because the use of the Covenant Name would have been unbecoming on the lips of the serpent.

**“That in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened”** — The serpent reasoned that their understanding would be advanced by eating the fruit of

the tree. This was literally true (see v. 7), but not in the way he intended. He set forth the prospect of increased wisdom as the means whereby death could be defeated; but when their eyes were opened subsequently it only revealed their state of nakedness.

**“And ye shall be as gods”** — The word is *Elohim* as in the beginning of the verse where the word is rendered “God.” The Revised Version consistently translates this as God: “Ye shall be as God.”

**“Knowing good and evil”** — See note Gen. 3:22.

## VERSE 6

**“And when the woman saw”** — The statement of this verse illustrates the teaching of James 1:14-15. Another classic example is that of Achan who confessed: “I have sinned: I saw; I coveted, I took” (Josh. 7:20-21). The tempting philosophy of the serpent had inflamed lust in Eve; she now looked at the tree with a longing she had never previously possessed. The earthy, fleshly intellectualism of the serpent had now imparted to her new ideas, for her mind had become serpentised. Mentally she was defiled. Whereas previously she had legitimate desires and was free to satisfy them; now she had a longing, generated by the unlawful suggestions of the serpent, to eat of that which was forbidden. The more she looked at the tree, the greater this desire became. She was now under the domination of the “lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” which sum up the three avenues of temptation, but which, taught John, “are not (out) of the Father” (1 John 2:16). They are “not of the Father” because, in their inflamed condition, they were brought into existence by the serpent.

**“That the tree was good for food”** — The lust of the flesh aroused.

**“And that it was pleasant to the eyes”** — The “lust of the eyes.” See the margin: “a desire to the eyes”.

**“And a tree to be desired to make one wise”** — The pride of life.

**“She took of the fruit thereof”** — This was the first act of folly leading to

sin. She probably tentatively touched the fruit (ct. v. 3) whilst caressing it with her eyes. Then, finding that no evil effects followed, she was led to eat it.

**“And did eat”** — She was now morally defiled. She had boldly grasped at equality with the Elohim; revealing an attitude of mind contrary to that required of God. How different from that manifested by the Lord Jesus (see Phil. 2:5-10). He recognised that equality with God was “not a thing to be grasped at,” and so submitted to the Father’s will in all things.

But Eve had acted in a presumptuous manner. She should have rejected the temptation of the serpent, or, at least, she should have conferred with her husband. He was made “in the image and likeness of the Elohim” (Gen. 1:26), whereas she was “the glory of the man” (1 Cor. 11:7). Being formed out of his side, designed as his counterpart (Gen. 2:20), his helpmeet, she should not have acted independently of him (see 1 Cor. 11:8-11).

But she did, and because she did, Paul reasons that women should take heed and not “usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence” (1 Tim. 2:12). He points out that Adam was first formed, and then Eve; and that Adam was not deceived by the serpent, but was seduced through her (1 Tim. 2:13-14). To demonstrate that principle, Paul established the ecclesial discipline of the subjection of sisters (1 Cor. 11:8-11) that all members might be instructed.

**“And gave also unto her husband with her”** — There is usually great sociality in sin; its effects spread to others as leaven does in dough (1 Cor. 5:6-7). Let us follow the Apostle’s advice, and purge out the leaven by refusing to associate with or condone the practice of sin. This action may be seen to be only a little deviation, but it resulted in the devastation of the lives of Adam and Eve, and the sentence of death on all their posterity. The apostolic advice is to “make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Rom. 13:14).

**“And he did eat”** — It is sometimes taught that Adam did so with his eyes open to the enormity of the act, and as a

gesture of love towards his wife, preferring to perish with her than to remain alone faithful to God. This is suggested in view of Paul's comment: "Adam was not deceived" (1 Tim. 2:14). In so writing, however, the Apostle obviously had in mind the deception of the serpent which was limited to Eve. She was deceived by the serpent, and Adam was seduced by his wife. If the theory suggested were correct, why did he later accuse her before God (v. 12)? We cannot effectively help those whom we love by joining them in acts of sin or rebellion against God; but, rather, in maintaining obedience. Adam would have been far better placed to help and lead his wife if he had remained faithful. As it was, she not only became a sinner but also a successful seducer.

#### VERSE 7

**"And the eyes of them both were opened"** — They became more observant than previously and aware of sin.

**"And they knew that they were naked"** — The Hebrew *yada* signifies to know by observation or experimentally. In Genesis 4:1 this is associated with the sexual act. Adam and Eve became conscious of their nakedness as never before, and sexual desire became aggravated. This led to a state of self-consciousness and shame which is a reaction to sin. A sinner becomes self-conscious, whereas he should be God-conscious. The eyes of Adam and Eve were now full of themselves, whereas previously they were more conscious of God.

In Scripture, "nakedness" is symbolic of a state of sin. See Rev. 3:17; 16:15. It is recorded of Ahaz that "he made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against Yahweh" (2 Chron. 28:19).

**"And they sewed fig leaves together"** — The large fig leaves seemed appropriate for that purpose. Afterwards, the fig tree was used as a symbol for Israel (Joel 1:7) because of the value of its fruit. Some species bear fruit throughout the year, the symbol thus suggesting that a true Israelite should bear fruit "in season and out of season" (2 Tim. 4:2). Christ cursed the barren fruit tree, because it had ample leaves, but

no fruit; it had plenty of promise, but no performance (Mark 11:13-14).

**"Made themselves aprons"** — They manufactured a covering of their own devising; they attempted to hide their sin by their own means, and in the absence of sacrifice. They had yet to learn the lesson, that "without shedding of blood there is no remission (of sin)" (Heb. 9:22; Matt. 26:28). Those aprons did not hide their sin from God, as Job remarked (see Job 31:33).

#### God Investigates The Cause Of Sin — vv. 8-13

*The Elohim conduct an inquest on the cause of sin, and, uncovering the part the serpent played in it, condemn the parties responsible, and proclaim the first Covenant of promise on that basis.*

#### VERSE 8

**"And they heard the voice of Yahweh Elohim walking in the garden"** — A "voice" does not "walk." However, the Hebrew *golquole* is frequently rendered "sound," and is so in this place in the Revised Version. It is used elsewhere of the sound of footsteps (2 Sam. 5:24; 2 Kings 6:32), and doubtless that is what is intended here. Adam and Eve heard the sound of the approaching angel, and being sadly conscious of their sin, they experienced fear. It is significant that Moses has used here the Covenant Name of Yahweh, as though as to remind the reader that the Divine Covenant with man had been broken by Adam. Of course, it was not the Eternal Father Himself who appeared to man, but His representative as in Exodus 23:20. Yahweh Himself dwells in unapproachable light, and has never been seen by mortal man (1 Tim. 6:16).

**"In the cool of the day"** — This is an idiom for evening, for in the Middle East, a cool breeze moves in upon the land at sundown. "Cool" is from "ruach" (see margin), "wind". Variations of temperature would not affect the angel, but could do so to man; so that in this, we have an evidence of Divine grace, in that he approached man at the most comfortable and pleasant time for him. See Song 2:17.

The guilty day of sin (the end of the Law of Gen. 2:17) was about to close, and a new day of grace commence. As the Hebrew day commences at sundown, the "cool of the day" would constitute the end of the day.

**"And Adam and his wife hid themselves"** — This was because of guilt, but it was ineffectual. "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith Yahweh" (Jer. 23:24). "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13; Amos 9:2-3). Yet though we know this to be true, we act as though sin is hidden from God, when we are able to hide it from man! Let us bear in mind that we are always in the presence of Yahweh; and so we should "walk as before Him" in spiritual maturity (Gen. 17:1). It is the fool who saith "There is no God" (Psalm 14:1). "Blessed is the man whose sin is covered" declared David (Psalm 32:1-7). Despite his fig-leaf covering, Adam realised that he was in a state of sin before his God.

**"From the presence of Yahweh Elohim amongst the trees of the garden"** — "Presence" is *paniyim* in Hebrew, and signifies "faces." The "faces" of Yahweh Elohim were those of the Elohim who represented and manifested Him.

#### VERSE 9

**"And Yahweh Elohim called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?"** — Another act of grace; Yahweh called, as He has continued to do (Luke 19:10; Rom. 5:6-8). Note how "the long-suffering of God waited" with outstretched hands, as it were, "in the days of Noah" (1 Pet. 3:20), as it again does today (2 Pet. 3:15).

#### VERSE 10

**"And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden"** — The R.V. margin renders this as "sound".

**"And I was afraid"** — This was the result of a defiled conscience. In *Clerical Theology Unscriptural*, Bro. Thomas comments:

"A good conscience is without shame or fear. Transgression of law, or sin, con-

verts a good conscience into a bad one, and develops shame or fear. Before he sinned, Adam's conscience was good. He was naked, but not at all ashamed or afraid of the presence of the Elohim; but immediately after, his conscience being defiled, shame and fear caused him to hide himself because he was naked or uncovered. This teaches that sin needs to be covered. Adam undertook to cover his sin the best way he could devise, being ignorant of the way sin is covered by Divine appointment. But the Lord God stripped him of his own device which did not recognise the need of bloodshedding in the covering of iniquity. He taught Adam to shed the blood of a lamb, and to cover his nakedness with its skin. This was the 'lamb slain from the foundation of the world', and represented him who is the Lamb typically slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8). Adam and his wife were in this manner clothed by Yahweh Elohim, and being thus clothed their sins were expiated or covered."

**"Because I was naked; and I hid myself"** — In Scripture symbology nakedness is treated as a state of sin (Rev. 16:15). Adam's declaration was a confession of sin. His statement, "I hid myself" was an acknowledgement that a covering was needed.

#### VERSE 11

**"Who told thee that thou wast naked?"** — He was self-condemned by his very words which revealed the fact of his sin.

**"Hast thou eaten of the tree?"** — Adam's fear and his shame of nakedness revealed his moral state. The eating of the tree had obviously caused a moral deterioration which affected his nature. He was now no longer "very good" having been stricken by sin.

**"Whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat"** — This was the real moral issue. Adam's sin lay not in eating fruit as such, but in disobeying God's command. It is sufficient that God has expressed His will; true love of God will respond accordingly, even though the worshipper does not comprehend why such a

command is given.

#### VERSE 12

**“And the man said, the woman whom Thou gavest to be with me”** — In this preamble, Adam sought to lay whatever blame he could on others. Whilst he did not deny that he had done wrong, he tried to convince the angel that it was not altogether his fault. God had imposed certain responsibilities upon him in supplying him with a wife, and Adam sought to shift some portion of blame on to both the woman and the God-given responsibility. Thus he attempted a measure of self-justification. How different in attitude was the second Adam, who willingly took upon himself the failings of his Bride (Matt. 8:17; Psa. 69:5; Eph. 5:26-27). He stood as representative of the people, bearing their sins “in his own body on the tree” (1 Pet. 2:24; Gal. 3:13; Isa. 53). Instead of complaining of the added responsibility imposed on him by shouldering the work of atoning for his Bride as well as ensuring his own salvation, the Lord declared: “I come... to do Thy will, O God” (Heb. 10:7).

**“And I did eat”** — This is a frank and open confession of sin, and as such must have pleased the angel.

#### VERSE 13

**“And Yahweh Elohim said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done?”** — The woman had been presented to the man as a “help meet (or fit) for him,” but she did not act in that capacity by inciting him to sin. Wives can help or hinder their husbands in their service to Yahweh. There are many warnings in the Word because of wives acting contrary to their function as helpmeets: see Isa. 3:16-26; 32:11-12; Amos 4:1-4. When husband and wife are united in their service to Yahweh, the foundation of true domestic happiness is established. Because of such co-operation, Aquila and Priscilla proved outstandingly helpful in the activities of the Truth (cf. Rom. 16:3).

**“And the woman said, the serpent beguiled me and I did eat”** — Here, again, is a frank confession of sin, and

both Adam and his wife appear in better light once they opened up their transgression to God. Nevertheless, Eve passed some of the blame on to the serpent, though with more reason and justice than did Adam in blaming his wife. The serpent beguiled through his subtility.

Paul similarly uses the circumstances to warn simple-minded believers against the seductive subtility of false teachers who can draw them away from the Truth in Christ (2 Cor. 11:1-4).

#### Judgment, Punishment, and Hope

##### — vv. 14-19

*Having listened to the evidence from the parties concerned, Yahweh, through His angelic representative, proceeded to pass judgment and sentence. But, as always, He mingled mercy with justice, and gave hope of salvation through the Edenic covenant.*

#### VERSE 14

**“And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this”** — The motives of the serpent were of the most benevolent nature; but it failed through presuming to philosophise on matters too high for its ability. When it spake, it spake the animal mind of the flesh. It was “very good” of its kind, but it was not designed to reveal the “likeness of the Elohim”.

“The thinking of its flesh could not ascend to faith, being destitute of the organic ability to believe; therefore its speech could express only fleshly thoughts. Faith was too high an attainment for it. The light of God’s law could not shine into it. Like all the inferior animals, it was a creature of mere sensation; and could utter only sentences formed of combinations resulting from the impressions of sensible objects transmitted to its sensorium by the five senses; it transcended them, however, in being more observant and reasoning than they” (*Elpis Israel*, p. 88).

In the condemnation now pronounced upon it, motive was not taken into consideration.

“What it *had done*, and not what it *intended* to do, was made the ground of

the Serpent's condemnation .... It was incapable of moral intention. It did not intend to deceive; but it did deceive; therefore, it was a deceiver. It did not intend to lie; but it did lie; therefore, it was a liar, and the father of a lie. It did not intend to cause the woman's death; but still it brought her under sentence of death; therefore, it was a murderer: and became the spiritual father of all intentional liars, deceivers, unbelievers, and man-killers, who are styled 'the Serpent's seed'" (*Elpis Israel* p. 88).

It is significant that no question was asked of the serpent, nor did it attempt to shift any of the blame on to anybody else, as did the man and the woman. Surely this shows the fallacy of a theology that teaches the existence of a superhuman devil. If such a being was responsible, why was not the fact plainly stated? But the serpent had nobody to blame, and its silence is eloquent testimony against the existence of such a being. The serpent, itself, was responsible for the form of reasoning that planted the idea of sin in the mind of Eve.

**"Thou art cursed above all cattle and above every beast of the field" —**

Though the serpent was not specifically under the law to which the human pair were subject, it could not escape the responsibility of its action. There are certain obvious requirements, needing no stated law — such as, that God's Word is inviolate; but the serpent had cast doubts on the Divine revelation. Ignorance is no justification for sin, and God metes out punishment upon morally irresponsible agents who break fundamental principles of righteousness. See Gen. 9:5; 15:16; 20:6; Exod. 21:28; Lev. 20:15; Zech. 1:15; Eph. 5:6. The result of the curse involved all cattle, because the deterioration that it wrought in man would affect all creation. The ground itself was cursed (v. 19), and so, also, were all forms of life that came out of it, or that were dependent upon it. Animals that previously had been vegetarian (Gen. 1:30), now became fiercely carnivorous, and began to prey one upon another: a condition that will be changed when the millennial blessing is poured down from on high (Isa. 65:25). The

curse, therefore, had a physical reaction. The general result is summed up by Paul in the words: "For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of Him Who subjected it in hope: because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God" (Rom. 8:19-21; R.V. mg.).

**"Upon thy belly shalt thou go" —** Though the word "belly" frequently occurs in Scripture, the Hebrew word *gachown*, here translated "belly", only appears in this passage and in Leviticus 11:42. According to Davidson, it is from a Hebrew root, signifying "to incline, or bend". To crawl upon the belly is a sign of degradation; and in this case denotes one whose support is the flesh. The Apostle referred to some who "serve not... Jesus Christ but their own belly" (Rom. 16:18), and to others whose "God is their belly" (Phil. 3:19). These are people motivated only by the flesh which they serve with the ardor of a genuine worshipper.

It is significant that the only other place where *gachown* is used is in relation to creatures that should be "held in abomination". Thus: " whatsoever goeth upon the belly ... are an abomination" (Lev. 11:42). In like manner we should view the serpent-like characteristics of the flesh, which are the basis of the thinking of the carnal mind.

Upon this, Bro. Thomas comments in *Elpis Israel*:

"The *Carnal Mind* is an expression used by Paul; or rather, it is the translation of the words used by him, in his epistle to the Romans. It is not so explicit as the original. The words he wrote are *to phronema tes sarkos*, the *thinking of the flesh*. In this phrase, he intimates to us that *the flesh is the thinking substance*, that is, the brain; which, in another place, he terms, '*the fleshly tablet of the heart*'. The kind of thinking, therefore, depends upon the conformation of this organ. Hence, the more elaborate and perfect its mechanism, the more precise and comprehensive the thought: and *vice versa*. It is upon this



principle such a diversity of mental manifestation is observable among men and other animals: but after all, how diverse soever they may be, they are all referable to one and the same thing — the *thinking of the flesh, whose elaborations are excited by the propensities, and the sensible phenomena of the world.*

“Now, the law of God is given, that the thinking of the flesh, instead of being excited by the propensities within, and the world without, may be conducted according to its direction. So long as Adam and Eve yielded to its guidance, they were happy and contented. Their thoughts were the result of right thinking, and obedience was the consequence. But when they adopted the Serpent’s reasonings as their own, these being at variance with the truth, caused an ‘enmity’ against it in their thinkings, which is equivalent to ‘enmity against God’. When their sin was perfected, the propensities, or lusts, having been inflamed, became ‘*a law in their members*’; and because it was implanted in their flesh by transgression, it is styled, ‘the law of sin’; and death being the wages of sin, it is also termed, ‘the law of sin and death’; but by philosophy, ‘the law of nature.’” (*Elpis Israel*, pp. 89-90).

This law of nature can be styled the serpent in the flesh, which is grovelling and earthbound in its thinking.

**“And dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life”** — This is a figurative expression denoting the degraded, grovelling condition of the serpent, and of the state of fallen flesh, of which it is a symbol. See Micah 7:17 where the nations, brought into subjection to Christ, are said to grovel before him, and to “lick the dust as a serpent”. In fact, snakes do not eat dust, but are entirely carnivorous. They feed only on animals swallowed whole with no chewing. Their jaws can dislocate and dilate enormously to engulf prey much thicker than themselves; they can also pass long periods, sometimes over a year, between feeds. Doubtless when they swallow their prey they consume dust as well; but the reference should not be taken literally, but is equivalent to saying idiomatically, You will be humiliated (see Psa.

72:9; Isa. 49:23). The serpent is a pictorial representation of the earthy nature of flesh (1 Cor. 15:47). This will continue in the kingdom, among the mortal populations of the earth. Thus the serpent is described as remaining unchanged from its present condition, though the other animals will be subjected to change of habits (see Isa. 65:25).

### VERSE 15

**“And I will put enmity”** — There is war to the death between the way of righteousness and the way of sin. See John 15:19; 16:33; Rom. 7:18-23; 8:6-7 mg.; Gal. 5:17, and elsewhere.

**“Between thee”** — This declaration of God, separating the serpent from the woman, and providing the basis for the first promise of redemption, must be interpreted allegorically. In that light, the serpent stood for what it proclaimed: “Ye shall not surely die” (v. 4). This error was an emanation of the thinking of the flesh called “the carnal mind” by Paul, which, he declared “is enmity against God” (Rom. 8:7). By his teaching, the serpent became “the father of lies”, and all who endorse or proclaim error are considered as its seed, or children (John 8:44). Accordingly, in the allegorical signification of this statement, the serpent represents the spirit of error and deceit as it emanates from the carnal mind. It is frequently used for those who oppose the Truth (Psa. 58:4; 140:3; Matt. 23:33; Rev. 12:9), manifesting themselves as adversaries of the righteous. Its error stemmed from its presumption in reasoning upon Divine law from the standpoint of the flesh. This philosophy caused Eve to view the forbidden tree anew, and its attractive appearance aroused in her the latent propensities of the flesh which then became active and demanding. “The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” which John teaches is “not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:16) were inflamed, and became “the word of the serpent” made flesh in her. Elsewhere, these lusts are given the title of *sin in the flesh* (Rom. 8:3), or “sin that dwelleth in me” (Rom. 7:20). Because this was first manifested

through the prompting of the serpent it is treated allegorically in the Edenic covenant as the serpent in the flesh. This is the "devil" or *diabolos* of the N.T., which term is defined as "that which has the power of death" (Heb. 2:14), elsewhere described as "the law of sin and death", "sin that dwelleth in me", "sin in the flesh" (Rom. 7:20; 8:2,3). Paul described how that this "warred against the law of my mind" (Rom. 7:23), and in doing so gave expression to the enmity described by God in the verse before us. There is constant enmity between the lusts of the flesh and the requirements of God as set down in His law.

That the serpent is used allegorically of sin is shown by the punishment meted out to Israel when the people "spake against God, and against Moses" (Num. 21:5). Serpents appeared among the people, the sting of which proved fatal (cp. 1 Cor. 15:56), so that "much people of Israel died". In panic, the rest of the people appealed to Moses for help, and he interceded with God on their behalf. He was told to make a serpent of brass, and to set it on a pole, so that the people might view it. All who did so in faith were saved from the death that threatened them. The serpent on the pole illustrated to the people what they should do to the "serpent" within (the carnal mind that inflamed lust): they must crucify it if they would live. But unlike the active serpents on the ground, there was no venom in the serpent on the pole; similarly sin must be neutralised in us if we would live. The serpent on the pole, therefore, represents the Lord Jesus Christ who came in the nature common to all. On several occasions he compared his crucifixion with the "lifting up" of the serpent in the wilderness (John 3:14-16; 8:28; 12:32), thus identifying his nature with the allegorical significance of the serpent. All who would follow Christ must likewise "crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24).

The term *devil* is not only used to define physical sin in the flesh, but all those who are motivated thereby. It is applied to individuals who stand in opposition to the way of righteousness (e.g.

John 6:70), or to governments that are antagonistic to the principles of Christ (e.g. Rev. 2:10). The serpent is used in similar fashion. It is applied to the sin-promptings of the flesh that must be crucified (Num. 21:6; Gal. 5:24); to actual transgression (Psa. 58:4); and to the political sin-powers of the world of flesh (Rev. 12:14; 20:2).

In *Eureka* vol. 1, pp. 248-249, Bro. Thomas has this to say on the word *diabolos* or devil:

"By this time, I apprehend, the intelligent reader will be able to answer scripturally the question, 'What is that which has the power of death?' And he will, doubtless, agree, that it is 'the exceedingly great sinner SIN,' in the sense of 'the Law of Sin and Death' within all the posterity of Adam, without exception. This, then, is Paul's *diabolos*, which he says 'has the power of death'; which 'power' he also saith is 'sin, the sting of death'.

"But why doth Paul style Sin, *diabolos*? The answer to this question will be found in the definition of the word. *Diabolos* is derived from *diaballo*, which is compounded of *dia*, a preposition, which in composition signifies *across, over...* and intransitively, like the Latin *trajicere*, to *pass over, to cross, to pass*. This being the signification of the parent verb, the noun *diabolos* is the name of *that which crosses, or causes to cross over, or falls over*. *Diabolos* is therefore a very fit and proper word by which to designate the law of sin and death, or Sin's flesh. The Eternal Spirit drew a line before Adam, and said, Thou shalt not cross, or pass over that line upon pain of evil and death. That line was the Eden law; on the east of that line was the answer of a good conscience, friendship with God, and life without end; but on the west, fear, shame, misery, and death. To obey, was to maintain the position in which he was originally placed: to disobey, to *cross over the line* forbidden. But 'he was drawn away, and enticed by his own lusts'. The narrative of Moses proves this. The man was enticed of his own lust to cross over the line, or to disobey the law; so that his own lust is the *Diabolos*. Thus, etymology and doctrine

agreeing, our definition must be correct".

According to this, the original *diablos* was the serpent, whose seductive, tempting voice, lured Eve and then Adam to disobey. In Eden, therefore, there was an external tempter in the person of the

serpent. But as the propensities were inflamed through the original transgression, the tempter, the serpent, has been found within.

"**And the woman**" — The woman is representative of the Ecclesia. She was so

## The Edenic Covenant — Genesis 3:15

God's plan of redemption is based upon three covenants of promise: the Edenic, the Abrahamic, and the Davidic.

They build one upon another:

1. The Edenic promises *everlasting life* — that which Adam lost through sin.
2. The Abrahamic promises an *everlasting inheritance* — replacing that which Abraham gave up when he left Ur.
3. The Davidic promises an *everlasting kingdom* — which was desired by David, but which he did not then obtain.

Life, inheritance and glory are thus set before those who answer the call of God. The first is necessary for the enjoyment of the second; and the second is essential for the attainment of the third.

The covenant of Genesis 3:15 should be interpreted allegorically. The three parties to it are:

The Deity and the enmity to which He makes reference.

The serpent and its seed.

The woman and her seed.

The covenant is based upon "enmity" which God's way creates between two parties: the serpent and the woman.

Interpreted allegorically, the serpent represents that which he proclaimed. He declared: "Thou shalt not surely die". That was a lie, the product of his own thoughts, reasoning upon his own observation. Hence it was the emanation of the thinking of the flesh. This, in its outworking, incited Eve to sin which, in turn, brought death. The serpent, therefore, stands for the flesh unilluminated by divine revelation, formulating false teaching, bringing forth sin and death.

The woman, on the other hand, proclaimed the truth received by divine revelation. She faithfully set forth the facts concerning God's law, even though subsequently, she sinned. In the allegory she represents those who receive divine instruction.

The two principles, represented by the serpent and the woman, are mutually antagonistic, made so by the creation of divine law.

The three principles forming the basis of the covenant can be allegorically set out as follows:

### The Serpent

Expressed the mind of the flesh, based on mere observation.

Proclaimed false doctrine.

### The Enmity

*"I will put enmity.."*

Enmity between the mind of the spirit and that of the flesh as taught by Paul: Rom. 8:6-7 mg.; Gal. 5:17.

Enmity between truth and error: 2 Cor. 11:3-4,13; Gal.1:8-9.

### The Woman

*"God doth know.."*

Expressed the mind of the spirit given through divine revelation.

Proclaimed the Truth: Gen. 3:2-3.

The serpent's teaching brought forth sin.  
Resulted in death.

Rom. 7:17-23; 1 Cor. 15:33,56; Eph. 4:18; Rom. 6:23.

The Truth leads to obedience: Rom. 6:17  
The Truth is designed for Life: John 17:3  
The Seed of the Woman are those motivated by the mind of the Spirit. They are described as being "in Christ".

The Seed of the Serpent are those motivated by the mind of the flesh. They are described as being "in the flesh" (Rom. 8:8).

Matt. 23:33; John 15:19; 16:33.

The word "bruise" in Gen. 3:15 is from the Hebrew *shuwph*, "to crush". The "enmity" established between the two ways of thought and action would result in the seed of the woman being temporarily incapacitated by a crushed heel; but would ultimately result in the seed of the serpent experiencing a fatally crushed skull. The fulfilment of the promise is expressed in the following terms: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he (the seed of the woman) also himself likewise took part of the same (*fallen human nature — sin's flesh*, Rom. 8:3); that through death (*a crushing of the heel*) he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil (*a crushing of the head*); and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:14-15).

That "which has the power of death" is sin (Rom. 5:12; 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:56); that which Christ "came to destroy" is sin (Heb. 9:26; 1 Cor. 15:3; 1 John 3:5). These two lines of investigation both reveal that the devil is a synonym for sin.

The outworking of sin brought a change in the condition of Adam's nature. It was no longer "very good" (Gen. 1:31), but "evil from his youth" (Gen. 8:21), defined by Paul as "sin's flesh" (Rom. 8:3). For "sin" is used in two ways in Scripture: first, to denote actual transgression (1 John 3:4); second, to denote man's mortal, sin-prone nature, as the root cause of transgression (Mark 7:20-23). Hence it is styled by Paul "the law of sin which is in my members" (Rom. 7:20,23).

Christ came in the nature common to all mankind. Strengthened by the Father (Psa. 80:17), he conquered the flesh in life, and manifested the Divine character to perfection. His obedience extended to submitting to his death on the cross, thus publicly demonstrating that flesh must be crucified in order to serve God aright (Gal. 5:24). His obedience "even unto the death of the cross" ensured his resurrection to life eternal. Though he had been "crushed on the heel", he succeeded in "crushing the head", or destroying, that which would have held him in captivity to sin. Through grace and mercy, Yahweh offered forgiveness to all who would come unto Him through Christ. By an acknowledgement of the Truth, followed by the act of obedience in passing through the waters of baptism unto newness of life (Rom. 6:4), those "in Christ" constituting the multitudinous seed of the woman, commence a walk in faith that can gain for them eternal life in the Age to come. Sin may crush them on the heel, but in the strength of Yahweh, manifested through His Son, they will ultimately attain unto the victory that will lead them triumphantly from domination of sin in life, and from the grave, through a resurrection to life eternal.

The Edenic covenant opened a way to life eternal for those who would avail themselves of the provision God then proceeded to reveal to Adam and Eve.

in her formation, as well as in her sin. See the use of this symbol 2 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:31-32; Isa. 54:6.

**“And between thy seed”** — Those governed by the mind of the flesh. See Psa. 58:4; 140:3; Matt. 23:33; 2 Cor. 11:3-4; Rom. 8:5-9; John 8:44.

**“And her seed”** — Those governed by the mind of the Spirit, and who are found “in Christ”, God’s son “made of a woman” (Gal. 4:4). The emphasis upon the “seed of the woman” rather than that of the man, points to the importance of the divine begetting and virgin birth of the Lord. Phil. 2:6.

**“Cursed”** — The curse rested upon all creation because man, the chief of Creation, was involved. By “one man’s offence death reigned by one” (Rom. 5:12, 17); by “one act of transgression judgment came upon all men to condemnation” (Rom. 5:18 mg.). This does not mean that we are “condemned” or treated as guilty because of the offence of Adam, but it means that the punishment to which he was condemned (that of mortality) rested upon all his posterity. It is our misfortune, not our blame, that we inherit the physical consequences of Adam’s sin; for, let it be clearly understood, it is the physical consequences of the curse that we inherit, and not the moral guilt; and, furthermore, the Lord inherited these in common with us all. Man was originally in a “very good” physical state (Gen. 1:31); but afterwards was adjudged by the same Judge as evil (Gen. 8:21). Originally the earth was proclaimed “very good,” but afterwards it sprouted thorns and thistles in abundance (Gen. 3:18). Its proneness so to do is similar to the proneness of the flesh to sin, producing moral thorns and thistles (see Heb. 6:8). Originally, the animals were vegetarian, and came tamely before Adam to be named (Gen. 2:19); but subsequently they became carnivorous and fierce; though ultimately they will be restored to their original state (Isa. 65:25). Man’s physical state under the curse, his proneness to sin, is expressed in Scriptures such as Gen. 3:19; Rom. 7:5, 14, 17, 18, 20; Phil. 3:21, etc.

**“It shall bruise thy head, and thou**

**shalt bruise his heel”** — The Hebrew *hu* is best rendered “he”; and “bruise”, *shuw-ph*, signifies “to crush”, as rendered in Rotherham’s translation. To “crush” the head is to administer a fatal blow, whereas to crush a heel will only incapacitate for a time. Accordingly, the declaration promises to completely destroy the effects of transgression brought into being through the serpent’s teaching, though, in doing so, the seed of the woman would be temporary wounded thereby. This was accomplished through the offering of Christ. Though he died, it was only a temporary affliction, for he rose triumphant over death, and provided the means whereby his followers triumph over sin and death: the heritage of the serpent. Paul’s comment is to the point: “Through death (*a crushed heel*) he might destroy (*a crushed head*) him that had the power of death (*sin in the flesh*) even the devil” (Heb. 2:14). Christ destroyed “the devil” (sin in the flesh) in that in death such is rendered inactive. His sacrificial death ensured his resurrection to life eternal (John 10:17; Acts 2:24; Phil. 2:8-9). Being clothed upon with Divine nature, he was no longer subject to mortality, and sin in the flesh ceased to be an element of his being. Furthermore, through the mercy of the Father, the efficacy of his offering extends to those who are “in him” through baptism. They are granted forgiveness of sins, and are motivated to overcome. The Edenic Covenant of promise, therefore, guarantees life to the seed of the woman through conquest of the serpent power. It promises victory through Christ in the battle against sin and death.

#### VERSE 16

**“Unto the woman he said”** — The promise of final victory implied in the judgment pronounced upon the serpent, must have softened with hope the judgments now pronounced upon the woman and the man.

**“I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception”** — The incidence of sin and death has greatly increased the sorrow of womankind, as they have found their children brought under the influence

of these enemies. Women, because of their closer affinity to their children, suffer more keenly than do men, when their offspring go astray, or are struck down by death. An example is provided in the events narrated in Genesis 4. How keenly Eve must have felt the sorrow caused by her firstborn's sin in murdering his brother. Her high hopes of him when he was born (Gen. 4:1) were completely shattered by this frightful family tragedy, which she doubtless felt more keenly than did Adam.

Moreover, the mortality of the human race which came through sin, made necessary a more frequent conception in order to make good the wastage through death, in order to "replenish the earth" as required (Gen. 1:28).

In addition to all this, the words have an allegorical value. The Ecclesia, the second Eve (2 Cor. 11:1-3), experiences travail in bringing forth children. How great is the sorrow of the Ecclesia at the spiritual death of any of its family; how often has it gone through the agony of Cain versus Abel; how much more it has had to labour throughout the ages to repair such loss through death! The curse imposed upon the woman has likewise to be experienced by the Ecclesia.

**"In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children"** — This form of life to which Eve was condemned is quite different from that which she had tried to achieve through disobedience. The appearance of the forbidden tree was attractive, and the knowledge which the eating of it was said to convey had suggested everything that was desirable (v. 6). The result, however, brought the opposite. The birth of children is accompanied by travail, whilst the responsibilities of training and upbringing also bring their sorrow. This Eve found as the tragedy of family life unfolded, with the hostility manifested by Cain towards Abel. Job commented: "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble" (Job 14:1).

**"And thy desire shall be to thy husband"** — "Desire" in Hebrew is *teshuwqah* and denotes "a stretching out after", "a longing for". It is from the root *shuwq*, "to rush after or over", i.e. to over-

flow as water. But what is signified by "desire"? The comment in Genesis is that it is "to" her husband, rather than "for" her husband, and this suggests that the "desire" is for a restoration to her former status with her husband before sin entered the world. She had then enjoyed a unity with Adam as his helpmeet, but that position had been harmed. Her restoration depended upon her attitude and actions in conformity to the marriage covenant, and the divine commandments.

The same word occurs in Genesis 4:7, and there relates to the privileged status of the firstborn which was previously enjoyed by Cain.

Some read *teshuwqah*, return, instead of *teshuwqwah*, desire. The Concordant Version reads: "By your husband is your restoration, and he shall rule over you." The Septuagint and Syriac are similar, and render "turning or returning." The Septuagint renders by the Greek *apostrophee*, "a turning oneself, an escape, a place of refuge from evil" (see Liddell & Scott Greek Lexicon). Eve, through her presumptuous action, had lost her equality, her "one-ness" with her husband, and her restoration to this position was made subject to him.

Spiritually, this state of equality between man and woman is restored in Christ (see Gal. 3:28), for both have equal privileges and status in him. But this is only a token of the complete restoration to equality with "the man" Christ Jesus in the age to come, to which the Lord referred in his prayer: "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me" (John 17:21).

**"And he shall rule over Thee"** — By this Divine law, wives are required to be in subjection to their husbands, whilst husbands are required to manifest toward their wives the same self-sacrificing love that Christ reveals towards the Ecclesia (Eph. 5:22-27). The law does not make provision for dictatorial domination, but, on the part of the husband, a manifestation of the qualities of God (1 Cor. 11:7), and, on the part of the wife, that loving and

understanding submission to him that the Ecclesia should exhibit towards Christ. There is nothing difficult in this when the attitude of each towards the other is motivated by mutual affection and understanding, and is dominated by the self-effacing love that Christ reveals towards his "Bride". It is incumbent upon husbands to manifest the qualities of Christ if they are to receive the loving co-operation and recognition of their status from their wives. When that is the case, wives should be in subjection to their husbands in the Lord (Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:11-12) as a token of the subjection that the second Eve (the Ecclesia) should manifest towards her husband, the second Adam. That subjection will ensure her ultimate elevation and unity with Christ. Thus, in the *The Song Of Solomon*, the Bride is represented as using the same term, and singing: "His desire is toward me" (Ch. 7:10). The Bride has already confessed her total dedication to her Lord (Song 2:16; 6:3), and in this statement she uses language that links the marriage with the covenant to Eve. The Hebrew word rendered "desire" only occurs in Gen. 3:16; 4:7; Song 7:10, and thus, in each place, implies restoration and elevation. Paul interpreted the *Song of Solomon* as expressing the nuptials between Christ and his beloved, and so quotes Song 4:7 in Eph. 5:27.

The loving submission of the second Eve to the will of her Lord will result in her elevation. She shall be praised in the terms that the husband of the virtuous woman lavishes upon her in Proverbs 31:28-41:

*"Her children arise up, and call her blessed;  
Her husband also, and he praiseth her:  
Many daughters have done virtuously,  
But thou excellest them all.  
Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain:  
But a woman that feareth Yahweh, she shall be praised.  
Give her of the fruit of her hands;  
And let her own works praise her in the gates".*

The declaration to Eve recorded in Genesis 3:16, therefore, should be linked to the Edenic Covenant, as signifying the terms upon which her elevation will be obtained. Her restoration to favour and privilege is subject to her husband (the second Adam), and he shall rule over her. The spiritual application to the saint in Christ is obvious.

Meanwhile, the following comments by Bro. J. Thomas in *Elpis Israel* are to the point in relation to the present status of women in society:

"We hear much in some parts of the world of the political rights and equality of women with men; and of their preaching and teaching in public assemblies. We need wonder at nothing which emanates from the unenlightened thinking of sinful flesh. There is no absurdity too monstrous to be sanctified by unspiritualised animal intellect. Men do not think according to God's thinking, and therefore it is they run into the most unscriptural conceits; among which may be enumerated the political and social equality of women. Trained to usefulness, of cultivated intellect, and with moral sentiments purified and ennobled by the nurture and admonition of the Lord's truth, women are 'helps meet' for the Elohim; and much too good for men of ordinary stamp. The sex is susceptible of this exaltation; though I despair of witnessing it in many instances till 'the Age to come.' But, even women of this excellency of mind and disposition, were it possible for such to do so, would be guilty of indiscretion, presumption, and rebellion against God's law, in assuming equality of rank, equality of rights, and authority over man, which is implied in teaching and preaching. It is the old ambition of the sex to be equal to the gods; but in taking steps to attain it, they involved themselves in subjection to men. Preaching, and lecturing, women are but species of actresses, who exhibit upon the boards for the amusement of sinful and foolish men. They aim at an equality for which they are not physically constituted; they degrade themselves by the exhibition, and in proportion as they rise in assurance, they sink in all that really adorns a woman..."

“Christian women should not copy after the god-aspiring Eve, but after Sarah, the faithful mother of Israel, who submitted herself in all things to Abraham, ‘calling him Lord’ (Gen. 18:12). Nor should their obedience be restricted to Christian husbands only. They should also obey them ‘without the word’; that is, those who have not submitted to it, in order that they may be won over to the faith when they behold the chaste and respectful behaviour of their wives, produced by a belief of the Truth (1 Pet. 3:1-6)”. (pp. 121-123).

### VERSE 17

**“And unto Adam he said, 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”** — Adam was not deceived by the serpent, but by his wife! This is a common failing with men, many of whom permit family considerations to blind them to their obligations to God. A man best loves his wife and children by serving God and not by serving self. As Bro. Thomas declares:

“A man should never permit the words of a woman to intervene between him and the laws of God. This is a rock upon which myriads have made shipwreck of the faith. Adam sinned in consequence of listening to Eve’s silvery discourse. No temptation has proved more irresistible to the flesh than the enticing words of woman’s lips ...” (*Elpis Israel*, p. 123).

Christ taught that it was fundamental to the call of the Gospel that men recognize the prior responsibility to serve God before family. “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26). To “hate” in this context is to manifest a lesser love for one, so that the absorbing passion of life is for the prime object of it.

Adam had “hearkened unto the voice of his wife,” and in doing so had failed to heed the commandments of God.

**“Cursed is the ground for thy sake”** — In contrast to the sentence imposed on

Eve, a curse was put upon the soil instead of directly upon the man (apart from his physical defilement — see comment below). Adam had been commanded to work with the soil previously (Gen. 2:15), but now it was no longer to be a joy to do so. His labour would be mixed with sorrow. Yet this was for “his sake.” Idleness was not good for man in his “very good” state, and increased labour is best for him in the state of mortality which is now his lot. Paul commanded: “If any would not work, neither should he eat” (2 Thess. 3:10). Work should be provided for all, both in the ecclesia and in the world. The system of instruction in which everything is done for others, removing even the need for thought and decision, is not good; nor is the system of the welfare state that fails to provide labour for all, and instead offers the dole. This age of mass production and a shortened labour-week, is also an age of discontent and frustration. The ground was cursed “for man’s sake”, and evils have increased as he has drifted further from the soil.

Paul’s comment upon the curse is given in Rom. 8:20-22: “The creation (see RV) was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope.” The effect of the curse was a physical defilement of all creation whether serpent, cattle, woman, ground or man, and the results were apparent in a very obvious manner, as the terms of the sentence reveal. The productivity of the earth was restrained, and man was faced with competition in the pursuit of agriculture as the ground brought forth thorns and thistles in abundance. As the noxious weeds made their appearance, the effect of the curse was clearly seen. This was the case also as far as man was concerned as manifested in the tragic events recorded in Genesis 4. In Heb. 6:7-9 “thorns and thistles” are likened to the sins of the flesh which became apparent in man as the result of the curse, for whereas previously he had been “very good”, he now became death-doomed and sin-prone. The earth was cursed, and as man is of “the earth, earthy” so the curse rested on him, as on all creation that was associated



therewith.

**“In sorrow shalt thou eat of it”** — The experience of Solomon confirmed this statement. See Ecc. 2:22-23. The difficulties of extracting a living from the soil added to Adam’s problems, and brought upon him anxiety, pressure and lack of respite. His condition subsequent to sin illustrated the observation of the wise man: “The way of transgressors is hard” (Prov. 13:15).

#### VERSE 18

**“Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee”** — Howsoever this was brought about, the fact remains that it was done; and, furthermore, that in this proneness of the earth to bring forth noxious weeds, man had a visible representation of his own fallen condition, and the proneness of his nature to produce sin. Thorns and thistles are typical of the sins of the flesh that manifest themselves in human nature. See Heb. 6:8. Thus human nature is described as “earthy”; but whereas, originally, the earth, with all creation, was in a “very good” state (Gen.1:31), that was no longer the case.

**“And thou shalt eat the herb of the field”** — Previously Adam had been given the fruits of the garden to eat; now he must cultivate the herb of the field. This also was indicative of his fallen state.

#### VERSE 19

**“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread”** — Man was condemned to labour and toil in place of eating the fruits of Eden. In his fallen state, work is the best thing for man. Thus Paul taught: “If any would not work, neither should he eat” (2 Thess. 3:10). There is dignity in labour that is beneficial to the development of character. To fill one’s life with profitable activity will limit the opportunity for sin. It was when David “tarried still at Jerusalem” that he transgressed against Yahweh (2 Sam. 11:1). As thorns and thistles will take over an uncultivated field; so sin will dominate a mind empty of the Word. Thus the “field of the slothful” is described as that of the man “void of understanding.” The wise man saw that it

was not only cluttered with thorns and nettles, but that the prolific growth of such weeds had broken down the wall, and had extended to neighbouring fields (Prov. 24:30-31). He declared: “Then I saw, and considered it well; I looked upon it and received instruction” (v. 32). If we allow the thorns and thistles of our natural thinking to take possession of us, the effect will not only be to produce sin in ourselves, but to adversely influence others in that way also.

**“Till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken”** — See the comment of Moses in Psalm 90:7-11; and his concluding exhortation: “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom” (v. 12).

**“For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return”** — Death was not to be immediate, but was to be a gradual process ending in a state of unconsciousness, when man, as a lifeless corpse, would mingle once more with the ground: “the dust shall return to the earth as it was” (Ecc. 12:7). This sentence illustrates the statement of the Apostle: “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23).

#### The Plan Of Redemption Typified — vv. 20-24

*Adam’s response to the proclamation of the sentence of death, was to “call his wife’s name Eve,” or Life. This seems so unrelated to the context, that many believe that the verse is misplaced. But, in fact, it illustrates Adam’s hope in the seed promised through his wife. He recognised the promise of v. 15 as a prophecy of a Redeemer who could give life. Therefore, in spite of the sentence of death, Adam claimed that he was still related to Life. In the face of that declaration, and to teach what was involved in order to secure the benefits of the Edenic covenant, and be really related to life, the Elohim stripped Adam and Eve of their fig-leaf-covering, and clothed them with the skin of an animal slain for that purpose.*

#### VERSE 20

**“Adam called his wife’s name Eve”** — Eve signifies “Life” or “Living.” In

giving her this name, Adam proclaimed his confidence in the promise of v. 15. It was, as it were, his statement of faith. He evidently recognised the significance of all that had been said, and comprehending the typical import of what had taken place in Eden, he named his wife in a way that spake of the hope of life through the Redeemer that would come through her.

**“Because she was the mother of all living”** — This is true literally, but it also has a figurative significance. Eve represents the bride of Christ, the Ecclesia associated with the Covenant of promise, “the mother of us all” (Gal. 4:26). They are truly “living ones” who are of the multitudinous seed of the woman; the others are “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1).

#### VERSE 21

**“Unto Adam also and to his wife”** — God responded to Adam’s naming of his wife, by showing him the process necessary to really become related to Life. In slaying an animal to provide a covering, He demonstrated that “the flesh profiteth nothing” (John 6:63), for it cannot, of itself, reflect the character of God. Therefore, the principle had to be laid down that “without the shedding of blood there is no remission” of sin (Heb. 9:22). The institution of sacrifice accomplished this. It dramatised that the flesh must be figuratively crucified (Gal. 5:24). Typically, the animal slain pointed forward to the Lamb of God who subsequently would be manifested to take away the sin of the world (see Rev. 13:8). There are both negative and positive aspects to sacrifice. The slaying of the animal represents the former: the putting to death of the flesh, the denial of its lusts when they run counter to the will of God. The pouring out of the blood upon the altar (see Lev. 17:11; 23:27) represents the latter; the dedication of life to doing the will of God. Without the application of this dual aspect of sacrifice in life, there is “no remission” of sin. Thus sacrifice has been provided as a covering for sins; and so the word atonement is from a Hebrew root signifying “to cover.” A believer is “covered” in Christ (Psa. 32:1-2; Isa. 61:10; Gal. 3:26-28; Rev. 3:4)

when he submits to baptism; and the process thus commenced will be consummated at the Judgment Seat of Christ when he will be “covered” with Divine nature (Rev. 19:8; 2 Cor. 5:2-3). This was typified in Eden.

**“Did Yahweh Elohim make coats of skins, and clothed them”** — There are several significant items that should be observed in this statement. First, is the use of the Covenant name: Yahweh Elohim. This is appropriate to the circumstances, linking it with the covenant of promise already made (v. 15), and pointing forward to the Lord Jesus, who, as the manifestation of Yahweh, confirmed the covenant. Second, it was Yahweh Elohim who made the coats, or coverings (as the Hebrew word signifies), and not the human pair; for their homemade covering of fig-leaves was stripped from them. The Lord Jesus, as the Lamb of God to provide a covering for the sin of the world (John 1:29), is a provision of Yahweh. He was “a body prepared” (Heb. 10:5), a stone engraved by the Divine Craftsman ( Zech. 3:9), one who though of our nature, was begotten not of the will of the flesh, but of God, and whose glory of character is traceable to his Divine begetting (John 1:14). Third, the word “skins,” though expressed in the A.V. in the plural, is in the singular form in the Hebrew. There was but one covenant victim, but it provided sufficient to suitably clothe both the man and his wife.

The Hebrew word *kuttoneth* or *kuttonet*, rendered ‘coats’ implies a tunic or coat. The word *owr*, in the singular form implies hide, leather or skin.

#### VERSE 22

**“And Yahweh Elohim said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil”** — For reference to the properties attached to the eating of the fruit of this tree, see notes on Gen. 2:17. The name “Lord God” or *Yahweh Elohim* relates to the *Elohim* or “angels” (see Psa. 8:5 where *Elohim* is translated “angels”) through whom Yahweh reveals Himself and implies that the *Elohim* had experience of both good and evil. When had that been, seeing that all that had been made

was deemed “very good”? Probably during the period of their probation. As created beings, the Elohim had probably attained unto their present status of exaltation through probation. This is strongly suggested in that equality with the angels is set before believers in Christ as a matter of hope (Luke 20:36). That being the case, it would have been with understanding sympathy that they would have observed Adam and Eve in a similar condition. To “know” is to experience experimentally, to feel the effect of the state described in some personal and tangible manner.

The evil effects of eating the fruit were obvious: Adam and Eve had become sin-prone, death-doomed creatures. But how did the eating of the fruit of the tree cause them to “know” experimentally a measure of “good” unknown to them whilst in innocence? Because, previously, there had been no basis of comparison. The witness of “good” was all around them. Their sin would introduce them to evil, and cause good to show up in sharper contrast. Their eyes had been opened to discern the difference, which had not been possible when they had experienced only the one. They realised that they were no longer in a state of innocence, and, therefore, were in need of a covering; but they were ignorant of what was required in that regard. The eating of the forbidden fruit brought home to them certain facts that it was “good” for them to know, whilst causing them to recognise the “evil” consequences of their action. These can be epitomised as follows:

(1) It brought home the reality of sin, and of the punishment that accrues therefrom.

(2) It showed that the thinking of flesh ignorant of the Word of God will lead astray.

(3) It made more evident that man is dependent upon the mercy, forgiveness and grace of God, Divine qualities that God expects forgiven man to manifest towards his fellows (cp. Matt. 5:44-45; Rom. 5:8).

(4) It demonstrated man’s need of God: the necessity for him to manifest humility, faith, loyalty, obedience.

(5) It set forth more completely a balanced view of God’s character, enabling Adam and Eve to more clearly “behold the goodness and the severity of God” (Rom. 11:22; Exod. 34:6-7).

Therefore, in His wisdom, Yahweh was able to create good out of the Fall in that it enabled His virtues of love, compassion, mercy and forgiveness to be emphasised by contrast. The eating of the forbidden fruit brought home to Adam and Eve, a true knowledge of good whilst, at the same time, causing them to experience an evil that previously was unknown to them.

**“And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life”**

— There was a danger that man might take of the fruit of the tree of life, and so attain unto eternal life without the necessary development of spiritual virtues in his character to make this desirable. The statement “lest he put forth his hand, and take also” shows that it was needful to eat only once of this tree to confer immortality. In that regard, it was similar to the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil: as only one eating was necessary to cause a physical deterioration, so one eating of the Tree of Life would have a similar reaction, though in the opposite direction. Why did not Adam and Eve eat of it previously, and so ensure life eternal for themselves? Apart from the fact that the fruit upon it probably would not have appeared attractive, it may well have been that it had not yet ripened or perhaps they were ignorant of its powers. Something prevented them eating it previously, and now, when its need was obvious in view of their changed condition, the Elohim made preparation against them presumptuously doing so.

**“Eat and live for ever”** — Eating of the Tree of Life conferred immortality. This is the obvious meaning of the phrase, and it is confirmed beyond doubt by the figurative reference to this literal tree in Rev. 2:7.

#### VERSE 23

**“Therefore Yahweh Elohim sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was**

**taken**” — The conjunction *therefore* links this verse with the one preceding it. Man is set to work in tilling the ground where the lesson of his mortality can be learned again and again in the seasons of the year, and the plants of the field, which go through the process of bearing, dying, and living again, through the seasons of summer, winter and spring. Whilst man is thus reminded of his earthiness, God mercifully consigns him to an exacting occupation, which prevents him from having the leisure to indulge his sinful propensities to the full. Idleness is the parent of vice. See Ezek. 16:49.

#### VERSE 24

**“So he drove out the man”** — He compelled him to leave; man was evidently reluctant to do so.

**“And He placed at the east of the garden of Eden”** — The east is the front, towards the rising sun. Both the Tabernacle and the Temple faced east, so that the worshipper, in approaching Yahweh turned his back towards the rising sun. This taught the lesson that he should turn away from natural light to seek the divine revelation, the light of the Word. The word “placed” is *shakan* in Hebrew, and signifies “to dwell, to have habitation, to lodge in”. Vine renders the phrase: “At the east of the Garden of Eden, He caused to dwell in a tabernacle the Cherubim and the flaming sword”. A centre of Divine worship was established at the east (or entrance) of the garden of Eden as a centre of worship for the growing family of Adam and Eve (Gen. 4:3).

**“Cherubims”** — The word should be rendered “cherubim” for the *im* on the end of a Hebrew word denotes the plural number. The singular form of the word is “cherub” as in Psalm 18:10. In *Phanerosis*, Bro. Thomas suggests the following derivation of the name:

“We believe that the word is derived from the root *rachav*, ‘to ride’ whether on an animal or in a vehicle. By transposing the first two letters, and hermeneutically inserting *wav* before the last, we have ‘cherub’ or that which is ridden — in the plural, ‘cherubim’. This convertibility of the verb *rachav* into the noun ‘cherub’ is

illustrated in Psalm 18:10” (p. 95).

According to this derivation, the cherubim comprise chariots of Yahweh, in which He rides by His Spirit, and through which He manifests Himself. In 1 Chronicles 28:18 the phrase “the chariot even the cherubim” occurs according to the Revised Version, and Psalm 18:10 states: “He rode upon a cherub, and did fly.”

These expressions support the derivation of the word suggested by Bro. Thomas.

W. Brown in *Antiquities of the Jews* gives another meaning. He states that the word signifies “resembling the majesty.” This derivation is obtained by dividing the word into *kay* as a particle of resemblance, and *rab* as signifying “majesty.”

Either definition emphasises the doctrine of God-manifestation. The Cherubim in Eden were celestial beings: the Elohim or angels who had conversed with and ministered to Adam (Heb. 1:7,14; Gen. 3:9).

**“And a flaming sword”** — Bro. Thomas renders this “*even* the flaming sword” and so unites the cherubim and the sword as one. Bro. Thomas points out that the phrase can be rendered: “Cherubim, even a flaming sword,” and directs attention to Psa. 104:4: “Who maketh His angels spirits; His ministers a flaming fire.”

The sword was used to slay, and the fire to consume, the burnt offerings that worshippers would later bring to this tabernacle east of Eden. Therefore the cherubim acted as priests, mediating in the form of worship that sin had made necessary.

The circumstances were appropriate for the priestly functions of the Elohist Cherubim. A priest is selected “who can have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity” (Heb. 5:2). Thus present difficulties are designed to equip us for priestly ministrations in the Age to come (Rev. 5:9-10). Meanwhile, our high-priest, though now clothed upon with immortality, can be “touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Heb. 4:15) because “learned he obedience by the things which he suffered” (Heb. 5:8).

The Elohist Cherubim in the Garden of Eden were similarly placed. They were able to say "the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil" (Gen. 3:22), and, recalling their own limitations and weaknesses during the period of their probation, were "touched with the feeling of the infirmities" of the fallen pair.

The use of the flaming sword probably denoted acceptance of the offerings presented. On such occasions, the fire evidently flashed forth from the cherubic glory, consuming the sacrifice upon the altar in similar manner to that described in Lev. 9:24; 1 Kings 18:38; 1 Chron. 21:26; 22:1; 2 Chron. 7:1.

**"Which turned every way"** — The devouring flame flashed on every side like a sword, "turning every way" to keep the approach to the Tree of Life. In this, it was like the faces of the Cherubim which likewise were turned towards the four points of the compass (Ezek. 1:10). Later, Cain was constrained to say: "From Thy faces shall I be hid" (Gen. 4:14). The "faces" to which he referred were those of the Cherubim, or Yahweh's representatives on earth.

Bro. Thomas comments: "The flaming sword in Eden is more strikingly illustrated as to its probable appearance by Ezekiel's description of the cherubic glory. He says he beheld 'a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the brightness thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire; whence issued forth the likeness of four living creatures'; or cherubim. 'The appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures: and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning'" (*Elpis Israel*, p. 153).

**"To keep the way"** — Access to the Tree of Life having been closed when Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden of Eden, the way to it eventually was preserved by the priestly ministrations of the Cherubim, whilst they likewise guarded it from unlawful intrusion on the part of those who refused the Divine way.

Accordingly, it is possible for sinners to become saints, and to be granted to eat of the Tree of Life in the bestowal of immortality (Rev. 2:7).

The verb "to keep" in the statement before us is from the Hebrew *shamar* which signifies "to preserve" as well as "to guard". Priestly ministrations are necessary for both. The priests and Levites under the Mosaic covenant, not only received the offerings of the people, but preserved the holy place from unwarranted intrusion on the part of those not qualified to enter (Num. 3:10). They had to "keep the charge" of the Tabernacle (Num. 8:24-26), as the Edenic sword "kept" the way to the Tree of Life. The "way" relates to the way of life. References to this "way" are frequent throughout the Word. Thus: "they shall keep the way" (Gen. 18:19); they "corrupted His way" (Gen. 6:12); "show me now thy way" (Exod. 33:13); "teach His way" (Psa. 25:9); "the way of holiness" (Isa. 35:8); "the way of Yahweh" (Isa. 40:3); "the way of understanding" (Isa. 40:14); "a way for the ransomed" (Isa. 51:10); "the way of peace" (Isa. 59:8). Notice how that the Gospel message is frequently described merely as "the way" (Acts 9:2; 16:17; 19:9, 23; 22:4). Contrast Yahweh's way with the way of sinners (Psa. 1:1); "his own way" (Isa. 53:6); "a way that seemeth right" (Prov. 14:12); the "way of Egypt" (Jer. 2:18); "the way of the heathen" (Jer. 10:2); "the way of Balaam" (2 Pet. 2:15); "the way of Cain" (Jude 11). The choice is before all as to which way they will walk, and the appeal is made by the Lord Jesus: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:13-14).

**"The tree of life"** — Figuratively we partake now of the tree of life in consuming the Word of Yahweh (cp. Prov. 3:18) in anticipation of the future when the approved will "eat" of the Tree of Life by being granted immortality, "and live forever."

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ENMITY LEADING TO MURDER

*The two sons of Eve: Cain and Abel, typically represent the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. Though both were religious and prepared to worship God and offer sacrifices unto Him they were motivated by different principles that led to enmity and hostility that finally erupted in murder. Cain desired to worship God according to the dictates of the flesh; Abel did so from the requirements of the Spirit Word. The result of this division of attitude and understanding was tragic, and the first blood was shed in religious controversy. It illustrated the bitter hostility that is manifested by the seed of the serpent towards the seed of the woman. The following statement from "Elpis Israel", p. 102 is to the point: "There can be no friendship between these parties. Death or victory is the only alternative. There can be no peace in the world till one or other be suppressed. The 'enmity' is the essential hostility betwixt sin and God's Law, which is the truth. Either truth must conquer sin, or sin must abolish truth; but compromise there can be none. I have great faith in the power of truth, because I have faith in God. He is pledged to give it the victory; and though deceivers in church and state may triumph for the time, and tyrants 'destroy the earth', their end is certain and their destruction sure."*

*It is significant that Cain and Abel were of one family; and that both were worshippers of God. But one sought to sacrifice self in worship; and the other offered only the worship of self.*

#### **The Worship of Cain and Abel**

— vv. 1-4

*Both sons of Adam and Eve desired to worship God and were prepared to offer a sacrifice. But their offerings differed. One brought of the labor of his hands; the other brought of the provision of God, with which he became identified. God showed respect towards the offering of Abel but rejected that of Cain.*

#### **VERSE 1**

**"And Adam knew Eve his wife" —**

This expression describes the most intimate action possible between a man and his wife; one which produces seed to the

glory of the father (see also vv. 17, 25). It is also used to describe the tangible results that come from the implantation of the Truth, the seed of Yahweh (1 Pet. 1:23-25) in the heart of the believer. The Word is designed to produce a new life, and to develop a son of God. Thus Christ taught: "This is life eternal to know Thee the only true God" (John 17:3). On the other hand, it is stated of the wicked sons of Eli that they were sons of Belial, "they knew not Yahweh" (1 Sam. 2:12).

**"And she conceived, and bare Cain"**

— The word is said to mean *Gain* or *Acquired* (see AV margin). The Hebrew *Qayin* is from a root signifying that which

is stable or fixed, so as not to be removed. The same word is rendered "spear" in 2 Sam. 21:16, and is applied to the weapon wielded by Goliath. The meaning of "acquisition" is implied from the idea of "fixity, as of a lance striking fast so as to be fixed into the object to which it is directed. What Cain had he was going to keep!

**"I have gotten a man from the Lord"** — The word "gotten" is *kained* in Hebrew, so that there is a play upon the name of Eve's firstborn. Rotherham renders her statement as: "I have gotten a man even Yahweh." She evidently imagined that the birth of her firstborn was the fulfilment of the promise of Genesis 3:15. She saw him as *He who shall be* (Yahweh), and thus used language indicative of this without recognising the significance of the Yahweh Name (Exod. 6:3). In fact, she made a mistake. John declares that "Cain was of that wicked one, and slew his brother" (1 John 3:12). He was the "word of the serpent made flesh," as, later, the Lord Jesus became "the Word of Yahweh made flesh." Commenting upon 1 John 3:12, Brother Thomas remarks: "There is precision in this language which is not to be disregarded in the interpretation. Cain was of the Wicked One; that is, he was a *son of sin* — of the serpent-sin, or original transgression. The Mosaic narrative of facts is interrupted at the end of the sixth verse of the third chapter. The fact passed over there, though not implied in the seventh verse, is plainly stated in the first verse of the fourth chapter. These texts conjoined read thus: "And Eve gave unto her husband, and he did eat with her. And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived. And the eyes of them were both opened, and they knew that they were naked." Now, here was a conception in sin, the originator of which was the Serpent. When, therefore, in the 'set time' afterwards, 'Eve bare Cain', though procreated by Adam, he was of the Serpent, seeing that he suggested the transgression which ended in the conception of Cain. In this way, sin in the flesh being put for the Serpent, Cain was of that Wicked One, the pre-eminent sinner, and the firstborn of the Serpent's seed" (*Elpis Israel*, pp. 93,94).

## VERSE 2

**"And she again bare his brother Abel"** — Hebrew: *Hebel*, signifying, breath, a vapour, metaphorically that which is frail or transitory. The word is rendered "vanity" in Ecclesiastes 1:2 and elsewhere. Abel came to recognise the vanity of this life, and that true substance is found only in God's way. Like Paul, he was moved by faith, setting his eyes on the unseen as revealing the tangible realities of life (Heb. 11:1-3; 2 Cor. 4:18). His short life on earth illustrated the observation of James: "What is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:14).

**"And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground"** — The two brothers were evidently different in physical condition, different in occupation, different in attitude, different in worship. Abel, perhaps, was so named by his parents because of his frailer condition. He was the first shepherd of the Bible, and as such was a type of Christ. The word "keeper" is *ra'ah*, to tend as a shepherd, to pasture, to rule. He thus learned to lead the sheep, with his eyes ever upwards, seeking out lush pasture for them, and caring for the animals under his control. On the other hand, Cain was a "tiller" of the ground. The word *abad* signifies to serve as a bondservant, a slave. Apparently, he became enslaved to his labour, so that his eyes were constantly centred on the earth, to which, in due course, he was destined to return.

## VERSE 3

**"And in process of time"** — The literal Hebrew is "at the end of days" (see margin). This implies a set time when it was appropriate to present a special offering at the Tabernacle referred to in Genesis 3:24. Perhaps this offering was made when they attained a certain age; the age of responsibility. In latter times Jewry followed the practice of *Bar mitzvah*, the *Son of the commandment* which conferred a responsibility to understand and obey the law upon a child of 13 years of age. Significantly it was on the eve of this age that the Lord Jesus presented himself to the leaders of his day in the temple (Lk. 2:42).

**“It came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground”** — He had enslaved himself to the labour of the ground, and now brought what he had personally laboured to obtain.

**“An offering unto Yahweh”** — Hebrew *minchah*, to apportion, bestow. This was usually bloodless and voluntary. In Lev. 2:1, the *minchah* was flour with the oil of frankincense. It was a gratitude offering by which a person expressed his thanks to God for blessings received, and declared that he would use the strength derived therefrom in Yahweh’s service. In bringing this offering only, Cain ignored the fundamental and primary principle set forth in Hebrews 9:22, “Without the shedding of blood is no remission.” This had been clearly revealed to Adam and Eve when they were provided with the covering that hid their nakedness. Now that the time had come for Cain to acknowledge his need, and seek a covering for sin in the approved manner, he brought what he desired, and not what Yahweh decreed. Cain imagined that the sweat of his brow was a more adequate offering than the blood of the Lamb. We all do that when we substitute grace with works. Both are needed, but works must be built upon, and developed out of faith — and not the reverse. We can only effectively labor for God when we have first been covered by the atoning sacrifice of grace that has been provided (see I Cor. 3:10; cp. I Cor. 9:27).

#### VERSE 4

**“And Abel, he also brought of”** — The construction of the Hebrew implies that Abel brought both forms of offerings. Kennicott renders: “Abel brought it also” — implying that he brought the firstfruits as well as the firstlings; he brought the offering of gratitude and also the sacrifice of dedication. The Concordant Version expresses the literal Hebrew thus: “Abel also is bringing, he, moreover, from the firstlings of his flock.” The Interlinear has: “And Abel he also brought of the firstlings...” Paul declares that Abel offered “a more excellent sacrifice” (Heb. 11:4). The Greek *pleion* signifies “more properly of number, but also of magnitude, and in comparison expressed or implied”

(Bullinger). He brought more than one offering, being moved by faith (Heb. 11:4), expressing his thanks to God for the benefits received, recognising that his life was but a vapour (Psa. 90:6; Jas. 4:14), and dedicating himself to the way of righteousness.

**“Of the firstlings of his flock”** — Thus, at that early age, the right of the firstborn was known. Later, under the Law of Moses, the firstlings of the flock and herd were always given in sacrifice to Yahweh (Num. 18:15-17). Yahweh laid claim to the firstborn as particularly His (Exod. 13:2, 12-13); for He has a right to the firstfruits of our increase (Prov. 3:9). The firstborn had triple rights: (1). *Birthright*; he received a double portion of the inheritance of his father (Deut. 21:15-17; 1 Chron. 5:1; 26:10). (2). *Priesthood*; he represented the family to Yahweh (Num. 8:4-18). (3). *Authority*; he was held next in honour to his parents (Gen. 49:3), and succeeded in the government of a family or a kingdom (2 Chron. 21:3).

The position of firstborn could be forfeited through misconduct or incompetence (e.g. 1 Chron. 5:1; 26:10; Gen. 25:31; Gen. 48:5, 13-14), in which case, a younger son could be elevated to the position. However, the legislation of the Law guarded against abuse in such cases (see Deut. 21:17).

The law of the Firstborn pointed forward to Jesus Christ, the second Adam. Though born after the first Adam in point of primogeniture, he was elevated to the status of “firstborn” (Psa. 89:24-28; Col. 1:15-19), because his perfect obedience showed him to be more qualified for the office than sinning Adam and his race. Thus he was consecrated to God (Luke 1:32-33), was granted a double portion of inheritance (Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 1:3-4), given the authority vested in the Father (John 5:23). In Israel, the Levites were appointed instead of the family firstborn (Num. 3:45); and today saints are incorporated into the “Ecclesia of Firstborns” (Lit. Gk., Heb. 12:23; Jas. 1:17-18; Rev. 14:4).

The context of Genesis 4 reveals that these principles, as well as the significance of sacrifice and atonement, were known to



the family of Adam. Abel's offering of the "firstlings of his flock" implies that he had been taught, and recognised the need of bloodshedding as a covering for sin, and also the part that the firstborn "seed of the woman" would accomplish in the work of atonement. Eve had imagined that her firstborn son of the flesh was the promised seed, but she had to learn that a younger son would be elevated to that position.

**"And of the fat thereof"** — The firstlings of the sheep and goats (see mg.) were first slain, and the blood poured out. In doing so, Abel acknowledged the need of crucifying the flesh (Gal. 5:24) and of dedicating his life (Lev. 17:11) unto Yahweh. The fat was then consumed upon the altar, by which he acknowledged that the stored energy of flesh should be expended in doing the will of God. In sacrificing the firstlings of his flock, Abel confessed his belief in the coming Redeemer, the Firstborn Seed of the Woman (Gen. 3:15). Thus Paul declared that "by faith Abel offered unto God," and that "faith is the substance of things hoped for" (Heb. 11).

**"Yahweh had respect unto Abel and to his offering"** — Not merely to the sacrifice, be it noted, but also to the offerer. Abel's heart was with his offering, and the one conformed to the other. Paul declares that "he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts" (Heb. 11:4). How was this done? Possibly by the touch of the flaming sword. In later times, Divine fire consumed sacrifices, thereby witnessing that Yahweh was pleased with them (Lev. 9:24; 1 Kings 18:38; 2 Chron. 7:1), and this may well have been the case on this occasion.

### The First Murder — vv. 5-8

*Cain became sullenly angry at God's preference for the worship of Abel. This manifested itself in jealous wrath and murderous intent. His countenance reflected the hidden thoughts of his heart, which finally erupted in violence and bloodshed. Cain murdered Abel.*

### VERSE 5

**"But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect"** — He shewed no respect for either Cain or his offering, for

the one was a reflection of the other. Rotherham renders this verse: "He approved not ..." God could detect the hidden heart of wickedness in Cain. The *Amplified Bible* notes: "In bringing the offering he did, Cain denied that he was a sinful creature, under the sentence of Divine condemnation. He insisted on approaching God on the ground of personal worthiness. Instead of accepting God's way, he offered to God the fruits of the ground *which God had cursed*. He presented the product of his own toil, the work of his own hands, and God refused to receive it." See Prov. 21:27; 15:8.

### VERSE 6

**"And Yahweh said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?"** — Cain's frowning, downcast look clearly manifested the jealous feelings and anger within. The purpose of God's questions was to bring Cain to self-examination and repentance.

### VERSE 7

**"If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?"** — The margin renders this: "Have the excellency." The Hebrew *se'eth* signifies to be elevated, or exalted in rank or character. The reference is to the status of firstborn in the family, with its various privileges outlined in the comments on v. 4. Cain was the actual firstborn, but even as "the flesh profiteth nothing" and confers no merit, he had to demonstrate his qualifications to hold such a position of privilege which would have been conferred upon him. Abel would then have been subject to his brother.

**"And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door"** — Two words require attention here. First *chatta'ah*, sin, is frequently rendered "sin offering" (see Num. 6:11, 14, 16); whilst "lieth", *rebets*, signifies "crouches." The *Amplified Version* renders it this way: "sin crouches at your door." If we substitute "sin offering" for sin, as the word permits, the statement indicates that Cain was directed to the animal sin-offering that he was expected to make, in addition to the *minchah* offering he had already made. The animal was crouching at his door, and he was invited to present it

in accordance with the will of God.

**“Unto thee shall be his desire”** —

The statement made to Cain in relation to Abel is almost identical to that made to Eve in relation to Adam, recorded in Gen. 3:16. The word “desire” is the same in Hebrew, and we see no reason why it should not be similarly treated here. If Cain performed the will of God in presenting his offerings according to instructions, the restoration of Abel to that “oneness” with God, that will be the lot of the redeemed in the Age to come (Jn. 17:21), would have been subject to his brother. Why? Because Cain was the firstborn, and as such had the privilege of priestly functions on behalf of the rest of the children. In that case, the acceptable worship of Abel would have been subject to Cain, for his position as family priest would have been confirmed by actions of faith.

**“And thou shalt rule over him”** —

Cain would exercise rule in spiritual matters, through the authority that would be vested in him by God, in the same way as elders “ruled” in the Apostolic Ecclesias (1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:7).

#### VERSE 8

**“And Cain talked with Abel his brother”** — Instead of heeding the instructions of God, Cain’s brooding, sullen, jealous anger flared into vile, murderous intent. How necessary it is to control passion. See Prov. 14:17; 27:4; Ecc. 7:9; and the exhortation of Eph. 4:26.

In some editions of the Hebrew Bible there is a small space left after brother, in this verse, and a mark is included that refers to a note in the margin, indicating that there is a deficiency in the text. This is supplied by the Septuagint: “Cain said unto Abel his brother, ‘Let us go out into the field.’ And it came to pass, etc.” The Samaritan and Syriac texts agree with the Septuagint. The approach of Cain was a mere hypocritical subterfuge to cover the murderous intent of his heart. As a real son of his allegorical father, the serpent, he added cunning and deceit to his jealousy and anger.

**“And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him”**

— There must have been contention, during which Cain “spake evil of those things which he knew (or understood) not” (Jude 10-11). As such, he showed that he was dominated by “that wicked one,” the serpent (sin) in the flesh (1 John 3:12). His attitude and action foreshadowed those of the Jewish generation of murderous vipers who put the Lord to death (Matt. 23:35). However, whereas Abel’s blood called out for vengeance, Christ’s proclaims mercy.

#### The Punishment Of Cain — vv. 9-12

*The curse is intensified, by wilful transgression and death, and Cain is denied fellowship with God, being driven into the Land of Exile.*

#### VERSE 9

**“And Yahweh said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother?”** — God’s first question to man was, “Where art thou?” (Gen. 3:9); His second question was, “Where is Abel thy brother?” Evidently Cain had buried the body of his dead brother, and in so doing had imagined that he had wiped away all trace of his crime.

**“And he said, I know not”** — In lying to God he followed the way of the serpent who lied concerning the effect of eating of the tree. Cain thus demonstrated that he was the son of the devil, which was now found in the flesh instead of external to it. Christ warned the “vipers” of his day that in seeking to kill him, they did “the deeds of their father” (John 8:41). He then told them: “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8: 44). The “devil” of this verse, the one that drew Adam and Eve over the line of the law drawn by God, and that caused Cain to deceive, murder and lie, was the serpent revealed both as an animal, and as the inflamed lusts of the flesh. Cain was dominated by the latter.

**“Am I my brother’s keeper?”** — At this stage, sheltering behind his lie, Cain was boldly defiant, seeking to justify him-

self by disclaiming responsibility towards his brother. In fact, as firstborn in Adam's family, he was appointed to the position of responsibility over the others. The family unit is the foundation of a nation's greatness. This was inculcated in the Law that Yahweh later gave to Israel, and some principles of which had evidently been taught to the family of Adam by the Elohim. This required that the various members of a family should be closely intertwined together, co-operating to the support and the defence of each other. It required that those in a position to do so, should act as redeemer for the others in time of need (Lev. 25:23-49). Yahweh has established the tie of blood as a natural law, and expects it to be acknowledged and acted upon, so long as His Truth is upheld. Thus, a special consideration was demanded of an Israelite towards an Edomite because "he is your brother" (Deut. 23:7); and special promises were granted Ishmael "because he is your (Abraham's) seed" (Gen. 21:13). There is such a thing as a "brotherly covenant" (Amos 1:9), established by natural affinity of a common parentage. But the selfish, sullen Cain refused to acknowledge this and murdered his brother, thus being the first to commit the awful crime of fratricide. He manifested characteristics that were reproduced later by the Edomites, who symbolised the flesh in political control (Obad. 12).

#### VERSE 10

**"And he said, what hast thou done?"** — This exclamation is for the purpose of emphasis, to underline the extreme gravity of the crime. The wickedness of Cain is apparent; especially since both brothers were members of the family of God. As sons of Eve, they were members of the Ecclesia, called by a common hope. But as Cain murdered Abel; so the Jewish authorities murdered Christ; and so it is possible for us to be guilty of spiritual fratricide; for "whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer", declares John (1 John 3:15). Let us beware, lest when we are arraigned before the Judgment Seat of Christ, the exclamation be made "What hast thou done!"

**"The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground"** — How foolish to try and hide things from Yahweh! How vain is a covering of lies by which we might seek to blot out our transgressions! For "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13). David had to learn the truth that the only way to obtain a covering for sin was to open it up to Yahweh with a plea for mercy and help. As it was, Abel's blood cried out for vengeance alone. In this it did not have the same efficacy as that of Christ's whose blood "speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Heb. 12:24). Christ's blood cried out for vengeance also, and justice was administered against guilty Judah. But that was only because, like Cain, the nation refused the mercy of Yahweh. Christ's blood also called for grace, mercy and forgiveness, and thus accomplished that which Abel's was unable to do.

In the verse before us, "blood" is in the plural, as in the margin, "bloods." Why the use of the plural? Because Cain's crime not only destroyed Abel personally, but threatened his posterity as well. This posterity figuratively comprised the multitude of the righteous; so that here there is another remarkable type of Christ. The prophetic words of Isaiah relating to Christ, can apply equally to Abel: "Who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living" (Isa. 53:8). Nevertheless, it was also predicted of the Lord: "He shall see his seed ..." (v. 10). So with Abel. Though his life was cut off, and he was denied a posterity through natural means of procreation, this was supplied him in Seth "who was appointed ... instead of Abel" (Gen. 4:25).

Justice was satisfied in the punishment given to Cain, and the restoration of Abel through Seth. In that way, his blood continued to speak proclaiming that Yahweh will protect and vindicate His people. Thus, at the very dawn of creation, Yahweh was revealed as Redeemer, justifying Job's comment: "I know that my Redeemer liveth ..." Of course, the drama is not yet completed, in that Abel is yet to rise again from the grave to receive the

inheritance reserved for him.

### VERSE 11

**“And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother’s blood from thy hand”** — The *Amplified Version* reads:

“You are cursed by reason of the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood.” Personal transgression added to the curse already imposed as a result of the original sin. In common with all creation, Cain had inherited the effects of the curse proclaimed at the time that his parents had sinned; but that had been his misfortune, not his crime. Now his actual transgression brought a personal curse upon him in that he was to be driven from the fertile areas of the earth. This reveals that men are subject to two curses: (1) the effect of the condemnation on Adam in the first instance; (2) individual condemnation because of personal sins. Israel is a case in point. Because of transgression the nation was cursed (see Deut. 28:15-24), and scattered into all parts of the earth. All mankind are in a similar condition. The physical results of the sentence pronounced against Adam are experienced by all: a curse that caused human nature to become sin-prone and death-doomed; and, in addition, each individual transgresses on his own account, and therefore is cursed by God’s law which reveals sin for what it is.

The first is our misfortune and not our crime; the latter is both our crime and our misfortune. To deliver us from this dual

curse, Christ came in the line of Adam, to inherit the nature possessed by all; and likewise came under the curse of the Law by the manner of his death (Gal. 3:13). But his personal righteousness, his perfect obedience, typified by his shed blood, ensured his resurrection to life eternal (Heb. 13:20). It is significant, that though the blood of Abel was that of a righteous man (Heb. 12:24), it could not atone for sin; because, of course, he was not a perfect manifestation of the Father. However, the Lord Jesus was, and this ensured his own resurrection to life eternal, and the forgiveness of the sins of those who come unto God through him.

### VERSE 12

**“When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength”** — Cain was to be driven away from the fertile areas of the earth, and the privilege of cultivating plant life in fellowship with Almighty God was to be denied him. This, likewise, was the circumstance of Jewry after A.D. 70. Originally the Jewish people were a rural community; but with their dispersion throughout the wilderness expanse of Gentilism (see Rev. 17:1-2) this facility was denied them.

**“A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth”** — A “vagabond” is a wanderer. He was driven away from his original abode, to the “land of Nod” or of Exile (v. 16); there to wander as a nomad. The word “vagabond” or “wanderer” (R.V.) in Hebrew is *nuwd*, and forms the root of the word Nod (*nowd*) of v. 16.

## Personalities of the Old Testament

### Abel: First Man to Die

Abel’s life-history illustrates the meaning of his name. It is derived from the same source as is the word “vanity” that appears so frequently in the *Book of Ecclesiastes*. His name signifies that which is vain or fleeting. He saw the vanity of this life, and fixed his vision on the reality of the kingdom of God, which, at present, is only seen through the vision of faith (Ecc. 1:2-3; 2 Cor. 4:18).

No word of Abel’s is recorded in Scripture, yet his actions were more eloquent than his words, so that he, though dead, “yet speaketh” (Heb. 11:4). How powerful is the example of a life given in service to Yahweh! How lasting is the character of a man who recognises the vanity of human life and aspirations, and

seeks a more permanent lot in that which Yahweh has set before humanity.

Abel was a shepherd, a possessor of flocks and herds (Gen. 4:4). As such, his eyes were always on that which was before him, seeking out rich pastures for the animals under his care. His brother, Cain, was a tiller of the ground, with his eyes ever turned earthwards. Both brothers, educated in the home of Adam, had been brought up to revere the Creator, and when they came to the age of responsibility, both became worshippers at the Tabernacle over which the Cherubim presided.

But Abel sought out what God required of him; whereas Cain thought that God should have been satisfied with what he offered. God had respect unto the offering of Abel (Gen. 4:4), and testified to that fact (Heb. 11:4). This aroused the jealous anger of Cain, who, governed by the flesh, murdered his brother. Thus the first drop of blood was shed in a religious controversy, and the full extent of that enmity that God predicted would exist between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman was dramatised in this frightful incident at the dawn of creation.

Despite the temporary success of the seed of the serpent in ridding himself of his more righteous brother, the final triumph was with Abel, because Cain was banished from the presence of God, and Seth was raised up to take his place. Nevertheless, a mark was placed on Cain, and a warning issued lest any should molest him.

The events of Abel's life foreshadow those of Christ. The appointment of Seth typified the resurrection of the Lord; the punishment on Cain pointed forward to the judgment of A.D. 70 extended upon guilty Jewry who crucified the Lord (Matt. 23:35). Nevertheless, the record is careful to state that Christ's blood speaketh better things than that of Abel (Heb. 12:24). Abel's blood cried out for vengeance; but, in addition, Christ's blood cries out for mercy on those who base their faith in it. Abel's blood, though that of a righteous man (Matt. 23:35), cannot atone, but Christ's blood is ever efficacious (1 John 1:7).

#### **Abidah: Grandson of Abraham**

Abidah (Gen. 25:4; 1 Chron. 1:33) was the fourth son of Midian, the fourth son of Keturah and Abraham. He therefore was a grandson of Abraham, and his name signifies *Father of Knowledge*.

#### **Abimelech: The King who rebuked Abraham**

Abimelech, whose name means *My Father-King*, was king of the Philistine city of Gerar in the days of Abraham (Gen. 20:1-2), and circumstances caused Abraham to sojourn there for a time. We are not told what those circumstances were, but possibly the terrible calamity of Sodom, which undoubtedly affected the surrounding country, may have been the cause of Abraham removing from Hebron to such a place as Gerar, which, as he acknowledged, lacked the fear of God (Gen. 20:11).

At this stage in Abraham's life, the fear of man caused a snare (Prov. 29:25). He pretended that Sarah was not his wife, but his sister, and this caused Abimelech to contemplate taking Sarah into his harem. He was prevented from doing so by a warning from God received through a dream. He pleaded his innocence on the ground of Abraham's deception, and later rebuked Abraham and Sarah for

such. Notice his sarcasm. To Sarah he said: "I have given thy *brother* a thousand pieces of silver; behold he is to thee a covering of the eyes unto all that are with thee, and with all other" (Gen. 20:16). "A covering of the eyes" was the symbol of marriage in those days (see Gen. 24:65); so that these words constituted proof of the action of Abraham and Sarah.

It is sad when the ungodly have just reason for rebuking the righteous; for the contrary should be the case (1 Tim. 5:20). It was degrading for Abraham to be thus reproved. Yet this incident testifies to the Truth of Scripture. In a merely human document, such a trivial lapse probably would be overlooked; but the Word sets before us flesh as it really is, that we might be warned to avoid its weakness.

Though Abimelech tried to justify himself, he was to be condemned for taking Sarah from Abraham; for it is obvious that she would not have gone willingly. His action demonstrated the truth of Abraham's fears that there was little thought for God or His ways in the place (v. 11).

At the same time, the incident witnesses to the overshadowing care of Yahweh in the case of His people (cp. Gen. 20:7 with Psa. 105:15). Abimelech was not only warned by God against touching Abraham, but was afflicted by Him until he freed Sarah. Only on the intercession of Abraham was the king saved from even more dire punishment (vv. 7, 17-18).

The fact that God still helped Abraham, though Abraham had failed God, so impressed Abimelech, that he offered to enter into covenant with the patriarch (Gen. 21:23). At the same time, Abimelech showed a measure of distrust of Abraham, and requested that he prove more reliable in the future (Gen. 21:23). In return, Abraham reproved Abimelech because of the violence of his servants (Gen. 21:25-26). The result was that Abraham established his right to Beersheba, "the well of the oath" which was established by covenant (vv. 29-31).

There is a further reference to Abimelech in Genesis 26, relating to a similar incident with Isaac and Rebekah. However, this could have been another king, and the name Abimelech might well have been a general title used by the kings of Gerar. The fact that Isaac repeated the mistake of Abraham indicates how little men learn by the mistakes of others.

### **Achbor: The Mouse**

He was the father of Baal-hanan, and king of Edom (Gen. 36:38,39; 1 Chron. 1:49).

### **Protection of Cain — vv. 13-15**

*First Cain was punished, then he was protected. Cain typed the Jewish leaders of Christ's day. Christ warned them that they were following the way of Cain (John 8:44), and, therefore, the "blood of righteous Abel" would come upon them (Matt. 23:35). In consequence, they were punished and driven into exile at the hands of the Romans, but even in their dispersion they were divinely protected and preserved as a nation. This was foreshadowed in the pro-*

*tection afforded Cain. A careful consideration of the verses that follow will show how closely the type, Cain, conforms to the anti-type, the Jewish leaders of Christ's day.*

### **VERSE 13**

**"And Cain said unto Yahweh, My punishment is greater than I can bear"**

— The margin renders this: "Mine iniquity is greater than that it may be forgiven," and Hebraists endorse this rendition. Cain did not speak thus out of moral considera-

tions, or out of remorse for what he had done, but because he reasoned concerning God from his own viewpoint like the serpent before him (ch. 3:1-5). As he was not prepared to forgive anybody who acted against him as he had acted against Abel, he reasoned that now his crime was discovered he was without hope. He knew nothing of mercy and forgiveness, and therefore gave way to black despair. He limited the power of God in every way, to provide a cover for the enormity of his sin.

#### VERSE 14

**“Behold, Thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; from Thy face shall I be hid”** — Cain completely ignored the offer of mercy made to him earlier (v. 7), and accepted as his lot the excommunication from Divine fellowship expressed in his rejection. To be driven from the localised place of worship was tantamount to being driven from “the presence of Yahweh” (cp. Jonah 1:3; Deut. 11:12; 2Kings 13:23; 24:20; Psa. 51:11; Jer. 52:3). In the Hebrew, “face” is in the plural, “faces”. As such it relates to the “faces of the Cherubim” which turned in each direction, as described in Ch. 3:24. Cain acknowledged that he was cut off from Divine worship. In that regard, he foreshadowed the condition Jewry found itself in when it had crucified the antitypical Abel, the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 11:15).

**“And I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond”** — The word “vagabond” signifies “a wanderer”, or “fugitive” (see comment on v. 12). In what way was Cain a “fugitive”? The word *nuwa* means “to waver”, to wander from place to place. Expelled from the centre of Divine worship, it would be apparent to all that Cain no longer rested under the shadow of Divine care.

**“And it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me”** — Again Cain reasoned from his own viewpoint. He was a murderer, and imagined that everybody else was equally ruthless. He complained that he was without protection, and realised that his vile murder would add to the problems of the race. It set a precedent that others might follow. He foresaw that the population would

increase within the family of Adam (Gen. 5:4); and in Cain’s mind, the descendants of Seth, appointed instead of “Abel whom Cain slew” (Gen. 4:25), might well seek to avenge the death of their spiritual forebear.

#### VERSE 15

**“And Yahweh said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold”** — Thus God decreed in mercy regarding Cain. The object was doubtless to rekindle in him a correct attitude, such as Paul expressed when he wrote: “The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance” (Rom. 2:4). Though banished from the worship of Eden, it was still possible for Cain to make his peace with God. The sevenfold vengeance represented complete retribution. It was pronounced in order to prevent further crime by awakening fear in the potential sinner. See Deut. 13:11; 17:13.

**“And Yahweh set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him”** — The R.V. has: “appointed a sign for Cain.” But the context suggests that the A.V. is correct, and that the sign was on Cain to make him easily distinguishable. In that regard, he was like the Jews whose identity is easily perceived by their very appearance (see Matt. 23:5). Furthermore, like the Jews, he was also protected. The mark on Cain, whatever it may have been, underlined the fact that he was a sinner. The external marks of a sinner are often openly shown upon his countenance, and we need to avoid such. The political/religious man of sin (Rome) is also identified by a mark: that of “the name of the beast or the number of his name” (Rev. 13:17). As we avoid the Cain-like way of life in society, so we beware of the evil teachings and practices of the church-powers with the “mark” distinguishing it.

#### Development Of The Line Of Cain — vv. 16-24.

*The posterity of Cain laid the foundation of the type of civilisation that existed before the Flood, and which was typical of our own times. City life, permissiveness, popular music and power-politics were among the things established. A very comprehensive organization was brought into*

*being, based upon the flesh.*

#### VERSE 16

**“And Cain went out from the presence of Yahweh”** — See note v. 14.

**“And dwelt in the land of Nod”** — The word means, *Exile*. See note v. 12.

**“On the east of Eden”** — Therefore, when worshippers approached Yahweh, they would have to turn their backs to the land of Cain. When the Tabernacle and Temple were erected, approach was always from the East, thus requiring worshippers to turn their backs upon natural light in order to approach the Light of Truth.

#### VERSE 17

**“And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch”** — His name signifies *Dedicated*, which implies religious worship.

**“And he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch”** — Cain named his son, *Dedicated*, and he built a city with the same name. This suggests that the design of the city was for religious worship, and that Enoch was set to be its presiding priest. Thus “the way of Cain” as an apostate form of worship (Jude 11) was established in opposition to the way of the Truth (Gen. 3:24). The city Cain built has its counterpart in “the strong city” (Isa. 26:1) of the Apocalypse, even Babylon the Great (Rev. 16:19).

In building this city, Cain turned from those agricultural pursuits that God had laid down for man from the beginning (Gen. 3:19), and introduced the organised and complicated activities of an urban community. He turned the family into a state, and introduced political and social activities such as absorb so much of man’s life today. By calling the city after the name of his son he endeavoured to perpetuate his own influence and renown (Psa. 49:11).

#### VERSE 18

**“And unto Enoch was born Irad”** — So the murderer’s posterity increased; and families came into existence deprived of the true knowledge of God, and devoted to the city-worship Cain had invented. Irad signified *wild ass* (See Davidson), the

symbol of the man of flesh (Gen. 16:12).

**“And Irad begat Mehujael”** — His name signifies *smitten of God*. It recalled the condition of Cain’s posterity in the sight of God, and reminded such of the need to look after their own interests. It thus suggests reliance upon the flesh.

**“And Mehujael begat Methusael”** — His name signifies *man of God*. It indicates that the posterity of Cain were “religious” like their ancestor, but it was a religion in apostasy to the Truth. His name is developed from a root signifying full stature or age, indicating a fullness of development.

**“And Methusael begat Lamech”** — His name means *Reduced or Overthrower*. The names of these descendants of Cain imply a development of religious and political organizations in apostasy to God.

#### VERSE 19

**“And Lamech took unto him two wives”** — The narrative becomes more detailed with the advent of Lamech, alerting the student to the importance of this man. He was the seventh from Adam, and thus a contemporary with Enoch in the line of Seth (Jude 14). He exercised a devilish influence on his contemporaries, introducing trends that accelerated the godlessness of that generation. He encouraged the growth of permissiveness, and perfected large-scale commercial undertakings, sophisticated communal entertainment, and armed might. Through his efforts, society was caused to conform to that condition of things which Yahweh later overwhelmed by flood. Lamech was responsible for undermining the sanctity of the marriage bond, for he was the first to introduce polygamy: “he took unto him two wives.”

**“The name of the one was Adah”** — Her name means *adorned, beauty or pleasant*. From this it is suggested that she was known for her beauty, being perhaps of a lighter complexion.

**“The name of the other Zillah”** — Her name signifies *comfort, or shade*, with the implication of hovering over one. It is derived from a root signifying “defence.” The two wives of Lamech provided him with beauty and comfort. From the ideas



behind the name, some suggest Zillah was of a darker complexion than her companion.

#### VERSE 20

**“And Adah bare Jabal”** — Another significant name, for it means to *produce* or *business*. Strong derives it from a root signifying to bring along, specially with pomp.

**“He was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle”** —

The record does not say that he dwelt in a tent, but that he was the father of all who did so. He supervised such, caring for them and guiding them. In fact, he organised the shepherds' lives, so that the humble occupation of Abel the first shepherd, was developed into a complex business by Jabal. He developed large flocks and herds, with travelling companies of shepherds to tend them. It was big business and Jabal stood for profit.

#### VERSE 21

**“And his brother's name was Jubal”**

— His name means *pleasure*, and is related to the term *jubilee* which suggests joyous music. The ram's horn, which was associated with the shofar sound, is derived from this word. The same word is connected with the music of the silver trumpets. Thus Jubal became identified with joyous music.

**“He was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ”** —

Jubal, like his brother Jabal, was engaged in big business; but whereas Jabal was identified with the profit motive in commerce, Jubal linked it with pleasure. He organised music on a wide scale, so that his bands were heard over all the countryside. He was a “father” to musicians, organising their contracts and their programmes; shrewdly arranging for their performances. The terms “the harp and organ” imply all stringed and wind instruments, and strongly suggest some development in the construction of musical instruments at that early age.

#### VERSE 22

**“And Zillah she also bare Tubal-Cain”** — The name of this third son in this trinity of brethren signifies *flowing*

*forth of Cain or the power of Cain*. He manifested Cain-like characteristics.

**“An instructor of every artificer in brass and iron”** — The literal meaning of the Hebrew word translated “instructor” is *whetter* as in the margin. This, however, must relate to an instrument, not a person, and so the R.V. renders: “forger of every instrument.” Tubal-Cain was the inventor of metal working, probably for the manufacture of weapons (cp. the confident boast of Lamech: v. 23). It is significant that brass and iron are used throughout Scripture as symbolic of the flesh, suggesting that Tubal-Cain's power was based upon fleshly might. This present age of inventiveness in the perfection of more dreadful weapons of destruction than man has previously known, answers to the times of Tubal-Cain. Incidentally, “brass” should be rendered bronze or copper. Bronze, an alloy of copper and tin, was used in ancient times. The secret of its manufacture was probably discovered by Tubal-Cain.

**“And the sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah”** —

It is most unusual for women to be mentioned in ancient genealogies, so that Naamah must have been pre-eminent in the early society of humanity to warrant it. Her name signifies *pleasantness* or *sweetness*. We are not told in what way she excelled. But it is significant that the only relation in which the women of the line of Cain are mentioned is in regard to their pleasant appearance: “The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair” (Gen. 6:2). Perhaps Naamah asserted herself in this way contrary to the decree of Genesis 3:16, and thus obtained notoriety to herself. If so, she was the counterpart of the current women's liberation movement!

Thus the influence of the powerful Lamech had a deteriorating effect upon the antediluvian society. He introduced permissiveness (polygamy), profit, pleasure, power and apostasy. When his son Jabal had set the family in a way to be rich, Jubal put it in a mood to be happy, Tubal gave them power, and Naamah provided them with relaxation. This kingdom of the flesh, set up by the family of Lamech, was

defended by the father, whose vengeful spirit was commemorated in the boastful song he composed for the gratification of his wives.

### VERSE 23

**“And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt”**

— In the Hebrew, the words that follow are in poetic form, and represent the earliest form of poetry. The sentiments express the fierce, implacable spirit of revenge, and testify that Lamech was prepared to defend to the death, the kingdom that he had established. As his song follows upon reference to the inventiveness of Tubal-Cain, it doubtless is related thereto, and expresses his boastful confidence in the effectiveness of the weapons his son had perfected. In this *Song Of The Sword*, Lamech boasts that he no longer needs the Divine protection afforded Cain (v. 15), but was well capable of defending himself; and, moreover, would do so by exacting the utmost vengeance upon his enemy. Let anybody wound, or hurt him, and he will answer by mortal conflict. How like the attitude of the flesh today in the boastful threats of ruthless politicians! Lamech and his family are still alive in the modern world, bringing humanity to a state of violence such as Divine intervention alone is competent to handle. In Lamech’s song, flesh reached its absolute peak of arrogance and ruthlessness. The structure of the lines are as follows :

*Hear my voice;*

*Ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech;*

*For I have slain a man who wounded me,*

*And a young man who hurt me.*

*If Cain be avenged sevenfold,*

*Truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.*

The margin renders this song in the terms of a threat: “I would slay a man in my wound, and a young man in my hurt.” Or, as the *Amplified Version* renders: “A young man (only) for striking and bruising me.”

### VERSE 24

**“If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold”**

— It was God who promised to avenge Cain, but the self-assured and ruthless Lamech was not prepared to leave vengeance to Him, but declared that he would take matters into his own hands. In his boast he claims to be more competent than God in avenging himself.

**“Truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold”** — This expression only occurs once elsewhere in the Bible, and then in the opposite manner to that of Lamech. When Peter enquired of the Lord as to how often he should forgive his brother, Christ used the expression of Lamech in reverse: “Until seventy times seven” (Matt. 18:22). By so doing, the Lord taught the doctrine of non-resistance to evil, and proclaimed that his followers are governed by the very opposite motives to those of Lamech.

### Appointment Of Seth In Place Of Abel — vv. 25-26

*In replacing Abel with Seth, God typically raised the former from the dead. Eve’s words on the birth of this son suggest that she understood this. Evidently she had been given a revelation of the Divine purpose in replacing Abel with Seth.*

### VERSE 25

**“And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew”** — His name signifies *appointed*. Eve’s comment on the birth of this son reveals that she had a proper understanding of the purpose of God in him.

### VERSE 26

**“And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos”** — His name signifies *weak, mortal man*. It is a name applied to man in his weakness both physically and morally (see Psa. 9:20), and suggests a deterioration in the line of Seth at this time.

**“Then began men to call upon the name of Yahweh”** — At that stage in the development of the Divine purpose, the name *Yahweh* had not been revealed as

such (see Exod. 6:3). Nevertheless, the intention of the great Increase to reveal Himself in flesh had been proclaimed in the covenant made in Eden (Gen. 3:15). Therefore, though the name *Yahweh* had not been formally announced, it is but a development of the common verb *Ehyeh*, I will be. The antediluvians knew God as *He who will be* manifested in the seed of the woman, even though the name itself had not been revealed unto them. Further, the statement that “men *began* to call upon the name,” implies that they did so in a special way, because already they had called upon, or invoked God, in the Name

(Gen. 4:1).

They now did so in a new way such as did not ascribe credit to it. They began to invoke it in a way that led to a profanation of it and contributed to the decline that consummated in the Flood. Perhaps the boastful arrogance of the Cainites as suggested by Lamech’s *Song Of The Sword*, and the declining weakness of the Sethites, as suggested by the name *Enos*, led to them calling upon the Name in a way that did it no credit and brought it into disrepute. It is equivalent to the blasphemous and coarse use of the Name by those with “unclean lips”.

**THE BOOK OF THE GENERATIONS OF ADAM**  
**The Development of the Human Race:**  
**Sin and Death Triumphant**  
**(Chapter 5:1–6:8)**

*The Book of the Generations of Adam is the third division in The Book of Beginnings (cp. Gen. 1:1; 2:4; 5:1). It can be called The Book of Death, because the statement “and he died” occurs with monotonous regularity throughout (Ch. 5:5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27, 31) emphasising the mortality of the human race. In spite of the long lives men then lived, inevitably this sad end awaited even a Methuselah. The phrase, “and he died” is the theme-song of mortality, and the experiences of life are punctuated with that grim epitaph. The only exception in this chapter is the case of Enoch. Nothing is recorded of his death, but to the very contrary; a wonderful reminder that the sting of death can be defeated. The title of this third division of Genesis should be compared with the title given to the Gospel records: “The Book Of The Generation Of Jesus Christ” (Matt. 1:1). Thus the Bible places the record of the First Adam and his posterity in juxtaposition with that of the Second Adam and his seed. As the theme-song of the Book of the Generations of Adam emphasises the mortality of the human race; so that of the Second Adam reveals the way to life, and that more abundantly. The Book of the Generations of Adam comprises the Book of Death, whereas the Book of the Generation of Jesus Christ comprises the Book of Life.*

## CHAPTER FIVE

## DEATH REIGNS

*Paul wrote that “death reigned from Adam to Moses” (Rom. 5:14). That fact is emphasised in the chapter before us in that the statement “and he died” occurs eight times. The incidence of death is used by Paul to provide a foundation for the doctrine of the Atonement. Accordingly, the mortality of the human race is now shown by tracing the posterity of Adam through Seth to Noah.*

*In contradistinction to that of the line of Cain recorded in Genesis 4, this one is complete with details of ages and deaths, so that Bible chronology can be established. These details are given because this is the line of promise, expressing hope in the future.*

#### MAN MORTAL: FROM ADAM TO NOAH — Ch. 5:1-32

*The posterity of Adam is traced through Seth to Noah, and their ages are catalogued.*

#### Adam the Earthy — vv. 1-5

*After a pilgrimage of over nine hundred years, Adam dies and returns to the dust from whence he had come, in conformity with the divine decree upon him for his transgression in Eden.*

#### VERSE 1

**“This is the book of the generations”**

— This is additional to the general titles of Genesis in relation to the “generations”. The expression only occurs again in connection with the records of the second Adam (Matt. 1:1).

“Adam” — See notes Ch. 1:26. His name proclaims his earthy origin and destiny (Gen. 3:19). It signifies *red earth*. Paul comments: “the first man is of the earth, earthy” (1 Cor. 15:47). God gave man the name of Adam, though Adam named the beasts. God knew Adam better than Adam knew himself, for Adam’s name for himself was *Ish* (Gen. 2:23). Jeremiah observes: “The way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23). That was the case with man before the Fall

as well as after it; for whether in his “very good” state, or in his present “evil” condition, he needs the help of God through the Word to walk aright. Mere dust-created beings have no “inner” light, and must seek that from above (James 1:17).

**“In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him”** — Man differs from the lower creation in that he has been made in the “likeness of God”; that is, with the latent ability to develop thought, faith, conscientiousness, and Godliness. This stems not from his nature, but from his mind, which, however, must be stimulated by the Word of God to do so. Thus Paul indicates his desire to follow the “law of his mind” activated by the divine law assimilated (Rom. 7:22-23).

#### VERSE 2

**“Male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created”** — Male and female were designed as a unit, welded together in fact as well as by name. Eve is thus comprehended in the name of her husband. The modern world has drifted from this concept of marriage. Promiscuity has replaced the original unity, whilst in carrying out the demands of women’s liberation, some married women demand to be known by their maiden names.

## VERSE 3

**“And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image”** — The reference is to Seth, but he was not the first son born to Adam and Eve, for Cain and Abel were before him. In fact, other sons and daughters were born to them (v. 4), so that this chapter is not a complete genealogical record, but merely traces the main line of descent to Noah. Seth was in “the likeness and image of Adam”, whereas Adam was in the “likeness and image of God”. Likeness has relation to capacity, whereas image relates to shape (see notes Gen. 1:26). The original “likeness” of man to the Elohim had been marred by sin, and through sin had come physical death (Rom. 5:12). This chapter, with its emphasis upon mortality, records the result. See *Elpis Israel* pp. 38-39.

**“And called his name Seth”** — According to Eve’s words, Seth’s name means “set”, “appointed” or “placed”. Seth replaced the position previously held by Abel, and therefore his name was expressive of God’s mercy. Seth kept alive the principles of faith and hope that were distorted and destroyed by the descendants of Cain, introduced to us in the previous chapter. Seth commenced the genealogy of true worshippers. In him it was demonstrated that Godliness was possible among men.

## VERSE 4

**“And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years”** — In all, Adam lived 930 years. He lived to see the birth of Lamech in the line of Seth, and also to witness the frightful decline in moral standards introduced by his descendants in the line of Cain. Sorrowfully, Adam could contemplate the sad results of sin as he saw its fruit in ruthless pursuit of selfish interests by such as Lamech (Gen. 4).

**“And he begat sons and daughters”** — Many other sons and daughters were born to Adam and Eve in addition to those named, and from these Cain and others obtained their wives. Hence the appointment of Seth to replace Abel means more

than the mere birth of a son; it represented the appointment of this son to the position of privilege as legal “firstborn” with its office of priesthood and leadership within the family of Adam. Of course the Cainites, driven from the presence of Yahweh, and the seat of worship, would not have recognised the appointment or privilege of Seth, any more than do their counterparts today recognise the status of the resurrected Christ.

## VERSE 5

**“And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died”** — Adam did not live a millennium; even Methuselah failed to do that in contrast to the hope set before the faithful who will, exceed that period of time (Rev. 20:6). It must have been a dramatic moment for the human race when its progenitor Adam, finally died, and the Divine decree (Gen. 3:19) was evident in his decease. The stark statement, *and he died* occurs with monotonous regularity throughout this chapter (vv. 5,8,11,14,17,20,27,31), emphasising the hopelessness of flesh in spite of the long lives lived by the antediluvians. Inevitably the same end awaits even a Methuselah, so that the re-occurring statement *he died* becomes the theme of a life related to the flesh.

## Seth The Appointed — vv. 6-8

## VERSE 6

**“And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos”** — The comment made regarding Adam (v. 3) applies also to Seth. He doubtless begat other sons and daughters who are not mentioned, as the line of descent is continued through Enos.

## VERSE 7

**“And Seth lived after he begat Enos eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters”** — And so the line of Abel was kept alive in Seth’s progeny.

## VERSE 8

**“And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years: and he died”**

— He outlived Adam his father by just over a century; about fourteen years before the birth of Noah. Hence he, too, saw a sharp decline in the moral standards of the human race.

**Enos The Weak — vv. 9-11**

**VERSE 9**

**“And Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan”** — Enos signifies *weak, mortal man*. His name implies a deterioration in the spiritual condition of the descendants of Adam during his lifetime of nine hundred and five years. He died in the year 1140 A.C., and before his death the sharp decline in the moral condition of the sons of God was already apparent.

**VERSE 10**

**“And Enos lived after he begat Cainan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat sons and daughters”** — See comment on the name Cainan below.

**VERSE 11**

**“And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years; and he died”** — None of the descendants of Adam attained a life of a thousand years.

**Cainan the Gainer — vv. 12-14**

**VERSE 12**

**“And Cainan lived seventy years, and begat Mahalaleel”** — That Enos should select the name of Cainan for his son indicates the spiritual declension that was developing among the descendants of Seth. Cainan signifies *Gainer*, and from this it is suggested that materialism was beginning to be manifested within the ecclesia of God. The “way of Cain” was being followed by the seed of the woman.

**Mahalaleel: the Praiser — vv. 15-17**

**VERSE 15**

**“And Mahalaleel lived sixty and**

## **Personalities Of The Old Testament**

### **Adah: Personifying Permissiveness**

Adah is the first woman mentioned in the Bible after Eve. She is mentioned in an unfortunate context: “Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah” (Gen. 4:19). Lamech was the seventh from Adam in the line of Cain; whereas Enoch was the seventh from Adam in the line of Seth (Jude 14). As such, they type those who would be living at the seventh millennium from Creation: the generation on the eve of Christ’s return. Enoch raised his voice in protest and warning (see Jude 14-15). Lamech raised his voice in ruthless boasting against his enemies (Gen. 4:23-24).

It was an age of permissiveness, for polygamy was practised for the first time, and, apparently, was introduced by Lamech. Adah’s name means *Adorned, Beautiful, Pleasant*. She provided Lamech with beauty, whilst his other wife gave him comfort. She had two sons: Jabal and Jubal. The first gave himself over to profit (cattle); the second to pleasure (music). This side of Lamech’s family, therefore, contributed to the permissiveness, profit and pleasure of a society that was hastening towards the crisis of the Flood. Adah appears to be well content with her status in life. She listened to Lamech’s *Song Of The Sword* (Gen. 4:23-24) without trying to persuade her husband to turn from such boastful, ruthless, self-vindication and desire for vengeance as is expressed therein. She was content with her lot; she made herself pleasant to her husband and others about her; and was satisfied to grace a home based on the gratification of self, as are so many of her daughters today. Yet her beauty faded, and her descendants perished in the Flood.

**five years, and begat Jared”** — His name means *The Praise of El*, from *halal*, to praise. Perhaps he instituted some kind of reform, calling upon the sons of God to praise their God. If so, evidently the reform was shortlived, for his son’s name signifies *Decline*.

**Jared: the Decliner — vv. 18-20**

#### VERSE 18

**“And Jared lived an hundred sixty and two years, and he begat Enoch”** — Jared’s name signifies *Decline*. Evidently some spiritual decline marked his day. This is suggested, not merely by the meaning of his name, but by the comment of Jude who summarised conditions in the Ecclesia prior to the Flood. He wrote: “Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of Cain ... These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear, etc.” “And Enoch, also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of *these*, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard sayings which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” Jude cites Enoch’s words as having application in his day, but obviously, their primary application was to the days before the Flood. The ungodly were multiplying among the sons of God, so that the period of Jared was marked by *decline*. Enoch evidently saw the development of a state of wickedness which had commenced in his father’s time. Jude speaks of ungodly deeds, speeches, sinners, and of certain having “men’s persons in admiration because of advantage” (v. 16). Evidently there were found in the line of Seth those who showed admiration for “the way of Cain,” and for the “giants” who were manifested among them, and so tended to drift towards the current way of thinking and living.

#### VERSES 19, 20

**“And Jared lived after he begat Enoch eight hundred years, and begat**

**sons and daughters: and all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty and two years; and he died”** — This reaches to A.C. 1422, when Methusaleh was 735; Lamech was 548; Noah was 366.

#### VERSE 21

**“And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah”** — Enoch’s name means *Dedicated* or *Teacher*, and he proved to be such. He was “taken” before the death of Seth, and long before the death of his own father, and evidently saw the rising tide of evil from the time of Enos onwards (Jude 14-16), when the sons of God “had men’s persons in admiration.” Enoch walked in faith (Heb. 11:5), not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7, 9), and God revealed His purpose to him (Psa. 25:14). He “believed” God (Heb. 11:6): believed in the impending judgment, his own translation, the coming of Christ (the seed of the woman), and the establishment of God’s rule on earth (Jude 14-17). As he was the seventh from Adam (Jude 14), he was contemporary with Lamech, and therefore saw the growth of militarism, pleasure, profit, permissiveness, women’s liberation movements, and so on. But worse, he saw an imitation of those evils, on the part of the sons of God. In spite of their bad example, he dedicated himself to the will of God.

Methuselah’s name means *when he dieth it shall be sent*. Methuselah died in the year of the Flood, and therefore fulfilled his prophetic name. Was it by accident that this happened? By no means. Jude describes Enoch as a prophet whose voice was raised in warning against that generation because of the impending judgment of God. He evidently knew that there was a set time for this to occur, and through revelation of God named his son accordingly. Not only did he see the growth of permissiveness, of commercial and political power as well as ruthless violence through the influence of such as Lamech in the line of Cain, but he also lived in the epoch of a “set time” for judgment. The times were therefore comparable with those of today, justifying the Lord’s prophecy that “as it was in the days

of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man" (Luke 17:26).

### VERSE 22

**"And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters"** — Enoch set himself to walk with God. The Hebrew *Yithhalak* in the hithpael tense signifies what one does for himself. Enoch dedicated himself with determination to walk in a way consistent with his belief; and in carrying this out, he pleased God (Heb. 11:5. Cp. Gen. 6:9; Mic. 6:8). Thus he had fellowship with God. God is light (1 John 1:5), so that Enoch walked in light; God is love (1 John 4:16), so that Enoch walked in love; God is truth (1 John 5:20), so that Enoch walked in truth; God is life (1 John 5:11), so that Enoch walked in the way of life.

### VERSE 23

**"And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years"** — Like the shining Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2), he completed his course: a prophetic solar year. Two notable yet contrasting events occurred during this period, within sixty years of each other. In the year 930 A.C. Adam, the father of the human race, died; and in the year 987 A.C., Enoch was "translated that he should not see death". The death of so notable a man as Adam must have caused a sensation, and would have united both branches of the human race (sons of God and sons of Cain) in a common mourning. The incident emphasised the mortality of the human race, and surely would have recalled to many the Edenic incidents that made death inevitable for the human race. Shortly afterwards, the dedicated Enoch was "translated that he should not see death". This also caused a sensation, for, though a search was made for him, he could not be found. Thus, if Adam stood for mortality and death, Enoch stood for salvation and life. The death of the former and the translation of the latter brought prominently before the attention of the human race, the choice set before them: Death or Life.

### VERSE 24

**"And Enoch walked with God"** — This is repeated for emphasis. It also testifies that his walk was consistent; he did not deviate from the path of righteousness.

**"And he was not"** — Paul adds the ellipsis: "he was not found" (Heb. 11:5), implying that a search was made for him. He was taken away by God, so that no trace of him could be discovered. Paul states that he was "translated" or "changed" (cp. Heb. 7:12 where the same Greek word is rendered "change"). He was subjected to a change so that his life was held in continuance. That is the obvious meaning of the statement, and is not contradictory of the Scripture which teaches "in Adam all die" (1 Cor. 15:22), because the same chapter also states: "we shall not all sleep" (v. 51). Instead of dying, those living at Christ's coming, will be subjected to a change, if found approved. Among them will be Enoch whose life has been miraculously prolonged, and whose body will be changed to incorruptibility at the Judgment Seat. Enoch is given the title of "the seventh from Adam" (Jude 14), and as such he is a fitting type of the living at the coming of the Lord. They will be "taken away" to the Judgment Seat; and (if approved) will be translated that they do not see death. As in the case of Enoch, their removal will cause consternation, and doubtless will result in a search being made for them by an incredulous world!

Paul taught that "before his (Enoch's) translation he had this testimony that he pleased God" (Heb. 11:5). Evidently God openly expressed His pleasure in His dedicated son before translating him.

To our mind, the context of Genesis 5, combined with the comments of Paul in Hebrews 11, precludes the possibility of Enoch dying in some mysterious way without "having seen death." The term "see death" signifies to die, for, in fact, nobody literally "sees death." If Enoch merely was put to death in some painless fashion, as is sometimes suggested, he experienced nothing more than what millions of others have done. But his case was unique as the Scriptures imply. Why does the narrative of Genesis 5 suspend the



statement "and he died" in Enoch's case, if he did die? His death would have conveyed no lesson to his contemporaries; but certainly his *translation* did do so. It dramatised the hope of life that had been placed before the faithful from the beginning.

It is significant that Paul places Abel and Enoch side by side in his gallery of faithful ones. The former died by the hand of an assassin; the latter was translated that he should not see death. Both experienced the overshadowing care of Yahweh; yet one suffered and the other was delivered. This teaches that the providential care of Yahweh takes various forms.

Enoch witnessed in faith, looking forward to the coming glory (Jude 14-16). He set that before himself as his objective in life, and thus provides an example for his contemporaries to follow.

**"For God took him"** — Paul explains this as "translated him." This constituted Enoch a witness to all his associates. One day his voice was heard, protesting against the prevailing wickedness and setting forth the hope of the Gospel; and the next day it was silent, and the man was gone. But his record remains as a testimony to all to the present day. What a thrill to meet the man personally in the Age to come, to hear his description of the prevailing circumstances of his times, and to see in him the evidence of the victory of faith.

**Methuselah: The Warning — vv. 25-27**

#### VERSE 25

**"And Methuselah lived an hundred eighty and seven years and begat Lamech"** — The shortest record is followed by the longest. Enoch named his son "Methuselah" in prophetic spirit as part of his witness and warning to his contemporaries. The name is a combination of *mar*, he dieth, and *shelah*, he sendeth out, or it shall be sent, together the two words signify, *When he dieth, it shall be sent*. What would be sent? The Divine judgment of which Enoch had warned his contemporaries. But Methuselah lived so long that many forgot the warning of Enoch, and it seemed to others that the judgment would never come. But at last he died, and in the very same year, 1656 A.C., the Flood

broke upon a disobedient world.

#### VERSE 27

**"And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died"** — Methuselah was the oldest man who ever lived. He died at the age of 969 years having failed to live for a millennium, and dying a few months before the Flood.

**Lamech: The Reduced — vv. 28-31.**

#### VERSE 28

**"And Lamech"** — His name means *Reduced* or *Reducer*. There were two men by name of Lamech: one in the line of Cain, the other in the line of Seth. The former was a "Reducer", for he exerted his strength to reduce others. The latter was "Reduced", for his term of life was reduced below that of his predecessors. Lamech lived for 777 years. As with his ancestors, the period seems to have a spiritual significance. Enoch lived 365 years, representing a prophetic solar year; Methuselah lived 969 years, falling just short of a millennium; Lamech lived 777 years, emphasising the completeness of the covenant proclaimed by Yahweh; Noah was 600 years of age at the Flood, stressing that the epoch of flesh (for six is the number of flesh) had come to an end.

**"Lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son"** — Attention is now focussed upon this important son of Lamech who appears in the narrative as a type of Christ.

#### VERSE 29

**"And he called his name Noah, saying"** — Noah's name means *Rest*.

**"This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which Yahweh hath cursed"** — This statement of Lamech's was made at the birth of his son, Noah. It expresses his confidence in the Messianic hope, and constituted a prayer that his son might prove to be the promised Seed (or, at least, would lead to the manifestation of the promised Seed), who would crush the head of the serpent power, and restore the earth from the curse.

**VERSE 31**

**“And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy and seven years: and he died”** — The righteousness of Lamech is suggested by this number; for seven is the number of the Covenant. Thus the Hebrew words for “seven” and “oath” are closely related. Lamech continued until five years before the Flood, and thus witnessed, and probably supported much of the labour of Noah, his son. He then died in hope.

**Noah: Peace With God — v. 32**

**VERSE 32**

**“And Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth”** — His name means *rest*. In the narrative of the Flood he types the Lord Jesus Christ. Other references in the Word relating to him show:

His times foreshadowed the crises of AD 70 and of today (Isa. 54:9; Matt. 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-27).

He witnessed an acceleration of materialism, permissiveness, and immorality on the part of his contemporaries (Matt. 24:39; Luke 17 :27).

His preaching proclaimed the long-suffering of God which waited before the outpouring of judgment in order to give opportunity for repentance on the part of any who might seek salvation (1 Pet. 3:20).

He revealed the righteousness of faith (Heb. 11:7).

He was warned of God concerning Yahweh’s intention to blot out civilisation with a Flood (Heb. 11:7).

He was then moved to Godly reverential fear by this message (Heb. 11:7).

He became a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. 2:5).

He preached to others who were imprisoned by sin (1 Pet. 3:19).

He condemned the indifference of the ungodly (Heb. 11:7).

He was marked out for special commendation (Ezek. 14:14, 20).

**“Five hundred years”** — Five is the number of grace. Five hundred years was a long time to wait for a family; so that Noah’s faith was tested as Abram’s was later. Noah realised that the promised Seed would have to come through his line of descent, for God had revealed to him that civilisation would be wiped out by a disastrous Flood. About twenty years before the birth of his eldest son, Noah had been told that the human race had only one hundred and twenty years in which to repent before divine judgment would be unleashed upon it (Gen. 6:3). The Flood occurred in Noah’s six hundredth year (Gen. 7:6).

**“Shem, Ham and Japheth”** — Shem signifies *Name*; Ham (pronounced Khawm) signifies *Hot*; Japheth signifies *Expansion*. Each of these names foreshadowed the future of the three lines of descent through Noah. Through Shem came the people of the Name — the Semetic people; through Ham came those who inhabited the warmer parts of the earth — the dark races; through Japheth those who expanded throughout the world, for the Japhetic line found in the Eurasian nations has been foremost in exploratory zeal, and inventiveness.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE WORLD BEFORE THE FLOOD

*This chapter outlines the moral and political deterioration prior to the Flood. The world became noted for ruthless indifference to the requirements of others, widespread corruption of God’s ways, and universal violence. The majority of the sons of God succumbed to this evil environment, but Noah and his family retained their integrity before God. Three Divine inspections were made of*

*the world (cp. vv. 3, 7, 13) followed by three warnings of coming judgment. The final one proclaimed that the end had come, and Noah was told to make preparation for the deluge that followed. The Flood is the third of the four outstanding events of primeval history recorded in Genesis (see Analysis). It brought judgment upon the world of the ungodly, though a righteous remnant was preserved therefrom. This discrimination proclaimed "the goodness and the severity of God" which epitomises the character of Yahweh (Rom. 11:22; Exod. 34:5-7). Other O.T. references to the Flood are found in Job 22:15-17; Psalm 29:10; Isaiah 54:9.*

### **THE FLOOD: DIVINE JUDGMENT IN GOODNESS AND SEVERITY — Chapters 6 to 8**

*The world had reached a state of absolute anarchy. Filled with violence it reflected the attitude of Cain and rejected the divine appeal that had been constantly presealed by those of faith. But for the moment the "seed of the serpent" was to be victorious; it was to crush the principle of righteousness in an orgy of fleshly desire. But ultimately the world was cleansed of such sin by a universal baptism.*

#### **The Antediluvian Apostasy — vv. 1-8**

*The adulterous union of the two seeds (the seed of the woman — descendants of Seth, and the seed of the serpent — descendants of Cain) led to the greatest calamity history has known. The Godless attitude of the people made it imperative that Yahweh should act. The generation before the Flood was not a pagan nor idolatrous one, but it was worse: it was a Godless one which worshipped self. The people became proud and arrogant in their attitude to one another; and lawless and indifferent towards God, His revelation and His will. Progressive and great in material things, they became carnal and corrupt in spiritual matters. In consequence God made known His intention to destroy His creation with a Flood (see Amos 3:7).*

#### **VERSE 1**

**"And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth"** — In the Hebrew "men" is in the

singular number *haadam* — the Adam. In the beginning, Adam became both male and female (Gen. 1:27; 2:24), so that the "him" became "them" (see Gen. 1:27).

**"And daughters were born unto them"** — That is unto Adam and Eve, "the Adam" of this verse. These verses, therefore, provide a broad sweep of history from the beginning, showing that the seeds of the apostasy were sown long before the epoch of the Flood itself. Emphasis is given to the birth of daughters to draw attention to the seat of the danger — the physical and sexual motive.

#### **VERSE 2**

**"That the Sons of God"** — This is the first time this phrase is used, but by no means the last. Israel constituted a "son of God" even Yahweh's "firstborn" (Exod. 4:22-23; Deut. 14:1; Hos. 1:10; Isa. 43:6-7) and He is their Father (Psa. 103:13; Isa. 63:16; 64:8; Mal. 1:6). The same relationship subsists today between those who embrace the Truth in Christ and the Father in heaven (1 John 3:1-2). The sons of God in antediluvian times, therefore, constituted the seed of the woman, being mortal believers of the Truth.

**"Saw"** — Notice the same process in these sons of God as led Mother Eve to sin. She "saw" the fruit of the tree, that it was "good" and "she took" of it (Gen. 3). Now her sons permit their spiritual vision to be obscured by the sight of the daughters of men who had appeared in the society of the times. They were "fair" or good to look upon, and the believers "took" of whom they chose. Though the outward

appearance of these women was beautiful, they were rebellious against God in heart.

**“The daughters of men that they were fair”** — They are described as “the daughters of ‘*eh haadam*’ in contradistinction to “the sons of God”, because they were dominated by the flesh; they were “of the earth, earthy”. Beautiful of face and deportment, they did not possess that “inner man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible ... and which is in the sight of God of great price” (1 Pet. 3:4).

**“And they took them wives of all which they chose”** — In so doing they destroyed that healthy antipathy that Yahweh had established between the two seeds, and so broke a fundamental law established by Divine decree. It is a law endorsed by both Mosaic and Christian principles (Deut. 7:3; 1 Cor. 7:39). The flesh made choice and so began to dominate the most intimate associations.

### VERSE 3

**“And Yahweh said”** — This is the first of three specific inspections that Yahweh made of His creation at this time. See vv. 7,13. They answer to the three inspections that a priest was required to make of a leprous house under the Law (Lev. 14:33-45). The type of the priest under the Law was fulfilled by John Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ, in the three-fold proclamation they made, after which the nation of Israel was given over to destruction (cp. Lev. 14:45 with Matt. 23:38). John warned the nation that if it did not repent it would be destroyed (Matt. 3:10); the Lord at the beginning of his ministry warned the leaders not to make his Father’s house a place of merchandise (John 2:16); and at its conclusion, he rebuked them for turning it into a “den of thieves” (Mark 11:17). He publicly pronounced to them “*your house is left unto you desolate*” (Matt. 23:38), and in so doing indicated that its leprous condition was incurable. He paralleled those days with the times of Noah (Matt. 24:37-39), when Yahweh likewise made three inspections of His creation, and pronounced it to be incorrigibly corrupt. It is significant that the pangs of parturition develop in three distinct stages to the birth of a child; and that the birth of the new

world order is similarly described (cp. 1 Thess. 5:3).

**“My spirit shall not always strive with man”** — The verb *diyn* signifies to contend, strive, decide, judge, and so forth. But here, and here only, in the Bible, it takes a different form *down*, and it has been rendered by the Septuagint, Vulgate, Syriac, and other versions as “remain among” or “dwell in” man. Using that meaning, Yahweh pronounced His intention of “gathering to Himself His spirit” (Job 34:14), the life principle of creation.

**“For that he also is flesh”** — The Hebrew has: “in their erring he is flesh” (*The New Old Testament — Interlinear*) from *bashaggim*, (prim. root *shagah*) to wander, go astray. The statement witnesses to the tendency of flesh to wander from the path of righteousness.

**“Yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years”** — This does not proclaim a reduction in the life-expectancy of man, but the term of reprieve, before judgment would be poured upon that guilty generation. Yahweh gave time for man to repent, and proclaimed His intention to Noah in order that he might pass it on to his contemporaries. Yahweh has “no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live” (Ezek. 33:11). Therefore, for one hundred and twenty years, before the Flood, the appeal went out to any “who had ears to hear”, to turn from their ways and seek Yahweh. Peter declared that “the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah” (1 Pet. 3:20). The Greek word used, *apekdechomai*, signifies to “eagerly await”, suggesting a reaching out in readiness to receive something. Rotherham renders it: “God was holding forth a welcome”. That was the merciful attitude adopted by Yahweh before the Flood, but few heeded the message. A repetition of that reaction in response to the preaching of the Gospel must be expected inasmuch as Christ warned that the days would be comparable to those of Noah (Lk. 17:26).

### VERSE 4

**“There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters**

**of men** — The Hebrew *nephilim*, from *naphal* to fall, signifies “fallen ones”. They were fallen from righteousness, but strong in stature and prowess. Like the sons of Lamech, of the time of Cain, they exercised great power in the fields of profit, pleasure, power and permissiveness. They reflected the fierce, military boastfulness of Lamech who threatened others with death if they dared impede his course.

“Men” in the Hebrew is *adam*.

**“Also after that”** — The same spirit was manifested after the Flood. The same term, *nephilim* (giants), is used to describe the powerful warriors of Canaan whom the spies of Israel encountered as they surveyed the land to be conquered (Num. 13:33).

Doubtless there were among them men of outstanding stature such as Goliath, but it was the attitude of ruthless indifference towards others that characterised them as giants in wickedness. In that connection, the *nephilim* are in evidence in modern political, commercial, and social life.

**“And they bare children to them”** — The sons of God were attracted to the apparent success of the *nephilim* in the various fields of endeavour, and observing that their daughters “were fair,” like the pleasant Naamah (Gen. 4:22), they became attracted to them, and married

them. The children of such a union, reflected the influences of both. The ruthless determination of the *nephilim* was now combined with the intellectual ability of the sons of God. There was an attempt to compromise the separateness of the Truth’s demands to gain advantage of the great opportunities of material benefit that now opened up to the sons of God. They endeavoured to obtain the best of both worlds with apparent success.

**“The same became mighty”** — Heb. *hagibborim*, the heroes, usually men of war. The progeny of the Sons of God were thus drawn into “the way of Cain” as Jude observed (Jude 11). They were probably more refined in manners and exalted in thought than their predecessors of mere Cainite descent.

**“Which were of old”** — They imitated the exploits of the giants of the past.

**“Men”** — The word is *enosh* and it relates to mortal man as physically weak or morally depraved. See its use in Psa. 9:20. Though acclaimed as heroes, they were morally polluted.

**“Of renown”** — The Hebrew has *hahshem*: the name. God knew their true state as weak and depraved, and before Him they had a name for wickedness. But to their contemporaries, they had a name of honour. They were honoured and respected by the Sethites, as by the Cainites, and

### Bible Chronology to the Flood

|            | Born | Died | Age          | Age at son's birth |
|------------|------|------|--------------|--------------------|
| Adam       | 1    | 930  | 930          | 130                |
| Seth       | 130  | 1042 | 912          | 105                |
| Enos       | 235  | 1140 | 905          | 90                 |
| Cainan     | 325  | 1235 | 910          | 70                 |
| Mahalaleel | 395  | 1290 | 895          | 65                 |
| Jared      | 460  | 1422 | 962          | 162                |
| Enoch      | 622  | 987  | 365          | 65                 |
| Methuselah | 687  | 1656 | 969          | 187                |
| Lamech     | 874  | 1651 | 777          | 182                |
| Noah       | 1056 |      | 600 at flood | 1656               |

Enoch was translated before the death of Seth at the age of 365 years. Adam died a mere 57 years earlier. Thus, within a comparatively short period of time mankind learned of the death of Adam, the progenitor of the human race, and of the translation of the prominent reformer Enoch. From the former, mankind inherited mortality; whereas from the latter, it was provided with an example of how it could be overcome — by walking with God. Methuselah lived to the very year of the Flood.

## The Two Genealogies

(*The Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent*).

It is significant to note:

- \* The imitation of the names of Cainites by the Sethites;
- \* The increasing moral pollution and permissiveness indicated by the polygamy of Lamech;
- \* The contempt of God's law shown by the prominence given to Naamah the daughter of Lamech;
- \* The decline of religion suggested by the significance of the names given to the Sethites.

(1) Adam

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| (2) Abel-Seth — Self-effacing                   | (2) Cain — Demanding  |
| (3) Enos — Weak                                 | (3) Enoch — Dedicated<br>(false religion established)   |
| (4) Cainan — Gain                               | (4) Irad — Wild Ass<br>(self-will asserted)   |
| (5) Mahalaleel — Praise of El                   | (5) Mehujael — Smitten of God<br>(self-centred)   |
| (6) Jared — Decline                             | (6) Methusael — Man of God<br>(Apostate priesthood)   |
| (7) Enoch — Dedicated                           | (7) Lamech — Reducer<br>(Boastful arrogance)  |
| (8) Methuselah — When he dieth<br>it shall come | (8) Jabal, Jubal, Tubal-Cain, Naamah<br>(Commerce), (Pleasure), (Military<br>Permissiveness), (Prowess) |
| (9) Lamech — Reduced                            |   |

Noah

- \* The "way of Cain" introduced city life (Gen. 4:17); false religion (vv. 17,18); polygamy or permissiveness (v. 19); commercial cartels, sophisticated pleasure, metal-working for war (vv. 20-22); personal vengeance, or the spirit of revenge (v. 24), women's liberation movement (v. 22), leading to the corrupt and violent condition of things on the eve of the Flood. It all stemmed from clever but fleshly organization ungoverned by Divine Law.

their influence for evil was the greater because of that. The "princes" of Israel who supported Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On were similarly described as "men of renown". They were honoured by the Israelites, but revealed their moral depravity before Yahweh (Num. 16:2).

### VERSE 5

**"And Yahweh saw"** — This implies a second "inspection" — see note v. 3. The word "God" is *Yahweh*, as it is also in v. 3, though it is there translated "Lord". Wherever the word GOD or LORD appears printed in small capitals, as in these places, the word is *Yahweh*. From this it will be apparent that throughout the narrative of the Flood, the Divine Name, *Yahweh*, is interchanged with *Elohim*. What is the purpose of this? We believe it relates to the doctrine of God-manifestation. Whereas *Yahweh*, the Eternal Father, was per-

sonally cognisant of all that took place and directed the issues in regard to it; the actual work was undertaken by the *Elohim*. They are His ministers (Heb. 1:7), "that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His Word" (Psa. 103:20).

**"That the wickedness of man was great in the earth"** — The Hebrew *ra'ah* is from the root signifying "to break in pieces, to destroy, afflict", and relates to people who break in pieces the established order of things, thus confounding and destroying that which is right, and afflict themselves by so doing. It is frequently used for moral depravity and lewdness.

**"And that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart"** — Imagination is from *yetzer*, something made to plan, and thus includes both purposes and desires. Man, by nature, is prone to sin, and needs the law of God to restrain this. When that

law is abandoned, all that remains is evil. That was the case with the antediluvians. They had rejected the restraints of Divine law, and had given themselves over completely to the purposes and desires of their hearts. To the Hebrew, the heart was the seat of the affections and emotions of the mind, and thus related to intellect (see Judges 16:15; Psa. 10:6; Prov. 5:12). The "wickedness" of the antediluvians was deliberate, and was pursued with complete consciousness of their actions.

**"Was only evil continually"** — The evil was practised without intermission every day (see margin), and so became habitual. The carrying out of their own desires and purposes occupied all their time, and left them completely indifferent to the will of God. The world today is rapidly reaching that condition.

#### VERSE 6

**"And it repented Yahweh that He had made man on the earth"** — The Hebrew *yinnahem* is from the root *nacham*, to sigh, pant, groan, lament, grieve. The extreme wickedness of man, and particularly that of the sons of God, caused grief to Yahweh, in consequence of which, He decided to alter His purpose. This is an anthropomorphic expression, in which God accommodates His language to man's limited ability to understand. In fact, God does not repent (Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29), if by "repent" is meant to regret something done; but He does change His purpose when such is necessary. A study of such passages as Exod. 32:14; 1 Sam. 15:11; Jer. 18:7-8; 26:3,13, 19; and Jonah 3:10 reveals that repentance in relation to Yahweh relates to changes in His dealings with man consequent upon man's change of relationship towards Him.

**"And it grieved Him at His heart"** — This expression is used to emphasise the effect of sin upon God. In Ephesians 4:30, believers are exhorted to "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God". Man's wickedness and ingratitude caused God sorrow. He may not have expected anything more than indifference from the line of Cain, but to experience a similar attitude from "His sons" caused "sorrow of heart" to the

Father in heaven, as a like experience of indifference on the part of children, does to parents on earth.

#### VERSE 7

**"And Yahweh said"** — Paul declares that "By faith, Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark" (Heb. 11:7). Evidently the message of Yahweh was conveyed to Noah (Amos 3:7). This declaration followed the second inspection of Yahweh. See comment on v. 5.

**"I will destroy man whom I have created"** — This decree illustrated the Bible principle: "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). As Creator, Yahweh has the prerogative to do what He assesses to be right and best with His creation. "Destroy" is *machah*, to blot out, erase, or wipe out, and, in this context, with water.

**"From the face of the earth"** — Why should God do this if angels were responsible for the wickedness of the antediluvians as some teach? They claim that the "sons of God" were angels, and not mortal believers, and that the "giants" who resulted from the co-mingling of the sons of God with the daughters of men were half-human, half-divine monsters of crime. But, if that were the case, why should God be so specific in His declaration that He intended to destroy man from "the face of the earth", leaving the "angels" untouched, if they, in fact, were the cause of the wickedness.

**"Both man and beast and the creeping thing and the fowls of the air"** — The literal Hebrew, as given in the margin, is "from man unto beast" thus representing creation in reverse.

**"For it repenteth Me that I have made them"** — Another anthropomorphic figure of speech, in which God applies terms to Himself that man would normally use. See notes on v. 6.

#### VERSE 8

**"But Noah found grace in the eyes of Yahweh"** — The verb is expressive. Noah must have "sought" grace in order to have "found" it. It implies some action on his part. The R.V. renders "grace" as "favour". The Hebrew word is from a

root *chanan* signifying “to bend”, to lean over as in kindness to an inferior. It is expressive, therefore, of Yahweh’s condescension in figuratively stooping down to help fallen man. In Noah’s case, this took the form of exempting him from the general destruction reserved for the human race. Was this provision extended to Noah on Noah’s own merits? If that had been the case, Noah would have had no need to plead the favour of Yahweh; he could have claimed salvation as his right. On what grounds could Noah, as a sinner, seek the favour of Yahweh? On the basis of the for-

giveness of sins through the promised Redeemer (Gen. 3:15). The atoning efficacy of Christ’s offering is retrospective as well as prospective; it reached back as well as forward. Paul taught that the Lord’s death embraced “the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant” as well as those that even then were future (Heb. 9:15). Noah’s faith (Heb. 11:7) was a confident anticipation of things hoped for, and embraced that promise as well as the other promises and teachings of Yahweh. He sought and found grace in the eyes of Yahweh.

## THE GENERATIONS OF NOAH: A JUST MAN

### The Ruin of the Old World & the Preservation of a Remnant Chapters 6:9–9:29

*This section of Genesis, the third of the “generations” (see “Outline of the book”) narrates the destruction of the old world by the Flood, and the preservation of a righteous remnant. It therefore sets forth “the goodness and severity of God” (Rom. 11:22), which are fundamental to the character of Yahweh. Noah is described as “a just man and perfect in his generations”, one who “walked with God”. His character was unique among a generation that had abandoned the way of righteousness. Being “warned of God” of things “not seen as yet,” he believed what he heard; and, energised by the “spirit of Christ which was in the prophets” (1 Pet. 1:11), he “preached to the spirits” (or teachers of the time) who were “in prison” to sin and death (1 Pet. 3:19), that is, to the Antediluvians “who were disobedient in the days of Noah”. He warned them of the coming Flood, which would “destroy them from the earth”; and proved to them his own conviction of its certainty, by “preparing an ark for the safety of his own house”; by the which he condemned the world, and became “heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (Heb. 11:7). But his faith, thus made perfect by his works, made no salutary impression upon his contemporaries. “They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not till the Flood came; and took them all away” (Matt. 24:38-39), leaving only eight persons of the line of*



*Seth alive (2 Pet. 2:5).*

*The Section of Genesis narrating the Generations of Noah, is divisible into two parts:*

*(1) A Generation perishes by Flood — Gen. 6:9–9:17;*

*(2) Sin In The Flesh Survives — Gen. 9:18-29.*

*The first part records the details of the Flood, including the covenant Yahweh made with the survivors; the second part shows how that flesh again took over.*

**(1) A GENERATION PERISHES BY FLOOD — GEN. 6:9–9:17**

**Noah And His Family — Vv. 9-10.**

*The righteousness of Noah and his family is contrasted with the gross wickedness of the rest of the antediluvians. In the face of the latter, God confirms His intention to punish the world with a Flood.*

**VERSE 9**

**“These are the generations of Noah”** — See note Gen. 2:4. The “generations” of Noah comprise his family history.

**“A just man”** — Justification is through Christ Jesus (Rom. 3:24). Noah, therefore, must have anticipated the coming of Christ, and the redemption in him. He thus had a clear understanding of the teaching of the Edenic covenant in regard to individual redemption, as did Abraham (John 8:56).

**“Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations”** — The Hebrew word *tamim* is from a root signifying to be complete, to be without blemish. It indicates to be *full to capacity*. Noah did what he could, to the fullest capacity, and was complete in that sense; he was also “without blemish” for his sins were forgiven. In the New Testament, the word “perfect” is used in the sense of maturity: “We speak wisdom among them that are perfect” or mature (1 Cor. 2:6). Again: “In understanding be men” (1 Cor. 14:20). The Greek word for “men” is elsewhere rendered “perfect”, and here signifies to be mature, to grow up. Perfection, in the sense of being “without blemish” (and *tamim* is frequently so rendered. See Exod. 12:5; 29:1) is possible through the

forgiveness of sins. So Paul wrote: “By one offering he (Christ) hath perfected for a continuance (see *Diaglott*) them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14). Noah’s justification and perfection, therefore were by faith (Heb. 11:7), by his “confident anticipation of things hoped for” (Heb. 11:1). He was perfect in the sense of moral integrity, not in that of complete sinlessness. The perfection referred to, therefore, proclaims that Noah was a complete, or “whole man” (cp. Ecc. 12:13, eliminating the italics) through obeying the commandments of Yahweh. As with *teleiosis* in the Greek, the word denotes the complete readjustment of sinful man to the laws of God. To be “perfect” towards God therefore is to be full, or complete, to the individual capacity possible. In that regard, the capacity of men vary, and none come up to the absolute perfection of the Lord Jesus.

**“And Noah walked with God”** — Like Enoch he was fully conscious of the reality of his Creator, and conducted himself as though He were visibly alongside. He “walked with God”, and therefore he “walked in the light” (1 John 1:7), enjoying communion and fellowship with Yahweh through the Elohim. He “humbled himself to walk with his God” (see Micah 6:8 mg, and note on Gen. 5:22).

**VERSE 10**

**“And Noah begat three sons”** — Three is the number of completeness. Noah’s three sons became three racial groups that comprised all mankind after the Flood.

**“Shem”** — His name means *Name* or *Renown*. Though mentioned first, Shem

apparently was younger than Japheth who is called the "elder" (Gen. 10:21). Why this anomaly? Because it was a prerogative of a parent to elevate a younger son into the position of legal firstborn, if such were deemed necessary (1 Chron. 5:1; Deut. 21:15-17). Thus Reuben, the actual firstborn of Jacob, was replaced from such an honoured position because of his shocking immorality (Gen. 49:4), and the three-fold privileges of such were given to other sons: the priesthood was given to Levi (Exod. 13:2, 11-16; Num. 8:14-16); the double portion of inheritance was given to Joseph (he had two tribes to all the other sons' one); rulership was given to Judah. There are many other examples of younger sons being elevated to legal firstborn: Isaac in place of Ishmael; Jacob in place of Esau; David in place of his brethren (Psa. 89:27), and so on. Why was this so frequently done in Yahweh's dealings with men? To teach His purpose to man, which was to supply a righteous younger son who would assume the position of legal firstborn over the human race. Yahweh has had two sons: Adam (Luke 3:38) and Christ. In point of time, Adam was the elder of the two, for Yahweh's second Son came some four thousand years after the first. But the older son revealed his incompetence through transgression, to receive the promised inheritance, or to act as priest and king, and he was deposed in favour of the obedient "second Adam", who was elevated to the position of firstborn (Col. 1:15). The title of firstborn does not teach the pre-existence of Christ, instead it proclaims the Father's pleasure in His Son, and the elevated status he has been granted. The Lord Jesus manifested the Father's Name, and Shem was a type of him. The name of Shem, signifying *Name* or *Renown*, was a fitting caption for he who would come.

**"Ham"** — His name means *hot, dark, or swarthy*. The descendants of Ham ultimately occupied those portions of the earth that are expressed by his name, and became swarthy in appearance.

**"And Japheth"** — His name means *enlarger, expansion*. The Japhetic races (the European races) have been noted for

their restless energy, particularly in the fields of exploration and inventiveness, by which they have enlarged their possessions or their scope of knowledge. They, too, have lived up to their name.

### Noah's contemporaries — vv. 11-13

*They had corrupted Yahweh's Creation, and consequently He proclaimed His intention to "corrupt" them.*

#### VERSE 11

**"The earth also was corrupt before God"** — By "earth" is meant the inhabitants thereof, who are "of the earth, earthy". The description of this verse contrasts them with Noah and his family who, "walked with God." Noah's upright sincerity was brought into bold relief by the "corruption" of his contemporaries. In consequence, Noah and his family shone forth "as lights in the world" being "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation" (Phil. 2: 15-16).

**"And the earth was filled with violence"** — The moral corruption of the antediluvians found expression in ruthless contempt for the rights of others; they followed in "the way of Cain" (Jude 11), as manifested by the boastful and arrogant Lamech (Gen. 4:24).

#### VERSE 12

**"And God looked upon the earth"** — This is the third and final inspection as required by the Law with regard to a leprous house (cp. note v. 3). The inspection revealed that the moral condition of the world had not improved in spite of the preaching of Noah, but, in fact, had worsened, and all that remained was to destroy the building. Yahweh exhibited mercy as well as judgment towards the antediluvians.

**"And, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted His way upon the earth"** — The word "corrupt" is *shachath* in Hebrew, and signifies to decay, cast off, corrupt, ruin. The same word is rendered "destroy" in v. 13. Compare its use there with the word *machah* rendered "destroy" in v. 7. The latter signifies to wipe out as with washing; the former means to bring

to ruin. Mankind had ruined God's creation by moral depravity; and now Yahweh, as a wise Master-Potter was about to destroy the marred vessel, and remake it with another lump of clay (See Jer. 18:1-10; 19:1-2,10-11). The statement of Genesis 6:12-13 is cited generally in a significant context in Rev. 11:18: "The nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come ... (that Thou) shouldest destroy (mg. corrupt) them which destroy (corrupt, mar, ruin) the earth." Thus the approaching crisis of the latter days is antitypical of that of Noah's day.

**"His way"** — This was the way to the tree of life; the way to immortality (see notes Ch. 3:24). God's intention as expressed at this epoch is similar to that recorded in 1 Cor. 3:17 in relation to the present. "If any man defile (mg. destroy) the temple of God, him will God destroy (same word as "defile" in Greek), for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." In corrupting "God's way", the antediluvian sons of God corrupted "the temple of God" as it was then constituted, and Yahweh had no further use for them nor their corruption of His Truth.

### VERSE 13

**"And God said unto Noah"** — To whom did He proclaim His intention? Paul declared that He did so to Noah. There was a series of revelations, each expressing with growing intensity and greater urgency, the signs of the times and the intentions of Yahweh (see vv. 3,7,13; Ch. 7:1). Thus warned, the family of Noah was exhorted to stand aside from the mad rush of doom that characterised the attitude of most of the antediluvians. In similar manner, the proclamation of the Spirit is urgent upon this generation of believers, as they "see the day approaching" (cp. Rev. 16:15).

**"The end of all flesh is come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them"** — Throughout the ages, great epochs of judgment have been similarly introduced for it is a principle of Yahweh's ways of Providence, to make known His intentions to His servants (see Amos 3:7). By so doing, He elevates such from the status of servants to that of intimate

friends (John 15:15; Rev. 1:1). The Flood (Gen. 6:13), the Egyptian plagues (Exod. 7:2,3,7), the destruction of Jerusalem (1 Pet. 4:7), as well as the coming judgment on the nations (Rev. 10:7; 16:15), have all been the subject of warning messages to those who have "ears to hear". We thus stand in a privileged position, being among those "taken out of the Gentiles" (Acts 15:14), to whom Yahweh has confided the secret of His future intentions.

**"And behold, I will destroy them with the earth"** — The Hebrew word rendered "destroy" is the same as that translated "corrupt" in v. 12. As men had morally ruined Yahweh's work in Creation, He, in turn, announced that He would ruin them. The use of the same word to announce Yahweh's intention, shows that this was a fitting retribution for the wickedness of the antediluvians. The margin renders "with the earth" as "from the earth", thus following the Samaritan text. But the Hebrew is as the AV. This suggests that God designed the cataclysmic upheaval of the Flood to reduce the earth to its original void and empty state, completely overwhelming the inhabitants thereof. Originally the earth was covered with water, and subsequently rose out of it, but now God proclaimed His intention of causing it to revert to that original state. It is the very presence of water on the earth that makes life possible upon this planet. Peter taught that the earth "was compacted out of water and through water" (2 Pet. 3:5). But he proceeds to explain that this very element, so essential to life, became the means of destruction: "The world that then was being overflowed with water, perished" (v. 6). Thus the water destroyed the very life it helped to bring into existence. Yet, remarkably, that same water held the ark aloft and preserved Noah and his family! Peter again declares: "eight souls were saved by water" (1 Pet. 3:20). The water, which brought death to the world, saved them because it lifted them up above the destruction that swept the globe. It saved them because of their relationship to it in the Ark. This is true also of our relationship to the death of Christ through the waters of baptism. Thus Christ is to the one "the savour of death

unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life" (2 Cor. 2:15-16). None could remain indifferent to the Flood, though, for a time, they might ignore the warning message of Noah. And, ultimately, none will be able to remain indifferent to Christ, though, for the time, they might ignore the message of warning and salvation proclaimed in his name.

### Noah Commanded To Build An Ark — vv. 14-22

*The Divine decree: "The end of all flesh is come" rang like a death knell through the consciousness of Noah. It was obvious that Deity could not remain indifferent to the flood of violence that had covered the earth; and now the Divine vengeance is proclaimed. The earth was to be ruined in the sense that it would cease to support life whilst covered with water; but mercy was also to temper judgment in that an Ark of safety was to be Divinely designed for the remnant who would submit to the ways of Providence. Noah, moved with fear at the revelation given him, preached an urgent message of salvation to whoever would hear, as he prepared the ark for the salvation of himself and his family.*

### VERSE 14

**"Make thee"** — The ark was to be identified with Noah, subject to Divine instructions and dimensions. It was thus to be representative of the human race, whilst, at the same time, representative of Yahweh's requirements for the salvation of those who would accept His mercy. In size it was adequate for all who would shelter therein. In like manner, the Lord Jesus, our Ark of Refuge, was representative of those he came to save, as well as manifesting Yahweh as Saviour. In him is adequate provision for the salvation of all who desire to accept the Divine grace extended.

**"An ark"** — The word is *tebah*, (not *aron*, a chest, as used for the ark of the Tabernacle), and signifies a hollow construction for the purpose of floating. It was not a ship in the normal sense of the word, as being a vessel designed to travel from one place to the other and therefore equipped for steering. The ark was the

best possible construction for the purpose in view; for it was designed simply to float upon the water, leaving it to Yahweh to drive it wheresoever He would. The word only occurs twice in the Bible; here for the ark of Noah, and again in Exod. 2:3-5 for the ark of bulrushes in which the infant Moses was saved from the cruel decree of Pharaoh. The actual meaning of the word is in doubt, and it could have been of Egyptian derivation. It is significant that Moses, who wrote both Genesis and Exodus, should have used the same word to describe the vessels in which both Noah and himself were able to shelter from danger. The ark points forward in type to Christ our Ark, in which "whosoever will" is able to shelter from the storms of life.

**"Of gopher wood"** — There is considerable doubt as to what is meant by gopher wood. *The New Old Testament Interlinear* renders it as "timbers of cyprus"; the *Concordant Version* has "sulphur wood"; Strong renders it "wood to house in" suggesting that it relates to the method of construction, the ark being a covered-in vessel. Gesenius identifies *gopher* with *kopher*, to cover, implying a covering over the top to roof it in. The ark, including the covering, was of wood.

Wood suggests both human nature and also the stake upon which human nature was portrayed and crucified, and through which a covering was provided for mankind. Christ bore "our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Pet. 2:24). The word for "tree" in this quotation is *xulon*, "wood". As a figure, the wood of the ark points to flesh cut down as in sacrifice, and shaped according to Divine specification to provide a covering. The covering of the ark points to the covering obtainable in Christ through his sacrifice. Gesenius, in identifying the word Gopher with the Hebrew *kopher* links it with the "pitch" with which the seams are sealed, probably relating to the resin from the tree. If correct, the wood of the ark came from trees that were cut down as in death, and wounded to provide the resin, pointing to the death and the piercing of the Lord.

**"Rooms shalt thou make in the ark"** — In the Hebrew "rooms" is *ginnim*, nests

(see margin). Nests are abiding places of comfort and shelter. Christ declared: "In my Father's house are many mansions" (John 14:2) or "abiding places". These are "nests" where his followers can find refuge and comfort from the storms of life. "The Name of Yahweh is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe" (Prov. 18:10).

**"And shalt pitch it within and without with pitch"** — The Hebrew word for "pitch" is *kopher*, covering, thus: "thou shalt cover it with a covering". The vessel was thus caulked for safety. What was used for that purpose we are not specifically told; but it could well have been bitumen, or the resin from trees. The fact we need to heed is that it was required to be covered. The word used to describe this, *kopher*, is the same word that is used for the covering of sins. It is rendered "ransom" (Exod. 30:12; Isa. 43:3; Job 33:24). In its plural form *kappurim* it is translated "atonement" (Exod. 29:36; 30:10,16; Lev. 23:27; 25:9). As *kapporeth*, it is used of the mercy seat, the covering of the ark of judgment. The "covering" made the ark watertight, and thus held back the waters of judgment. The covering in Christ (Gal. 3:26-29) does likewise by providing a means for the forgiveness of sins.

#### VERSE 15

**"And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: the length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits"** — In ancient times, there were several measurements in use defined as the cubit. According to F.Petrie, a noted Egyptologist, the cubit in Egypt measured 22½ inches (57cm). In Israel, the common cubit represented the length from the elbow to the middle finger, and so was called "the cubit of a man" (Deut. 3:11). It was approximately 18 inches (46cm) in length. However, there was also a sacred, or great, cubit, by which the common cubit was increased by a hand-breadth" (Ezek. 40:5), making it about 24 inches (61cm) long.

When the dimensions of the ark are considered in the light of these measurements, they reveal a vessel of no mean

size.

The dimensions of the ark, however, have a spiritual as well as a literal significance. There is such a thing as spiritual numerics in the Bible, in which numbers are used to teach basic truths. This is found in the numbers associated with the Law, the Tabernacle, the Temple, as well as those relating to Noah's Ark. Thus the dimensions, 300 x 50 x 30, are on a closely proportionate scale. Their highest common factor is ten, a number which, in the Bible, expresses the idea of completeness. It is used to describe a large, undisclosed number, which in its totality expresses the whole. See Deut. 33:2; Psa. 3:6; 1 Sam. 29:5; 1 Cor. 4:15; 14:19 where "ten" is used as a token number for a much larger unrevealed total. Thus the "ten thousand" of Deut. 33:2 actually expresses a "great multitude which no man can number" (Rev. 7:9). If each of the measurements of the ark is divided by five, the number of grace, the results are respectively 5 x 6 x 10 = 300; 5 x 10 = 50; 5 x 6 = 30. What do these figures teach when considered in the light of spiritual numerics? Five represents grace; six is the number of man or flesh (Rev. 13:18); and ten suggests completeness. So 5 x 6 x 10 = Grace extended to flesh to bring to completeness the multitude of the Redeemed. The dimensions of the width and the height of the ark convey the same spiritual lessons.

**"The breadth of it fifty cubits"** — Either 23m (75 feet) or 30m (100 feet), according to the size of the cubit.

**"And the height of it thirty cubits"** — Either 14m (45 feet) or 18m (60 feet), according to the size of the cubit.

#### VERSE 16

**"A window shalt thou make to the ark"** — The Hebrew word for window in this place, *tsohar*, is entirely different from that found in Genesis 8:6. The word here is from a root signifying "to glisten", and literally means a "light". It was a lighting apparatus, which may have been a series of windows (Gesenius), or an opening running along the top of the sides of the ark, covered in by some translucent substance.

**"And in a cubit shalt thou finish it**

**above**” — This relates not to the window but to the ark. A cubit square window in such a large vessel would not have been of much use. It is suggested that an opening was left around the whole of the ark a cubit below the roof for light and ventilation.

**“And the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof”** — There was only one door, as there is only one way of entrance into Christ. It was on the side of the ark, and as such, reminiscent of the side of Adam from which Eve was built up (Gen. 2:21-22).

**“With lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it”** — The word “stories” is not in the original, but some such word must be supplied. Evidently the ark was divided into three sections or storeys; and these were fitted out with rooms (v. 14).

#### VERSE 17

**“And behold I even I”** — The repetition is for emphasis. Who was the speaker? The Creator! He thus proclaimed His intention to destroy the wonderful creation which witnessed to His wisdom and power. Noah believed the statement (Heb. 11:7), but he was almost alone in doing so. The two families of mankind ignored the unlikely warning. It was a fearful and unheard of thing that the Creator threatened to bring about, and the “wisdom” of the world ridiculed it as impossible (1 Pet. 3:20). The world unheeded the warning (Matt. 24:38-39), as it similarly is unheeding of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:4).

**“Do bring a flood of waters upon the earth”** — This is the first intimation of the form of judgment to be inflicted upon the earth. The word for flood is only used here and in Psalm 29:10; and therefore is limited to Noah’s flood.

**“To destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die”** — In the Hebrew, “breath of life” is in the plural, *ruach chayim*, and literally signifies breath of lives. The term relates to all forms of life as defined in this verse. However, this is “from under heaven”; and

“every thing that is in the earth shall die” — limited to “everything under heaven” and “everything in the earth”. This includes all bird-life and animal-life, but not necessarily fish life.

#### VERSE 18

**“But with thee I will establish My covenant”** — The Covenant established with Noah was that proclaimed in Eden, which promised a Redeemer for mankind (Gen. 3:15). After the murder of Abel, this Covenant had been kept alive though the line of Seth. But the line of Seth had proved disobedient and would be involved in the Divine judgment that would blot out the rebellious, and so faithful Noah was selected as the channel through whence would come the Redeemer of mankind. This demonstrated that Yahweh’s Promise and Covenant are greater than human opposition or weakness: they will prevail in spite of the wickedness and indifference of flesh.

In this statement to Noah, the word “covenant” is used for the first time in Scripture. It is from the Hebrew *berith* which is from a root signifying to cut, or carve, and therefore implies a covenant confirmed by sacrifice (see Gen. 15:9; Jer. 34:18-19). The use of this important and significant word taught that the promise in Eden would be confirmed by sacrifice (see Rom. 15:8), and the declaration now made to Noah showed that this offering would come through him. The Lord Jesus Christ is the covenant victim (Heb. 9:15-17), and Noah typed the work he would accomplish.

**“And thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons’ wives with thee”** — It was necessary for Noah to be saved if salvation was to extend to others. In fulfilment of the type, it was necessary that Christ first save himself, that he might save others. Both Noah and his family were invited to shelter in the ark, though Noah led the way. Hence Noah not only organised the building of the ark, but was the first to be saved thereby. Again the type is fulfilled in Christ, who both saved himself by his own sacrifice, and led the way to salvation

for others. He was "brought again from the dead (to life eternal) ... through the blood of the everlasting covenant (his own blood — Heb. 13:20)".

### VERSE 19

**"And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark"** — Literally, *"Two from every kind"* — that is, all gathered into the ark shall appear in pairs, whether it be the seven pairs of clean animals or the single pairs of unclean animals (Ch. 7:2). Noah was to "bring them into the ark" in the sense of receiving them and not prohibiting them. He did not go out and gather them; the Elohim did that (Ch. 6:20).

**"To keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female"** — They did not enter the ark on a basis of faith, but with the object of preserving life. Noah and his family ruled over them, as Christ and the saints will rule over the mortal peoples in the Age to Come. In this, the experience of Noah foreshadowed the future. See notes Genesis 9:15. The birds and animals in the ark, were separated into clean and unclean categories, answering to the nations (see Acts 10:9-12; Dan. 7:11-12; Ezek. 39:17). For example, Israel is represented as a holy nation, the Gentiles as unholy. Both will find a place in the Kingdom as mortal peoples, incorporated therein by a national acceptance of Christ's rule. This was typically set forth in the judgment of the Flood. Consider the categories dealt with by Yahweh:

1. The adulterous sons of God destroyed.
2. The mighty men and giants together with their followers, destroyed.
3. Noah and his family saved by faith.
4. The lower creation preserved to sustain life.

As in the typography of Genesis 1:26, these lower forms of life represent the mortal nations of the future (see Gen. 1:28), with whom Yahweh will enter into covenant relationship (Gen. 9:15).

### VERSE 20

**"Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of**

**every sort"** — This statement excludes sea-life which possibly was not subjected to the same judgment. See v. 17.

**"Shall come into thee"** — The animals to be preserved, would be drawn to Noah by angelic means. This fact has been ridiculed by those who reject the Bible, and the claim has been made that it was impossible. For example:

1. How would it be possible for the slow-moving animals of Australia to shuffle their way back to the Middle East, and to the ark in time to be saved?

2. Would the ark accommodate all the species of animals to be preserved?

3. How would a mere eight men attend to all the requirements of so many creatures?

4. What about space for the normal increase of such?

These and other problems may present themselves to the mind, and, indeed, have been pressed by those who doubt the Bible record. We suggest the following answers:

1. The antediluvian globe was different from that which is familiar to us today. That is obvious from the fact that there is evidence of growth in the polar regions, such as would be impossible today. Most likely, the land masses were different then from those of today, and it is possible that all creation was more completely centred then, than is the case now, into one main continent.

2. Concerning the species and available room in the ark, the following comment is by B. Nelson in *After Its Kind*, pp. 80-81.

"Into the ark had been brought two of every kind. From the sacred record it appears that it was not necessary for Noah to go out in to the world and collect these pairs, but that they were sent to him, they came to him, impelled by the Power which made and controls all things. That the ark was not large enough to contain two of every bi-sexual species has often been charged. The charge, however, rests on ignorance both as to the vast carrying capacity of the ark as outlined in the Bible, and as to the number of species that there actually are. Some scientists, called the "lumpers", make the number of species few. Others, called the "splitters", make

the number many. Until breeding tests have been carefully applied so that men can know which forms are varieties and which are distinct species no one will be able to do more than make a guess at the number of 'kinds' there are. Dr. Howard Osgood in the *Sunday School Times* discusses the question whether all species of animals, as they are now classified by naturalists, could have found accommodation in the ark. The highest estimate of the number of species of land mammalia is 290 above the size of the sheep, 757 from the sheep to the rats, and 1,359 of the rats, bats, and shrews. The average size is about that of the common cat. Allowing five square feet of the deck room as amply sufficient for a cat, two of each species of mammalia could find room on two-thirds of one deck of the ark, with its 33,750 square feet of surface. The representatives of 10,000 species of birds, 979 of reptiles, 1,252 of lizards, and 100,000 of insects could easily be placed on the remaining third of the deck, leaving the other two decks for storing food".

3. It could be that most of the animals hibernated during the period of the Flood. This would limit the amount of food and attention necessary to attend to them. In regard to the judgment of the Flood, we are in the presence of miracle in many var-

ious aspects.

4. If Yahweh limited the activity of the animals by hibernation, it would also care for this problem.

**"To keep them alive"** — Male and female were both essential to that end. Cp. v. 19.

**VERSE 21**

**"And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee and for them"** — Whereas the angels gathered the animals and birds to Noah, he had to arrange for their food. This applies also on the spiritual plane: God is calling out of the Gentiles a people for His name (Acts 15:14), but they must feed on the food that Christ, as the antitypical Noah, has prepared.

**VERSE 22**

**"Thus did Noah"** — Noah was moved by faith, and his faith was perfected by action. See James 2:18-24. As Yahweh had limited the period of preparation to one hundred and twenty years, most of this time would be occupied in building the ark, preaching to the people, storing the food, and preparing for the reception of the animals.

**Chronology of the Flood**

|          |   |  |            |
|----------|---|--|------------|
| 7:6      | — | Noah's age at the Flood (600 years).                         |            |
| 7-7-10a  | — | Loading the Ark — 7 days.                                    |            |
| 7:10b-11 | — | Rain begins — 17th day 2nd month                             | 17/2/1656  |
| 7:12     | — | Rain continues 40 days                                       | 27/3/1656  |
| 7:24     | — | Water prevails 110 days                                      | 17/7/1656  |
| 8:4      | — | Ark rests on Ararat  | 17/7/1656  |
| 8:5      | — | 73 days later tops of mountains are seen                     | 1/10/1656  |
| 8:6      | — | 40 days later raven and dove sent out                        | 11/11/1656 |
| 8:10     | — | 7 days later dove sent out a second time (returns with leaf) | 18/11/1656 |
| 8:12     | — | 7 days later dove sent out (does not return)                 | 25/11/1656 |
| 8:13     | — | 36 days later, covering removed                              | 1/1/1657   |
| 8:14     | — | 56 days later, the earth ready                               | 27/2/1657  |

Total time from beginning of the Flood, one year, 10 days.

The computation above is based upon lunar reckoning which seems to be established from the fact that 150 days are computed as five months. See Gen. 7:24 with Ch. 7:11 and 8:4. The repetition of 5's (grace), 6's (flesh), 7's (covenant), 40's (probation) and so forth in the above period is significant.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

## THE FLOOD WASHES THE EARTH CLEAN

*The epoch of the Flood dawns, and Noah is instructed to gather all that has been accumulated into the ark. He is then invited to enter the ark, which follows as a calm and orderly event. The door is divinely closed upon him, and the Flood commences. The source of the waters is twofold: they burst out from beneath, out of the ocean floor; and pour down from above as the heavens are opened. For forty days and nights the storm continues until the earth is covered, and all forms of life thereupon cease. For one hundred and fifty days the waters prevail upon the earth.*

**A Remnant To Be Saved — vv. 1-9**

*Further instructions are given to Noah as to those who were to be saved from the Judgment. At the set time they all entered the ark. They did so before the outpouring of Judgment, as, similarly, the saints living at Christ's coming will be withdrawn from the world before the judgment of Armageddon is experienced by it (Isa. 26:20-21; 60:1-2; 1 Pet. 4:17).*

**VERSE 1**

**“And Yahweh said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark”** — The verb is in the imperative mood, expressing a sense of urgency, in which one is called upon to act for himself. Moved by faith, Noah acted upon the summons (Heb. 11:3). He left a world absorbed in its material pursuits (Matt. 24:38-39; Luke 17:26), left his home, property, and relations, to enter the ark in which were found only the barest necessities of life. He did this because he “believed God” setting forth an example later followed by Abraham (Gen. 12:1), and by all such “believers” (Acts 15:14; Rev. 18:4).

**“For thee have I seen righteous before Me in this generation”** — There were probably plenty of people who were righteous in their own eyes; but only eight persons were saved (1 Pet. 3:20). As life upon the globe had by then continued for 1656 years, the population must have been

considerable, for all the available evidence suggests that man had a vitality far greater than his state in the weakened postdiluvian world. For example, Josephus records a tradition that Adam had fifty-six children, thirty-three sons and twenty-three daughters. The statement of Cain also presupposes a population quite numerous, for he declared to the Elohim: “Everyone that findeth me shall slay me.” Cain would not have spoken that way if the whole human race at that time had consisted only of the members of the size of a modern family. A. M. Rehwinkel, in *The Flood*, claims:

“On the basis of what has been said, it would not be unreasonable to assume that an average family in that age might have consisted of at least eighteen to twenty living and marriageable children. All will agree that on the basis of what has been said, this is a very conservative estimate. According to Genesis 5 there were ten generations from Adam to Noah. Taking these figures as a basis for calculation, we obtain the following results:

|                       |             |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| 1st generation .....  | 2           |
| 2nd generation.....   | 18          |
| 3rd generation .....  | 162         |
| 4th generation.....   | 1,458       |
| 5th generation.....   | 13,122      |
| 6th generation.....   | 118,098     |
| 7th generation.....   | 1,062,882   |
| 8th generation.....   | 9,565,938   |
| 9th generation.....   | 86,093,442  |
| 10th generation ..... | 774,840,979 |

“To this number must be added all surviving previous generations, which would probably number an additional hundred million. According to this calculation, the population at the time of the Flood would have been nearly nine hundred million.”

#### VERSE 2

“**Of every clean beast**” — The distinction between clean and unclean animals was thus understood at this time, which argues for the existence of Divine law prior to the Flood. It also presupposes that meat was a staple diet of the antediluvians, for “clean beasts” would be those used for food (Lev. 11:1-22; Deut. 14:1-20).

“**Thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female**” — Literally (see margin) “seven seven”, or seven pairs.

“**And of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female**” — Only one pair of animals deemed unclean were permitted into the ark.

#### VERSE 3

“**Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth**” — The reference is to “clean” fowls. Some versions include that designation. The purpose of God in Christ, the ark of salvation, is to preserve life. God desires not the death of any, but that all should come unto Him and live (Ezek. 33:11).

#### VERSE 4

“**For yet seven days**” — The ark of salvation is always available during mankind’s week of seven millennial days. This interval also gave Noah time to complete his preparations.

“**And I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights**” — Forty is the number of probation; the number of trial ending in triumph for the righteous, and ruin for the wicked. Moses was forty days in the Mount (Exod. 24:18); the spies were forty days in the land (Num. 13:25); Israel was forty years in the wilderness (Num. 14:33); Elijah fasted for forty days in the wilderness of Beersheba

(1 Kings 19:8); Christ fasted forty days before the temptation (Matt. 4:2), and sojourned forty days on earth after his resurrection (Acts 1:3).

“**And every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth**” — The word is *machah* as in Ch. 6:7 (see note), not *shachath* as in Ch. 6:13, 17. Notice the marginal rendition. The word signifies to blot out, or wash off.

#### VERSE 5

“**And Noah did according unto all that the Lord commanded him**” — This was faith in action. It constituted his righteousness. Cp. v. 1; Rev. 19:18.

#### VERSE 6

“**And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth**” — Six is the number of man (Rev. 13:18). In the Apocalypse, the sixth seal (Rev. 6:12-17), sixth trumpet (Rev. 9:13-18), and sixth vial (Rev. 16:12-16), announce epochs of outstanding judgment which vitally changed the course of human history. The year of the Flood was also the year that Methuselah died (see note Gen. 5:27).

#### VERSE 7

“**And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons’ wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood**” — We are not told at what point of time Noah entered the ark except that it was before the Flood was sent. The reference to “seven days” in v. 10 relates to the “seven days” of v. 4. It was a period of great activity during which all that were to be saved from the Flood were gathered into the ark, followed by Noah and his family, at which time the door was closed.

#### VERSE 8

“**Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth**” — Gradation of beasts, birds and creeping things were taken into the ark, during the seven days appointed for this purpose. As the week came to its end the work was

completed.

### VERSE 9

**“There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah”**

— The orderly procession of animals into the ark was the result of Divine power. The lower creation could have been moved by a Divine impulse or instinct for preservation instilled in them in some mysterious way. The normal “enmity” of animal life was set aside in the face of the impending storm which they perhaps could sense.

**“Unto Noah”** — Typical of the future. It pointed forward to the way in which the nations will be drawn to Christ during the Millennium.

### Noah’s Log Of The Flood — vv. 10-24

*When all preparations had been completed, and Noah and his family had entered the ark, the storm broke, and there followed the most devastating catastrophe this world has ever experienced or ever will experience. The record is given in simple direct language; and reads like the logbook of a sea captain. Doubtless Noah recorded a chronological diary of what occurred.*

### VERSE 10

**“And it came to pass after seven days”** — The margin renders it literally: “on the seventh day”. Rotherham renders: “in the seven days”.

**“That the waters of the flood were upon the earth”** — Thus the beginning of the Flood was recorded in Noah’s logbook!

### VERSE 11

**“In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month”** — That year Methuselah died, which notable event warned that the time of judgment had come. He must have died but a few weeks before the Flood. Thus the world of the antediluvians learned that “the ages have been so thoroughly adjusted to God’s command” (see Heb. 11:3, *Diaglott*). What month was this? The ecclesiastical

year commenced with the Passover (Exod. 12:2), which is springtime in the Middle East; but the civil year commenced with the autumnal equinox in the month Tisri, corresponding to September/October. The second month would then be October/November, about the time when rains normally commence.

**“The same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up”** —

The Hebrew *tehom*, deep, is used both of the waters of the ocean (Isa. 51:10), and of the subterranean waters (Psa. 78:15). In Genesis 1:2, it is used of the waters that covered the earth originally. By “the word of God” earth had appeared above the waters, and life had been manifested thereon (2 Pet. 3:5). “He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap, He layeth up the depth in storehouses” (Psa. 33:7). The storehouses include the “waters under the earth” as well as those stored in the icy wastes of the south and north poles. Wherever they were — whether in the oceans, under the earth, or at the poles, — they were held in check by Divine laws (Jer. 5:22; Job 38:8-11). But now those laws were to be relaxed. The same “word of God” that had caused earth to appear and life to be manifested, proclaimed the decree that reversed the work of creation, causing the world to “overflow with water” and “perish” (2 Pet. 3:6). How was this brought about? The record suggests by great volcanic eruptions and seismic upheavals. This probably forced the seabeds up, and caused the land to subside. Huge tidal waves would then tear their way through the land, destroying everything in their path. Thus all the restraints originally imposed upon the oceans were relaxed to sweep away the ungodly creation. In like manner, earthquake and seismic upheavals will introduce the judgments that will precede the reign of Christ during the Millennium. They will be both literal (Isa. 2:20-22; Zech. 14:4-11) and political (Rev. 16:18) upheavals.

**“And the windows of heaven were opened”** — Hebrew: *larabboth*, the sluices or floodgates (see mg.). Literally it signifies “lattices”, or a window as being closed with lattice work instead of with

glass. The floodgates of heaven were opened, and torrential rain poured down.

#### VERSE 12

**“And the rain was upon the earth”** — The word *geshem* signifies “violent rain”. A different word (*matar*) is used in other places for rain (e.g. v. 4).

**“Forty days and forty nights”** — The torrential rain poured down continuously, to mingle its waters with the oceans that flowed over the depressed continents.

#### VERSE 13

**“In the selfsame day entered Noah and Shem, and Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah’s wife, and the three wives of his sons, with them, into the ark”** — The word *etsem* signifies “bone” of the day (Strong); that is, its strength, when the sun is at its greatest. It suggests the most public period of the day, when all would observe the action of Noah. Noah entered the ark in the public view of all his contemporaries — an action that was a witness against the world (Heb. 11:7). It is also significant that Noah and his family entered the ark seven days before the Flood. In the typical foreshadowings of Genesis this suggests two factors: (1) Noah and his family entering the ark typifies the whole work of God, which thus typically was “finished from the foundation of the world” (Heb. 4:3), for, “whom He (foreknew), them He also called” (Rom. 8:29; Eph. 1:4). (2) As Noah was called into the ark prior to the outpouring of Divine judgment upon a Godless age, so it will be at the coming of Christ: The saints will be withdrawn before the outpouring of national judgment at Armageddon (Isa. 26:20-21; 60:1-2; 1 Pet. 4:17).

#### VERSE 14

**“They, and every beast after his kind”** — Each individual species was represented.

#### VERSE 15

**“And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life”** — This was the only way they could be saved. In like

manner, the nations, must do likewise as far as Christ is concerned if they would be saved from the judgments of Armageddon and its aftermath (Isa. 60:12).

#### VERSE 16

**“And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him:”** — The Elohim conveyed the message of Yahweh to Noah, and the responsibility for the work was placed upon his shoulders. He had the job of organising this strange assembly so that all members of it would harmoniously dwell together in the ark. Similarly, the immortal saints will have the task of organising the nations in the Kingdom of God (Rev. 5:9-10; Luke 19:17).

**“Yahweh shut him in”** — In shutting the door, Yahweh not only protected those in the ark, but shut all others out. His discriminating omnipotence was demonstrated. The Psalmist declared (Psa. 29:10):

*“Yahweh sat enthroned at the Deluge:  
Yea, Yahweh sitteth King for the Age.”*

His work of judgment at the Flood is thus linked with His future exercise of authority when He will manifest Himself as “King over all the earth” (Zech. 14:9). The statement, “Yahweh shut him in,” is important from two viewpoints. Firstly, the action prevented a calamity that might have occurred if it had been left to Noah to close the door behind him; for, lacking the insight of Yahweh, he might have been moved by natural sympathy, and so allowed others of the ‘sons of God’ in the Ark who were best excluded. Secondly, it showed that the selection was a Divine one, and revealed the responsibility that rests upon those whom God calls. Once in the Ark, Noah’s company could not get out, even if they wished to. Once a person embraces Christ in the way appointed, he accepts a covenant which is irrevocable. He cannot escape the responsibilities of it, even if he wishes to. He will inevitably be brought to account at the Judgment Seat. Even knowledge of Yahweh’s will involves responsibility to perform it.

#### VERSE 17

**“And the flood was forty days upon the earth”** — Forty is the number of pro-

bation and judgment. In that regard, the waters remained until the judgment had accomplished the whole purpose of God in sending it. On a day for a year principle, a comparable period of time will be occupied at the second coming of the Lord, to reduce the world of flesh to the obedience required in Christ. (Cp. Micah 7:15-20).

**“And the waters increased, and bare up the ark”** — The very waters that destroyed those on the face of the earth, ensured the safety of those in the ark. Peter records: “Eight souls were saved by water” (1 Peter 3:20). The water saved them because it lifted them up above the destruction that swept the world. It was a means of salvation to them, because of the protection afforded them in the ark. The same principle also applies to our relationship to Christ through the waters of baptism. It is a token of death to “the body of sin,” that the individual might be raised to life (Rom. 6:4-6). The waters of the Flood washed the earth clean and preserved Noah and his family, as the waters of Baptism blot out past sins and enable believers to rise to a new way of life. Christ is thus a “savour of death unto death... and of life unto life” (2 Cor. 2:15-16). Referring to the Flood, Peter comments: “Eight souls were saved by water; the like figure, whereunto even baptism doth also now save us” (1 Pet. 3:20-21).

**“And it was lift up above the earth”** — So also was Christ, our ark of salvation. He declared: “Even so must the Son of man be lifted up” (John 3:14; 8:28). Christ’s offering was a public declaration of the righteousness of God; and so also was the ark of salvation, as it was lifted up high above the earth. Many saw the ark but were destroyed by the waters, as many later looked at the brazen serpent that Moses reared up, (Num. 21:8) but without faith they could not obtain the salvation offered.

#### VERSE 18

**“And the waters prevailed”** — The Hebrew *gabar* signifies to be strong, hence the *Gibborim* of Ch. 6:4. The Flood was a contest between the mighty men of the earth, and the Mighty One of the heavens; and the waters. His weapon, proved

stronger than they. Nothing could resist the terrible surge of the billows as they swept across the earth destroying all in their path.

**“And were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters”** — The waters became deeper and deeper, marked by the lifting up of the Ark, which triumphed above the waters of judgment.

#### VERSE 19

**“And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth”** — The language describes the incident as though it was a contest between the water and the earth. Gradually the hills and mountains were covered with water, and as they were submerged, the victory of Divine judgment was complete.

**“And all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered”** — The Flood was evidently universal in its extent (ct. Dan. 7:27), though the expressions of this verse do not necessarily teach this. What they do state is that the highest mountains within view of the spectator were covered; but if they included some of earth’s highest mountains, it is obvious that the whole earth was covered with water, and creation was turned back to its original state (Gen. 1:2). It seems that the contour of the earth as relating to the height of mountains, the extent of continents, and so forth, was different before the Flood than is the case today. For example, there is evidence of tremendous growth in the polar regions in antediluvian times, as well as on high mountains where, today, it cannot develop. Moreover, throughout the Globe there are evidences of past tremendous cataclysmic upheavals which could relate to the Flood. These had the effect, firstly, of bringing the water tearing across the face of the earth; and, afterwards of forcing the earth above the water as at creation. The height and depth of mountains and oceans probably were much greater after the Flood than before. Probably, before the Flood, mankind was congregated on one continent; whereas afterwards, new continents were formed. It is obvious, that at one time, vast areas of Australia were under water for a consider-

able period of time, and similar evidence has been found elsewhere.

**VERSE 20**

**"Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail"** — The waters prevailed to a depth of approximately 22 feet (6.7metres) above the highest mountain.

**"And the mountains were covered"** — Most likely, before the Flood, mountains were not as high as today so that a lesser volume of water would be required for the covering of all land masses.

**VERSE 21**

**"And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man"** — This excluded fish life, much of which remained unaffected by the Flood.

**VERSE 22**

**"And in whose nostrils was the breath of life"** — Or *neshemet ruach chayim*, "breath of spirit of lives"; the various forms of life are included: cattle, beast, fowl, creeping things.

**"Of all that was in the dry land, died"** — There was salvation only within

the ark. See Acts 4:12, for our Ark of salvation — Christ.

**VERSE 23**

**"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"** — Literally was "wiped out." Heb. *machah*, "wiped out" by washing (cp. Ch. 6:7).

**"And Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark"** — This will be the case, likewise, in the Age to come: Isa. 60:12.

**VERSE 24**

**"And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days"** — This period was inclusive of the forty days of rain (Ch. 7:11-12), and therefore comprised five lunar months of thirty days each. The rain commenced on the seventeenth day of the second month, and the Ark rested upon Ararat on the seventeenth day of the seventh month (Ch. 8:4). Thus, in Bible numerics the number 17 becomes the number of the saved ecclesia.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE END OF THE FLOOD: A NEW BEGINNING FOR MAN

*The severity of God is blended with His goodness, as He "remembers" Noah in the Ark and makes provision for a new beginning for man.*

**The Flood Recedes — vv. 1-5**

*Violence and corruption had brought destruction, but the remembrance of Noah's faithful witness ensured the manifestation of goodness from God. Thus mercy triumphed over judgment, as it does in every age (James 2:13).*

**VERSE 1**

**"And God remembered Noah"** — This statement is like a beam of light in a

dark and gloomy scene. It is infinitely comforting that at that epoch when God's name was vindicated in fearful judgment and destruction of those who had corrupted the earth, He recalled to mind those few in the Ark who had remained faithful to Him. The Hebrew *zakar* signifies "to mark so as to recognise," and thus to remember. Though as the sole survivors of a drowned world, Noah and his company must have felt very lonely as they looked out upon

the waste of mighty waters, they were very much in the considerations of God. God does not forget. Thus later, He told Noah He would remember His covenant in the Age to come (Gen. 9:15). In similar manner, He remembered Abraham's prayer and saved Lot (Gen. 19:29). He remembered Rachel's plea, and healed her barrenness (Gen. 30:22). He remembered His covenant and delivered Israel (Exod. 2:24). He will yet remember the covenant and the land and fulfil His promise (Lev. 26:42; Ezek. 16:60; Psa. 105:8, 42; 106:45). On the other hand, Israel was called "to remember" the Passover (Exod. 13:3); the Sabbath (Exod. 20:8); the Commandments (Num. 15:39-40); their national status before Yahweh (Deut. 5:15; 15:15; 16:3, 12); the Omnipotence of Yahweh (Deut. 7:18; 1 Chron. 16:12; Psa. 105:5); the types manifested in their history (Deut. 8:15,16); the Divine Name (Deut. 8:18; Psa. 20:7); their failures (Deut. 9:7); the Divine blessings (Deut. 32:1-7); the brevity of life (Psa. 89:47); the Creator in youth (Ecc. 12:1); the examples of the past (Isa. 46:9). Unfortunately they forgot (Jud. 8:34; Psa. 78:41). We, too, are encouraged to remember the goodness of Yahweh in calling us to the Truth (Eph. 2:11-14); and to recall the examples of the past (1 Cor. 10:11). In his prayers, Nehemiah constantly included a plea that Yahweh should remember him for what he had done (Neh. 13:14, 22, 29, 31). See also Psa. 25:6-7; 74:2, 18, 22).

The term, "God remembered," is used relatively. In the real sense, Yahweh does not forget, but He does "mark" for attention those who are deserving of it. God is said to "remember" when He takes action. Thus He is said to "remember" men's sins when He punishes them (Psa. 25:7); and His people's needs when He supplies them (Neh. 5:19). So now, as He was about to move to reverse the effect of the Flood, the record states that He "remembered" Noah.

**"And every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark"** — Paul asked the question, when quoting the provision of the Law for the kindly treatment of oxen, "Doth God take care (only

of oxen? Or saith He it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt" (1 Cor. 9:9-10). Thus the oxen were used typically for man. That was the case in the time of Noah when God "remembered all the cattle." The living cargo in the ark was called to mind, as, in the Judgment of the last day, the nations will be cared for (see Isa. 60:12; Zech. 14:16). See further note in Ch. 9:12.

**"And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged"** — This strong, drying wind hastened the work of evaporation. The word is *ruach*, spirit. Originally, when water covered the earth, "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:2) to effect the work of Creation. Now, again, the Spirit was used to repair the ravages of the Flood.

## VERSE 2

**"The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained"** — The tremendous convulsions of nature ceased (see Ch. 7:11), and the earth commenced to return to normal. Similar convulsions of nature will be manifested at Christ's return (Zech. 14:4; Isa. 2:21).

## VERSE 3

**"And the waters returned from off the earth continually"** — The margin supplies the literal Hebrew: "going and returning." Convulsions of nature had driven the waters hither and thither, but now the steady action of the wind in driving the water from off the elevated ground, and the lessening of volcanic action and earthquake, brought a state of comparative calm to the previously surging waters. The Hebrew implies that originally huge tidal waves had swept the earth, but now they commenced to gradually settle. Meanwhile, the Ark had to battle with the waves of judgment — as does our Ark of shelter.

**"And after the end of the hundred and fifty days"** — Comprising five lunar months of thirty days each. See note Ch. 7:24.

**"The waters were abated"** — The

## Personalities Of The Old Testament

### Abram, Abraham: The Friend of God

The name of this great man is related to the Hebrew word for "father", which is *Ab*. Abram means *Exalted Father*, and Abraham, *Father Of A Multitude*. Abram's name was changed to Abraham when the promise of a multitudinous seed was renewed to him by God (Gen. 17:5,9). He is one of the greatest men of the Bible, one whose outstanding faith is set forth as an example for all those who should follow in his footsteps (Rom. 4:18-25). He is described as the "father of the faithful" both Jew and Gentile (Rom. 4:11), and the "Friend of God" (James 2:23). His biography describes him as being "called", and "chosen", and "faithful", and, significantly, that is also the character of his spiritual Seed (Gal. 3:26-29), the approved who will be with Christ in the Age to come. They too, are "called and chosen and faithful" (Rev. 17:14).

He was called from the great and populous city of Ur (Gen. 11:28), and from its pagan worship in which he once participated (Josh. 24:2-3). Moving northwards from thence to Haran (*Enlightened*), he was again called upon to take a southern route, passing over the Euphrates into the land of Promise (Gen. 12:1). Great and precious promises were made to him conditional upon him being obedient to the call; and those important promises form the basis of the Gospel message (Gen. 12:2-3; Gal. 3:8). Having passed over the Euphrates into the land of Promise, and by obedience to the Divine call, passing over from a way of death to a way of life, he received the name of "Abram the Hebrew" (the *Crosser over*; Gen. 14:13), and so became the first Hebrew.

He remained a stranger and a pilgrim in the land of Promise until the day of his death (Heb. 11:8-16), for "the Canaanite was then in the land" (Gen. 12:6). He built an altar at Shechem where he was given a revelation from God, and was promised that his seed would inherit the land (ch. 12:7), and again at Bethel (ch. 13:15-17).

Famine drove him into Egypt, and in the face of the wickedness of the land, and the possible threat of violent opposition, he manifested a temporary weakness. However, such incidents in the lives of great men remind us that they were human, and that the divine account of their lives is factual.

God blessed Abram with great riches; and blessed Lot, Abram's nephew also, with similar wealth. This led to a disagreement, and Lot left his uncle for the luxurious and comfortable plains of Sodom and Gomorrah. But the cities of the plain were attacked by Chedorlaomer, the powerful king of the north, and Lot was taken captive; to be rescued by Abram and his company of faithful retainers. Abram was a man of courage as well as a man of faith.

His faith stemmed from his belief. When God told the childless Abram that his progeny would be as numerous as the stars of heaven, the record states that "he believed ... and... He counted it to him for righteousness" (Gen. 15:6). Paul adds to the statement by declaring: "Without being weakened in faith he considered his own body now as good as dead" (Rom. 4:19, R.V.), as well as the "deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God" (v. 20).



He married Hagar at the instigation of Sarai in order that they "may obtain children by her". This was not an evidence of weakness of faith, but a use of natural means to accomplish the Divine purpose. Nevertheless it was not God's way. The promised seed would come through Sarai, and in order to impress that fact, Abram was told that his name would be changed to Abraham, and Sarai's name would be changed to Sarah.

The promised son was born when Abraham was one hundred years old (Gen. 17:17), and Sarah was ninety. Isaac replaced Ishmael, the son of Hagar, in the camp of Abraham, and on him the patriarch placed all his hopes for the future. This provided the background to the greatest test placed on Abraham: the proposed sacrifice of his son. Abraham did not flinch from the trial. He implicitly believed God, and therefore realised that if he offered up his son, he would be restored to him, as through a resurrection (Heb. 11:17-19). On this evidence of his outstanding faith and obedience to the Divine command, the promises were renewed to Abraham unconditionally, confirmed by an oath (Gen. 22:15-18).

He carefully supervised the upbringing of Isaac, as he did of all his children (Gen. 18:19), making special preparations to obtain for him a bride (Gen. 24). He separated him from the rest of the family, and gave unto him the major portion of his possessions (Gen. 25:5-6).

In addition to Ishmael and Isaac, the sons of Hagar and Sarah, Abraham had children by Keturah, another wife, whom he married earlier probably about the time he married Hagar (Gen. 25:1-4). In a typical sense, through her, he became a father of many nations, for her children later developed into nations. Sarah died at the age of 127 years, and Abraham purchased the cave of Machpelah as a burying place (Gen. 23). Abraham died at the age of 175 years, and was also buried there (Gen. 25:7).

His life reveals characteristics that his children should emulate (see John 8:39). He believed; even when the evidence indicated that what was promised was impossible (see Rom. 4:18). He obeyed; even though he knew not what was before him (see Heb. 11:8). He was a man of vision; he looked for that which he could not then see (see Heb. 11:10). He was a man of patience; he waited for God to act (see Gen. 17:17). He was a man of courage; he did not shrink from moving to the aid of Lot though warfare stalked the land (Gen. 14). He was a man of prayer; he pleaded the cause of Lot, and was granted his petition (Gen. 19:29). He was a man of sacrifice; he not only sacrificed animals unto God, but was prepared to give part of himself, even his "only" beloved son (Gen. 22). He lost nothing by his readiness to perform the Divine will, and gained much.

Abraham also manifested weakness on occasions, but this merely shows that perfection is of God alone. Because he was human he provides a true example to his spiritual seed. He pleased God despite his weaknesses, and thus reveals that we can please God in spite of failings. In Abraham faith is seen to be perfected by action, as James teaches (James 2:20-24), and we are encouraged to walk the same pathway to the Kingdom that he so faithfully trod. The influence of Abraham is impressed upon the Scriptures in both the Old and New Testaments, and the day is coming when the whole world will be forced to recognise how truly great is this pioneer of the Faith (Luke 13:28).

Hebrew word *chacer* signifies to *lack, fail, lessen*. Rotherham renders it "decreased." The flood of water began to recede.

#### VERSE 4

**"And the Ark rested"** — The Ark apparently drew 15 cubits of water, for the water was 15 cubits above the highest peak (Ch. 7:20). As the Ark was 30 cubits in depth (Ch. 6:15), it evidently drew half its height.

**"In the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month"** — The repetition of "seven" is interesting, for Noah now saw signs that God would act in accordance with His covenant. The order of the months of the year was later changed (Exod. 12:2), and the seventh month became the first month, or Abib: the month in which the Passover was celebrated. On that basis, it was at the conclusion of this day (Matt. 28:1) that Christ rose from the dead. Under the Law a sheaf of the harvest was waved (Lev. 23:10-11), indicating Israel's dedication of its strength to serving Yahweh.

**"Upon the mountains of Ararat"** — Ararat (a Chaldean word) signifies *The trembling light, or The mount (English and Hebrew Concordance)*. Ararat is a high mountain range in Armenia (Turkey), noted for its harsh, lofty, inaccessible peaks. The two tallest, about 11kms (7 miles) apart, are respectively fourteen thousand and ten thousand three hundred feet in height. The higher peak, called by the Persians *Kuhi-Nuh*, or *The Mountain of Moses* is perpetually topped with snow. Prior to the Flood, most likely the extremes of height and depth today in evidence upon the earth, did not then exist, for there are evidences of lush growth on some high mountains such as is not possible now. Possibly these high peaks were projected to their present elevations by seismic upheavals during the Flood, and the deep basins formed, helping to drain the water back from the earth.

It is impossible to identify the spot upon the mountain range where the Ark rested, and it does not necessarily follow that it was on one of its many peaks. What happened to it, or whether it is still in exist-

tence, is a matter of conjecture. There are some who claim that they have seen the ruins of the Ark on the slopes of Ararat. Others have conducted expeditions in attempts to discover them, but without success. An interesting summary of all such efforts to date is recorded in the book: *The Search For Noah's Ark*.

#### VERSE 5

**"And the waters decreased continually"** — The literal Hebrew, as recorded in the margin, suggests that the waves became smaller as the waters poured back into the ocean beds, and the wind lessened in its velocity (cp. v.1).

**"Until the tenth month"** — Some two and a half months after the Ark had rested.

**"In the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen"** — This provided further evidence of Divine mercy to Noah. There were several such pieces of evidence. The first was the resting of the Ark on the unseen mountain, as we rest upon the unseen Rock of Christ (Heb. 6:19-20; 11:1); the second was the appearance of the tops of the mountains, typifying the visible evidence of fulfilling Bible prophecy; the action of the dove gave further pledges, and all these culminated in the sight of Noah's eyes when he removed the covering of the Ark and looked out.

#### The Message Of The Birds — vv. 6-12.

*As the tops of mountains became visible, and the Ark grounded upon Ararat, Noah sent forth a raven and a dove, to ascertain from their behaviour, the condition of things on the earth. The dove returned to the Ark for it found no rest for its feet on the water-soaked, swampy soil. Seven days later, Noah sent forth the dove again. This time it returned with an olive leaf, bringing a message of goodwill to Noah. A further seven days, and it was sent out the third time, and on this occasion, it did not return.*

#### VERSE 6

**"And it came to pass at the end of forty days"** — Forty is the number of

probation. See note, Gen. 7:4.

**“That Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made”** — Heb. *challon*, a small aperture, and not the skylight *tsohar*, an opening for light, mentioned in Gen. 6:16. The former was a section of the latter that could be removed when required, as Noah did now.

#### VERSE 7

**“And he sent forth a raven”** — The Hebrew word is *oreb*, dusky, referring to the black colour of the raven, and black is the colour of sin. As an unclean bird (Lev. 11:15), the raven represented “sinners of the Gentiles” (Gal. 2:15). Yahweh made use of ravens to feed Elijah (1 Kings 17:4), as he used Gentiles for the benefit of saints. The Psalmist declares that “the wicked are His sword” to that end (see Psa. 17:13-14; Isa. 10:5; 2 Cor. 4:15). Though typical of sinners, the raven is cared for by God (Luke 12:24), Who showers His good gifts upon good and evil alike (Matt. 5:45).

**“Which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth”** — The margin expresses the literal Hebrew as “going forth and returning.” The raven came constantly back to the Ark, making it its base and refuge. It perched upon it, but was not admitted — typifying the sinner. However, its action represented the pledge to Noah of God’s Promise to him.

#### VERSE 8

**“Also he sent forth a dove from him”** — The Hebrew word for “dove” is *Yonah* found in the name, *Jonah*. Jesus, at his baptism, was anointed with the Holy Spirit which appeared in the form of a dove (Matt. 3:16), the “sign” of which rested upon him (Luke 11:29-32). The dove was considered a “clean bird; and was offered in sacrifice (Lev. 1:14). It was the offering of poverty for a sin offering or a burnt offering; and was offered with a lamb at childbirth (Lev. 12:6); though, in the case of extreme poverty, another bird was offered instead of the lamb (v. 8; Luke 2:24). It was also used in the cleansing of the leper (Lev. 14:4, 22). Though consid-

ered a “clean” bird, the dove was never eaten by the Jews, but reserved by them for sacrificial purposes. It symbolised harmlessness (Matt. 10:16), and, therefore, in sacrifice, set forth the principles of innocence and perfection in character. But the dove also can act foolishly, like sheep (Hos. 7:11; Isa. 53:6), and, therefore, represented the lamb among bird life. In the *Song of Solomon* it is frequently used to symbolise the multitudinous Christ (Song 1:15; 2:14; 4:1; 5:2; 6:9). In the symbology and drama of the Ark, the dove represents the righteous.

**“To see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground”** — The dove will settle only on those places that are dry and clean.

#### VERSE 9

**“But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot”** — The earth was still swampy and wet, and therefore unfit for a clean bird such as the dove. Consequently, it flew over the stormy waters of the flood finding no rest. Its condition was much like that of saints today who find no “rest” in the present state, for “the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked” (Isa. 57:20-21).

**“And she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth”** — Under those conditions, the Ark provided the only refuge of rest. That is true of the Bride of Christ today.

**“Then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark”** — In this act of mercy Noah typified Christ, who would draw his Bride into the refuge that he provides in the Ark of salvation. Noah extended more grace to the dove than he did to the raven, which he left to its own resources.

The words of the Psalmist are appropriate to his action:

*“Yahweh preserveth the simple (the innocent, the sincere);*

*I was brought low, and he helped me.*

*Return unto thy rest, O my soul;*

*For Yahweh hath dealt bountifully*

with thee" (Psa. 116:6,7).

#### VERSE 10

**"And he stayed yet other seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark"** — The covenant period is again mentioned.

#### VERSE 11

**"And the dove came in to him in the evening"** — God appointed the evening to commence the complete day-period (Gen. 1:5), and this is continued in Jewish calculations, the day beginning at sunset (Matt. 28:1). Thus, the period stated indicated the commencement of a new epoch and points forward to the new era when restoration will come to the flood-ravaged world of Gentile times by the work of Christ and the saints.

**"And, lo, in her mouth"** — The exclamation *lo* suggests that it was with rising excitement that Noah viewed the olive leaf carried by the dove. It was an assurance of judgment past and of fruitfulness in the earth. The leaf "in the mouth" suggests the work of the ecclesia in bringing the message of salvation to those who would be saved.

**"Was an olive leaf pluckt off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth"** — The olive, like the dove, is a symbol of peace. Also like the dove, it is a symbol of Israel (Hos. 14:6), though the wild olive is also representative of the Gentiles (Rom. 11:17). In the type of the dove bearing the olive leaf to the Ark "in the evening," there is foreshadowed the bringing of the true Israel of God (Gal. 6:16), from out of all nations, in peace to the Christ-Ark (Eph. 2:11-14), at the evening time or beginning of the New Day (Mal. 4:1-2).

#### VERSE 12

**"And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more"** — She went forth to her inheritance.

#### A Cleansed World — vv. 13-19

*On the first day of the new year (being the six hundredth and first year of Noah's life), the waters had receded from off the*

*earth, and Noah removed the covering of the Ark. However, he did not allow anybody to leave the Ark until after a further 56 days had elapsed, and the ground was completely dried out. There is a difference in the Hebrew verbs contained in vv. 13-14 expressive of this. In v. 13, the word "was dry" is "charebu"; in v. 14, it is "yabeshah," and signifies a more complete drying. In the typical foreshadowing of Genesis we perceive the application to the future. After the resurrection, the judgment on the nations must run its course, until the earth is fully prepared for the redeemed inhabitants. Then, as in Noah's day, the words of Psalm 103:9 will be fully appreciated: "He will not always chide, neither will He keep His anger for ever."*

#### VERSE 13

**"And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month the waters were dried up from off the earth:"** — This commenced both a new year, and a new beginning for humanity. Under the Mosaic Law special ceremonies marked the beginning of the new year, designed to bring home to Israelites their spiritual obligations. Other important events have synchronised with the beginning of the year, marking a new beginning for Israel. The setting up of the Tabernacle (Exod. 40:2); the sanctification of the Temple by Hezekiah (2 Chron. 29:17); the beginning of Ezra's pilgrimage to Jerusalem from Babylon (Ezra 7:9); the giving up of their foreign wives by faithful and repentant Jews to commence life anew (Ezra 10:17) all took place on a new year's day. Finally, the sanctification of the Temple of the Age to come is set down for such a time, and will mark a new beginning in Divine worship (Ezek. 45:18).

**"And Noah removed the covering"** — Those in the Ark had been shut in. There had been no opportunity for them to get out, nor to properly view the condition of the world. So their eyes had been mercifully closed to much of the suffering that had taken place when the Flood overwhelmed humanity. But now the time had come for the covering to be removed, and

all to be revealed; when faith was to be exchanged for sight. The covering will be removed for saints when Christ makes his appearance in the earth, and they, too, will find faith replaced with sight. In due course "the face of the covering cast over all people" will be removed, and the truth in Christ Jesus will be completely revealed (Isa. 25:7). All doubts and confusion will cease, and his own people "shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). The full extent, and real benefit, of Yahweh's goodness and severity (Rom. 11:22) will then be manifested, and Isaiah's words will be vindicated: "When ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb; and the hand of Yahweh shall be known toward His servants, and His indignation toward His enemies" (Isa. 66:14).

**"And looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry"** — The Hebrew verb *charebu* is used in contrast to *yabeshah* in the following verse. As yet, only the surface, "the face of the ground," was dry, and Noah had to wait a further period before descending from the Ark. In like manner, at Christ's return, the saints must await the final preparations before entering into full possession of the inheritance that awaits them. Isaiah declares: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee, hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast" (Isa. 26:20). Meanwhile, in Noah's day, the earth remained moist and swampy.

#### VERSE 14

**"And in the second month on the seven and twentieth day of the month"** — This was one year and ten days. Cp. with ch. 7:11. Allowing thirty days to a month in a lunar year, the number of days totals 370. However, it is claimed that every alternate month in the Jewish calendar is limited to 29 days, making this period approximately 365 days, or a solar year. But were the Jewish months so treated originally? It does not appear as though they were, for the 150 days of vv. 3-4 are treated as five months (cp. with Ch. 7:11).

**"Was the earth dried"** — Hebrew: *yabeshah*; it was completely dried out.

#### VERSE 15

**"And God spake unto Noah, saying"** — He constantly informed Noah as to His intentions (Amos 3:7), and gave him commandments as to what he should do. See Ch. 6:3, 13; 7:2, 5; 8:1; 9:16. In the salvation of Noah and his family, God took the initiative, and kept Noah apprised of His intentions. Thus, in anger He did not overlook mercy. This is ever the case, for the work of salvation is His (2 Cor. 5:19). The sacrifice of Christ was not to appease a wrathful, vengeful God, but to draw "whosoever will" unto a loving and merciful heavenly Father.

#### VERSE 16

**"Go forth of the Ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee"** — The time had come for the narrow confines of the Ark to be exchanged for the freedom of the cleansed world. Two related commands were given: "Go forth!" and "Bring forth!" (v. 17). It marked a new beginning in relationship with God and His purpose, such as now is established at baptism, and foreshadowing that which will be more completely manifested at the commencement of the Millennium.

#### VERSE 17

**"Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth:"** — Noah and his family were commanded to act the part of shepherds to the living creatures in the Ark, inducting them into their new life and inheritance. So, in the future, the family of Christ will lead those mortals who escape the judgments of Armageddon, into a new life under new conditions.

**"That they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth"** — This had been restrained in the Ark; but now the time had come for the lower creatures to produce new life to the glory of their Creator. The antitype will be found in the spiritual life that will be developed in mortals during the Millennium (Isa. 65:19-23).

**VERSE 18**

**“And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons’ wives with him:”** — Obedience to the Divine commands is required: “come” (7:1); and now “go forth” (see v. 16).

**VERSE 19**

**“Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark”** — The Hebrew word, as shown in the margin, signifies “families”. They went forth in families. Family life is the basis of Yahweh’s dealings with mankind now (Eph. 6:1-3), and will continue to be so in the Kingdom (Mic. 4:4; Zech. 12:12; Psa. 68:6; Matt. 19:29). When the family unit is broken down, as at the present, humanity suffers as a whole. The family principle is even incorporated into Yahweh’s dealings with man. By baptism we are inducted into the family of Christ, and can address Yahweh as “our Father which art in heaven.”

**The Divine Promise To Noah**  
— vv. 20-22

*Stepping down from the Ark, Noah first directed his thoughts and actions Godward. He built an altar and sacrificed some of the clean animals and birds upon it. His action pleased Yahweh, and He responded with a promise of mercy and blessing.*

**VERSE 20**

**“And Noah builded an altar unto Yahweh”** — This is the first reference to an altar in the Bible, though obviously, it was not the first one set up. The Hebrew is *mizbeach* from *zabach*, to slaughter an animal in sacrifice. Moses was instructed that altars were to be set up only at places where Yahweh recorded His Name (Exod. 20:24), that is, where He manifested His power, and that they were to be built of “unhewn stone”. They pointed forward to Christ “our altar” (Heb. 13:10) through whom, all offerings should be made to God. Though Jesus was of our nature (stone), his character was Divine (John 1:14), and therefore he was fittingly repre-

sented by “unhewn stone”, or stone shaped by the hand of Yahweh. Concerning the stones of altars, the instruction was given that “if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it” (Exod. 20:25). In other words, mere human nature in its own power cannot manifest the Divine likeness but must be sacrificed to that end. An altar, therefore, represented Yahweh in sacrificial manifestation; and found its fulfillment in Christ Jesus. Every altar referred to in the Bible has a typical significance unique to itself, pointing forward to the work of God in Christ. Noah’s altar of peace was no exception to this general rule.

**“And took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl”** — These pointed forward to the offering of Christ. He was the antitypical priest, altar and sacrifice, and, as sinless before Yahweh alone among men, was fit to fulfil the type of the offerings. He was the lamb of God “without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet. 1:19).

**“And offered burnt offerings upon the altar”** — The references to clean and unclean animals, to altars, and to offerings and sacrifices, strongly suggest that there was a formal system of religion in vogue, which was doubtless handed down from the days of Eden onwards. No doubt this would not have differed much, if at all, from the Mosaic system even though the divine requirements had not been legislated beforehand so far as we are aware (Rom. 5:14). Hence, the burnt offerings that Noah offered required (1) the slaying of the sacrificial animal; (2) the dismemberment of its parts; (3) the meticulous washing of them in water; (4) the careful and orderly placing of them upon the altar, in order that the fire might easily penetrate; (5) the entire consumption of it into the ascending smoke (Lev. 1:1-17).

An animal sacrifice was representative of the offerer, who was taught to see himself in its symbolism. Hence Christ, as the perfect offering, is representative of those “in him”. He put self to death; he was clean in character; he was consumed with fiery zeal for Yahweh; he gave his head, and members (intellect, work and walk) to

his Father; he was entirely consumed by the Spirit Word, and attained unto Spirit nature. Those "in him" should manifest the same characteristics, if they claim him as their representative. A burnt offering was killed, cleansed and consumed, pointing forward to what Yahweh required in those who would come nigh unto Him. Thus, Noah's altar and offerings were prophetic of what Yahweh would accomplish in the promised Redeemer (Gen. 3:15), through whom would come peace (John 14:27). In this worship, Noah expressed his faith and confidence in the Divine purpose to provide the seed of the woman to that end.

#### VERSE 21

**"And Yahweh smelled a sweet savour"** — The Hebrew *ruach hannichoah* (see margin) signifies a "savour of rest", and is derived from Noah's name, *nihohah*. The faithfulness exhibited by Noah pleased God and gave rest to His Spirit which previously had striven with man (Gen. 6:3). It was honouring to Yahweh, and upheld His righteousness in the judgment of the Flood with its repudiation of the wickedness of sin's flesh. In presenting a burnt offering, the offerer acknowledged the weakness of flesh — for the animal was slain, confession was made, and the blood as a symbol of a life

dedicated was offered on the altar. The offerer, therefore, ritually acknowledged his desire to serve Yahweh to the fullest extent of his being. Head (intellect), fat (strength), flesh (being) were placed in order upon the altar (Lev. 1:8-9), and pledged to God in a spirit of total dedication to His service (Deut. 6:5). All were consumed by the Divine fire (Lev. 9:24), and ascended as a sweet savour to Yahweh (Lev. 1:9). It thus expressed submission to Yahweh's will. The word "burnt" *olah*, signifies *that which ascends*, and expressed the offerer's desire to "set his affection on things above" (Col. 3:2; cp. 2 Chron. 7:1; Psa. 20:1-3 mg.). It was the expression of these principles in the offering that caused Yahweh to "smell a sweet savour." The fulfilment of this is seen in Christ, our pattern. Thus: "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour" (Eph. 5:2). As he is our pattern, we can share in his offering. Thus: "The things... sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God" (Phil. 4:18).

**"And Yahweh said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake"** — The Hebrew *lo yesaph* is derived from the root *yasaph*, to add or augment (Strong), and may be ren-

### "The Longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah"

So declares Peter (see 1 Pet. 3:20). It waited that eight souls might be saved, and the Ark's cargo redeemed. Did this "longsuffering" bear any fruit? Certainly it did. It is a common mistake to assume that Noah, with his sons, was building the Ark for 120 years; but it is not so. In fact, Shem was not born when Yahweh pronounced that man's days "shall be an hundred and twenty years" (Gen. 6:3); for the record states that he had a son born to him when he was one hundred years old, which was two years after the Flood (Gen. 11:10). Shem was ninety-seven years old when he entered the Ark, for the Flood lasted over one year. If "the longsuffering of God had not waited" for 120 years, the wives and the posterity such as Shem, would have been denied the salvation they ultimately obtained. If Yahweh was prepared to manifest such patient waiting to secure the salvation of a few, should not we manifest patience in the preaching of the Word? Moreover, when the faithful posterity of those sons of Noah are considered, how great was the salvation effected through a few; and how wise was Yahweh to restrain His just punishment. In view of all that, how significant is the statement of Genesis 8:18, "And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him."

## Archaeological Records of the Flood

The oldest version of the Flood at present extant is the Sumerian record of a Cuneiform tablet from ancient Nippur in Babylonia, dated before the days of Moses in the second Millennium B.C The flood hero is named Ziusundra, a king-priest. He is shown receiving a communication from the gods, following which the storm breaks, but he is saved by riding in a huge boat. The record states:

*"When for seven days and seven nights  
The flood had raged over the land  
And the huge boat had been tossed on the great waters by the storms,  
The sun god arose shedding light in heaven and on earth.  
Ziusundra made an opening in the side of the great ship.  
Before the sun god he bowed his face to the ground.  
The king slaughtered an ox, sheep he sacrificed in great numbers."*

Further tablets telling the story of the Flood were unearthed at ancient Nineveh in 1853. In language very similar to that of Genesis, Utnapishtim, *Day of Life* reveals to Gilgamesh, how he came to be saved from the Flood that destroyed mankind, and afterwards to attain to immortality.

Utnapishtim surveys the desolate scene of a drowned world:

*"I looked at the weather: stillness had set in,  
And all mankind had turned to clay.  
The landscape was as level as a flat roof.  
I opened a hatch, and light fell upon my face.  
Bowing low, I sat and wept,  
Tears running down my face."*

He describes how he sent forth a swallow and a raven to ascertain existing conditions; and how, afterwards, he offered up sacrifice to the gods.

There are similarities to the Bible record in these accounts contained in *Light From the Ancient Past*, but also striking differences from it. They reveal a common origin: The fact of the Flood itself. The Sumerian and Babylonian records are the distorted accounts of man; the Bible account is the inspired narrative given to Moses, by Yahweh.



*The ark and flood as portrayed in ancient Babylonian records.*



dered: "I will not add to curse the earth." Although the circumstances that led to the Flood demonstrated that "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth," the action of Noah so pleased Yahweh, that He made the declaration that He would not add to the curse that had been imposed at the beginning (Gen. 3:17).

**"For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth"** — In the beginning God pronounced man "very good" (Gen. 1:31); but sin had brought a change in the condition of his original nature. Man was not only subject to death, but prone to evil, as God here states. See also Psa. 58:3; Prov. 20:9; Ecc. 7:20; Jer. 10:23; 17:9; Rom. 3:20.

**"Neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done"** — The concluding clause qualifies the earlier statement. God will never again smite all living with a flood; though He will purge it with fire (2 Pet. 3). In Isaiah 54:9, Yahweh recalls this promise when proclaiming the mercy He will show towards Israel in the future.

#### VERSE 22

**"While the earth remaineth" —**

This is for ever: Ecc. 1:4; Psa. 148:6; Isa. 45:18. The literal Hebrew is: "as yet all the days of the earth."

**"Seedtime and harvest"** — This first division of the year calls for the co-operation of man. If he does not sow, he will not reap. This applies literally and spiritually. Man is appointed to activity on the earth (Gen. 3:19). This will continue on into the Millennium when the saints will enjoy harmonious co-operation in labour with Yahweh; and even beyond it when they will continue to work, though their functions are not outlined. We recall, however, that the Elohim declared of our creation: "Let us make man." We may yet follow their example.

**"And cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease"** — This second division represents Yahweh's co-operation with man, brought about by the revolution of the earth, and the functions of the heavenly bodies. This statement to Noah comprises portion of Yahweh's "covenant with day and night" upon which His covenants of promise are based. See Jer. 31:35; 33:24-26. The seasons are a manifestation of Yahweh's merciful interest in humanity.

## CHAPTER NINE

### SIN IN THE FLESH SURVIVES THE JUDGMENT OF THE FLOOD

*The sweet savour of Noah's offering was followed by a Divine covenant of promise confirmed with the patriarch. A new beginning was made on the regenerated earth, but it was followed by a new departure from the ways of righteousness.*

#### The New Order — vv. 1-7

*Renewed instructions were given to Noah and his family, and universal laws were established for the general good of humanity.*

#### VERSE 1

**"And God blessed Noah and his sons"** — Fellowship with God had been established by Noah's righteousness.

#### **"And said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth"**

— The blessing of fruitfulness, conferred on Adam (Gen. 1:28) now is reaffirmed to Noah, the federal head of a renewed world. However, there is a significant omission. The decree, "Have thou dominion" (Gen. 1:28) is not included. World dominion, originally assigned by God to man, had been forfeited by sin, and await-

ed the appearance of the ideal Son of God, completely "in His image and likeness", before it could be conferred. See Eph. 1:22; Heb. 2:8-9.

## VERSE 2

**"And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea;"** —

There had been perfect harmony before sin had created fear (Gen. 3:10; Rom. 8:19-23). Fear of man is inherent in the fiercest beasts of prey, brought about by man's use of his superior intellect. Without this fear, mankind would have been destroyed by the fierce beasts of prey.

**"Into your hand are they delivered"**

— Man has the ability to tame and to use many of the beasts of the field (Jas. 3:7). Moreover, into the hands of the saints has been delivered the task of taming savage humanity by the power of the Word.

## VERSE 3

**"Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you"** — See notes on Gen. 1:29. As animals were slain for sacrifice before the Flood, it can be assumed that meat was an article of diet during that period. However, inasmuch as animals were separated into clean and unclean categories (Gen. 7:2), it is obvious that some were prescribed for food. At that time, humanity also was divided into categories: the seed of the woman, and the seed of Cain; and therefore a separation of animals for diet reminded man of the need of separation from evil association. But now only the family of Noah remained, and the distinction was no longer necessary. Therefore an extension of diet was granted. The separation of animals into clean and unclean categories has a doctrinal, and therefore spiritual, significance, for as Paul observes, "there is nothing unclean of itself" (Rom. 14:14). What is the spiritual significance attached to this Noahic decree? From Acts 10:12-16, we learn that the killing and eating of meats typified the preaching of the Gospel. In that regard, Peter was told that the distinction that pre-

viously prevailed no longer applied: "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common". The preaching of the Gospel was to be extended to all, irrespective as to race. That, also, was the state of things after the Flood. All in the Ark, though previously divided into clean and unclean categories, had now been cleansed in preparation for the Noahic covenant Yahweh was about to proclaim. All were to be incorporated into the benefits of the Gospel about to be preached. In fulfillment of the type, all peoples that remain after the holocaust of Armageddon and its aftermath, will be cleansed and incorporated into the Kingdom (Psa. 72:17). Because all in the Ark were invited to the benefits of the covenant about to be proclaimed, all animals were considered suitable for food, and Noah was invited to select what he desired to that end. Similarly, since the Gospel was opened up to the Gentiles, the same provision has been made (See 1 Tim. 4:3-5; Rom. 14:3,14,17,20; 1 Cor. 10:23, 25,26,31); for the separation of race, between Jew and Gentile, does not apply as far as the preaching of the Gospel is concerned. It can be seen, therefore, that there was no inconsistency in granting all animals for food to Noah, and forbidding some to Moses. The conditions of the Gospel call had changed. In the days of Moses, all flesh had corrupted Yahweh's way, and He had again separated a nation (Israel) unto Himself. Therefore, the racial distinction between clean and unclean had been established again, and was incorporated as a salutary lesson in the separation of animals into clean and unclean categories.

**"Even as the green herb have I given you all things"** — A reference to Gen. 1:29. Man had been given a vegetarian diet before the Fall; afterwards it had been broadened to include "clean animals" indicative of the Sethites; to Noah it was extended to incorporate all animals that remained in the Ark. The legislation regarding meats, however, was doctrinal, not dietetical, in its import.

## VERSE 4

**"But flesh with the life thereof,**

**which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat**” — In Hebrew, “life” is *nephesh*, frequently rendered “soul”. See also Lev. 17:11. The statement of this verse is literally true, for the bloodstream is the bearer of life throughout the body: a teaching of the Bible which science has confirmed. Blood was prohibited as an article of diet because it represented the life of the body which should be given up to God exclusively, as it is by self-sacrifice.

In the vision seen by Peter on the housetop (Acts 10), he learned that the division of mankind between clean and unclean categories had been cancelled, insofar that Gentiles were to be invited into the Hope of Israel. Peter was taught that the preaching of the Gospel was comparable with the killing and eating of meat. The flesh is put to death and consumed by the Gospel; but the life must be dedicated unto Yahweh. The memorial bread of communion represents the body put to death; the wine represents the life given in active service unto God. Paul declared: “without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. 9:22). Whilst we are dependent upon the blood of Jesus Christ to act as an atonement, for the forgiveness of sins, Paul’s words are expressive of the fact that unless we give our lives in active service unto God, forgiveness of sins will not be granted unto us. We must do something ourselves, whilst remaining dependent upon the offering of the Lord.

The eating of blood was prohibited under the Law (Lev. 3:17; 7:26-27; 17:10-14). In the killing of animals it was disposed of in different ways. Whereas the blood of a sacrifice was smeared on the altar, typifying a life given unto Yahweh (Lev. 17:11), the blood of animals slain to sustain the life of the flesh was to be poured out on the ground and covered with earth (v. 13). In these actions, the Israelite recognised his duty to God. In pouring out upon the ground the blood of animals slain for eating, the Israelite acknowledged his dependence upon Yahweh for life’s needs, so that the action was equivalent to giving thanks for the good things of this life. In pouring upon the altar the blood of animals slain for sacri-

fice, the offerer acknowledged his debt to God for spiritual benefits, and both ritually, and publicly, proclaimed his responsibility to give his life in dedication to Yahweh. Christ’s followers figuratively drink his blood (John 6:53), to identify themselves with his dedication of self to Yahweh. The full significance of the command prohibiting the eating of blood is revealed in the Lord, after whose offering, the original prohibition lost much of its significance. See Paul’s advice in 1 Cor. 10:23-29.

### VERSE 5

**“And surely your blood of your lives will I require”** — Lit. “for your lives,” for the protection of life (see Gesenius). The sanctity of life is enjoined in a very important law. Already God has revealed Himself as a Life-giver (v. 1), a King (v. 2), a Provider (v. 3), a Law-giver (v. 4), and now a Judge. The unlawful slaughter of man is to be avenged, and God warns that He will see that it is avenged (Rom. 12:19). Vengeance is to be exacted whether the slayer is an animal or a man — *chayah*, living creature (See Exod. 21:12, 28-29; Num. 25:31-33; Deut. 21:1-9).

Evidently (and significantly, in view of current practice throughout the world) man had abolished capital punishment just prior to the Flood, and this had been a contributory factor to the widespread uprise of violence and crime throughout the earth at that time. In the beginning, God had warned that anybody taking the life of Cain unlawfully would be avenged “seven times”, that is completely, by being put to death (Gen. 4:15). But Lamech had taken the law into his own hands, and had boasted to his wives that he would kill anybody who harmed him in the slightest degree, and would do so without fear of retribution (Gen. 4:23-24). Accordingly unchecked violence and terrorism had swept the antediluvians, for, judicial execution being abolished, man took it into his own hands to obtain vengeance. Capital punishment was evidently removed, and the law of the jungle took over. Capital punishment will be restored in the Age to come (see Zech. 13:3), for it is the responsibility of those in

authority to see that God's laws are carried out. Today, however, saints are "taken out of the Gentiles" (Acts 15:14), and as "strangers and pilgrims" with "no continuing city" here, have no authority to carry out these laws, and therefore leave it to God to exact vengeance (see Rom. 12:19; Rev. 13:10).

**"At the hand of every beast will I require it"** — See Exod. 21:28-29 etc.

**"And at the hand of every man"** — See Exod. 21:12 etc.

**"At the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man"** — This relates to what is described as "the brotherly covenant" (Amos 1:9), the responsibility of the family redeemer to guard and defend the rights of his relations (see Num. 35:12; Deut. 19:6). It anticipates the great Redeemer who will avenge the members of his family by destroying him that had the power of death, the murdering *diabolos* (Heb. 2:14). We will consider this more in detail when we consider the responsibilities and work of the Redeemer.

The statement "I require" in the declaration to Noah, literally signifies to *search after*, with a view to administering punishment. Yahweh will avenge the blood of His saints, carefully searching out and exacting retribution upon those responsible (cp. Rev. 18:20,24).

## VERSE 6

**"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man"** — This is a command to introduce capital punishment as a deterrent to murder, and the fact that it is combined with a statement emphasising the creation of man, would suggest that both the law concerning the former, and the teaching of the latter, had been abandoned before the Flood, contributing to the uprise of violence and wickedness at that time. By the imposition of capital punishment at God's command, man as established in government, was called upon to uphold the authority and justice of Yahweh manifested in the destruction of the Flood. Man was called upon to recognise the sanctity of life, in that he was specifically created in the

image of God to reflect the Divine glory. Capital punishment was designed to limit the ravages of human savagery that had precipitated the catastrophe (Gen. 6:13).

It is significant that in these days, likened by Christ to those of Noah's time, there is a repetition of these things. Capital punishment is abolished: belief in Creation and in responsibility towards God is largely opposed; His "way" is ignored and rejected; crime and ruthless violence are on the increase. Capital punishment is not for Christ's followers to administer because they are "strangers and pilgrims in the earth." But it was incorporated in the Mosaic system (Num. 35:29-34), and will be established again when the government of nations passes into the hands of the saints (Zech. 13:3).

## VERSE 7

**"And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth"** — The work of Christ is similarly described (John 12:24); and therefore it is the responsibility of his followers to bring forth fruit to the glory of his Name (see John 15:2,4,5,8,16; Rom. 7:4; Gal. 5:22).

## The Covenant with All Flesh — vv. 8-17

*This important covenant guarantees the perpetuity of the earth and man upon it. Significantly it involves both the family of Noah and the living creatures in the Ark. It points forward to the Kingdom when the promises incorporated will be consummated. Thus it is an extension of the covenant made in Eden.*

## VERSE 8

**"And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying,"** — He spoke to outline the terms of the covenant that had been promised before the Flood. See Ch. 6:17-18.

## VERSE 9

**"And I, behold, I establish My covenant with you, and with your seed after you"** — With regard to the expression, "establish My covenant" see notes Ch. 6:18. The four parties to the covenant are enumerated. They are God, Noah, his

seed, and all living creatures within the Ark (v. 10).

#### VERSE 10

**“And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth”** — The covenant extends from the living creatures that emerged from the Ark, to those born to them in the earth. These living creatures represent the mortals in the kingdom, in contrast to the immortal rulers “who neither marry, nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels” (Luke 20:35-36). The same figurative interpretation given to the lower creation over whom Adam was promised dominion (Gen. 1:26), applies to these “living creatures” from out of the Ark, with whom God now enters into covenant.

#### VERSE 11

**“And I will establish my covenant with you”** — Noah stands as a type of Christ, and is given assurance that the work of redemption shall proceed in accordance with the covenant of Gen. 3:15.

**“Neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth”** — Instead, “the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh, as the waters cover the sea” (Hab. 2:14).

#### VERSE 12

**“And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you”** — The covenant, of which the rainbow became the token, speaks of God’s continuing promise to mankind and relates to the future when Yahweh “will remember the everlasting covenant” thus proclaimed (see v. 16). In the terms of the covenant, Noah and his family represent the multitudinous Christ in glory, whilst the birds and animals of the Ark stand for the mortal nations that will be incorporated into the kingdom of God.

**“For perpetual generations”** — Or

“generations of *olam*” the hidden period, the Millennium. The covenant thus stretches forward to that epoch. A similar expression is used in relation to the Name (Exod. 3:15; Psa. 45:17; 79:13), manifested through the Truth (Psa. 100:5); Yahweh’s memorial (Psa. 102:12; 135:13); His dominion (Psa. 145:13; 146:10). These all will be revealed in their fulness in the Age to come.

#### VERSE 13

**“I do set”** — The Hebrew word *nathan* signifies “appoint,” “grant,” and not “make”. This was not the first time the rainbow was seen, but the first time it was assigned as a token of the everlasting covenant. The rainbow is the natural effect of a natural cause. It always has been and always will appear where water falls, or rain descends in sunshine.

**“My bow in the cloud”** — From *qesheth*, bending. The bow is frequently used in the Bible for a weapon. The bow in the hands of man is an instrument of war and of death; but the bow bent by the hands of Yahweh is a symbol of peace and Divine life. The rainbow forms only when there is the combination of cloud, falling rain, and sunshine. Its seven colours combine to form the pure, white light of the sun. When sunlight bounces off tiny particles in the air such as air molecules, dust or smoke, it changes colour and becomes blue; thus the general appearance of the firmament. This “bouncing” of sunlight off small particles in the air is called “scattering,” and more blue is “scattered” than red light, hence the colour of the sky. By refraction, the white light of the sun (Rev. 21:23) is broken up into the seven colours of the rainbow: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet; in that order, with red always on the outside. The “seven” colours speak of the covenant number. Moreover, as they are variations of pure sunlight, they provide symbols of the different manifestations of Divine glory, which, when combined, create the pure and complete glory of the Sun of righteousness (Mal. 4:2). The rainbow, therefore, speaks of God-manifestation revealed in the political heavens of the

Age to come. The rainbow is broken by the position of the earth; for, if the globe could be removed out of the way, the rainbow would be seen as a complete circle of coloured light. It is appropriate, therefore, that in Rev. 4:3, the rainbow is represented as a complete circle, speaking of eternity.

**“And it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth”** — The Hebrew word for “covenant” is *berith*, from a root signifying *to cut*, drawing attention to the covenant victim. The covenant is God’s guarantee of His unflinching concern for His creation. See its use in Jer. 34:18.

#### VERSE 14

**“And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth”** — Cloud is formed by minute particles of water being drawn into the heavens by evaporation generated by the sun. It is frequently used as a symbol for the glorified saints (Rev. 1:7). The influence of the Sun of righteousness (Mal. 4:2) upon the waters of the earth (Isa. 57:20), has separated some from humanity.

Ultimately they will be drawn into the political heavens as “clouds” (1 Thess. 4:17; Heb. 12:1), there to become the associates of the Lord Jesus Christ in Millennial glory (Rev. 5:9-10).

**“That the bow shall be seen in the cloud”** — A rainbow comprises the refracted glory of the sun, shining through falling rain. The token of the covenant, therefore, requires the sun shining in the heavens, and a cloud emptying its life-giving, and fructifying, water upon the earth. The Sun is the Lord Jesus Christ in Millennial glory (Mal. 4:2); the cloud comprises the saints in heavenly positions of authority (1 Thess. 4:17); the falling rain is representative of their teaching (Deut. 32:2; Psa. 72:6); and the rainbow symbolises the glory of Yahweh manifested through the Lord Jesus and his redeemed ecclesia: “He shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe” (2 Thess. 1:10).

#### VERSE 15

**“And I will remember my covenant”** — When Yahweh says that He will re-

member, we can be assured He will not forget. Noah, already, had received evidence to show that God is faithful to His Word (Gen. 8:1).

**“Which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh”** — The covenant with Noah thus embraces the lower creation. But, as we saw in our consideration of Gen. 1:26, the lower creation is representative of the mortal populations of the earth. In that context, the covenant to Noah guarantees that there would not again be utter destruction. Instead the kingdom of God will be set up under immortal rulers reigning over the nations — the antitypical “lower creation” of this covenant.

**“And the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh”** — Instead “all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Yahweh” (Num. 14:21). “Peace on earth” will then prevail.

#### VERSE 16

**“And the bow shall be in the cloud”** — In the terms of the covenant, God-manifestation will be seen in the cloud of witnesses to be gathered together in the Age to come (Heb. 12:1). Such are “the salt of the earth”, adding flavour to humanity, and preserving it from putrefaction, or destruction.

It is a mistake to suppose that it did not rain before the Flood. If that were the case what comprised winter, and whence came the water to replenish such mighty streams as those mentioned in Genesis 2? The reference to the mist ascending from the earth and watering the ground (Gen. 2:6) is expressive of the power of evaporation which invisibly draws water into the heavens where it forms into clouds, and returns in the form of rain. That clouds for rain were formed shortly after Creation is proved beyond all doubt by the words of Yahweh to Job (Job 38:6-9, 25-28).

**“And I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth”** — The covenant is for the *olam*, or hidden period: the future millennium. References to this covenant in commemoration of it, or exten-

sions to it, are found throughout Scripture, thus: Gen. 17:7,13,19; 2 Sam. 23:5; 1 Chron. 16:17; Psa. 105:10; Isa. 55:3; 61:8; Jer. 32:40; Ezek. 16:60. Such notable men as Abraham, Moses, David, and the prophets were related to it. On the other hand, there were those who "broke the everlasting covenant" with disastrous results (Isa. 24:5).

### VERSE 17

**"And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth"** — That is, the rainbow. "Token" is from *owth*, a signal, monument, evidence. See vv. 12,13,17; Ch. 17:11.

### SIN IN THE FLESH SURVIVES

— Ch. 9:18-29

*In spite of the lessons of the Flood, the post-diluvian world did not remain true to God. Though the world had been washed clean of its iniquity, sin in the flesh still survived, and began to manifest itself in shameful acts of rebellion against God.*

### The Sin of Ham — vv. 18-27

*Becoming a husbandman, Noah tilled the soil, and cultivated plants. Included among these were grapevines. In due course he took of the juice of the grape, and stored it for future use. Noah may have been innocent of this action, not knowing the effect that fermentation has on grape juice, nor the effect of fermented wine on the human brain. However, his excess caused shame to enter the family circle. Ham mocked at the state of his drunken father. For this he was denied any blessing and his sons received a curse.*

### VERSE 18

**"And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham and Japheth"** — See note Gen. 6:10.

**"And Ham is the father of Canaan"** — Canaan was evidently alive at the time this event took place and may well have been implicated in the shameful folly of his father, as the children of Dathan and Abiram were later (Num. 16:27). He is mentioned, apparently, for two reasons:

(1) the lewd attitude of Ham was manifested by him and his descendants more than by any of his brothers (Gen. 10:6); (2) he occupied the land that Israel was to obtain, and the record was written primarily for Israelites.

### VERSE 19

**"These are the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread"** — The three great families of humanity, incorporating all colours and nationalities, developed from the three sons of Noah. In Acts 17:26, Paul is represented as saying: "God... hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth". This statement has been challenged on the grounds that there are various kinds of blood. However, in the Greek *blood* is omitted, so that the R.V. renders: "hath made of one" i.e. Adam. All races have sprung from one common source: from Adam through Noah and his posterity. The construction of the blood can easily be altered by divine design to provide for the three different strains, as the language spoken was also changed (Gen. 11:7).

### VERSE 20

**"Noah began to be a husbandman"** — This was evidently a new occupation for Noah. Having been told to "bring forth abundantly in the earth" (v.7), he now assayed to do so. Through his inexperience, probably, he was led astray by this new labour. The term *husbandman* literally means "a man of the ground". Cain was a husbandman in contrast to Abel the shepherd. In the course of experimenting in his new occupation (instead of seeking direction from God), Noah ultimately found himself physically naked as Cain was spiritually so.

**"And he planted a vineyard"** — Vines are indigenous to Armenia where the Ark rested, so that Noah would have found the cultivation of a vineyard to be among the easiest forms of husbandry.

### VERSE 21

**"And he drank of the wine"** — He evidently experimented in his new occupation instead of seeking the guidance of

God. Storing some of the grape juice, in due time it fermented, and possibly through ignorance, Noah partook of it. Whether through innocence of its potent qualities, or through design, he became intoxicated. Drunkenness is likened to the serpent's bite (Prov. 23:29-35), and this action of this normally exemplary man of God revealed that sin in the flesh was still a vital factor in his constitution. Paul warns that in drunkenness there is excess (Eph. 5:18), and Noah became guilty of this.

**"And he was uncovered within his tent"** — The verb is in the Hithpael indicating an action that one does on one's own behalf; thus *he uncovered himself*. He was now like Adam after the transgression, naked in a state of sin (Gen. 3:7). The warning of Christ is therefore significant: "Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame" (Rev. 16:15). The intoxicating wine of Babylon (Rev. 18:3) can reduce one to a state of figurative nakedness. How sad to think of such a man as Noah naked and prostrate on the ground within his tent. Cp. 1 Cor. 10:7.

"Uncovered" is from *galah* — denuded (of clothing).

## VERSE 22

**"And Ham the father of Canaan"** — The repetitive references to Canaan serve to illustrate his sensual character. His descendants became noted for their frightful sensuality even in religion. In this they reflected the action and attitude of their forefather Ham.

**"Saw the nakedness"** — The son saw the father reduced to the shameful state referred to in Hab. 2:15-16, and instead of going to his aid, manifesting concern for the reputation of his father, like all fools he made a mock of sin (Prov. 14:9). "Nakedness" is from *ervah* rendered nakedness, shame, unclean, uncleanness.

**"And told his two brethren without"** — The obvious inference is that he wanted to share the joke with them. Ham, like most sinners, was ready to jeer at the failure of others, and to derive a secret pleasure from it (Rom. 1:32). He did nothing to help or relieve his father in his helpless-

ness, but acted in a manner that could only aggravate the fault.

## VERSE 23

**"And Shem and Japheth took a garment"** — They took a covering for their father in a desire to redeem him from his pitiful state. In doing so these two sons of Noah acted with filial consideration and reverential tact towards him. "Love," declared Peter (1 Pet. 4:8), "shall cover a multitude of sins". Shem and Japheth, in love, proceeded to do just that. It has been mainly from the descendants of these two sons of Noah (from Israel and the white races) that there have come those who have prominently displayed the covering of Christ. In this incident, therefore, they acted typically of the Redeemer to come who would reveal the principles of atonement (coverings).

**"And laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness"** — They could not bear to look upon the shame of their father, for they had a deep affection for him. They laboured, at personal inconvenience, to serve one in need of a covering, with their eyes averted from the sin and shame. This was in contrast to Ham who revelled in the humiliation of his father.

## VERSE 24

**"And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done"** — Paul warned: "All things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light; for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore, he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:13-16). Noah awoke to feel deep shame at his state; a shame that was accentuated by the knowledge of the way in which his younger son had acted towards him. The family evidently comprised Japheth the firstborn, then Shem, then Ham. See Ch. 6:10.



**VERSE 25**

**“And he said, cursed be Canaan”** — Why should Canaan be cursed rather than Ham? Most likely Canaan was in the transgression with Ham his father, and therefore deserved the punishment. Or was it that custom dictated that in cursing his own son, Noah would in effect curse himself? Society made the father responsible for the actions of his son. Conversely to bless Shem and Japheth was in effect to bless himself. See the principle endorsed in Exod. 20:5; 1 Kings 11:9-12; Jer. 31:29.

Certainly, Ham would have been the more greatly punished, as he recalled how his own conduct contributed to the cursed state of his offspring. The incident teaches that a sinner can have a demoralising influence upon others, and particularly his children, drawing them to perdition. Sin is infectious, like an evil germ. Many a parent is responsible for the wayward conduct of his child. Frequently the example of worldliness, manifested by parents, brings its curses upon the children. Instead, the father, by his conduct, should present “the image and glory of God” to the household, and he should be helped in this by the loving respect and co-operation of the mother (1 Cor. 11:7-9); whilst to both, the children should be in reverential submission (Eph. 6:1-4). On the contrary, Ham’s conduct caused a curse to rest upon his offspring.

In later times the Canaanites manifested the same evil conduct as their ancestor, for they developed into a depraved, wicked, dissolute, immoral people, incapable of conversion, and deserving only of the sword of Joshua (Lev. 18:3,25,27-30; Deut. 9:4; 12:29-31).

The name Canaan is from a root signifying, *to bend the knee*, hence to *prostrate* or *humiliate* oneself in order to gain an advantage over another, and thus, by implication, *a trader*. The word is given a religious significance throughout the Bible, and is related to spiritual traders, such as are described in Rev. 18:11. The clergy are traders in the bodies and souls of men, and therefore deserve the epithet of Canaanites; so that though the ancient race has been extirpated, its counterpart still remains. These modern Canaanites

are indifferent to the spiritual nakedness of mankind today; or at least, they divert them away from where a proper covering might be obtained. But their days are numbered, for the curse still remains, and ultimately they, too, will be rooted out of the earth. Zechariah predicts: “In that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of Yahweh of hosts” (Zech. 14:21).

**“A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren”** — This portion of the curse relates to Ham rather than to Canaan, as is indicated by the singular pronoun “he/his brethren”. The term “a servant of servants” expresses the most humiliating servitude; and this has been the experience of the descendants of Ham as a whole, rather than merely the Canaanite portion of his race. Whilst those Canaanites that survived the sword of Joshua were put under servitude (Josh. 9:23; 1 Kings 9:20-21), the coloured peoples of the earth (descendants of Ham), generally, with few exceptions, have experienced similar servitude.

**VERSE 26**

**“And he said, Blessed be Yahweh Elohim of Shem”** — As Shem signifies *Name*, the statement can read: “Yahweh Elohim of the Name”. When “blessed” is applied to Yahweh, it signifies an ascription of praise or worship. Therefore, the blessing ascribed to Shem points particularly to the manner in which his descendants have excelled: namely, in religion. Shem was appointed as the channel of all true worship. It reached out to all mankind through Abraham, David, and the Lord Jesus Christ, all of whom descended from this son of Noah.

**“And Canaan shall be his servant”** — The verb is a Hebrew imperative, and as such can be rendered “*Let Canaan be his servant*”, or “*Canaan must be his servant*”. In this chapter, Canaan is representative of the sinner doomed by Divine curse. The only way such can escape its consequences is by becoming a servant to Yahweh Elohim of Shem. A case in point is supplied in Acts 8:26-40 in the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch to the Truth. Significantly, Acts 8,9,10 bring together

into the one family on a basis of complete equality, representatives of the three great races of mankind, in the conversions of the Ethiopian (Ham), Saul (Shem), and Cornelius (Japheth). By that means Japheth came to dwell in the tents of Shem, Ham escaped his servitude, and all three were found proclaiming: "Blessed be Yahweh Elohim of Shem".

#### VERSE 27

**"God shall enlarge Japheth"** — See note Ch. 6:10. Japheth means *Enlarger* and here stands for the European people's of the earth. From earliest times they have been known for their inventiveness and exploratory zeal. The Greeks were great explorers and colonists, and their example has been followed by the peoples of the western world ever since. Thus *enlargement* has characterised the descendants of Japheth.

**"And he shall dwell in the tents of Shem"** — The Hebrew *shakan*, dwell, signifies to dwell as in a tabernacle, and implies worship. In fulfilment of this promise, Gentiles have been incorporated into the hope of Israel (Rom. 11:17-22; Eph. 2:12,13). Paul wrote: "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every

one that believeth; to the Jew (*Shem*) first, and also to the Greek (*Japheth*)" (Rom. 1:16).

**"And Canaan shall be his servant"** — See note to v. 26.

#### The Death of Noah — vv. 28-29.

*The eventful life of this great patriarch at last came to an end. It was marred in its latter years by the shameful conduct of his son Ham; his own participation in this sad incident illustrating the basic truth set forth by Paul: "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."*

#### VERSE 29

**"And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years"** — This was three hundred and fifty years after the Flood. He died just prior to the birth of Abram.

**"And he died"** — In this statement, the wearying, monotonous repetition, of chapter 5 is heard again, pointing to the truth of Romans 5:12: "By one man sin entered the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." The death of Noah emphasised the need of a Redeemer, and the inadequacy of Noah the type.

## Personalities of the Old Testament

### Adah: A Cause of Grief

There are two women by the name of Adah mentioned in Genesis, and both are found in an unfortunate context.

The first Adah was the wife of Lamech, whose character we have outlined.

The second Adah became one of the wives of Esau which was "a grief of mind" to his parents, Isaac and Rebekah (Gen. 26:34-35). In this reference she is called Bashemath, or *Fragrance*, but in Genesis 36:2 she is given the name of Adah, or *Adornment*. Women sometimes received a new name when they married, which could account for the different names in the two references. The *Companion Bible* suggests that the first name was dropped in Genesis 36:2 to avoid confusion with the daughter of Ishmael of the same name. This Adah became the mother of Eliphaz, Esau's firstborn son, and therefore, was an ancestress of the Edomites.

### Adbeel: Grandson of Abraham

His name is said to mean *Miracle of God* (Gesenius), or *Pining for God*. He was the third son of Ishmael (Gen. 25:13). Nothing more is known of him.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONS AND DECLINE OF THE TRUTH

### Genesis 10:1 to 11:9

*This section of Genesis presents what first appears to be a most uninteresting series of genealogical tables. However, a closer study will cause profound truths to emerge. First, notice that the descendants of Japheth and of Ham are given before those of Shem. What is God telling us? That the best is reserved until the last? Certainly that will prove true to us if we do His will. God will never forget His plan, nor set it aside, even though men are so busily engaged in developing their personal aggrandisement and power that the Divine purpose is hidden from view, or swept aside. In fact, the schemes and ambitions of men and nations are often used by God to perfect His purpose.*

*This fact is wonderfully illustrated by these genealogical tables. The key to this section of Genesis is revealed in Deut. 32:8,9 where Moses states that God's design in separating the sons of Noah into nations as recorded here, was with a view to His purpose with Abraham, as yet unborn. He declares: "He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For Yahweh's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance" (Deut. 32:8). Israel's family numbered seventy when he went into Egypt (Gen. 46:27), and here, in Genesis 10, the family of nations likewise numbers seventy in all: fourteen to Japheth; thirty to Ham; twenty-six to Shem.*

*Israel was to be a channel of Divine grace to all nations, but they failed to hearken to the requirements (Jer. 13:11). When Israel failed, the Lord Jesus sent out seventy disciples to preach (Luke 10:1), based upon the numerical arrangement of Genesis, seemingly to indicate that the impending preaching of the Gospel to all peoples was about to be inaugurated (see also Exod. 15:27). The time will come when immortal saints will be sent forth to all nations to proclaim the Gospel of blessing, their figurative number being seventy. In addition to this, see how the very language of Genesis 10:5 is reproduced by the Revelator in Rev. 10:11 in predicting the future preaching of the Truth to the Gentiles.*

*Meanwhile, the genealogical tables of the section before us reveal how the two great companies of nations first mentioned*

*(those of Japheth and of Ham) settled north and south of Palestine respectively, with Shem providing a blessing in the centre. So shall it be in the future (Isa. 19:24-25). But as the record of Shem is related last in these tables, so the promised blessing awaits the future. These records of the past introduce us to the crowded cemetery of history. There lie kings and commoners, wise men and fools, heroes and cowards, the oppressor and the oppressed. Their lives represent a record of faithful service or of misspent opportunity. Their reputation in life does not hold good in death; but what the future holds out means all. The centuries come and go, but throughout them the purpose of Yahweh is worked out. Originally all had equal opportunity to serve Him, for Yahweh made a covenant with Noah and those with him in the Ark; but subsequently, "when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things ... And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient" (Rom. 1:21-23,28).*

## CHAPTER TEN

### THE GENERATIONS OF THE SONS OF NOAH

#### **Descendants of Japheth — vv. 1-5**

*The descendants of Japheth are briefly recorded; fourteen nations developed from this son of Noah. They enlarged their possessions, as it was predicted they would do, in the first part of the prophetic blessing made to Japheth. Occupying the land to the north, they subsequently moved to the west and east of Europe.*

#### **VERSE 1**

**"Now these are the generations" —**

See notes on ch. 5:1.

**"Of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth:" —** See notes on ch. 9:18.

**"And unto them were sons born after the flood" —** Indicating the development of the divine instruction given to Noah in ch. 9:17, "all flesh". The posterity of Noah is thus preserved in his grandchildren, and the purpose of Yahweh is continued. Unfortunately, the faithful attitude of Noah was not maintained in his descendants, as was shown in ch. 9:19-29, but here are enumerated for the purposes of chronology.

#### **VERSE 2**

**"The sons of Japheth" —** As he was the "elder" (Gen. 10:21), it is appropriate

that the record of his descendants should be listed first.

**“Gomer”** — His name signifies *Completion* (Strong). Josephus identifies Gomer with the Gauls of western Europe. By others, Gomer is identified with the Gamir of the Assyrian inscriptions, the Cimmerians of the Greeks, the progenitors of the Celts. They settled in France, Scandinavia, etc. It is suggested that the name survives in the ethnic name of the Welsh people, Cymru. Gomer is mentioned in Ezekiel 38:6.

**“Magog”** — The meaning of his name is given by *The English and Hebrew Bible Students’ Concordance* as signifying *From the top*, implying supremacy. The Magogites have been identified with the Scythians who moved north to Georgia in south Russia, and from thence to Central Europe (see *Elpis Israel*, pp. 427-428; Ezek. 38:2).

**“Madai”** — The Medes, who lived to the east of Mesopotamia, and later, in conjunction with the Persians, built a world empire.

**“Javan”** — Strong gives the meaning as *Effervescent*, hence *Hot* and *Active*. From Javan, or Yavan, came the Ionians, or Greeks, noted for their hot, effervescent character.

**“Tubal”** — Signifies *brought*. See *Hebrew Bible Students’ Concordance*. The descendants of Tubal moved north and east, to give their name to the city Tobolsk in Siberia.

**“Meshech”** — Signifies *durability*. The names Muscovy and Moscow probably derive from Meshech (Ezek. 38:3. See *Elpis Israel*, p. 422).

**“Tiras”** — *The Companion Bible* identifies Tiras with the Thracians.

### VERSE 3

**“And the sons of Gomer; Ashkenaz”** — Signifies *Collector of Fire*. Bochart places Ashkenaz in the region of Phrygia and Bithynia. Assyriologists identify it with the Asguza of the monuments, a branch of the Indo-Germanic tribes. Many modern expositors identify it with Germany. See Jer. 51:27.

**“Riphath”** — Signifies *A stable*, Jose-

phus identifies Riphath with the Paphlagonians. Bochart places it near the Bosphorus, on the ground of resemblance in name to a local river and district.

**“Togarmah”** — Signifies *A stronghold*. Noted for the export of horses (Ezek. 27:14); situated north of Palestine (Ezek. 38:6). Probably southern Russia, Turkey. See *Elpis Israel*, p. 428-429.

### VERSE 4

**“And the sons of Javan; Elishah”** — Signifies *Neglected of God*. Mentioned in Ezekiel 27:7 as supplying Tyre with purple. Identified by many with the Alasia of the Tel-Amarna tablets and by others as Cyprus, of which Tyrian purple was a product.

**“Tarshish”** — Signifies *A Beryl*. Tartessus, the site of the Phoenician mining and trading station in the south of Spain and Britain. A place rich in minerals (Jer. 10:9; Ezek. 27:12; Isa. 23:1, 6, 10); a remote coastland reached by sea (Isa. 66:19; Psa. 72:10; Ezek. 38:13).

**“Kittim”** — Signifies *Bruisers*. Identified by many today with southern Italy. See Dan. 11:30; Num. 24:24).

**“Dodanim”** — The Hebrew in 1 Chron. 1:7 gives this as Rodanim. The Hebrew consonants representing D and R are very similar in appearance, and a mistake could easily occur in copying them. That, evidently, was done in this place. Rodanim is identified with Rhodes.

### VERSE 5

**“By these”** — By these fourteen descendants of Japheth whose name means *Enlarger*, the Japhethites enlarged their possessions, moving north and then to the west and east. As vigorous, progressive peoples, they inquisitively explored the countries before them, extending their borders as they did so.

**“Were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands”** — This, of course, was after the confusion of tongues, following the building of the tower of Babel. This chapter, therefore, is parenthetical, and chronologically should follow at the end of Ch. 11:9. “Divided”: Heb. *parad*. See notes on v. 25.

**“Every one after his tongue, after**

**their families, in their nations**” — Here is suggested a development from speech, to family, to nation. First the confusion of tongues, then the racial division (families), and finally a political division (nations). Each was a development out of the other. Notice the repetition of this phrase in Rev. 5:9; 7:9, where the saints are represented as being taken out of every “tongue, people and nation.” The Apocalypse reveals that though saints are taken out of such, they are expected to witness to them (Rev. 11:3). Ultimately, in the Millennium, they will be sent back to the places from whence they have been taken in order to convert the people to the Truth (Rev. 10:11; 14:6). Meanwhile, Genesis 10:5 provides the first mention in the Bible of the significant word *Goyim*, rendered “Gentiles” and “Nations”.

#### **The Descendants of Ham — vv. 6-20**

*Generally, the line of Ham occupied portions of Africa, and therefore moved south from the original settlement. Ham's descendants followed the example set by the line of Cain: city building, false religion, power of the sword. The mighty Nimrod (the antitype of Lamech) came from this line; and under his rule, Ham's power and influence reached a peak of might and wickedness. The curse rested on Canaan, his son, however, and subsequent events found the descendants of Ham cursed by it, to become servants of servants. For example, contrast the glory of ancient Egypt, with its degradation throughout the latter ages.*

#### **VERSE 6**

**“And the sons of Ham; Cush”** — The word signifies *Burly*. From Cush came the Negroid peoples, particularly the Ethiopians. The Cushites originally established their power in Mesopotamia (Gen. 2:13), then migrated south to Arabia, to north Africa, and to modern Ethiopia. In some places, Cushites include Arabian peoples (Hab. 3:7), probably through intermingling and intermarriage.

**“Mizraim”** — Signifies *Oppressors*, from *matzowr*, to limit, hedge in, distress, derived from a root *tsuwr*, to cramp, confine. The word has been rendered *adver-*

*saries, beset, distress. Mitsraim* is the Hebrew name for Egypt. The plural form of the name related to Upper and Lower Egypt.

**“Phut”** — *Libya*.

**“Canaan”** — Signifies *Submitter, Merchant*. The dwellers in Palestine.

#### **VERSE 7**

**“And the sons of Cush; Seba”** — Signifies *Drunkard*. The Sabceans of North Africa; noted for their stature (Isa. 45:14).

**“Havilah”** — See notes, Gen. 2:11. Originally located near the Caucasus, Havilah is later described as being in the south of Egypt (Gen. 25:18), indicating a migratory process from north to south.

**“Sabtah”** — Signifies *Cease*. Unidentified; as a nation it has ceased!

**“Raamah”** — Signifies *Thunderer*. Mentioned in Ezekiel 27:22 as trading in spices, gold and precious stones. Raamah occurs in the inscriptions of Sheba as a place in S.W. Arabia near Main, referred to as Regina in the Septuagint and the Vulgate (Unger).

**“Sheba”** — Signifies *Seventh, Oath, Captivity*. Here given as a descendant of Cush but in v. 28 as a descendant of Shem, and in Gen. 25:3 included with Dedan as coming through Keturah. Perhaps there was some intermarriage. Sheba has been identified as a great commercial state in S.W. Arabia, adjacent to Yemen. Its capital was at Marib some 72kms (45 miles) due east of the present capital of Yemen, not far from Aden. In ancient times, Sheba was the spice kingdom of the world, and from it came its queen to Solomon, bearing some of its products (Ezek. 27:22; 1 Kings 10:1-2).

**“Dedan”** — Signifies *In Judgment*. See notes on Sheba. Dedan has been identified as Muscat in Arabia (see *Elpis Israel*, p. 433. Cp. Ezekiel 38:13).

#### **Nimrod the First Empire Builder**

— **vv. 8-12.**

*Hislop in “The Two Babylons” claims that most religious and superstitious error developed from Nimrod. His empire included both political and religious power, as he set himself up as the first king-god. It is*

claimed that he married his mother Semiramis, and established the worship of the Trinity by adopting the role of both father and son, with his wife as the third person in unity, the equivalent of the Spirit. Nimrod walked in the way of Cain's descendants by building a city and founding an empire. He perfected the power of the flesh, following the example set by Lamech.

#### VERSE 8

**"And Cush begat Nimrod"** — This expression does not necessarily mean that Nimrod was the immediate descendant of Cush, but that he was in the line of Cush. Some of the events enumerated in this chapter took place after the confusion of tongues recorded in Genesis 11. Cp. v. 5. The name Nimrod signifies *Rebel, We will rebel*, from *maradh, to rebel*. He personified the spirit of rebellion manifested by building the tower of Babel. He repudiated Divine authority, rebelling against it, whilst exercising ruthless control over his own subjects.

**"He began to be a mighty one in the earth"** — The Hebrew *gibbor*, signifies *hero, warrior, mighty one*. Nimrod "began" the order of such by exercising ruthless tyranny over his subjects, and his example has been followed by Gentile rulers ever since. In doing so, he revived the hero-worship of the antediluvians, illustrating the comment of Gen. 6:4: "There were giants in the earth in those (Noahic) days, and also after that (i.e. after the Flood)." Nimrod not only exercised ruthless power, but also demanded, and received, the worship of his subjects. This form of political-worship "began" with Nimrod and will end with the man of sin of 2 Thess. 2:8.

#### VERSE 9

**"He was a mighty hunter"** — A *gibbor* of hunting. He became a *Hero of the Chase*, not only of animals, but also of men, as in Jer. 16:16; Mic. 7:2. He ruthlessly hunted all those who opposed his will, as Rome has done in succeeding ages. It is significant that inscriptions portray the ancient monarchs as skilful hunters, indicating that their ability in the

chase was reflected in their governmental rule. As mighty hunters, these Gentile rulers stand in complete contrast to the rulers of Israel who are set forth as shepherds of the kingdom.

**"Before Yahweh"** — That is, in His sight, and in defiance of His will as before the Flood (see Gen. 6:11). Thus the characteristic of rebellion against God, which was introduced in Eden by the action of the serpent, and manifested in wilful opposition by mankind since, is seen to be a feature of the flesh. In this, Nimrod illustrated the meaning of his name: *We will rebel*.

**"Wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before Yahweh"** — The exploits and rule of Nimrod became the basis of comparison, by which all successive rulers were compared, and the ideal to which they aspired.

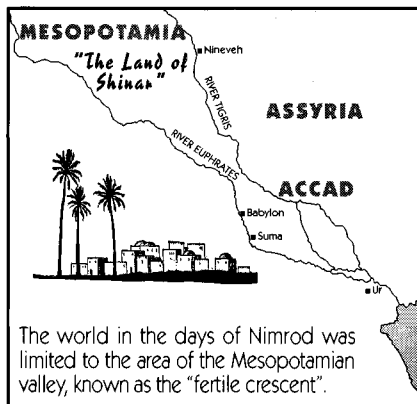
#### VERSE 10

**"And the beginning of his kingdom"** — Like Cain, Nimrod built a city (cp. Gen. 4:17) which became the centre of his religious and political power.

**"Was Babel"** — As he built Babel, he was probably the instigator of the revolt that caused the tower to be constructed. As the people were scattered, he set about challenging the Divine objective by founding his city-empire. In the Chaldean language *Bab-ili* signifies *The Gate of God*, and hence a city of worship; but in Hebrew this became *Confusion* (Gen. 11:9). It was the first of the cities built by Nimrod, the place where Daniel was taken as a captive.

**"Erech"** — Signifies "Long". Modern Warka, situated about 160kms (100 miles) S.E. of Babylon in a marshy region of the Euphrates.

Here the ruins of the earliest ziggurat were discovered, as well as evidence of the first cylinder seals (Finegan, *Light from the Ancient Past*). The four cities which Nimrod built are descriptive of the entire alluvial plain of Babylonia between the Tigris and the Euphrates, in approximately the last 320kms (200 miles) of these great rivers according to their ancient course. In the cuneiform inscriptions, the region is divided into a northern por-



tion called Accad (Akkad), in which Babel and Accad were situated; and a southern portion called Sumer, in which Erech was situated. The area was divided between Semitic and Hamitic influences. Erech was also known as Aruk.

**"Accad"** — Signifies *Dark*. The ruins today are known as Agade, a short distance south-west of modern Baghdad. In very ancient times this became the centre of Hamitic imperial power, and the whole region is given the title.

**"Calneh"** — Signifies *Lodging*. Its location is uncertain. Some have identified it with Nippur, an important excavated city in central Babylonia; others identify it elsewhere.

**"In the land of Shinar"** — *Shinar* is compounded of Hebrew roots signifying *Enemy's Tooth* (J. Thomas), and, therefore, is suggestive of the serpent power. Babylon was built upon a plain through which flowed the Euphrates. It is called "the land of Shinar," and "the plain of Dura" see Dan. 1:2; 3:1. Cp. Gen. 11:2; 14:1.

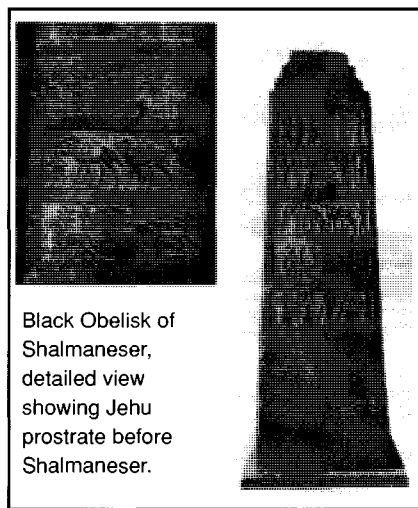
## VERSE 11

**"Out of that land went forth Asshur"** — The R.V. renders this: "He went forth into Assyria." Nimrod thus extended his dominion over the adjacent territory.

**"And builded"** — In Assyria, as in Babylonia, he built four cities to establish his power therein.

**"Nineveh"** — The capital of Assyria, situated on the eastern bank of the Tigris River opposite the modern city of Mosul. The name Nineveh was later given to a complex of cities that clustered near it (Jonah 1:2; 3:2; 4:11). The meaning of the name is given as *The Place of Habitation*.

**"Rehoboth"** — Signifies *Spread among the People*, or *Broad Places*. One of the complex of cities incorporated in Greater Nineveh.



**"Calah"** — The modern ruins of Nimrud, made famous by Layard who excavated it in 1845. Shalmaneser 1 made the place famous in his day, but later it declined. It was here that Layard uncovered the colossal winged man-headed lions that guarded the palace of the Assyrian kings when resident in this city. Here, too, was found the famous Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III which portrays Jehu of Israel, among other captives, bringing tribute to his Assyrian overlord.

## VERSE 12

**"And Resen between Nineveh and Calah"** — It signifies, perhaps, *Fountain-head*. It was situated between Nineveh and Calah which cities comprised the limits of the complex of cities that formed Greater Nineveh.



**“The same is a great city”** — Moses is not singling out Calah for this distinction, but Nineveh. All four cities are grouped under the general title and became portion of Greater Nineveh which later became a city-state. The greatness of Nineveh reflected the greatness of Nimrod, whose power and influence was elevated in the eyes of man, but not in the sight of God. In His sight human values are frequently reversed: “That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God” (Luke 16:15).

John Thomas comments: “The Kingdom of Men was founded by Nimrod, son of Cush, who was son of Ham, son of Noah. ‘The beginning of it was Babylon, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Out of that land he went forth into Assyria, and builded Nineveh, and the city of Rehoboth, and Calah: and Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city’ (Gen. 10:8-12). This Nimroudia was the Kingdom of Men in the extent of it during the lifetime of its founder, comprehending, as we see, Babylon and Assyria. These were its roots and trunk, which in after ages came to be famous for their strength and altitude, the beauty of their leaves, the abundance of their fruits, and their wide-spreading top; so that all the nations had shadow under it, and their rulers and great men dwelt in the boughs, and all flesh were fed of it (Dan. 4:10-12).” (*Exposition of Daniel*, p. 7).

#### **Descendants of Ham (cont.)**

— vv. 13-20.

*Moses continues his list of the dark races which came from Ham, son of Noah.*

#### **VERSE 13**

**“And Mizraim begat Ludim”** — Signifies *Generations*. They were the primitive Libyans and are always mentioned in connection with Egypt and Ethiopia (Nah. 3:9; 2 Chron. 12:3; 2 Chron. 16:8; Dan. 11:43).

**“Anamim”** — Unidentified.

**“Lehabim”** — Also identified with the Libyans.

**“Naphtuhim”** — Signifies *Openings*. Unidentified.

#### **VERSE 14**

**“Pathrusim”** — These are thought to have been the inhabitants of Pathros (Southland), the name for Upper Egypt (Isa. 11:11; Jer. 44:1, 15; Ezek. 30:14).

**“Casluhim”** — Unidentified; but probably in Upper Egypt adjacent to Pathros.

**“(Out of whom came Philistim)”** — Elsewhere (cp. Deut. 2:23 with Amos 9:7), the Philistines are said to have originated from Caphtor, or Crete; and it is thought by some that this is a contradiction. Herodotus declares that the “Pilitis” dwelt in Egypt as shepherds, and he identified them with the Hyksos who were subsequently driven from Egypt and dwelt in Philistia in the land of Canaan. It could well be that the Philistines originated from Caphtor, moved into Casluhim in Egypt, and from thence migrated to what became later known as Philistia.

**“Caphtorim”** — Signifies *Distinguished*. It is generally acknowledged that Caphtor is Crete. The Philistines originated from Crete and moved into Egypt (Deut. 2:23; Amos 9:7), but were driven from there to Palestine (derived from Philistine). Archaeologists date their arrival about the twelfth century B.C., but this does not agree with the Bible which requires their presence in Gerar in the time of Abraham. The Scriptures, reveal that the migration of the Philistines into the land of Canaan was earlier than generally assumed. The Cretans developed the Minoan Culture, a very advanced form of civilisation. At the height of their power, they commanded a widespread and influential Empire.

#### **VERSE 15**

**“And Canaan begat Sidon his first-born”** — Signifies *A Place for Hunting*. Jezebel came from Sidon (1 Kings 16:31), bringing with her the pernicious influence of its false and immoral religion.

**“Heth”** — Signifies *Annoyance, Terror*, and known to historians as the Hittites. They founded a powerful empire in Asia Minor, and also extended their influence southwards into the land of Canaan. Abraham purchased the Cave of Machpelah from “the children of Heth” (Gen.

23:7), a settlement of Hittites adjacent to Hebron.

**VERSE 16**

**“Jebusite”** — Signifies *Trampler*. The Jebusites later occupied Jerusalem, and gave their name to the city (Josh. 15:63; 18:28).

**“Amorite”** — Signifies *Talker*. The Amorites were inveterate enemies of Israel, and are included among the seven nations of Canaan to be destroyed (Deut. 7:1).

**“Girgasite”** — Signifies *Sojourner*. See Deut. 7:1.

**VERSE 17**

**“Hivite”** — Signifies *Tent, village*. The Hivites were among the nations of Canaan (Deut. 7:1), dwelling in the north (Josh. 11:3; Judg. 3:3; 2 Sam. 24:7).

**“Arkite”** — Signifies *Gnawer*. Represents the inhabitants of present-day Tell Arka, some 129kms (80 miles) north of Sidon at the foot of Lebanon. It is mentioned in the Egyptian records (see Unger).

**“Sinite”** — Signifies *Thornbush*. Thought to have been located towards the area of Lebanon. Some identify the Sinites with the Chinese. See Gesenius on Isa. 49:12.

**VERSE 18**

**“Arvadite”** — Signifies *To sway over*. They occupied the island of Arvad, about 3kms (2 miles) from the shore of Phoenicia (Ezek. 27:8-11), today known as Ruwad. The Arvadites participated in the maritime trade of Phoenicia.

**“Zemarite”** — Signifies *Fleece of wool*. They probably occupied the territory in which was found the ancient town of

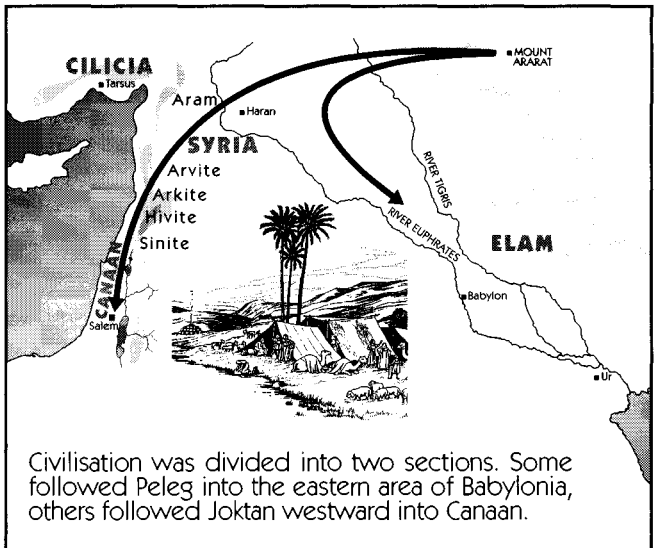
Zemaraim within the area granted to Benjamin (Joshua 18:22).

**“Hamathite”** — Signifies *Fortress*. They founded the ancient city-state of Hamath in the valley of the Orontes, in upper Syria (cp. 2 Kings 18:34).

**“And afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad”** — They occupied the territories to which they afterward gave their names. They “spread abroad” bearing the curse of Canaan with them. In that, they were like sin which spreads its influence around, and against which the Truth must battle as did Israel against the Canaanites when Joshua led them into the land.

**VERSE 19**

**“And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar unto Gaza; as thou goest, unto Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha ”** — This land was later promised to Abraham. It is significant that the Scriptures state that “the Canaanite was then in the land” when Abraham entered it (Gen. 12:6), and that the final picture will be that “in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the



house of Yahweh of hosts" (Zech. 14:21). The ancient Canaanites have given place to modern Canaanites; for the name signifies *Traders*, and has a religious significance, for there are those today who trade in "(the bodies) and souls of men" (Rev. 18:13).

#### VERSE 20

**"These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations" —** See note v. 5.

#### Descendants of Shem — vv. 21-32

*The main attention in the genealogies is centred upon Shem. Whereas the lines of Japheth and Ham are briefly mentioned and then dismissed, that of Shem is given as introductory to the development of the main record of Genesis. Mention is made of twenty-six nations from Shem.*

#### VERSE 21

**"Unto Shem also"** — His name signifies *Name*, and through him were to come the people of the Name.

**"The father of all the children of Eber"** — Eber is the ancestor of the Hebrews. The verse declares that all Hebrews are Semites.

**"The brother of Japheth the elder"** — According to the Masoretic text, this is the proper reading, and not that of the R.V: "the elder brother of Japheth." The genealogy of Shem is given last, though in the list of Noah's sons, he is placed first (Gen. 6:10). We have discussed the reason for this in our notes on *Shem*, in that verse.

#### VERSE 22

**"The children of Shem; Elam"** — Signifies *Highland*. The Elamites occupied the land beyond the Tigris and Euphrates, bounded on the north by Assyria and Media, and on the south by the Persian Gulf. Its capital was Susa. Under the Persian regime it was known as Shushan. Chedorlaomer king of Elam was one of the kings who invaded the land of Canaan in the days of Abram.

**"Asshur"** — Signifies *Progressing*, *Step*. His descendants peopled the land of

Assyria.

**"Arphaxad"** — Signifies *Pouring*. The son of Shem through whom came Abram. He was born two years after the Flood. In the R.V. his name is given as Arpachshad. He is associated with the district N.E. of Nineveh, the Arrapachitis of the Greek geographers (Unger).

**"Lud"** — Perhaps the Lydians of Asia Minor.

**"Aram"** — Signifies *Lifted up*. This is the regular Hebrew name for Syria. The language spoken in Syria in early times and which later spread even into Palestine, was known as Aramaic, similar to Hebrew.

#### VERSE 23

**"And the children of Aram; Uz"** — Signifies *Light, Sandy*. His descendants settled in the Arabian territory occupied by the Idumeans (Lam. 4:21), the Sabeans and the Chaldeans (Job 1:15, 17), and Teman near Petra (Job 2:11).

**"Hul"** — *Circle*. Unidentified.

**"Gether"** — Unidentified.

**"Mash"** — Unidentified. In 1 Chron. 1:17, the name appears as Meshech.

#### VERSE 24

**"And Arphaxad begat Salah"** — Signifies *Missile, Javelin*. Also known as *Shelah* (1 Chron. 1:18, 24). At thirty years of age he became the father of Eber.

**"And Salah begat Eber"** — Signifies *To cross over*. He is claimed as the founder of the Hebrew race.

#### VERSE 25

**"And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg"** — Signifies *Division*. *Peleg* is the common Hebrew name for *watercourses*.

**"For in his days was the earth divided"** — The word *divided* is used three times in this chapter: vv. 5, 25, 32. In v. 5, the word is *parad* and signifies to be *dispersed, scattered* whereas in v. 32 the word is *cachar* to *travel, traffic, trade*.

Here, however, a different word is used: *palag*, which signifies *divided up*. In what way was the earth divided in the days of Peleg? We are not told directly, but by inference it seems as though it was divided as spheres of influence by Peleg

and Joktan his brother. Peleg moved into the region of Babylonia, and his descendant, Terah, settled in Ur. Joktan made his way towards what was later known as the Land of Promise, and settled there. Later, when Abram came into the land, he was met by Melchizedek the priest. Obviously, as priest, he was a believer in the true God, and presided over a community who worshipped God. We will discuss this interesting matter later, when we come to consider chapter 14; but meanwhile in this verse we have an inference as to how it was possible for Abram to find true believers in Jerusalem, at the time that he visited the city.

**“And his brother’s name was Joktan”** — Signifying *Be settled*. His numerous progeny indicates settlement after the division. They are identified by some with tribes that settled throughout Arabia.

#### VERSE 26

**“And Joktan begat Almodad”** — Signifying *Compression*. Unidentified.

**“Sheleph”** — Signifying *A drawing forth*. Unknown.

**“Hazarmaveth”** — Signifies *Village of Death*. Unidentified.

**“Jerah”** — Signifies *Moon, Month*. Unknown.

#### VERSE 27

**“Hadoram”** — Signifies *High elevation*. Unknown.

**“Uzal”** — Authorities generally identify ancient Uzal as Sanaa, the metropolis of Yemen.

**“Diklah”** — Authorities believe that the descendants of this son of Joktan settled in Yemen, a little to the east of the Hejaz.

#### VERSE 28

**“Obal”** — Identity unknown.

**“Abimael”** — Signifying *A Father is God*. Identity unknown.

**“Sheba”** — See v. 7.

#### VERSE 29

**“Ophir”** — Signifying *Ash*. Arabian inscriptions speak of an Ophir in southwest Arabia; there was also an Ophir in India (1Kings 10:22).

**“Havilah”** — Cp. v. 7. This suggests intermarriage with the Hamites.

**“Jobab”** — Signifies *Howler*. Unknown.

#### VERSE 30

**“And their dwelling was from Mesha”** — Mesha signifies *Deliverance*. There was a Mesha who was king of Moab (2 Kings 3:4) and it is attractive to identify this Mesha with the land of Moab. That would mean that one branch of the family of Shem found its way towards the Land of Promise, whilst the other branch, through Peleg, moved eastward to settle in Ur of the Chaldees. That would account for Abram finding Melchizedek in Jerusalem when he migrated to the Land. See notes Gen. 14.

**“As thou goest unto Sephar”** — Sephar signifies *Numberer*. “There is quite a general agreement that Sephar is preserved in the very ancient city of *Zhafar*, now pronounced *Isfor*, in the province of Hadramut, of South Arabia, not far from the seaport Mirbat” (Unger). The statement, “as thou goest” suggests that the table of migrations was compiled by somebody in the eastern border of the Promised Land. Such a list of peoples could have been given to Abraham as supplementary to the promise made to him, indicating the scope of territory incorporated in it. If so, it could have been retained and handed on to his descendants, to be used by Moses under Divine guidance.

**“A mount of the east”** — This mountain, mentioned in connection with the Joktanite boundaries, suggests that the immigration of the tribes was from west to east, and settlements extended from one point to the other.

#### VERSE 31

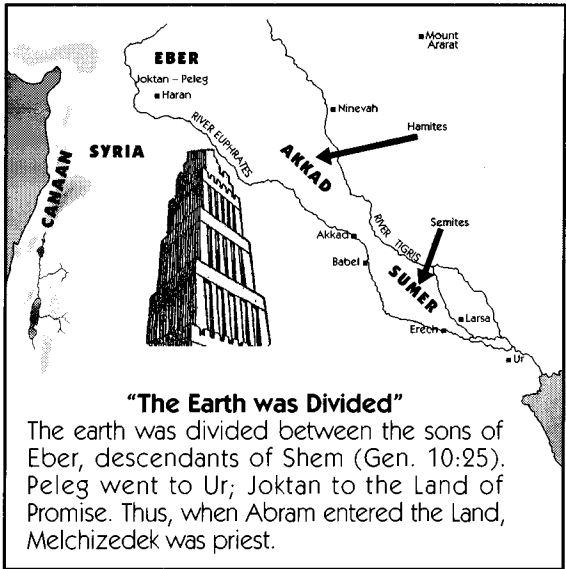
**“These are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations”** — The statement attached to the lists of descendants of Ham and Japheth now summarises that of Shem. The family is the basis of healthy human life, whether domestic or national. The current growth of divorce, the trend of modern educational systems which tend to break down family discipline, the establishment of the Welfare

State in which dependence upon family co-operation is dispensed with, all tend to weaken domestic ties and destroy the prin-

ciples of happy, healthy home and national life. The Truth restores it, creating a Divine family on the patriarchal system (John

**The Beginning of the Kingdom of Men**

The Empire of Nimrod marked the beginning of the Kingdom of Men. From Ararat (Gen. 8:4), Noah and his descendants moved towards the Persian Gulf, and then eastward along the fertile crescent (Gen. 11:2) to build Babel. The Bible record is in accordance with archaeological research, for this has established that the Akkadians (Semites) and Sumerians (Hamites) migrated from the direction of Ararat to Mesopotamia. Here Nimrod built his cities and established his empire. Babel (Babylon) signifies *Confusion*, or in Akkadian, *Bab-ili, Gate of God*. It is



82kms (51 miles) south of Baghdad. Erech (Akkadian, Uruk) modern Warka, is 161kms (100 miles) south east of Babylon. Here the oldest ziggurat has been found. Akkad, known as Agade, a short distance southwest of modern Baghdad, gave its name to the *Land of Shinar*, which is known to archaeologists as the *Land of Akkad*. *Calneh*, site uncertain; some identify it with Nippur. *Nineveh* comprised a great city incorporating Rehoboth and Calah (Gen. 10:11,12). *Rehoboth*, which signifies *Broad places*, is also known as *Rehoboth-ir*, or *The Streets of the City* (See Gen. 10:11 mg. and compare with Rev. 11:8).

**Sumer And Akkad**

In very ancient times, Mesopotamia (*The Land Between the Rivers*) was inhabited by the Hamites and Semites. The region of the former was known as Sumer, and extended from Baghdad to the Persian Gulf. Akkad (Semitic Kingdom) extended to the north of Sumer.

The Sumerians termed themselves *the black-headed people*, and were probably Hamites. Their cuneiform (wedge-shaped) writing is dated among man's earliest written records. They were the first to build ziggurats for the foundations of their temples. "The Assyro-Babylonian word *ziggurahi* comes from the verb *zagaru* meaning 'to be high or raised up' (*Light from the Ancient East*).

Sumer comprised a group of city-states belonging to the gods. Nippur was the city of Enlil and Ninlil; Erech of Anu and Inanna ; Ur of Nanah, the moon god, and his wife Ningal.

Assuming the above conclusions of archaeologists to be according to fact, Terah's forebears, though Semites, must have made their way down south to the region of the Hamites, where they worshipped the pagan gods (Josh. 24:2).

1:12; Gal. 3:26). Family life regulated upon Divine principles, and wedded to the soil (Gen. 3:19) was the basis of the Law, and will be that of the future, as far as the mortal peoples are concerned (Mic. 4:4-8).

#### VERSE 32

“These are the families of the sons of

Noah, after their generations, in their nations and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood” — The Hebrew *cachar* signifies to travel, trade. See note on v. 25. There was a division in the nations as they dispersed abroad and developed their international commerce and activity.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### THE CONFUSION OF TONGUES: AND CALL OF ABRAM

*Chapter Eleven introduces three outstanding events that have dramatically changed the course of human history, and the effects of which continue to be felt today. They are: the building of Babel; the confusion of tongues; and the call of Abram. These three events resulted in: the widespread populating of the earth; the preservation of the true religion; and the continuation of the line of descent leading to the Messiah. The confusion of speech is the greatest divisive force of humanity. It was when “every man heard in his own tongue” (Acts 2:8) that unity of belief in the early ecclesia was achieved. Paul exhorted that they should “speak the same thing” (1 Cor. 1:10), and so continue the unity established; and it is the purpose of Yahweh, ultimately, to unite all mankind in one “pure language” and worship (Zeph. 3:9; Zech. 8:23). By these steps, the divisive influence caused by the confusion of tongues at Babel will be healed.*

#### **Babel and the Scattering of the People** — vv. 1-9.

*This section provides an example of human folly, and of Divine wisdom in skillfully enforcing the Divine purpose. The clumsy attempt of man to establish unity on his own terms and in defiance of God’s decree, is met by the confusion of tongues, the introduction of the most divisive force in human experience. Man said, Let us go up; God said, We will go down. Man aspired to do so physically, whilst spiritually he remained completely earth-bound.*

#### VERSE 1

“And the whole earth was of one language and one speech” — This

implies complete unity of language and ideas. The value of sound speech based on the Truth is shown by Paul in Rom. 10:8-15. For a time, the descendants of Noah had one language and one ideal.

#### VERSE 2

“And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east” — The margin renders: “to the east,” suggesting a migration from Ararat (ch. 8:4), towards Babylonia. However, it is claimed that the text is more authentic than the margin (see *A New Old Testament*), which would suggest that the descendants of Noah first made their way to a central place of worship which may well have been in the vicinity of the Gar-

den of Eden, where originally the antediluvian centre of worship had been set up; and from there, succeeding generations migrated through the Mesopotamian plains westward.

**“That they found a plain in the land of Shinar”** — Shinar signifies *Enemy's tooth* (J. Thomas). It became the location of Israel's great adversary throughout the ages, the serpent power of Babylonia.

### VERSE 3

**“And they said one to another”** —

This was co-operation; which is excellent in a good work, but disastrous in an evil one. How much better if they had co-operated in building a Temple of living stones (1 Peter 2:4-5). At first, however, it seems as though they used this building material to construct homes for themselves; and only later did they move further to build a Temple for worship. They had been commanded to “replenish the earth” but had now decided against doing so. Instead of acting as “strangers and pilgrims in the earth,” they wanted to establish themselves in permanent dwellings of their own in apostasy from God. From personal dwellings, they built a city, and then a temple.

**“Go to let us make brick and burn them thoroughly”** — The building they intended to construct was of human ingenuity and skill; not of Divine design. Yet it was for the purpose of worship. The use of humanly constructed brick in such a context is significant; for whilst altars for worship were to be constructed of unhewn stone (see note Gen. 8:20), Israel was condemned for using brick (Isa. 65:3). Unhewn stone is stone moulded by the Creator; brick is a man-made construction expressive of human ideas and willpower.

**“They had brick for stone”** — They substituted something of their own making, for that which God had provided. Contrast Exodus 20:25 with Isaiah 65:3.

**“And slime had they for mortar”** — In Hebrew “slime” is *hemar*, to *boil up*, to be *red*. It relates to the asphalt, or bitumen, which is common to the area. It is said that asphalt is a mixture of hydrocarbons, or decayed vegetable matter, which hardens

by exposure to the air. It is a fit substance in this connection, to represent the flesh, as corruptible.

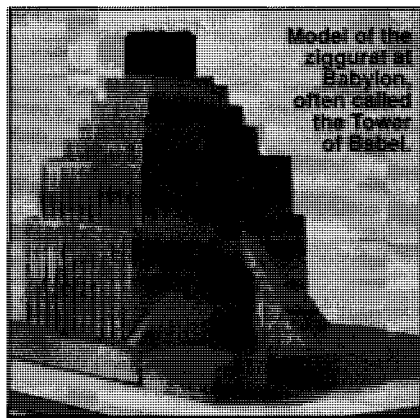
### VERSE 4

**“And they said, Go to, let us build us a city”** — They repeated the folly of Cain (Gen. 4:17). Their city was designed as a centre of worship, much the same as Babylon the Great, that mighty temple-city of the Revelation (see Ch. 17:18).

**“And a tower”** — This was part of the city; a central uniting factor, designed for common worship. It constituted a ziggurat. The ruins of such buildings are today disclosed by excavations at the sites of ancient cities throughout Mesopotamia. The design of the builders of Babel was the establishment of a dominion in apostasy against the Truth. Their strength lay in centralisation, though God's will was decentralisation in order to subdue the earth (Gen. 1:28) in preparation for the Kingdom.

**“Whose top may reach unto heaven”** — This does not literally mean to reach to heaven, but suggests a building of exceptional size. The same expression is used in Deut. 1:28 for cities with strong and lofty walls. The dome of the ziggurat was probably painted with signs of the Zodiac as symbols of heavenly worship.

The ziggurats of Mesopotamia were huge pyramidal towers rising often in seven terraces from the centre of the temple area, and crowned with a shrine at



the top (*Herodotus, Book 1, 181*).

Another writer claims: "These structures appear to have embodied a half-cosmical, half-religious symbolism: the ascent of the tower was a meritorious approach to the gods; and the summit was regarded as the entrance to heaven.

"The most famous of these edifices were those of E'sagil, the temple of Marduk in Babylon, and of E-zida, the temple of Nebo at Borsippa on the opposite bank of the river. The former bore the Sumerian name *E-temen-an-ki* (The House of the Foundations of Heaven and Earth). It was restored by Nabopolassar, who stated that before him it had become 'dilapidated and ruined', and that he was commanded by Marduk to 'lay its foundations firm in the breast of the underworld, and *make its top equal to heaven*'. The same expression occurs in an inscription to Nebuchadnezzar... The ziggurat of E-zida was called *E-ur-immin-an-ki* (House of the Seven Stages of Heaven and Earth); its restorer, Nebuchadnezzar, tells us in an inscription found at its four corners, that it had been

built by a former king, and raised to a height of forty-two cubits; its top, however, had not been set up, and it had fallen into disrepair. The temple of Borsippa is entombed in Birs Nimrud — a huge mound still rising 153 feet above the plain; which local, and Jewish, tradition identifies with the tower referred to in Genesis 11."

H. Livingston wrote: "They were huge, artificial mounds made of brick, some rising to as much as 100 metres (300 feet) above the surrounding plain. Placed in the centre of cities, they were topped by a temple to a pagan deity, and, in ancient inscriptions are actually described as 'reaching to heaven'."

Unger in *Bible Dictionary*, claims: "The oldest extant ziggurat is that at modern Uruk, Biblical Erech, modern Warka ... Both Assyrian and Babylonian kings greatly prided themselves upon the height of their temples and boasted of having their tops as high as heaven."

"Let us make us a name lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" — The word for "name" is

### Bible Chronology from the Flood to the Birth of Abram

(Continued from page 117)

|                      | Born | Died | Age | Age at son's birth |
|----------------------|------|------|-----|--------------------|
| Noah at the Flood    | 1656 | 2006 | 950 | —                  |
| Shem 98 at the Flood | 1558 | 2158 | 600 | 100                |
| Arphaxad             | 1658 | 2096 | 438 | 35                 |
| Salah                | 1693 | 2126 | 433 | 30                 |
| Eber                 | 1723 | 2187 | 464 | 34                 |
| Peleg                | 1757 | 1966 | 209 | 30                 |
| Reu                  | 1787 | 1994 | 239 | 32                 |
| Serug                | 1819 | 2049 | 230 | 30                 |
| Nahor                | 1849 | 1997 | 148 | 29                 |
| Terah                | 1878 | 2083 | 205 | 70                 |
| Abram                | 2008 |      |     |                    |

The above chronology is based upon the suggestion that Abram left Haran the year his father died (Terah then aged 205), and entered the land at the age of seventy-five years (Gen. 12:4). Notice the marked decline in the life-span from the age of Peleg onwards, and that "in his days the earth was divided". At that stage, the fathers were outliving their descendants. Shem was living when Abram entered the Land of Promise, if the above chronology is accepted; and some 352 years elapsed between the Flood and the birth of Abram. In the list of names given in Genesis 11, however, Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, listed in Luke 3:36, is omitted. If time must be found for his inclusion, some amendment to the above chronology would be required. The call of Abram, however, commences a new computation in Bible chronology.



*shem*, name. In this they sought fame apart from the Truth, which has ever been the ambition of the wicked. See Psa. 49:11-13. The intention was based on a religious consideration. God had revealed Himself as the 'God of Shem' (Name), and Babel-builders were determined to proceed in their own way to attain unto it. Nimrod was probably the instigator of the project and the designer of the building. Certainly he set out to make a name for himself. To make a name for oneself in that way is a perversion of Truth, but not if it is pursued Scripturally. God is calling unto Himself a people "for His name" (Acts 15:14), and it is only in that "one name" (Acts 4:12), manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:10), that men can approach unto Him. In the days of Babel, the promise of the Name-bearer was contained in the Edenic Covenant (Gen. 3:15). But Nimrod claimed to have fulfilled it, and set himself up as the son promised.

#### VERSE 5

**"And Yahweh came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded"** — What flesh builds is in stark contrast to that which Yahweh builds. So men of faith have looked for "a city which hath (eternal) foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). At present the future "house of God" (John 14:2) is in the embryo stage, in the Ecclesia; for, wrote Paul, "whose house are we if ..." (Heb. 3:6). Ultimately the house of God will be revealed as the Jerusalem from above (Rev. 21:2, 10; Gal. 4:26), the perfected Ecclesia (Eph. 5:27), to provide the government of a changed world (Rev. 5:9-10).

#### VERSE 6

**"And Yahweh said, Behold the people is one"** — Such a desire is excellent when founded upon Divine principles (John 17:21; 1 Cor. 1:10). One language facilitates communication and co-operation. But when united for evil, the union is extremely dangerous.

**"And they have all one language"** — If used properly to expound the things of God and to praise and glorify His Name, this would have been a splendid benefit;

but not when used to urge each other on in an activity in opposition to the Divine Will. Ultimately, mankind will be brought under the influence of a common language, in order to communally worship Yahweh (Zeph. 3:9).

**"And this they began to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined"** — God had already declared the imagination of man's heart to be evil from his youth (Gen. 8:21); and its disastrous fruit had necessitated the judgment of the Flood.

#### VERSE 7

**"Go to"** — An ironical contrast to the "go to" of the builders of Babel (v. 3), expressive of activity.

**"Let us go down"** — The language of the Elohim is accommodated to human reasoning. The Elohim are indicated by the use of the pronoun *us*. See notes Gen. 1:26. They act as "the eyes of Yahweh which run to and fro through the whole earth" (Zech. 4:10).

**"And confound their language that they may not understand, one another's speech"** — The confusion of speech is the greatest divisive force in existence. It is claimed that human speech has three main divisions: Semitic, Aryan, and Turkoman (T. Whitelaw). Be that as it may, the multiplicity of languages and dialects that have developed since, have greatly separated and segregated the different races of humanity.

#### VERSE 8

**"So Yahweh scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth"** — Whatever change of language was brought about, it adversely affected the co-operation necessary to establish the name and build the tower. The political and ecclesiastical unity the Babel-builders sought was brought to an end by the divisive effect of foreign speech then introduced. The word "scattered" is from the Heb. *pus* and can also imply to dash in pieces, break, shave. It suggests some catastrophe not recorded caused them to be "scattered abroad."

**"And they left off to build the city"** — Confusion of speech led to discord, so

that the previous co-operation ceased. They left off building the city, though it was completed by Nimrod and his associates.

**VERSE 9**

**“Therefore is the name of it called Babel because Yahweh did there confound the language of all the earth:”** — In Aramaic, Babel signifies *House or Gate of God*, but in Hebrew it signifies *Confusion*. What to the church (see Rev. 17:5) constitutes the *Gate of God*, is *Confusion* to the Ecclesia. Babylon is the Greek form of *Babel*, so that the action of the Babel-builders is relevant to the interpretation of the Apocalyptic prophecy relating to Baby-

lon the Great.

**“And from thence did Yahweh scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth”** — This verse clearly shows that the peoples’ speech was first confused, and afterwards they were scattered. The narrative does not state what caused the scattering, though the two actions are distinctly indicated. Thus the rebellion ended in confusion and defeat, as all such rebellions against Yahweh will likewise end. On the other hand, the Truth unites, and must ultimately succeed. Compare the account of the confusion of tongues with the record of the uniting of peoples from all parts of the world by the preaching of the Gospel.

## THE GENERATIONS OF SHEM

### The Calling out of a People for the Name Genesis 11:10-26

*The lineage of Shem has already been outlined in Chapter 10:21-32; but now, a more selective genealogy is given, to continue where that of Chapter 5 leaves off. The ages of leading men are given, indicating that this genealogy is related to the overall purpose of God. It is set forth in orderly fashion, synchronising with the earlier list from Adam to Noah. As Noah was tenth from Adam, so Terah was tenth from Shem (vv. 10,24); as three sons of Noah are named, so three sons of Terah are named. In contrast to the lineage of Shem in chapter 10, this list ignores the descent through Joktan, and concentrates upon that through Peleg. Thus the record is brought rapidly from Noah to Abram, showing how the selected seed was called out of darkness into the marvellous light of the Truth. The recording of these generations of Shem provides the foundation for the story of Abraham, advancing a further step in the work of redemption.*

**Descendants to Abram — vv. 10-26**

*This genealogical line traces the onward development of the line of promise through ten generations until it reaches Abram the Hebrew patriarch.*

**VERSE 10**

**“These are the generations of Shem;**

**Shem was an hundred years old, and begat”** — The details here enumerated are repeated from Ch. 10:21 to trace the righteous seed.

**“Arphaxad”** — See note Ch. 10:22.

**VERSE 12**

**“Salah”** — See note Ch. 10:24.

**VERSE 14**

“Eber” — See note Ch. 10:24.

**VERSE 16**

“Peleg” — See note Ch. 10:25. He was brother to Joktan.

**VERSE 18**

“Reu” — Signifies *Friend*. He is called *Ragau* in Luke 3:35.

**VERSE 20**

“Serug” — Signifies *Shoot, Tendril*. In Luke 3:35 his name is Grecized into *Saruch*. A city by this name in Mesopotamia near Haran attests the presence of the Hebrew patriarchs in that region.

**VERSE 22**

“Nahor” — His name signifies *Snorer* Abram’s grandfather.

**VERSE 24**

“Terah” — His name signifies to *turn, tarry or delay*, and provides an index to his character, for he tarried in Haran instead of moving into the Land of Promise. Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran, and through them the ancestor of the Israelites, Ishmaelites, Midianites, Moabites, and Ammonites. He was an idolater (Josh. 24:2), but left Ur for Haran, thus commencing the migration that finally took Abram and Lot into the Land of Promise.

**VERSE 26**

“And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran” — If Abram was born when Terah was seventy

years of age, and Abram was 75 years old (Gen. 12:4) when he departed from Haran after the death of his father (Acts 7:4), how was it possible for Terah to have been two hundred and five years of age when he died (Gen. 11:32)? It would be impossible, and in order to reconcile the apparent discrepancy, some have attempted to bend Scripture, or the facts, to force agreement.

But it is obvious that Abram is mentioned first, not because he was born first, but because the narrative is going to concentrate upon him, and in the purpose of Yahweh, he was elevated to the legal position of firstborn. A similar arrangement is given in the naming of Noah’s three sons, in which Shem is listed first, though Japheth was the elder (Cp. Gen. 6:10; 10:21). In ancient times it was possible to elevate a younger son as legal firstborn, and this was often done. It foreshadowed the purpose of Yahweh to provide a younger son (Col. 1:15), the second Adam, to replace the first Adam (Luke 3:38) who had been deposed through sin. See notes on *Shem*.

If Abram left Haran immediately upon the death of his father, he would have been born when Terah was about 130 years of age (cp. Gen. 11:32; 12:4). *Elpis Israel* makes the suggestion that Abram left Haran before the death of Terah, and that he did not enter “into the land of Canaan,” until after he had visited Hebron (*Chronikon Hebraikon* p. 13), but the facts are against this conclusion (Gen. 12:6; 13:12). Bro. Thomas’ translation of Acts 7:4 does not help his case materially, nor mitigate against our explanation above.

## Ur of the Chaldees

Ur was a city of no mean importance. It was the headquarters of the worship of the moon god Nanah, and its principal building was a massive ziggurat-temple dedicated to this pagan worship; the impressive ruins of which are still in evidence today. Ur was a royal city which one time governed the Sumerian provinces. Archaeological discoveries have established that the civilisation was of an extremely high order, with an advanced culture and education. Clay tablets have been found recording business transactions, school lessons, hymns, treatises in history and mathematics.

Before the river changed its course, Ur was situated on the Euphrates as it entered the Persian Gulf, though, today, the top of the Gulf is some distance from the site of the ancient city. In the days of Abram, Ur was one of the most magnificent cities in the

world: a centre of manufacture, farming and shipping, situated in an area of fabulous fertility and wealth. From this centre caravans left in all directions for distant lands and markets, and ships tied up at its docks importing and exporting merchandise. The city covered an area about 3.2kms (2 miles) northwest and southeast and .8km (half a mile) wide. It was surrounded by an inner wall 365m (400 yards) long by 183m (200 yards) wide. The royal tombs of Ur testify to the high degree of material skill and wealth developed by the civilisation. Articles of highest value in precious metal and of the most exquisite workmanship have been discovered there.

But Abram was told to “get thee out” of such a place. In that command it was emphasised to him that there was no future in Ur in spite of its material wellbeing. Today the wisdom of the command and his obedience to it are apparent. Ur is a barren waste. Its one-time fertile fields are now arid sand-dunes; its glorious city a mass of ruins in an uninhabitable desert. But Israel is alive, witnessing to the wisdom of the Divine command to the father of the nation. Ur declined when the Persian Gulf silted up and the river Euphrates changed its course. The city was gradually abandoned by its population, and finally buried by the sandstorms of the desert.

Even in the days of Abram, Ur was beginning to be superseded by Babylon, as the Akkadian Semites asserted their influence over the Sumerian Hamites.

## THE GENERATIONS OF TERAH

### The Calling out of a Family for God Genesis 11:27–25:11

*This section of Genesis, is the sixth of the list of “generations,” and, with the introduction, the seventh division of the book, narrates the life history of Abraham, the father of the faithful. The subject-matter is of the greatest significance, providing a foundation for the rest of the Bible, and setting forth in promise and prophecy the Gospel message itself. Commenting upon the life-history of Abraham, Paul declared that “it was not written for his sake alone ... but for us also” (Rom. 4:23-24) “...who walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham” (v. 12). The life history of Abraham, therefore, is a typical foreshadowing of the will and purpose of Yahweh with all who accept the call.*

*Up to Genesis 11:25, the Genesis record has described four outstanding events that changed the course of history: Creation, the Fall, the Flood and the Confusion of Tongues. It has also introduced three outstanding personalities who have typified Christ, namely Adam, Enoch, Noah. From now on, Genesis centres its narration around four outstanding men who likewise typified Christ, namely: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph — typifying a Divine Call; a Divine Birth; a Divine Care; a Divine Elevation to power.*

*Abraham also is set forth in four stages: as amongst idolators, as a believer, as a pilgrim, as justified by works. In the terms of Hebrews, he "saw" the promise afar off; was "persuaded" of it; "embraced it"; and "confessed" or witnessed to it (Heb. 11:13).*

*He lived as a "stranger and a pilgrim in the earth"; a "stranger" because here he had "no continuing city"; and a "pilgrim" because he moved towards an objective. He is first represented as under the domination of his father, Terah, and it was only after his death that Abram moved steadily towards his ideal and objective. How significant of our walk in the faith! Only when the "old man" is put to death, does the "new man" find its full manifestation in performing the Father's will. The flesh will take us a certain distance, in grasping a knowledge of God, but it must be put off before the full concept of belief in action will be revealed. Abram's relationship with his father Terah, and his ultimate entrance into the Land reveal that. The narrative is full of exciting interest, moving drama, and faith-stimulating examples to emulate. It is rich in typical foreshadowing of the future.*

*Abraham was called "the friend of God" (James 2:23; Isa. 41:8; 2 Chron. 20:7), the "called" (Isa. 51:2; Heb. 11:8), the "chosen" (Neh. 9:7), and the "faithful" (Neh. 9:7-8). Those are also the characteristics of true believers who follow in his steps (see John 15:14-15; Rev. 17:14). A close study of this section of the Word, therefore, will not only enrich us, but also energize us, to build into our lives characteristics worthy of a place with Abraham when he will become great in the earth.*

#### **ABRAM AS A STRANGER & PILGRIM: Ch. 11:27-13:18**

*This section narrates the family pilgrimage from Ur to Haran; the second call to Abram in Haran; the migration of Abram and Lot across the Euphrates and into the Land; the promise made at Shechem; the lapse in Egypt; the separation of Lot from Abram; and the great promise that Abram and his seed shall inherit the land for ever.*

#### **The Descendants of Terah — vv. 27-30**

*The family of Terah leaves Ur as idolaters, and makes its way to Haran, as a result of the divine message conveyed to the family.*

#### **VERSE 27**

**"Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran"** — Abram signifies *Exalted Father*, Nahor, *Snorer*, and Haran, *Enlightened*.

**"And Haran begat Lot"** — Lot's name signifies *veiled, covered*. He was perhaps given that name because he was "covered" or "protected" by Abram as a guardian. Once in the Land, he unfortunately revealed that his spiritual vision was veiled, and so he made his unfortunate choice to wander away from his uncle Abraham into the evil environment of Sodom. See Rom. 11:7-8, 25; 2 Cor. 3:15-16.

**VERSE 28**

**“And Haran died before his father Terah”** — His name signifies *Enlightened*, but the “light” in the family of Terah in Ur was really only darkness (cp. Matt. 6:23) for they were idolaters (Josh. 24:2). Babylonia was a land of spiritual death to those who dwelt therein.

**“In the land of his nativity in Ur of the Chaldees”** — Davis’ Dictionary gives the meaning as *Light of the Conquerors*, and identifies the name with the Cushites. In the time of Abram, Chaldea comprised a small territory in southern Babylonia, of which Ur was one of the most prominent cities; but later, the term was applied to almost all the territory of Mesopotamia. Archaeologists trace the Chaldeans from migrations back to Ararat in Armenia. The Chaldeans gave themselves to study, and excelled in exact science, which, however, they combined with superstition. They were interested in, and highly skilled at astronomy, particularly in the study and observation of the stars. But they combined it with astrology, and by this means sought to foretell the future. For over a period of 360 years they kept meticulous astronomical records; and one of their astounding contributions to human knowledge and development was to reckon a

year of 365 days, 6 hours, 15 minutes, 41 seconds — a calculation which measures to within thirty minutes of what modern instruments have worked out (Unger). Ur was one of the most magnificent of the centres of Chaldean learning, a “shining light” among the cities of Sumer.

**VERSE 29**

**“And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram’s wife was Sarai”** — Her name signifies *Princess*. She was Terah’s daughter by a different wife (Gen. 20:12).

**“And the name of Nahor’s wife, Milcah”** — Signifies *Queen*. These relations of Abram are introduced here in preparation for further references (see Ch. 22:20-23), when Abraham sought a wife for Isaac (Gen. 24).

**“The daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah”** — Signifies *Seer* or *She Will Look Out*. Does this signify that she was always on the search for something new? Josephus identifies this sister of Lot and Milcah, as Sarah, Abram’s wife; but that hardly seems likely. More likely, perhaps, that Iscah was a half sister to Lot as Sarai was to Abram (Gen. 20:12), and possibly his wife. If so, her *looking out* for something

## **Personalities of the Old Testament**

### **Adam: Of the Earth, Earthy**

Adam was the first human son of God (Luke 3:38), and the crowning work of Creation. His name means *red earth*, and though he was made in the image and likeness of the Elohim, he hearkened to the voice of his wife, expressing the foolish act of transgression, and so fell from grace. He was turned out of the beautiful garden he was given to till, and condemned to a lifetime of toil, wrestling with ground that had been “cursed for his sake,” and which now brought forth thorns and thistles.

At the epoch of Creation it was recognised that there was “not a man to till the ground” (Gen. 2:5), and so Adam was created. This teaches that the consummation of the Divine plan is dependent upon human instrumentality. The earth was first made for man, and then man was made for the earth!

But Adam needed companionship to bring out the best of his character, and so a help meet for him was provided in Eve. Harkening more to his wife than to God, Adam sinned, and the result was mortality which has descended upon all humanity: for man is mortal because of sin.

Adam, as the federal head of the human race, typed the Lord Jesus Christ, the “second Adam” who likewise is the federal head of those redeemed out of humanity to become the creation of God (Rev. 3:14), equal unto the angels, to die no more.

new at Sodom led to her downfall, and that of her family as well.

### VERSE 30

**“Sarai was barren; she had no child”** — This comment is significant. The Bride of Christ remains barren in the absence of a faith which will enable the “seed of God” (1 Pet. 1:23) to germinate and produce fruit. This truth was later dramatised in the life of Sarah, for “through faith she received strength to conceive” (Heb. 11:11; Isa. 54:1). Thus, in Sarah, the prediction of Yahweh was illustrated: “He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye Yahweh” (Psa. 113:9). Gabriel told Mary: “Behold,... Elizabeth hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible” (Luke 1:36-37). “The barren hath born seven (sons),” Hannah exulted at the birth of Samuel; “and she that hath many children is waxed feeble” (1 Sam. 2:5). All this teaches that the spiritually barren can produce fruit to the glory of Yahweh. With Him and the means He has made available unto “whomsoever will” this is “not impossible.”

### The First Call at Ur — vv. 31-32

*According to Stephen, the first call came to Abram in Ur of the Chaldees: “The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran” (Acts 7:2; Gen. 15:7). The call was to Abram alone (Isa. 51:2), but for a time he permitted his father Terah to take the initiative. This is true of all who are called to the Truth, for the flesh, called also “our father,” remains with us until it is figuratively “crucified” in baptism. Then, when it is “dead,” the believer commences a new life in righteousness. That was the drama now enacted by Abram as he left Ur in company with Terah.*

### VERSE 31

**“And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son’s son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son**

**Abram’s wife”** — Terah signifies to *turn, tarry, delay*. As such, he typified the flesh, which then still was in control of Abram. Abram received the call in Ur; apparently he told of it to his relations, and Terah left, taking his family with him.

**“And they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees”** — See Josh. 24:2; Neh. 9:7; Acts 7:2, 4.

**“To go into the land of Canaan”** — The Hebrew word for “into” is *el*, which signifies *towards*. They went, not knowing the exact location to which God directed them. Their intentions were to obey the call of Yahweh and proceed towards Canaan. But the flesh, in the person of Terah, was not prepared to go the whole way. The inhabitants of Canaan are listed in Gen. 10:15-19.

**“And they came”** — The four men represent four types. Terah stands for the flesh: “your father” (John 8:44) or, the “old man” of the flesh, which turns, taries or delays to carry out the Divine will. Nabor is the snorer who lacks the energising strength of faith to move on. Abram represents those who exalt the Father, by attempting to perform His will. Lot types those who may be guided by others, but who often fail when left to their own resources. His spiritual vision was veiled. Two remained behind; two went over the Euphrates; and of those two, one drifted. The women likewise provide examples and types, particularly if Iscah was the wife of Lot. Sarah is set forth as an example of exemplary walk (1 Pet. 3:6), whereas Lot’s wife is “re-membered” for her evil influence and sad end (Luke 17:32).

**“Unto Haran, and dwelt there”** — They probably believed that they had gone far enough, and therefore they now “dwelt” there. Figuratively, we all must come unto Haran if we would obey Yahweh; for Haran signifies *Enlightened, or Cross Roads*.

Abram had turned his back upon the natural light, Ur, and had come to a state of enlightenment. The next step was to pass over the waters of the Euphrates in a typical baptism, and commence his pilgrim walk as a stranger in the Land of Promise. The four men had come to the

crossroads of their existence. Who would move? For a time they waited in Haran, perhaps debating the issue. The statement, "they dwelt there", implies a settled state, and suggests that they intended to remain there. Haran still exists as a commercial centre, on the Belikh River, about 60 miles from its entrance into the Euphrates. It was on the busy caravan route connecting Nineveh and Babylon in Mesopotamia, with Damascus, Tyre and the Egyptian cities of the west and south. Haran, like Ur, was a centre of the moon god cult; which may have caused Terah to delay there as a convenient and congenial centre. Inscriptions have mentioned a neighbouring city of Nahor (Gen. 24:10). They likewise speak of social usages as family

teraphim (Gen. 31:19), deathbed blessing (Gen. 27), and employment of concubines to ensure heirs (Gen. 16:3). The family of Terah was in a familiar environment.

#### VERSE 32

**"And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran"** — The death of his father removed an influence that had caused Abram to delay complete obedience to the call of Yahweh. He was now ready to pass over the river Euphrates, and to become "a stranger and a pilgrim in the land." When believers elect to put to death the flesh, they render obedience to God. Conviction brings death to the old man of the flesh "that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6:6).

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### ABRAM AND LOT IN CANAAN AND EGYPT

*Abram obeys the Divine call, and worships at Shechem and Bethel. Under pressure of famine he moves down into Egypt; and under pressure of fear he makes a mistake. But God protects him.*

#### Second Call from Haran — vv. 1-3

Once again the voice of Yahweh was heard, calling upon Abram to separate himself from his old way of life, and obey the Divine Will. That voice is still heard today, calling out a people for His Name (Acts 15:14). All who heed it must follow the pilgrimage of Abraham in principle.

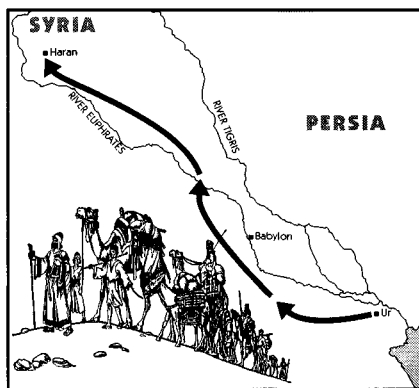
#### VERSE 1

**"Now Yahweh had said unto Abram"** — In common with most other translations, the R.V. renders this in the present tense: "God said". This was the second call to Abram; the first was made when he was in Ur (see Acts 7:1-2).

**"Get thee out"** — The Hebrew verb is in the imperative mood, signifying that the person's own interests and advantage lay in following the advice given. It can be literally rendered: "Go for thyself," as much as to say, "I strongly recommend thee to

go. It will be to thy advantage to do so".

**"Of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house"** — There was a need to separate from his former way of life, for Abram to become "a stranger and a pilgrim in the earth" (see





Josh. 24:2-3; Rev. 18:4; Luke 14:26-33; Heb. 11:8). This is basic to a true walk in faith. Paul taught that relationship with God is conditional upon this. "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:16-18). Thus sonship is predicated upon separation (Acts 15:14). As a true bride leaves all others to cleave unto her husband, so does the Bride of Christ to her Lord. This constitutes her true beauty. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; *so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty*; for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him" (Psalm 45:10-11).

**"Unto a land that I will shew thee"** — He went "not knowing whither he went...", and this constituted his first recorded act of faith (Heb. 11:8-10). He placed his trust in Yahweh, and allowed Him to guide him.

## VERSE 2

**"And I will"** — At this stage the promise to Abram was conditional; it was later confirmed unconditionally (Gen. 22:16-18).

**"Make of thee a great nation"** — There are four main sections to the Abrahamic promise, of which this is the first. It is a *national promise*, to be fulfilled in the restored and regenerated Israelitish nation. At no stage has Israel really been a "great nation," for even the glory of Solomon's reign was marred by dissension that ended in division. Yet, in fulfilment of the covenant, Israel is to become a great nation (Jer. 33:7-8; 31:22-24). Yahweh has promised "thou shalt not be forgotten of Me" (Isa. 44:21); that He will restore the nation for "His name's sake" (Ezek. 36:22-26); that Christ will assume his rightful place as king over a disciplined people (Ezek.

37:21-22); that Israel shall become a blessing instead of a curse (Zech. 8:13); that "the first dominion" shall be granted to it (Mic. 4:8).

The turmoil in the Middle East today stems from the return of the Jews to their ancient homeland; and that is in fulfilment of the promise to Abraham. Thus it can be said that our way of life today is affected by that which God offered the patriarch some four thousand years ago.

**"And I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing"** — In contrast to the national promise, this promise is a *personal* one. It involves Abram. It is not fulfilled as yet, for Abraham is dead, and comparatively few people are cognisant of the great part he is yet to play in the development of the Divine purpose. But the promise implies a resurrection from the dead. Christ taught: "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham ... God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. 22:31-32). The Lord taught that many "shall sit down with Abraham ... in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 8:11), called elsewhere "the kingdom of God" (Luke 13:28). In that day it will be accounted an honour to be the associate of Abraham, and to be acknowledged by him. He will not only receive a blessing himself, but will constitute a blessing unto others.

The word "bless" is *barak* in Hebrew, and signifies, to kneel so as to bless in adoration. By this expression God would honor Abraham because he had honored Yahweh by responding to His instructions. The idea is expressed in Matt. 10:32.

## VERSE 3

**"And I will bless them that bless thee,"** — This constitutes a *communal* or *family promise*. Those who bless Abraham are those who follow in his footsteps, and who are accounted as his "seed". "If ye be Christ's," declared Paul, "then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:29). Any who bless Israel will receive a blessing, but particularly does the blessing rest upon those who

embrace the promises, and are inducted into the family of Abraham.

**“And curse him that curseth thee”**

— On the other hand, individuals (notice the singular “him”) who curse Israel will be dealt with in kind by Yahweh. There are two different Hebrew words used here. The first is *arar*, to curse; the second is *qalal*, to despise. Literally: “I will bless the blessers of thee, and the despiser of thee I will curse”. Those who treat the things relating to Abraham lightly will receive the curse of God.

**“In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed”** — The final aspect of the promise is an *international* one. It involves all nations, and anticipates the time when the Lord Jesus shall reign over a world at peace (Isa. 2:2-4). The promise is frequently repeated (Gen. 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; Acts 3:25). In Gal. 3:8 it is cited as summarising the Gospel message. It is Yahweh’s purpose to cause “righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations” (Isa. 61:11), and so involve all nations in the blessings that stem from Abraham’s faith. Of course, this is to be fulfilled through the seed (Gen. 22:17-18; 28:14), even the Lord Jesus Christ (see Psa. 72:17; Gal. 3:16; Acts 15:17; Rev. 11:15). The promises of Gen. 12:2-3 are repeated in Gen. 22:16-18; but whereas in Genesis 12 they are given conditionally, in Genesis 22 they are confirmed with an oath because of the way in which Abraham had performed the will of Yahweh.

**Abram and Lot enter Canaan — vv. 4-5**

*With Terah dead (like the “old man of the flesh” at baptism: Rom. 6:6), Abram is no longer cumbered with obligations to the flesh, and passes over the Euphrates in a typical baptism, to commence a “newness of life”. He becomes known as Abram the Hebrew, the “Crosser over” (Gen. 14:13).*

**VERSE 4**

**“So Abram departed, as Yahweh had spoken unto him, and Lot went with him”** — The presence of Terah seems to have been a weight upon him, a hindrance to his own obedience. But now,

with that removed, Abram moved over the Euphrates into a new way of life.

**“Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran”** — He therefore must have been born when Terah was one hundred and thirty years of age (see Gen. 11:32).

**VERSE 5**

**“And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran”**

— This comprised a considerable number of people, for, when Lot was taken captive, Abram was able to muster a retinue of 318 men to go to his support (Gen. 14:14).

**“Into the land of Canaan they came”** — This involved a journey of some 300 miles. They would have crossed the Euphrates, moved down to Syria, visited Damascus (Ch. 15:2), and so entered the land. Abram’s status was then changed. He became known as Abram the Hebrew (Gen. 14:13), or *Crosser Over* as the word signifies. He had passed over from a way of life that inevitably leads to death, to one having the promise of life (1 John 3:14; 2 Cor. 2:16). Josephus cites a history extant in his day which claimed that Abram reigned as king in Damascus for some time, “being come with an army from the land of the Chaldeans” (Ant. 1.7). It is probable from Gen. 15:2 that he did visit Damascus on his way into the land.

**The Promise Confirmed in The Land**

— vv. 6-9

*The promise originally had been made conditional upon Abram acting in accordance with the will of Yahweh; but now that he had obeyed, it was confirmed in the land.*

**VERSE 6**

**“And Abram passed through the land”** — Paul wrote that “he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country” (Heb. 11:9). He realised that there was no future for him there under the existing order of things, and so “he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose

builder and maker is God" (v. 10). Abram's attitude of faith was pleasing to Yahweh.

**"Unto the place of Sichem" —** Sichem, or Shechem, is a very beautiful spot, in the very heart of the Land of Promise, overshadowed by the mountains of Ebal and Gerizim. The name comes from a root meaning *Between the shoulders*, and therefore signifies, *Burden-bearer*. Later Shechem, was appointed as a city of refuge (Josh. 21:21), and as such was a type of Christ, our city of refuge (Heb. 6:18-20). On entering the land under Joshua, the tribes were conducted to this spot, to hear the blessings and cursings of the law, pronounced from the joint mounts of Ebal and Gerizim which constitute the two "shoulders" between which Shechem sheltered, and to renew their covenant with Yahweh (Josh. 8:30-35). It thus became a rallying place for Israel (Josh. 24:1; 1 Kings 12:1-19), again pointing forward to our great Burden-bearer, the Lord Jesus, from whom will come, in due course, blessings and cursings according to how men react to the invitation of the Gospel. It was at Shechem that the Lord met the woman of Samaria, and instructed her regarding the water of life (John 4:5-14).

**"Unto the plain of Moreh" —** "Plain" is an entirely wrong translation. The Hebrew *allon* should be rendered *oak* or *terebinth* as in the R.V. (text and margin). It comes from a root signifying strength, for which the oak is noted. The oak, *quercus ilex* is native to the Mediterranean region, and is commonly used as a symbol for strength and long life. Its roots descend to a great depth, so that invariably it is found on firm ground, and never in swampy soil. The oak prefers to grow alone, and is never found in forests; it is noted for its longevity. In the symbology of the narrative it speaks of that strength available to saints, and derived from on high.

"Moreh" signifies *Archer*, *First rain*, or *Teacher*. The archer points to the mark; the first rain points to the promise of a bountiful harvest; the teacher points to the way.

The *Oak of Moreh*, therefore, signifies *The Oak (or Strength) of the Teacher*. As symbols, the place of Shechem (the Burden-bearer), the Strength (Oak) of the Teacher, point forward to the Lord Jesus Christ, our Burden-bearer, our Teacher, whose strength is derived from Yahweh. Moreh (the Teacher) was a most appropriate name for Shechem as far as Abram was concerned, for there Yahweh taught or instructed him in His purpose; "Unto thy seed will I give this land". At Shechem he heard this for the first time in the Land.

**"And the Canaanite was then in the land" —** This word is from a root *kawnah*, to bend the knee, to *humiliate* oneself, and therefore, by implication, a *trader*. The word has been rendered *merchant* (Job 41:6; see also Hos. 12:7; Zeph. 1:11) and *trafficker* (Isa. 23:8; see also Ezek. 17:4). The Canaanites were a people cursed of God (Gen. 9:25), and therefore the enemy of the righteous. They were a religious people, but their religion was immoral in the extreme. Abram entered a land of spiritual enemies and therefore needed a Burden-bearer, the strength of the Teacher! Though the ancient race has been extirpated, religious Canaanites still are in evidence throughout the world. They are the "merchants of the earth" who trade in many things including the "bodies and souls of men" (Rev. 18:11,13); but who are destined to mourn and lament when "no man buyeth their merchandise any more" (v. 11). At that time, as Zechariah observes, "there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of Yahweh of hosts" (Zech. 14:21), implying that they are found there at present. They are the religious Canaanites who "through covetousness, with feigned words, make merchandise" of the Truth (2 Pet. 2:3). The clergy are such, and are enemies of the righteous; they make merchandise of the Word of God, but their judgment is rapidly approaching, and Zechariah's words will be fulfilled (see Zech. 13:3).

#### VERSE 7

**"And Yahweh appeared unto Abram" —** In what way is not recorded; though it most likely would have been

through Elohist manifestation.

**“And said, unto thy seed will I give this land”** — The promise is absolute and not conditional as in vv. 2-3. See also Ch. 13:15; 17:8; Psa. 105:9-12. Shechem, therefore, was the place in the land chosen of God where Abram should first hear the promise. “Here was a country, lying between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean, in which were Abram and all his house, with his flocks and herds, and which was in the actual possession of warlike tribes, living in cities walled up to heaven. Concerning this country, the Lord, to whom heaven and earth belong, said to Abram, *I will give it to thy Seed*, when as yet he had no child” (*Elpis Israel* p. 229).

**“And there builded he an altar unto Yahweh; who appeared unto him”** — An altar represented Yahweh in sacrificial manifestation, as fully exhibited by Christ (Heb. 13:10). They were built of unhewn stone (symbolising flesh as shaped by Deity), and erected only in those places where Yahweh had manifested Himself (Exod. 20:24-25). This is the second altar referred to in Scripture (see notes in Gen. 8:20) and each one has a significance peculiar to itself. Consider the associations of this one: *the place*: Shechem, the Burden-bearer, the Strength of the Teacher; *the proclamation*: Unto thy seed will I give this land; *the circumstances*: the Canaanite was then in the land. Who is the Burden-bearer? the Strength of the Teacher? the Seed to inherit the land? the conqueror of the Canaanites? The answer is: Yahweh in sacrificial manifestation; in other words, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus Abraham “saw his day and was glad” (John 8:56). He saw it in parable as well as in prophecy, and the altar he built was expressive of his belief and his confidence in the promise.

#### VERSE 8

**“And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent”** — The elevation to the southeast of Bethel commands a panoramic view of the Jordan valley, and has been described as “one of the great viewpoints of Palestine.”

**“Having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east”** — Bethel signifies *House of God*, and Hai signifies *The Ruin*. Bethel is today called Beitin; Hai is identified with Et-Tell some 2.4kms (1.5 miles) from Bethel.

**“And there he builded an altar unto Yahweh”** — The altar (representative of Yahweh in sacrificial manifestation) was between the *House of God* and *Ruin*: bringing to mind the two destinies before the worshippers. Christ as “our altar” (Heb. 13:10) is, in a spiritual sense, strategically placed between the *House of God* and ruin. Paul wrote: “Now thanks be *unto God*, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are *unto God* a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish; to the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life” (2 Cor. 2:14-16). That was the parabolic import of the altar that Abram built between Bethel and Hai.

**“And called upon the name of Yahweh”** — Adam Clarke quotes Dr. Shuckford as contending that *qara beshem* signifies “invoked in the name of Yahweh”. This signifies that he foresaw the coming Redeemer, and made his approach to Yahweh through him. But how can the narrative claim that Abram “invoked in the Name of Yahweh” when that name had not been revealed unto Abraham (see Exod. 6:3). The name Yahweh, *He will be*, which we will discuss when treating with Exodus 3:15, is the third person, future tense of the common Hebrew verb, *Ehyeh*, which signifies *I will be*. Abram was familiar with the Divine purpose to provide a Redeemer for humanity, and recognised that the *goel* would be a seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15). As such he would be a manifestation of the Father, and the one, in common Hebrew parlance, “who will be”. Abram doubtless invoked in the *One Who will be*, and Moses, recording the incident after the Name had been revealed as such, appropriately used it in this place.

#### VERSE 9

**“And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south”** — He traversed

the Land of Promise from north to south. It is significant to observe the subtle difference in expressions used in vv. 9,10. In v. 9 Abram is described as "going toward" the south, but when he made to go to Egypt, he is said to have gone "down"; marking a point of deterioration (v. 10).

#### **Abram in Egypt — vv. 10-20**

*God had promised that if Abram performed His Will, he would prove a blessing to others. When Abram went down into Egypt he became a troublemaker and not a blessing. Two lessons emerge: (1) Fear can cause even a righteous man to fail; for "fear of man bringeth a snare"; and, (2) Yahweh overshadoweth the lives of His own, and in the ultimate will suffer no man to do them wrong.*

#### **VERSE 10**

**"And there was a famine in the land"** — The most fertile of all countries (Deut. 8:7-9; 11:11-12) suffered drought, and Abram was forced into Egypt. In this, he typified the experience of his race which would be driven from the land at a time of famine of spiritual food (Amos 8:11-13).

**"And Abram went down into Egypt"** — This was a mark of deterioration. Where reference is made in the Bible to going to Egypt, it is represented as a downward step (e.g. Isa. 30:2).

**"To sojourn there"** — He did not enter the land as a permanent resident, but merely as a temporary expedient, to *sojourn* there. It is set forth as an evidence of faith that Abram did not return to Ur (Heb. 11:15-16).

#### **VERSE 11**

**"And it came to pass when he was come near to enter into Egypt,"** — As he neared the confines of Egypt, he was filled with misgivings. Circumstances had forced him to Egypt, which, in the Scriptures, typifies the world. It is legitimate for believers to use the world, so long as they do not become entangled with it (1 Cor. 7:31). But there is ever a danger from close associations with the world, and this Abram now discovered. His attitude and action at this time illustrate the words of

Solomon: "There is no man that sinneth not" (1 Kings 8:46).

**"That he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon"** — She was fair and attractive in contrast to the dark-visaged Hamites of Egypt. As such, she would have been prominent among the other women. Sarai was ten years younger than Abram (Gen. 17:17), and therefore in her middle sixties. However, that was not considered old in those times, and, in fact, Sarai was only in the middle age of her life (Gen. 23:1-2).

#### **VERSE 12**

**"Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive"** — The Hebrew, *Mitsraim* (Egyptians) signifies *the Oppressors*. The very name was calculated to cause Abram concern, and, in this case, the words of the Proverb proved true: "The fear of man bringeth a snare" (Prov. 29:25).

#### **VERSE 13**

**"Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister"** — In fact, she was his half sister (Gen. 20:12), so that the statement was a half Truth. The environment of Egypt was rubbing off on Abram, so that he began to practise deception. If so great a man as he was adversely influenced by the world, what of lesser persons? We need to beware the seductive influence of modern Egypt about us.

**"That it may be well with me for thy sake, and my soul shall live because of thee"** — Sarai would benefit from the protection afforded Abram. The deception was evidently an arrangement entered into for personal protection when they left Ur (Gen. 20:13). In practising it, Abram acted out of character: it was a temporary lapse. As well as his concern for Sarah's well being, he had a fear for his own life.

#### **VERSE 14**

**"And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Eryp-**

tians beheld the woman that she was very fair" — This is similar to the attitude of the antediluvian sons of God towards the daughters of men (Gen. 6:2). The lust of the eyes had commenced its evil work as it did in Eden (Gen. 3:6).

**VERSE 15**

"The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house" — The commendation of Egypt to the people of God can lead to spiritual ruin (Luke 6:26), especially when based upon fleshly principles.

**VERSE 16**

"And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels" — Abram profited from the things of Egypt (Gen. 13:2), but they ultimately led to strife and division (v. 7).

**VERSE 17**

"Yahweh plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife" — The manner in which this was done is not revealed; but it evidenced Yahweh's overshadowing care for His servant. There is an obvious reference to this in Psalm 105:13-15:

*"When they went from one nation to another,*

*From one kingdom to another people:  
He suffered no man to do them wrong:  
Yea, He reprov'd kings for their sakes;  
Saying, Touch not mine anointed,  
And do my prophets no harm".*

**VERSE 18**

"And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? Why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife" — What a sad thing it is when a worthy man is justly rebuked by a worldly one. How circum-spect God's people must be! See 2 Sam. 12:14; 1 Tim. 3:7.

**VERSE 19**

"Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way" — So Abram is dismissed in disgrace, and any witness that he may have made concerning the faith which motivated his life, was weakened irretrievably by his inconsistency.

**VERSE 20**

"And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife and all that he had" — Among the servants he acquired (cp. v. 16) was Hagar the Egyptian (Gen. 16:1). Abram left materially enriched, but spiritually the poorer for his contact with Egypt.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### LOT LEAVES ABRAM

*Abram's stay in Egypt had been humiliating; the unhappy environment had caused him to act in a manner entirely out of character to his normal behaviour. He felt the need of closer communion with God, and "made his way back" to the altar of Bethel.*

**Lot Leaves Abram — vv. 1-13**

*The sojourn in Egypt had a bad effect upon the family of Lot. Having enjoyed its pleasures for a season, and materially profited by association with it, the various*

*members found the loneliness of pilgrimage in the Land difficult, and came to believe that it was unnecessary. The very possessions they gained in Egypt led to competition and strife, which paved the*

*way for division and separation.*

#### VERSE 1

**“Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had”** — Contrast this statement with that of Gen. 12:10. He never left the Land again. One excursion into Egypt was enough for that faithful man. He profited from the difficulties and experiences in Egypt by recognising its dangers. See Gen. 24:6.

**“And Lot with him, into the south”** — This would almost imply a reluctance on the part of Lot; at least it shows that Lot was not prepared to take the initiative.

#### VERSE 2

**“And Abram was very rich”** — Though these riches were extracted from Egypt, they did represent a Divine blessing. See Prov. 10:22.

**“In cattle, in silver and in gold”** — There is a contrast between the riches of Abram, and those of Lot (v. 5). In addition to cattle, used elsewhere for those who labour in the things of God (1Cor. 9:9), Abram was rich in silver and gold, the metals which symbolise redemption and faith (1Pet. 1:18). Later, some of these possessions were used to good effect in obtaining a wife for Isaac (Gen. 24:10,35).

#### VERSE 3

**“And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning”** — The beginning was not his entrance into the Land, but the commencement of those experiences that took him into Egypt. He obviously felt the need of closer communion with God, and slowly made his way up from Egypt, over 290 kms (180 miles), back to the altar at Bethel, where some unrecorded theophany had taken place.

**“Between Bethel and Hai”** — See note Ch. 12:8. A most momentous decision was about to be made; and appropriately Abram and Lot, representing their two companies, stood between the *House of God* and *Ruin*. They had returned from Egypt; and a new start was about to be made.

#### VERSE 4

**“Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first; and there Abram called on the name of Yahweh”** — See note Ch. 12:8. The journey back constituted a pilgrimage with a purpose: a restoration to a former way of life. They returned, and sought their God in an appropriate act of worship. As their joint companies comprised a large number of people, perhaps one thousand persons (cp. Ch. 14:14), such a ceremony on the heights of Bethel, would have been a solemn and impressive occasion.

#### VERSE 5

**“And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents”** — His household had been enlarged. God had blessed him with ample of this world's goods in which to maintain the pilgrim life, but probably the taste of the good things of Egypt, together with the nagging insistence of his wife who was always looking for more (see ch. 11:29; Luke 17:32), had adversely affected him. It is significant that no mention is made of silver and gold (the metals of redemption and faith) in his case (cp. 1Pet. 1:18).

#### VERSE 6

**“And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together; for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together”** — Probably it had not quite recovered from the effects of the drought (Gen. 12:10), so that pasturage was scarce. The difficulty was accentuated by their worldly possessions. When they had first arrived at Bethel from the north, their possessions had been smaller, but with the increase from Egypt, a crisis developed. Lot's spiritual wealth had dwindled, as his material possessions increased. The subsequent strife and division was quite unnecessary, being caused through greed. Lot should have asserted his authority over his servants, reminded them of the faith of Abraham and required them to submit to the benefits of unity. How frequently the tragedy of Lot has been repeated over the years. The very things that drew him from Abram consti-

tute one of the greatest problems of this present affluent and materialistic-minded age. If Lot had addressed the problem in a spiritually mature fashion, Yahweh, who had blessed him in Egypt, would have continued to bless him in the Land. But blinded to that truth, Lot allowed himself to be carried along by circumstances that ultimately impoverished him in the very things in which his heart delighted.

#### VERSE 7

**“And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram’s cattle, and the herdmen of Lot’s cattle;”** — This commenced the decline of Lot. The narrative states that the strife was between the herdmen of Abram and those of Lot, but it is obvious, from Abram’s appeal to Lot, that the latter had encouraged the action of his workmen. As a younger man, dependent for spiritual guidance on Abram, he should have rebuked his workmen, and sought the counsel and guidance of his uncle; but he allowed the opportunity to display such maturity of mind to pass. This strife commenced the first open manifestation of his spiritual decline, which gradually deteriorated more and more, culminating in the loss of his wife, his family, his wealth and almost his life. The six steps in his decline are illustrated by the following expressions: [1] strife (v. 7); [2] beheld (v. 10); [3] chose (v. 11); [4] pitched toward Sodom (v. 12); [5] dwelt in Sodom (Gen. 14:12); [6] sat in the gate as a citizen and ruler (Gen. 19:1). At that point, the mercy of God intervened; Sodom was destroyed and Lot rescued.

**“And the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land”** — Abram and Lot were surrounded by enemies. It was to their advantage, therefore, to strengthen one another in their pilgrimage walk. Their enemies were powerful. Reference to the Canaanites is made in our notes on Gen. 12:6. Who were the Perizzites? The Hebrew *Haperizziy* signifies *The village dwellers*. Whereas the Canaanites dwelt in walled cities; the Perizzites occupied unwallled villages and rural settlements. They were probably nomads who had been driven to the more fertile

areas of the land because of the drought. Their presence there limited the amount of available pasturage, accentuating the problem facing Abram and Lot.

#### VERSE 8

**“And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee”** — Perhaps Lot had voiced a protest, or, at least, had indicated his dissatisfaction with the prevailing circumstances. In any case, Abram sought to pacify him, and appealed to him to avoid “strife” or argument. This evil is listed among the things of the flesh to be avoided (Gal. 5:20; Jas. 3:16; 1 Cor. 3:3). Paul instructed: “The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth” (2 Tim. 2:24). Among the apostles there “was a strife, which of them should be accounted the greatest”. The Lord declared that if one desired to be great he need only apply one single rule: “He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve” (Luke 22:24-26). How beautifully Abram fulfilled those requirements. He refused to enter into argument, and he submitted to Lot though he had the advantage of him in age and status. Actually when Abram and Lot stood on the heights of Bethel and pondered the small problem that faced them, one of the great decisive moments of history had come; for the whole course of human relationships was to be governed by its outcome. How important then, to be careful in the smallest of matters! Who knows whether or not God is behind the seemingly unimportant outcome of a personal quarrel.

**“Between me and thee”** — Perhaps Lot had revealed a truculent attitude. He must have been taken aback by the appeasement offered by Abram, who evidently acknowledged: “it is an honour for a man to cease from strife;” and “a soft answer turneth away wrath” (Prov. 20:3; 15:1).

**“And between my herdmen and thy herdmen”** — The responsibilities of



peace rest with the principals, both in a situation such as faced Abram and Lot, as well as within Ecclesias (cp. Rom. 14:19; 1 Cor. 1:10; 2 Cor. 13:11; 1 Pet. 3:8; Matt. 5:9).

**“For we be brethren”** — The Hebrew is as the margin, “men brethren”. This is the same conciliatory form of address, as was used by Peter on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:29). As “brethren” it is good “to dwell together in unity” (Psa. 133:1), and to co-operate to the aid of each other. There is such a thing as the “brotherly covenant” (Amos 1:9), in which brethren should go to the aid of each other. Abram’s use of the term “brother” to his nephew, Lot, implied all that.

#### VERSE 9

**“Is not the whole land before thee?”**

— The heights of Bethel command an extensive view of the Land, and particularly the Jordan valley.

**“Separate thyself I pray thee, from me, if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left”**

— Abram graciously deferred to Lot for the sake of peace. In view of the lack of pasture, there was a need to divide up their flocks and herds, and Abram waived his right of choice. Lot should have refused this, and commanded his herdsmen to defer to the recommendation of Abram.

#### VERSE 10

**“And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan”** — Like Eve before him, Lot filled his vision with that which his flesh craved, and in doing so, he lost sight of that which was due to Abram. The word “plain” is *kikkar* in Hebrew and signifies *circle*, or *circuit*. His eyes roved around all the circuit of Jordan, observing its fertility and evidence of prosperity. He did not trouble to look behind him for he was familiar with that uninviting scene: the harsh hinterland of Canaan, the rugged hills, the steep climb to Bethel, the difficulties associated with the house of God. No, he turned to the lush Jordan valley, with its promise of easy existence, its spiritual ruin which he

felt sure he could successfully resist, and its promise of easy life and pleasant companionship. He left Abram to the virtue of isolation in the rugged hill country, and to the loneliness of Bethel, the house of God.

**“That it was well watered everywhere”** — This is the first reference to the river Jordan in Scripture.

*Jordan* is compounded of two words, *Yar* from *Yarad*, to descend; and *Dan*, judgment; and therefore signifies *The Descender Through Judgment*. As such, it is symbolic of humanity as a whole, all of whom have inherited the effects of the judgment passed on Adam. Its waters actually passed through the town of Adam (Josh. 3:16) descending to the Dead Sea, which is four times as large as the Sea of Life (the Sea of Galilee). Geographically, the source of the Jordan is at the foot of Hebron. Four streams unite to form the river: Bareighth, Habani, Dan, and Banias. The river pours its water into the Huleh swamps (the waters of Merom) and from thence to the Sea of Galilee some twelve miles long. From the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea is 65 miles (105km); and the Dead Sea itself is some 53 miles (85km)



long. From Huleh to just before the river reaches the Sea of Galilee it drops some 680ft (207m) in less than 9 miles (14.5km). By the time it has reached the Dead Sea, the land has dropped away to some 1292 feet (394m) below sea level, the lowest such point on earth; whilst the deepest point of the Dead Sea is some 1300 feet (396m) deeper still. Because of the steep drop, and winding bed, the Jordan itself is rapid and muddy, a good symbol of human existence. The Jordan valley rift is more than 160 miles long from below Lake Huleh to the Arabah south of the Dead Sea where it rises again to sea level. According to geologists this was once a great inland fresh-water lake. Adam Smith in *Historical Geology* states: "Geologists claim this valley is due to volcanic action forcing up two long folds of limestone, running north and south, with a diagonal ridge shutting off the Dead Sea from the Red Sea, and enclosing part of the old ocean bed". The description of the Jordan valley in Genesis 14 answers to this statement.

**"Before Yahweh destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah"** — Implying vast geographical changes. Today, this once fertile area is an arid waste. Modern Sodom, on the southern portion of the Dead Sea adjacent to what is called its "tongue" is today harshly white, salt-encrusted, and arid. It is crevassed by deep ravines, reminiscent of some stark lunar scene. Yet there are evidences of growth in this area. In places where the salt water has been drained, trees that have never been planted in modern times have commenced to grow, thus indicating that it was once fertile as required by the verse before us. This sterile area is to be "healed" in the future when Messiah reigns (Ezek. 47:8). Meanwhile archaeologists acknowledge that this area was once exceedingly fertile and well-populated, but that through some catastrophe it was dramatically changed. *Young's Analytical Concordance* quotes the finding of the archaeologist, W. Albright: "The great site of Babed-Dra on the Dead Sea probably belongs to the age of Sodom and Gomorrah; its remains date from about the last third of the third millennium, when

occupation here came to an abrupt close".

**"Even as the garden of Yahweh"** — This was watered by four rivers of water that combined into one (Gen. 2:10-11); the Jordan also has a four-fold source, that combines into one stream.

**"Like the land of Egypt"** — The Jordan originally overflowed its banks fertilising the soil like the Nile.

**"As thou comest unto Zoar"** — Zoar was a small city at the southeast corner of the Dead Sea (Gen. 14:2-3). All that area, today so arid and bleak, was once fertile and flourishing.

## VERSE 11

**"Then Lot chose him"** — What fateful words are these; and how unwise is the choice so frequently made by people governed by the flesh. At that time, Lot was prosperous and self-satisfied; and his "choice" marked a further decline in his condition before Yahweh.

**"All the plain of Jordan"** — Not the "plain" but the circuit. See note v. 10. He chose the area where the cities of the circuit were located.

**"And Lot journeyed east"** — From the heights of Bethel, he travelled east to Jericho, from whence he turned south for Sodom and Gomorrah.

**"And they separated themselves the one from the other"** — Here, again, are words of doom. Lot moved out from under the care of his guardian, Abram. His name signifies *Veiled*, and it is obvious that his spiritual vision was similar. He was in that "barren and unfruitful" state referred to by Peter, who adds: "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins" (2 Pet. 1:9). There was much that Lot had chosen to forget at that moment. His eyes were filled with the prospects of an easy existence in the circuit of cities below, and dazzled by the materialism that beckoned, he became blind to the spiritual vision. Lot was foolish in separating himself from Abram: "Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not ... for better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off" (Prov. 27:10). It is a command today to "forsake not the assembling of

ourselves together" (Heb. 10:25) which, actually is what Lot did.

#### VERSE 12

**"Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom"** — He moved down into the area of the circuit of cities, but showed a distinct preference for Sodom. This was the fourth step in his decline. But though, for the moment, he was attracted towards the more sophisticated and liberated city of Sodom, he still recalled his state as a "stranger and pilgrim", and, for the moment, remained outside of its bounds. He doubtless warned his family against its evil environment; but if so, it was to no avail, for ultimately they entered the city itself, and some of his family intermarried with the Sodomites. Compare "toward" Sodom of this verse with "in" Sodom of Ch. 14:12. How easy and regular are the downward steps to destruction!

#### VERSE 13

**"But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before Yahweh exceedingly"** — These two verbs sum up the spiritual state of this vile city. *Raim* ("wicked") from *ra'a*, signifies to break in pieces, destroy, afflict, suggesting a class of people who broke in pieces the established law and order of things, destroyed and confounded that which is right, and afflicted themselves by so doing. *Chattaim*, ("sinners") from *chatta*, signifies to miss the mark, and can include a lack of regard for righteousness, as well as their own happiness. At this stage, the narrative temporarily leaves Lot as he is drawn towards the evil environment of the worst of the evil cities of the circuit.

#### **Abram is Promised the Land Forever — vv. 14-18**

*After Lot had left, Abram was rewarded for his selfless magnanimity. By his action he had demonstrated that he was a man of love as well as of hope and of faith. Accordingly he was given a perpetual promise incorporating a land granted, a seed given, and a life for evermore promis-*

*ed. In consequence of this, he walked south through the land of Hebron, there to build another altar of worship.*

#### VERSE 14

**"And Yahweh said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art"** — The very expression used in relation to Lot (see v. 10), is now applied to Abram. When *Lot lifted up his eyes*, he saw only the cities of the circuit with their promise of immediate materialistic advantage: when *Abram lifted up his eyes* he saw the promise afar off (Heb. 11:13). Paul states: "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18). The "things now seen" have all the appearance of permanency and endurance, but in fact, they are nothing but shadowy, insubstantial, temporary makeshifts, destined to pass away. On the other hand, the "unseen things" of faith are eternal and real, though for the moment they are not discernible to the eyes of flesh. In his spiritual vision, Abram saw the promises "afar off, and was persuaded of them" (Heb. 11:13).

**"Northward"** — Towards Samaria, and the hill country of Ephraim.

**"And southward"** — Towards Jerusalem, and onwards to Bethlehem and the Hebron range of mountains beyond.

**"And eastward"** — In the very direction which Lot had taken, across the Jordan valley and beyond to the mountains of Moab.

**"And westward"** — Literally: *towards the sea*, hidden by the central range of mountains.

#### VERSE 15

**"For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it"** — It was promised to Abram, but he never received it in his lifetime (Acts 7:5). The promise is constantly kept alive throughout Scripture. See Gen. 17:7-8; 24:7; 26:3-4; 28:4,13; 35:12; Exod. 33:1; 2 Chron. 20:7; Psa. 105:9-12; Mic. 7:19-20. Christ came to

confirm these promises (Rom. 15:8; Luke 1:72-77); the Gospel is bound up in them (Acts 26:6-9; Gal. 3:8,26-29).

**“And to thy seed for ever”** — The seed who is to inherit the land “for ever”, relates to the spiritual seed. Paul writes: “The promises were made to Abraham *and* to his seed. God saith not, And to *seeds*, as of many (persons); but as of one (person), as it is written, And unto thy seed, which is Christ” (Gal. 3:16). Bro. Thomas comments: “The apostle here tells us that the *Land of Canaan was promised to the Christ*, when God said to Abram, ‘Unto thy Seed will I give this land’. Let the reader, then, bear this in mind as one of the first principles of the Gospel of the Kingdom. Deny this, and there is an end to all understanding of the truth” (*Elpis Israel* p. 229).

#### VERSE 16

**“And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered”** — A great unnumbered multitude; the aggregate of men and women of faith throughout the ages (Gal. 3:26-28; Rev. 7:9). Some of these are represented as saying: “Thou (Yahweh) art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not” (Isa. 63:16). Isaiah predicts the astonishment of Israel after the flesh when it is forced to acknowledge this spiritual seed in the Age to come: “Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?” (Isa. 49:20-21).

#### VERSE 17

**“Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it;”** — Abram is invited to survey the promised land; to centre his attention upon it; to carefully examine its extent; to allow his life to be involved in its promise of inheritance.

**“For I will give it unto thee”** — This promise was kept alive after the death of

Abraham. See Exod. 6:8; Deut. 30:20; 34:1-4; I Chron. 16:15-18, etc.

#### VERSE 18

**“Then Abram removed his tent”** — He commenced his tour of inspection throughout the land.

**“And came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre”** — Here, as in Genesis 12:6, *plain* should be *oaks* or *terebinth trees*. The word, in Hebrew, is *allon*, and is expressive of strength or power. Mamre, as a name, signifies *vigor* or *power* and related to an Amorite of the district (Gen. 14:13). The *plain of Mamre*, or *oaks of Mamre* can be paraphrased, *Strong ones of Power*. Abram dwelt in this place of significant name, and built an altar there, all of which was expressive of his belief and hope. To whom do those strong ones (oaks) of power refer? Undoubtedly to the multitudinous seed referred to in vv. 15,16 who are to inherit the land for ever. Why connect them with an altar? Because the altar is typical of Christ (Heb. 13:10). In building the altar in such a place, and against the background of such a wonderful promise, Abram parabolically set forth the only way in which the seed referred to could obtain the promise: through God in sacrificial manifestation. When Abram worshipped at that altar, it was with the belief that the mighty ones of power referred to in the promise, could only be developed through means of the antitypical sacrifice and altar which was dramatised in this incident at that time. The altar emphasised that life eternal is possible only through the seed of the woman crushing the head of the serpent power.

**“Which is in Hebron”** — Hebron, as a city, was not in existence in Abram’s day. It was not founded until “seven years before Zoan in Egypt” (Num. 13:22). The mention of Hebron at this time is an explanatory note by Moses to indicate the location of Mamre. Hebron signifies *to forge*, bring together, unite, and therefore *to have fellowship*. The Christ-altar is designed to unite believers with Yahweh in fellowship; for such is only possible upon the basis of death to the flesh. Hebron is also called Kirjath-Arba, or *The*

*City of the Four*, a title that anticipates the New Jerusalem, or Government of immortal saints, destined to rule in the Age to come. The New Jerusalem is described as a city that lieth "foursquare" (Rev. 21:16).

**"And built there an altar unto Yahweh"** — The new altar at Mamre was

expressive of Abram's faith at that time. He saw into the future, perceiving the day of Christ's glory, "and was glad" (John 8:56). He saw a company of "strong ones of power" in the Age to come surrounding an altar, and, associated therewith he saw "a Lamb as it had been slain" (Rev. 5:6).

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### ARMAGEDDON FORESHADOWED

*This chapter sets the figure of Abram in the framework of world history. It is acknowledged, even by critics of the Bible, that the general setting of the story is consistent with the political situation in the East as disclosed by the monuments, and that it contains data which cannot possibly be the fabrication of an unhistorical age. In this historical record, we have a typical foreshadowing of the last great crisis of the nations! It speaks of the way in which the power of faith will ultimately vanquish the political influence of a northern confederacy of nations — such as is prophesied in Ezek. 38, Joel 3, etc.*

#### **Invasion By a Northern Confederacy**

— vv. 1-7.

*Invaders, in their desire for conquest and spoil, plunged southward against the luxurious cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. They followed a circuitous route, advancing southward on the east of Jordan to the head of the Gulf of Aqaba, then northwest to Kadesh, thence north-east to the Dead Sea depression. This was once thought so unlikely as to be dismissed as a legend. But in 1929, W. Albright discovered a line of mounds in Hauran and along the east border of Gilead and Moab of cities that flourished B.C. 2000 indicating it to have been a well-settled country, and the direct trade route between Damascus, and the gold, copper and manganese regions of Edom and Sinai. Evidently, the kings marched to defend their control of these important metals, and in doing so, they followed what has since been called "The Kings' Highway."*

#### **VERSE 1**

**"And it came to pass"** — In the Hebrew, this statement is limited to two words *vayehi bemoyi*, and it occurs six times in Scripture: Gen. 14:1; Ruth 1:1; Isa. 7:1; Jer. 1:3; Est. 1:1; 2 Sam. 21:1. The phrase always prefaces a time of trouble that ends in a blessing.

**"In the days of Amraphel king of Shinar"** — Amraphel signifies *powerful people* (Young), and Shinar means *enemy's tooth*. The king of Babylon took the initiative in the attack, as Babylon the Great will also do at the time of the end. Some have identified Amraphel with Hammurabi, whose code of laws are well known to archaeologists, but this is disputed by others.

**"Arioch king of Ellasar"** — Arioch signifies *Servant of the Moon Goddess*. He was king of Ellasar which is identified with Larsa in lower Babylonia midway between Ur and Erech (Young).

**“Chedorlaomer king of Elam”** — Chedorlaomer signifies *Servant of the god Lagamar*. He was king of Elam, for which see note on Gen. 10:22.

**“And Tidal kings of nations”** — His name signifies *formidable, fear, veneration*. He was king of the *goyim*, or Gentiles. According to the *Companion Bible*, this identifies the barbarian tribes of the Kurdish mountains.

## VERSE 2

**“That these made war”** — The cause of the war is not stated; it could have been to secure the rich mineral content of the lands invaded, as suggested above. Evidently there had been some resistance on the part of the cities of the circuit among which Lot had chosen to dwell.

**“With Bera king of Sodom”** — Bera signifies *evil*; and Sodom, *slimepits* suggesting scorching burns.

**“And with Birsha king of Gomorrah”** — Birsha means *wickedness*; and Gomorrah, a *heap*, and by implication, *to chastise*, as though piling on blows.

**“And Shinab king of Admah”** — Shinab signifies *A father has turned*; and Admah *earthy, or red earth*.

**“And Shemeber king of Zeboiim”** — Shemeber signifies *Pass over to shame*; and Zeboiim, *beautiful as the Gazelle, splendor*.

**“And the king of Bela”** — Bela signifies *To make away; To devour at a gulp*.

**“Which is Zoar”** — Zoar signifies that which is *Little, Reduced, or Despised* (cp. Gen. 19:22).

## VERSE 3

**“All these”** — The names of the kings of the cities of the circuit form a sentence: From evil (Bera) to wickedness (Birsha), a father has turned (Shinab), and passed over to shame (Shemeber).

The cities likewise form a sentence: With scorching burns (Sodom) and heaps of blows (Gomorrah) the earthy (Admah) has had its glory reduced (Zeboiim); it has been devoured (Bela) and despised (Zoar).

**“Were joined together”** — They were confederate, as the Hebrew signifies. They allied together to resist Chedor-

laomer and his forces. Lot found that the valley that looked so peaceful from a distance was actually embroiled in war.

**“In the vale of Siddim”** — The vale of Siddim signifies *The Valley of Fields*, and as such is indicative of the high cultivation of the area before the destruction of Sodom. It relates to the territory south of the peninsular of the Dead Sea, which today is under water, but then comprised the fertile site of the cities of the circuit. In those days, the Dead Sea was a fresh water lake; it was changed into a salt sea by the catastrophe of Genesis 19.

**“Which is the salt sea”** — This is an explanation: “the valley of fields is now the salt sea.” M. Unger comments: “A very remarkable fact about this chapter, demonstrating its great age and authenticity, is its use of archaic words and place names, often appended with a scribal explanation to make them comprehensible to a later generation, when the name had changed. Examples are ‘Bela (the same is Zoar)’ in v. 2; ‘the vale of Siddim (the same is the Salt Sea)’ in v. 3; ‘Enmishpat (the same is Kadesh)’ in v. 7; ‘the valley of Shaveh (the same is the King’s Vale)’ in v. 17” (*Archaeology of the Old Testament*).

## VERSE 4

**“Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer”** — Twelve is the number of orderly government, implying the firm control of Chedorlaomer.

**“And in the thirteenth year they rebelled”** — Thirteen is the number of rebellion.

## VERSE 5

**“And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him”** — Seven is the covenant number, and when doubled it implies an enforced covenant.

**“And smote the Rephaims”** — The word signifies *shades, dead* etc. and has been translated *dead, giants*, etc. Others derive it from an Arabic root signifying *to be long*. The Rephaim evidently were a race of gigantic size inhabiting the area east of the Jordan. Og was “of the remnant of the giants” (mg. Rephaim), and the territory of Bashan was called “the land of

giants" (Deut. 3:11,13). They probably claimed to have inherited the spirit of the antediluvian giants (the *Nephilim*, or *fallen ones* — Gen. 6:4; Num. 13:33).

**"In Ashteroth Karnaim"** — Signifies *Astarte of the two horns*, a centre given to the worship of Ashteroth, and situated in Bashan (Deut. 1:4).

**"And the Zuzims in Ham"** — The Zamzummims settled between the Arnon and the Jabbok (Deut. 2:20), their chief city being Rabbah, now Amman. This is the "Ham" *multitude* of this verse. The word Zamzummims signifies *murmurers*, those through whom, it was alleged, the giants of the past spake (cp. Gen. 6:4).

**"And the Emims"** — The word signifies *terrible ones* (cp. Deut. 2:10), described as a people, great, many, and tall.

**"In Shaveh Kiriathaim"** — The *plain of Kiriathaim*, or *Two Cities*, later occupied by Sihon of Heshbon (Josh. 13:19). All this area is described as the "land of giants (*Rephaim*)". They were giants in wickedness as well as in stature, and nations to be feared (Deut. 3:13). The fact that they fell before the attack of Chedorlaomer implies the strength and ability of his forces.

#### VERSE 6

**"And The Horites in their mount Seir"** — The word *Horites* signifies *Cave Dwellers*, and Mount Seir forms part of modern Petra. Ancient caves are still to be found in Petra, which constituted an extremely strong fortress commanding the approaches north and south. Though strongly entrenched, the Horites fell before the attack of Chedorlaomer. This opened the way for his forces along the Kings' Highway to the Gulf of Aqaba where he turned to the right, and then again to the north.

**"Unto El-paran"** — This signifies the *Oak of the Place of Caverns*, or *The Oak of Paran*.

**"Which is by the wilderness"** — The wilderness of Paran extended through this area, along which Israel came later.

#### VERSE 7

**"And they returned, and came to En-mishpat which is Kadesh"** — En-

mishpat signifies *Spring of Judgment*, and Kadesh, *Holy*. The expedition moved south along the Kings' Highway towards the Gulf of Aqaba, and then turned west and north to Kadesh, south of Beersheba.

**"And smote all the country of the Amalekites"** — The word means *Warlike*. The Amalekites were descendants of Esau (Gen. 36:12), so that the statement means that they smote all the country later occupied by the Amalekites in the days of Moses.

**"And also the Amorites"** — The word means *Mountaineers*, and therefore *Hardy*.

**"That dwelt in Hazon-tamar"** — Signifies *Row of Palms* (Gesenius), or *The Pruning of Palms*, the ancient name for En-gedi (2 Chron. 20:2). Thus the expedition must have moved halfway up the Dead Sea.

#### Lot Taken Captive — vv. 8-12.

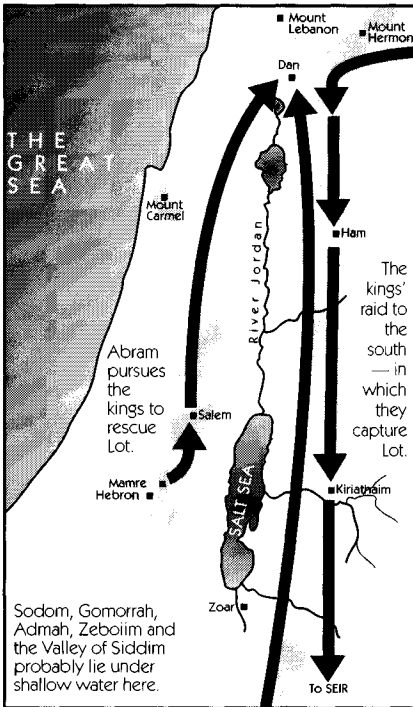
*At this point, battle was joined between the invading army and the Sodomite coalition. The latter was put to flight, Lot and others were taken captive, and Chedorlaomer moved north towards Dan.*

#### VERSE 8

**"And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar); and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim"** — "Vale" is from *emeq*, a broad depression: See v. 3. The southern tip of the Dead Sea.

#### VERSE 9

**"With Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; Four kings with five"** — The historicity of the incident recorded in this chapter is beyond doubt, but it is also of typical significance. The numbers twelve, thirteen, fourteen (vv. 4-5) are appropriate in the circumstances when considered in their symbolic connotation. Now we learn of four kings battling with five. Four is the number of control; five is the number of grace; and both are appropriate to the two groups of contestants.



**VERSE 10**

“And the vale of Siddim was full of slimepits” — The vale of Siddim signifies *The Valley of Fields*. It originally formed the southern portion of the Dead Sea, which is today under water. The expression “full of slimepits” has been rendered, *springs, springs of bitumen*. The Hebrew *chemar*, from the root *chamar*, signifies *to boil up*, hence *to ferment* (with scum) or *to glow* (with redness); suggesting wickedness and rebellion; and it is significant that the builders of Babel used this “slime for mortar” (Gen. 11:3). Strong relates it to bitumen, or asphalt. Apparently the area was full of pits dug to obtain this substance, which was used in Egypt and Babylonia for building, embalming and other purposes. Today petroleum deposits are still to be found in the area. The same Hebrew root from which *chemar* is derived, is rendered “foul” (Job. 16:16), *red* (Psa. 75:8; Isa. 27:2), *troubled* (Psa. 46:3). It is therefore an appropriate word

to describe the environs of Sodom, with its false teaching, and immoral practices.

“And the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there” — They were decisively defeated, and entrapped in the slimepits that they had digged (cp. Psa. 9:15).

“And they that remained fled to the mountain” — Lot sought refuge in the same mountain of Moab later (Gen. 19:17, 30).

**VERSE 11**

“And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals and went their way” — They most likely ascended the valley of the Jordan en route for Damascus.

**VERSE 12**

“And they took Lot, Abram’s brother’s son who dwelt in Sodom and his goods, and departed” — That Lot should be described as a dweller in Sodom indicates further declension in his state; the fifth of such steps.

**Abram Rescues Lot — vv. 13-16.**

*The knowledge that “Lot his brother’s son” was taken captive, aroused Abram into activity. As kinsman deliverer of the family, typical of the one who was to come, he moved to the aid of Lot. Later, the duty of an Israelite to redeem his kinsman out of difficulty was set down in the Law (Lev. 25:47-55). Meanwhile, the deliverance of Lot by Abram typified the redemption of Israel according to the flesh at Christ’s return. The invasion from the north thus anticipated the northern attack on Israel in “the latter days” (Ezek. 38:15-16).*

**VERSE 13**

“And there came one that had escaped” — He made his way to Hebron, about thirty miles distant to apprise Abram of the circumstances.

“And told Abram the Hebrew” — The word “Hebrew” means *Crosser Over*. Abram’s status in the land was that of a stranger; but, in fact, he had crossed over into the way of life.

“For he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite” — See notes Gen. 13:18.



**“Brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner; and these were confederate with Abram”** — There are several anomalies attached to this account. Why should these three Amorite chieftains assist Abram in his attack on Chedorlaomer, and yet remain inactive when the confederacy from the north attacked their own tribes in the vicinity (cp. v. 7)? Why should Abram be confederate with them, seeing that he dwelt as a stranger in the land? What constituted Abram’s army of 318 trained warriors?

Firstly, consider the significance of the names of these Amorite associates of Abram in comparison with those of other dwellers: The Rephaim, Zuzzims and Emims. Mamre means *vigor* or *strength*; Eshcol means *grapecluster*; and Aner means *waterfall*: all names that are expressive of fertility and peace.

But why did these men of peace become embroiled in Abram’s contest with Chedorlaomer, seeing that they stood aside from involvement when their fellow-Amorites were attacked? The answer is that they were “confederate with Abram.” The Hebrew is *baalim beriyth* or *lords of covenant*, i.e. masters or possessors of a covenant with Abram — literally: *They being possessors of the covenant of Abram*. This provides the key to the anomalies of this chapter: the reason why these Amorites did not go to the aid of their fellowtribes when they were attacked; the reason why they did assist Abram in his expedition against Chedorlaomer. These Gentiles had abandoned their previous national identity, and had thrown in their lot with the Hebrews. They were conscientious objectors as far as involvement with existing national aspirations or defence were concerned, but were prepared to co-operate with Abram at the decree of heaven.

All this provides a typical foreshadowing of that which is yet to be enacted in the future, when the house of Abraham, comprising Israelite and Gentile in covenant relationship with each other, and with Yahweh, shall overthrow the confederacy from the north, and rescue their relation after the flesh: the Jewish nation.

#### VERSE 14

**“And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive”** — The term “brother” is used in the sense of a kinsman; and Abram, in going to Lot’s aid, enacted the part of a redeemer. Israel after the flesh is to be redeemed by Abraham and his Seed in the Age to come. Isaiah (Ch. 63:1-6) provides a prophetic picture of the Lord going forth in warlike aspect for that purpose: “For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come” (v. 4). The word “redeemed” is *ga’al*, indicating the work of the next of kin. Four thousand years ago, in acting the part of redeemer to Lot, Abram typed Christ’s future conquests on behalf of Israel after the flesh.

**“He armed his trained servants”** — Hebrew *ruwq*, to *pour forth*. The margin renders it as *led forth*. Abram drew forth his servants as a body to pursue Chedorlaomer. However, there was no need to arm them, because they were already armed, with the weapons of faith.

Were they trained for war? Decidedly they were, but not the kind of war that Chedorlaomer engaged in. The Hebrew *chaniyk* signifies *initiated, practised*. It is derived from a root meaning to initiate and discipline; and signifies to *narrow*, that is, to restrict, thus to train properly. The root word is found in Prov. 22:6: “Train up a child in the way he should go.” Eliezer would have been among those in the army of Abram, and the faithful manner in which he was accustomed to go about his work is indicated by the prayerful request he made for Divine help and guidance when on the quest for a wife for Isaac (Gen. 24:12). Thus equipped, with the dynamics of the Truth, they were able to “quit themselves like men” (1 Cor. 16:13). Abram’s men were more than a match for Chedorlaomer’s forces (Eph. 6:11-18).

**“Born in his own house”** — Typically, the household of faith; becoming the seed of Abraham through the covenant of promise (Gal. 3:26-28).

**“Three hundred and eighteen”** — From this number of men of an age for vigorous warfare, we can gauge the size of Abram’s encampment, which could well have totalled a thousand people. The com-

mon idea of Abram and Sarai, in two tents wandering through the land, must be revised to provide scope for a large company of people taken "out of the nations." Since leaving Ur, Abram's Ecclesia had been increased by additions from Haran (Gen. 12:5), Damascus (Gen. 15:2), Egypt (Gen. 16:1), and in the Land (Gen. 14:13). Three hundred and eighteen is a multiple of six:  $53 \times 6$ ; and six is the number of man (Rev. 13:18); it was an apt number for Abram's contest with man in the person of Chedorlaomer, the Gog of this chapter.

**"And pursued them unto Dan" —** Dan means *judgment*, so that this name is appropriate to the circumstances, for there Abram administered the initial judgment on the forces of Chedorlaomer. Critics claim that the use of this name is indicative of a late date for the writing of Genesis, and therefore, Moses could not have been the author. They reason that the city of Dan was not established in the north until late in the time of Judges (Judges 18). But this reasoning is not decisive. Why should not Abram give the name of Dan to the place where he defeated the confederacy from the north, seeing that he would recognise the incident as Divine judgment? There was moreover, an ancient city of that name established before the settlement of the tribes (Deut. 34:1). See also: Dan-jaan *Judgment of the Woods* (2 Sam. 24:6).

#### VERSE 15

**"And he divided himself against them, he and his servants by night, and smote them" —** The whole company with Abram is treated as a unit. He divided his forces, falling upon the enemy unexpectedly from different quarters. He blended his own skill and foresight with the blessing of God.

**"And pursued them unto Hobah" —** Hobah signifies *hiding*. There was a place of this name between Tadmor and Homs, about 50 miles north of Damascus. Evidently, at this point, Abram's forces overthrew the remnants of the northern confederacy, and recovered the spoils of battle, both goods and persons.

**"Which is on the left hand of Dam-**

**ascus" —** To an Israelite, the east was always the front, so that the "left hand" was to the north. Damascus signifies *Sack of blood*, appropriate to the battle. It was the traditional enemy of Israel (Song 7:4).

#### VERSE 16

**"And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people" —** The experience should have constituted a warning to Lot. But if so he did not heed it in any effective way.

#### Melchizedek Blesses Abram

— vv. 17-20.

*Suddenly, without warning, the narrative introduces an eminent personality: Melchizedek. Throughout the Bible he comes before us in history (Gen. 14); in prophecy (Psa. 110); in typology (Heb. 7). He is King of Righteousness and King of Peace: the first needful to the second. He is Priest of the Most High God; therefore a King Priest. On this auspicious occasion, after Abram has overthrown the confederacy from the north, he meets with him at Salem, offers him bread and wine, and blesses him in the name of God.*

#### VERSE 17

**"And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him" —** This was either Bera (v. 2), or a successor. If it were Bera, he must have escaped the attack of Chedorlaomer (cp. v. 10). He went out to meet Abram whom he now regarded as his deliverer.

In the typology of this chapter, Chedorlaomer and his confederate forces represent Gog; Lot the veiled, represents Israel after the flesh; the king of Sodom and his associates represent the western world; Abram and his forces represent Christ and the saints in militant manifestation; and Melchizedek represents Christ as king-priest.

**"At the valley of Shaveh" —** Literally *The valley of plains*, in the Kidron, north-east of Jerusalem. Also called the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:1-2).

**"Which is in the king's dale" —** On

the east of Jerusalem, and probably so called because Abram there met with Melchizedek, king-priest of Salem. Later, Absalom's pillar was erected there (2 Sam. 18:18).

#### VERSE 18

**"And Melchizedek"** — His name means *King of Righteousness*, and his title (King of Salem) signifies *King of Peace*. Paul states that this has a doctrinal significance: "first being by interpretation King of Righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of Peace" (Heb. 7:2). Righteousness inevitably must precede peace (see James 3:17; Isa. 48:22; Isa. 57:21).

The immortal priests of the Age to come will be king-priests (Rev. 5:9-10), and are represented as "sons of Zadok" (righteousness — Ezek. 44:15), because after the order of Melchi-Zadok.

**"King of Salem"** — Salem means *peace*. It was the name of Jerusalem under Melchizedek, and significantly it will be the name of Jerusalem under Christ (Psa. 76:2). Melchizedek was a king of peace; and Christ will be likewise (Isa. 9:6; Zech. 6:13). Jerusalem will be a centre of righteousness from whence will radiate peace to all the world (Isa. 2:2-4).

**"Brought forth bread and wine"** — These are the tokens of the covenant confirmed by the Lord Jesus (Luke 22:17-18). When the Lord administered them to the Apostles he told them he would not again partake of them "until the kingdom of God shall come." In that day, declares Ezekiel, "the prince shall eat bread before Yahweh" (Ezek. 44:3). He shall do so in company with the elect, who will then be of the same nature as the prince, for they "shall be like him" (1 John 3:2). After the holocaust of Armageddon, when the House of Prayer for all nations has been erected in Jerusalem (Isa. 56:6-7), the Lord will fulfil the vows he made in the upper room 1900 years ago (Psa. 22:25). He will preside over a Memorial Feast in the city of Jerusalem, then renamed Salem. For, the *Vision of Peace* (Jerusalem) will then become the reality: *Peace* (Salem — Hag. 2:9). The bread and wine offered by Melchizedek was not only

refreshing and sustaining to Abram, but represented the tokens of the covenant to be confirmed in the Seed of the Woman (cp. John 6:54-58).

**"And he was the Priest"** — Melchizedek was King-priest, and as such the prototype of the Lord Jesus Christ who will also be King-Priest of Salem. Melchizedek founded the royal-priestly order following the Flood. His order was, and is, superior to the Levitical priesthood (Heb. 7:4-11), for it is destined to rule and mediate in the Age to come. Christ is high-priest of this order (Heb. 6:20; 7:11,17), and the glorified saints will be his immortal associates in it (Rev. 5:9-10). Paul declared that Melchizedek was "without father, without mother... having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually" (Heb. 7:3). These expressions relate to Melchizedek's order of priesthood, and not to his genealogy. In contrast to the Levitical priesthood, which was governed by genealogy, commenced and concluded at specific ages, and was only temporary in its appointment, the Melchizedek priesthood had no restrictions of genealogy, or limitations of service, and was designed for continuous priesthood.

What constitutes the Melchizedek order? It was the order of priesthood incorporated in the threefold privileges of the appointed firstborn of the family: (1) authority; (2) inheritance; (3) priesthood. See notes on *Shem* (page 121). The appointed firstborn of the family acted as its priest. This was the original order in Israel, so that before Levi was selected for the purpose of priesthood, "the young men" of the tribes performed the service (see Exod. 24:5). Because of apostasy by the tribes, whilst Moses was in the Mount, and faithfulness in vindicating the honour of Yahweh on the part of Levi at his return (Exod. 32:25-29), the tribe of Levi was selected for the priesthood instead of the firstborn (Num. 3:45; 8:16). However, in Christ, the rights of the firstborn are restored, so that authority, inheritance, and priestly functions revert to him and his followers. He has been appointed "firstborn of every creature" (Col. 1:15), which does

not mean that he existed before every creature, but that the authority, inheritance, and priestly ministrations are invested in him. All saints are part of the Melchizedek priesthood (see 1 Pet. 2:9), which, is not limited to race, genealogy, or age, but is a matter of appointment (Heb. 5:1-4).

Who was Melchizedek? His name, Paul declares, is really a title: "King of Righteousness" (Heb. 7:2). If Shem were living at the time of Abram's sojourn in the land (and, according to the chronology of Genesis 11, he was) he would be the actual firstborn, and, as such, "priest of the most high God." It is attractive to view Melchizedek in that light.

A further interesting idea emerges from the account of Gen. 10:25-30. This records that when the "earth was divided" between Peleg and Joktan, the sons of Eber, that the descendants of the latter made their way towards the Promised Land (see notes on those verses), and it could be that Shem went with them, to preside as priest over that community. It is obvious that Melchizedek, as priest, must have supervised a community of believers, who used Salem as a centre of worship.

There emerges a significant typical prophecy: reigning in Salem, and presiding over a centre of worship established there. The household of Abram (representing the multitudinous Christ) rejoicing in a communal feast in the city of peace, celebrating a victory of faith in the defeat of the northern confederacy.

**"Of the most high God"** — This is the first reference in Scripture to this most significant title of Deity. It is important, in studying the Names and Titles of God, to ascertain the circumstances in which they are given; to determine the real significance of the name used; and to establish the future use of the name or title as relating to Christ and the saints.

"Most high God" in Hebrew is *El Elyon*. *El* signifies *power or strength*; *Elyon* means *elevation, lofty, supreme*. It is from a root *halah*, to ascend; so that God is represented as *El* elevated above all else. There are lesser *Elim*, such as the angels, but Melchizedek was priest of the *El* or *power* that is supreme above all other forms of power. In the declaration

concerning Melchizedek, *El Elyon* is described as "possessor of heaven and earth," and a consideration of the title in other places, reveals that it is associated with dominion (see Psa. 83:18, and compare with Psa. 93; 95:3). In Psa. 91:1, *Elyon* is linked with *El Shaddai*. The first title expresses Yahweh's lofty dominion and status; the second the dispensing of His grace in sustaining his subjects, or in destroying their enemies. The first is associated by comparison with rulership in Isa. 14:12-14, for the word "ascend" (*halah*) in this place is literally *go up high*. The Lord Jesus is described as "the son of the Highest" (Luke 1:32, in Hebrew, *Elyon*), and, at His right hand, awaits the moment when he shall take over the dominion of the earth. Meanwhile, saints are to mentally ascend there (Col. 3:1), in anticipation of the time when they shall, with Christ, take over the dominion at his return.

The first use of the title *El Elyon* reveals in type how the Most High will use His authority, power and dominion to bring all nations into conformity with His will. The significance of the title is summarised in the words of David (1 Chron. 29:11; Psa. 124:8), and the concluding words of the Lord's prayer (Matt. 6:13): "For thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever." It would prove a profitable exercise to follow the usage of this title throughout Scripture.

#### VERSE 19

**"And he blessed him"** — When the Hebrew word *barak* is used in relation to man, it is in the sense of conferring a benefit; when it is used in regard to God, it is in the sense of adoration. In this and the next verse, it is used both in regard to man and to God.

**"And said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth"** — This expresses the full title: The *El* that is above all: lofty, elevated, supreme; whose governance in heaven extends to the earth; for He is King in both realms.

#### VERSE 20

**"And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into**

**thy hand**” — Demonstrating that *El Elyon* “rules in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and (will) set up over it him (who is set at nought of men)” (Dan. 4:17). The enemies of Israel will be delivered into the hands of the Seed of Abraham ultimately (Psa. 149; Dan. 7:27; Rev. 2:26; Isa. 60:12).

“**And he gave him tithes of all**” — In doing so, reasons Paul, he showed the superiority of the Melchizedek priesthood over that of Levi (Heb. 7:4-11). A tithe is a tenth, both words being derived from a common root. Tithes were compulsory under the Law of Moses, and an Israelite, governed only by Law, might see in them an imposition, in the form of a tax. Actually they were an expression of gratitude to Yahweh. All that a man has, comes from Him, so that in tithing, a man only gave back to God what was really His. Tithing was required under the Law to remind Israelites of their dependence upon Yahweh; but Abram, and all like him, voluntarily paid tithes because they desired to express their thanks and gratitude to God, acknowledging that all they had was His anyway. Under the Law, Israel received a tenth part of an ephah in the form of manna (Exod. 16:36), and they returned a tenth in the form of a tithe. Abram gave “tithes of all,” not because he had to, but because he wanted to. It is the privilege and responsibility of saints to co-operate with Yahweh in the work He is doing.

#### **The Spoil Shared By Abram’s Followers — vv. 21-24.**

*Abram refuses the offer of the king of Sodom, but leaves it to his followers to determine for themselves what they should accept.*

#### **VERSE 21**

“**And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself**” — The king of Sodom may have been motivated by the example of Abram paying tithes, to make such an offer. He evidently felt under an obligation to him, and invited Abram to take his choice of the goods. Abram refused the offer on the grounds that the victory really belonged to God, not to him.

The king of Sodom had an example of what he should have done: offer the tithes unto Yahweh, and bring the persons (or souls — see mg.) of the city under Divine control. He did not do this, and on restoration of Sodom’s power, continued his evil way unchecked.

#### **VERSE 22**

“**And Abram said to the King of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand**” — A ceremonial act denoting the taking of an oath before God.

“**Unto Yahweh, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth**” — The name *Yahweh* proclaims what He will be and, therefore, is of prophetic significance. The title expresses that *He will be manifested as El Elyon Possessor of heaven and earth*. At present, He rules in heaven, but not as yet throughout the earth. However, the future will reveal this, to the end that “glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, goodwill toward men” will be in evidence. For Abram’s use of the name *Yahweh*, see Exod. 6:3, and our notes on Gen. 13:4.

#### **VERSE 23**

“**That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine**” — The Hebrew *chut* denotes a fillet worn by young women to tie up their hair. The phrase signifies: “I will not receive the smallest portion of the property, either of the women or men, from a girl’s hair fillet, to a man’s shoe tie.

“**Lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich**” — Abram was content to leave any rewards in the hands of *El Elyon*.

#### **VERSE 24**

“**Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre;**” — It was in order to request out of hand expenses for those who laboured in this work of faith (Rom. 13:7-8; 1 Cor. 9:13-14).

“**Let them take their portion**” — See 1 Tim. 5:18. The record does not indicate as to whether they followed Abram’s

example or not. In any case, it reveals that liberty of choice must be permitted in some matters; and contrary decisions in

certain matters can both be right, dependent upon the individual motive (cp. 1 Cor. 7:38 as an example of this).

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### BIRTH OF ISHMAEL: THE SEED OF THE FLESH

#### (Ch. 15:1-16:16)

*Abram was now eighty-five years old, and he had no child. How, then, could the promise made by God at Haran, and repeated at Shechem and Bethel, be fulfilled, seeing that Abram was childless? He was now an old man, and had concluded to make Eliezer of Damascus his heir; how then could the great, the exceeding great, reward be realised by him? Yahweh promised him a son of his own, and declared the multiplication of his descendants (vv. 4-5). Abram believed this, and was justified by faith (v. 6). Yahweh then promised him Canaan for an inheritance (v. 7), and over a covenant-sacrifice, foretold the bondage in Egypt, the exodus, and the conquest of the land (vv. 8-21).*

#### **Abram Promised A Multitudinous Seed** — vv. 1-6.

*A further promise is made to Abram, and he is justified because of his faith in that which Yahweh proclaimed unto him.*

#### **VERSE 1**

“**After these things**” — The unsettled nature of the land illustrated by the invasion of Chedorlaomer, and the remarkable victory of faith won by Abram and his followers, was followed by some reassuring words of comfort from Yahweh.

“**The word of Yahweh**” — This is the first occurrence of the remarkable phrase *dabar Yahweh*, found so frequently throughout the Scripture. It expresses the communication of Yahweh’s will to man. The ten commandments are described as ten words rendered “commandments” (Deut. 4:13). The Psalmist declared: “The sum of Thy word *dabar* is truth” (Psa. 119:160, R.V.). All the experiences of life, all the sum of Scripture, total up to vindicate the declared Word; so that the Word is nothing but truth (John 14:6; Psa. 12:6). In the Septuagint, *dabar* is translated *logos*.

*The Logos or Dabar Yahweh is a title of Deity, manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ in whom it became flesh (John 1:1,14). In the Logos was “life and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4). There is an excellent exposition of this subject in Eureka vol. 1, pp. 89-124.*

“**Came unto Abram in a vision**” — There was a visible manifestation of the messenger of Yahweh. An angel evidently came to Abram with words of comfort and encouragement.

“**Saying, Fear not Abram**” — There is no need to fear what man can do unto us, if we are right with God, “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?” (1 Pet. 3:12-13). We need to “fear Yahweh,” for that is the beginning of knowledge, whilst love is its completion (Prov. 1:7; Col. 3:14). On the other hand, “the fear of man bringeth a snare” (Prov. 29:25).

“**I am thy Shield**” — In this verse *Dabar Yahweh* promised something for the

present and something for the future. For the present, Yahweh is a Shield; for the future, He is a Reward. The shield provides protection. We have nothing to fear if we have Yahweh as a Shield before us. "Thou art my hiding place and my Shield," declared the Psalmist, "I hope in Thy word" (Psa. 119:114). There are several Hebrew words rendered Shield. Here it is the word *Magen*, which signifies a small shield or buckler. It is derived from the root *ganan*, to *hedge about, to protect*, and thus sets forth Yahweh as a Defender, a Protector. This is the first occasion in which it is used, and in view of the events recorded in Gen. 14, it was a most appropriate time to introduce it. Abram's mind was evidently agitated at the evidence of enemies in the land, and troubled by the delay in the development of the Divine purpose: and he was given the assurance that Yahweh is a Shield and would protect him from all danger.

The Shield is expressive of the character of Yahweh as an effective Protector of His children, for "He is a Shield unto them that put their trust in Him" (Prov. 30:5). References to this Divine title are found in the following places: "My Shield": 2 Sam. 22:3; Psa. 3:3; 28:7; 33:20; 59:11; 84:9,11; 115:9,10,11; 119:114; 144:2. "The Shield of thy help": Deut. 33:29. "The Shield of thy salvation": 2 Sam. 22:36; Psa. 18:35. "A Buckler (*magen*) to those who trust": 2 Sam. 22:31; Prov. 30:5. "A buckler to them that walk uprightly": Prov. 2:7; Psa. 18:2,30. "Take hold of shield": Psa. 35:2.

Christ is set forth as a warrior, replete with shield (Isa. 59:16-19); the saints are bucklers (Song 4:4); they are exhorted to 'take the shield of faith' (Eph. 6:16). Finally, a comparison of Solomon's 300 shields of gold in the Temple (a symbol of faith in Yahweh's protection: 1 Kings 10:17; 2 Chron. 9:16) can be made with the action of Rehoboam in converting them into shields of brass (confidence in the flesh: 1 Kings 14:26-27; 2 Chron. 12:9-10).

**"And thy exceeding great reward"** — The Hebrew is: "Thy reward is great exceedingly." The recognition that Yahweh is a Rewarder of those who put their trust in Him is the very basis of faith. Paul

declared: "Without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6).

## VERSE 2

**"And Abram said, Lord God"** — Here the Hebrew is *Adonai Yahweh*. We have briefly commented upon the use of the name, *Yahweh*, before it was proclaimed officially unto Moses at the bush (see note on Gen. 12:8), and now we have the first occurrence of the oft-repeated name *Adonai Yahweh*. *Adonai* is a plural form of *Adon*, and signifies *Lords*. It is derived from *dan*, to *judge, rule*, and therefore, where related to God it is indicative of Divine sovereignty. Abram had been given an example of this Divine sovereignty in the overthrow of Chedorlaomer (Gen. 14), so that the context is appropriate to his use of this name. Of all the writers of the Old Testament, it is most frequently used by Ezekiel, whose prophecies relate to the Divine governance of the nations. The Name *Adonai Yahweh* is expressive of a future manifestation of Divine rulership in the earth: *the rulers of He who shall be*.

**"What wilt Thou give me"** — Abram recognised that the promise was dependent upon an heir; was it to be Eliezer of Damascus?

**"Seeing I go childless"** — The verb is used in the sense of dying (Psa. 39:13). Abram was an old man, and had recent evidence of unsettled conditions of the land; was his life to terminate in that state?

**"And the steward of my house"** — The Hebrew is *ben meshek*, the *son of possession*. Abram had made Eliezer his legal heir. This was a normal custom of the times with childless couples, as the evidence of archaeology has revealed. Excavations at Nuzu, not far from modern Kirkuk, and southeast of ancient Nineveh, disclosed evidence of this, for they revealed documents showing that this was done. But these same documents show that though such a legal adoption might take place, they also made provision for the rights to be set aside if the adopter should

afterward beget a son of his own. See *Archaeology And The Old Testament*, p. 121.

**“Is this Eliezer of Damascus”** — Eliezer signifies *El is my help*. The fact that he was “of Damascus” implies that Abram visited that city en route to the Promised Land.

### VERSE 3

**“And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed”** — Notice that Abram had not received any reply to his previous question; and yet continued to pray. Is not that an attitude pleasing to the Father? Consider Christ’s exhortation in Matt. 7:7-8; Luke 18:1.

**“And, lo, one born in my house is mine heir”** — The word “born” is *ben, son*. The phrase can be literally rendered: “the son of my house,” that is, his legal son by adoption.

### VERSE 4

**“And, behold, the word of Yahweh came unto him, saying, this shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir”** — Yahweh’s answer to Abram’s prayer was immediate, ample and direct. It also summed up the work of redemption.

### VERSE 5

**“And he brought him forth abroad”** — In this statement the Word of Yahweh is identified with a person: the angel or messenger of Yahweh.

**“And said, look now toward heaven, and tell the stars if thou be able to number them”** — Abram could not have numbered even the small proportion of stars he would have seen as he stood gazing towards heaven; what would he have said if he had possessed a modern telescope? Science has revealed that the larger the instrument, the more stars are revealed; and that when man gazes into the heavens, he views infinity. Yet the heavenly bodies are all under the control of Yahweh: “He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names” (Psa. 147:4). He knows the number of the saved, though man does not; for in their aggregate they

will constitute “a great multitude, which no man can number” at present (Rev. 7:9). The term is used for the seed of Abraham both after the flesh as well as after the spirit (cp. 1 Chron. 27:23; Gen. 22:17; Exod. 32:13; Heb. 11:12).

**“And he said unto him, so shall thy seed be”** — These challenging words, made to a childless man who believed that he was on the point of death, are cited by Paul in Rom. 4:18 as an evidence of the great faith of Abram. “Against hope he believed in hope.” The Apostle continues (according to the Greek text): “Without being weakened in faith, he considered his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb; he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able to perform” (Rom. 4:18-21).

The statement made to Abram can have another application. When he was told to look towards heaven and view the stars, and was instructed “so shall thy seed be,” he was taught as to what constitutes a true seed of Abraham. He saw the stars as gleaming lights in the dark vault of heaven; he saw them as “the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom they shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life” (Phil. 2:15-16). He saw them manifesting differing aspects of glory, for the appearance of one star differs from another in its majesty and influence (1 Cor. 15:41). Daniel was told that they who “turn many to righteousness” shall shine as stars in the political firmament of the future “for ever and ever” (Dan. 12:3).

### VERSE 6

**“And he believed in Yahweh”** — The *hiphil* of the verb *aman* signifies to *prop, stay, build upon, rest upon*. Gesenius states that the implication of the Hebrew word for faith is one supported, built up, and reposing in the strength of God, as a child in its mother’s arms. Notice that the record does not say that Abram “believed Yahweh,” but that he “believed in Yahweh.”



The latter involves the former, of course but in addition to mere belief, the phrase requires a complete committal to God, as the One upon Whom to lean and build. This is faith, and from whence does it come? Paul declares that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Is it not significant, that this chapter which is so expressive of the faith of Abram, should be prefaced by the statement that "*the word of Yahweh came unto him*" (v. 1)? Abram committed himself to Yahweh as his Shield and Reward, and was "fully persuaded" that what God said, He would perform (Rom. 4:21; Heb. 11:1).

**"And he counted it to him for righteousness"** — This important statement is used by both Paul (Rom. 4:3) and James (Ch. 2:23) to lay the foundation of the doctrine of justification through faith. Paul aligns faith with belief (Rom. 10:17); and God placed Abram's belief on the credit side of his character. The Apostle makes the point that this was done before circumcision and before the giving of the Law, so that justification was not dependent upon either. But it is necessary to carefully analyse what the statement means. It does not teach that belief or faith *is* righteousness; it does not say that "he counted it to him *as* righteousness," but "*for* righteousness". The word, as rendered in the Septuagint version, is the Greek *eis* which signifies *unto, with a view to*, implying motion towards an object. Abram's faith established a passive righteousness in that he accepted the word of Yahweh as the foundation of a character to be developed. This word subsequently wrought in him an active righteousness, for it caused him to conform to the Divine will by which he was justified by works (James 2:21-23). The fact that Abram "believed in Yahweh" and that this was counted to him for righteousness, teaches that he relied upon Yahweh for righteousness. Righteousness is a right standing with God; and, as it is beyond the ability of man to render perfect obedience, he must rely upon God to establish it. He does this through faith in the forgiveness of sins. Abram's fears and doubts were swept away by his believing faith. This pleased God, and became the basis of

"righteousness without works" (Rom. 4:3-6). In our case, a believing faith becomes the ground of justification or righteousness when "we obey from the heart that form of doctrine" received by us (Rom. 6:17), in being baptised. We are justified, or proclaimed righteous, through faith, without, at that stage, any works of our own. Our righteousness consists of sins forgiven; and this forms the basis of building a character acceptable at the Judgment Seat.

On this matter, *Elpis Israel* has some excellent comments (pp. 259-260): "It is worthy of remark here, that *Abraham believed the gospel ten years before his faith was counted to him for righteousness...* This fact ought to teach the reader, *that it is not at the instant a man believes that he is justified.* A man may believe the truth for many years, and yet not be the subject of the righteousness of God. If so, it may then be asked, 'When, or at what point of time, and how, is a man's faith in the truth counted to him for remission of sins?' ... The answer to the question, then, is this, *that a man's faith in the gospel is counted to him for righteousness in the act of being baptised into the name.* There is no other way than this, and even a believer of the truth will die in his sins unless he submit to it..."

"In conclusion, I would direct the reader's attention to the fact, that Abraham was the subject of a twofold justification, as it were; first, of a *justification by faith*; and secondly, of a *justification by works*. Paul says, he was justified by faith; and James, that he was 'justified by works.' They are both right. As a sinner he was justified from his *past sins* when his faith was counted to him for righteousness; and as a saint, he was justified by works when he offered up Isaac. Of his justification as a saint James writes: 'Abraham our father was justified by works, when he offered Isaac his son upon the altar. Faith wrought with his works, and *by works was faith made perfect.* And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not *by faith alone*' (James

2:21-24).

"I have termed it a twofold justification by way of illustration; but it is, in fact, only one. The two stand related as cause and effect; faith being the motive principle it is a justification which *begins* with the remission of sins that are past, and is *perfected* in obedience unto death. The idea may be simplified thus, No exaltation without probation. If a man believe and obey the Gospel his *past sins* are forgiven him in Christ; but, if after this he walk in the course of the world his faith is proved to be dead, and he forfeits his title to eternal life. But if, on the other hand, a man become an adopted son of Abraham, and 'by a patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour and incorruptibility' (Rom. 2:7), he will find everlasting life in the Paradise of God."

#### **Abram Promised His Descendants Will Enter the Land — vv. 7-16.**

*On the basis of Abram's faith, the possession of the land on the part of Abram and his descendants is confirmed by a sacrifice pointing forward to Christ.*

#### **VERSE 7**

"**And he said unto him, I am Yahweh**" — We shall see when we come to consider the Divine Name at length (Exod. 3:15), that it is prophetic of His purpose. Therefore, in prefacing His declaration to Abram by the proclamation of this fact, God directed the patriarch to the future.

"**That brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it**" — This teaches separation for a purpose, and that is the real significance of the word *Ecclesia*. It is not sufficient to merely separate from the world, but there must also be dedication to the Divine Will (see Acts 15:14).

#### **VERSE 8**

"**And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?**" — This is not the language of doubt or incredulity, for Abram had already manifested his conviction of faith; it expresses a desire for a sign of confirmation that he will, indeed, inherit the land. Perhaps Abram had misgivings as to his personal

worthiness, and required assurance from that standpoint. That, in fact, is what he received. Requests for such signs are not inconsistent with the conviction of faith. See Gen. 24:13-14; Judges 6:17,27; 1 Sam. 14:9-10; Psa. 18:17; Isa. 7:1-13; Luke 1:18.

#### **VERSE 9**

"**And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon**" — The animals and birds specified in this verse, are those commanded by the Mosaic law, and which foreshadowed the coming Messiah. The heifer was used for purification from contact with death (Num. 19:13), or for absolving from guilt in the case of murder (Deut. 21:3). The she-goat was used to atone for sins of ignorance (Num. 15:27). The ram was used as an offering of consecration (Exod. 29:15). Thus mortality, the natural sins of the flesh, and the need for consecration is brought in order before the attention of the offerer, Abram. The turtledove and pigeon comprised the burnt-offering of poverty (Lev. 1:14) and at childbirth (Luke 2:24), indicative of man's state of mortality before Yahweh. The animals were all of three years of age, speaking of maturity; three being the number of fruit or fulfillment, and associated with the covenant (Gen. 22:4, etc.)

#### **VERSE 10**

"**And he took unto them all these, and he divided them in the midst and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not**" — The Hebrew *bathar*, *divided*, is found elsewhere in Song 2:17; Jer. 34:18. It has relation to the dividing asunder, into two equal parts, of a covenant victim. In ancient times, a covenant was confirmed by the two contracting parties passing through a divided sacrifice, and proclaiming the terms of the agreement. Reference to this practice is found in Gen. 31:44 (Heb. *cut a covenant*), and more directly in Jer. 34:18-19. The idea behind this practice was to emphasise that a covenant is binding unto death. Typically, the two parties agreed

that if it was broken, the fate of the victim becomes that of the defaulting party. Hence, Yahweh declared through Jeremiah, of those who had "transgressed My covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before Me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof ... I will give them into the hand of their enemies, and their dead bodies shall be for meat unto the beasts of the earth" (Jer. 34). Christ is our covenant-victim, and our covenant with Yahweh through him is binding unto death. Paul wrote: "For where a covenant is, the death of the covenant-victim to come is necessary, for a covenant over dead victims is steadfast, since it is of no force at all while the covenant-victim liveth" (Heb. 9:16-17, *Youngs Lit. Trans.* and *Diaglott*). As the covenant-victim, Christ "confirmed the promises made unto the fathers" (Rom. 15:8), and made their fulfilment certain. What of those who break the covenant made with Yahweh through Christ? Their fate is to be figuratively "cut asunder" (Matt. 24:51; Luke 12:46).

In the upper room Christ declared: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20). We celebrate Christ as the covenant-victim when we assemble at the table of the Lord, and in so doing, the ordinance goes back to the time when Abram did so typically. The solemn nature of the memorials is such that if we are not careful we can "eat and drink condemnation to ourselves" and fall victim to the terms of the covenant-death.

When Yahweh directed Abram to take the animals and birds specified, and treat them as recorded in this chapter. He made known to him the way in which the patriarch would inherit the promises: it would be through the solemn, unbreakable Covenant He would enter into through the covenant-victim He would provide.

#### VERSE 11

**"And when the fowls came down upon the carcases, Abram drove them away"** — In accordance with the Hebrew, the R.V. renders, "fowls" as *birds of prey*. Abram protected the covenant-victims

from attack; thus he kept his part of the Covenant; he kept watch over it until death claimed him.

#### VERSE 12

**"And when the sun was going down"** — The termination of Abram's "day".

**"A deep sleep fell upon Abram"** — Figurative of death.

**"And, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him"** — Lit. "*a horror, a great darkness*" — the horror and darkness of *Sheol*, the grave.

#### VERSE 13

**"And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not their's"** — They would be exiles, driven from the Land of Promise. These words were cited by Stephen in his defence before the Sanhedrin (Acts 7:6-7).

**"And they shall serve them"** — They will suffer persecution.

**"And they shall afflict them four hundred years"** — Moses gives a figure of 430 years (Exod. 12:40), evidently dating it from the entry of Abram into Canaan. That being the case, Abram's four hundred years would be dated from the time that Ishmael mocked at Isaac, as recorded in Gen. 21. Both concluded with the Exodus. See notes on Ch. 15:16

#### VERSE 14

**"And also that nation, whom they shall serve"** — Egypt.

**"Will I judge"** — The plagues that were poured out upon Egypt.

**"And afterward shall they come out with great substance"** — See Exod. 12:36; Psa. 105:37.

#### VERSE 15

**"And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age"** — A Hebraism expressing that Abram would die and be buried. It cannot relate to the apostate idea of heaven-going, for the fathers of Abram were idolators (Josh. 24:2).

#### VERSE 16

**"But in the fourth generation they**

**shall come hither again**” — They were sojourners in oppression for 430 years (Exod. 12:40), 215 of which were in Egypt proper. In the fourth generation they came out. This can be computed two ways.

Firstly, the actual life-span. From Abraham's call to his death was 100 years (Gen. 25:7); Jacob, then about 16, lived until he was 148 = 132 years; Kohath, then about 18, lived to 133 (Exod. 6:18) = 115 years; Aaron, born after the death of Kohath, was 83 when the Israelites left Egypt. Thus 100 + 132 + 115 + 83 = 430.

Secondly: descendants from the time the children of Israel entered Egypt. Thus: Levi, Kohath, Amram, Moses comprise four generations.

**“For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full”** — The vile, immoral religion of the Canaanites fully justified the measures taken by Yahweh through Joshua to destroy their influence. It was noted for its brutality and lust, being effete and corrupt in its influence. It was right and merciful for Yahweh to order its complete destruction, for otherwise it would have destroyed His people. Sodom left its name for the unnatural vice its inhabitants practised. The Phoenicians surprised the Romans by the depth of their depravity. W.F. Albright, the celebrated archaeologist, claims:

“Comparison of the cult objects and mythological texts of the Canaanites with those of the Egyptians and Mesopotamians, forces one conclusion, that Canaanite religion was much more completely centred on sex and its manifestations. In no country has so relatively great a number of figurines of the naked goddess of fertility, some distinctly obscene, been found. Nowhere does the cult of serpents appear so strongly. The two goddesses Astarte (Ashtaroth) and Anath are called the great goddesses which conceive but do not bear! Sacred courtesans and eunuch priests were excessively common. Human sacrifice was well known” (quoted in Young's *Analytical Concordance to the Bible*).

### **The Boundaries Of The Land Promised Abram — vv. 17-21**

*The covenant is confirmed by Yahweh; and the ultimate borders of the land pro-*

*mised to Abram's seed are set forth.*

### **VERSE 17**

**“And it came to pass, that when the sun went down”** — Significantly, a similar expression is used in regard to the overthrow of Judah's commonwealth following the ministry of the Lord Jesus. See Mic. 3:6.

**“And it was dark”** — Micah, predicting the overthrow of Judah at the hands of the Romans, declared: “It shall be dark unto you” (Mic. 3:6).

**“Behold a smoking furnace”** — The Hebrew term signifies *fire-pot*. The word has been frequently rendered *oven* (Lev. 2:4; 7:9 etc.). The only other place rendered “furnace” is Isaiah 31:9: “Yahweh, whose fire is in Zion, and His furnace in Jerusalem.” The “smoking furnace,” therefore, suggests purification through trial, such as the Lord experienced (Heb. 5:7-8), and every true son of God will feel (Heb. 12:3-8).

**“And a burning lamp”** — This is a symbol for the Spirit of God (Rev. 4:5). It was through obedience learned through suffering, and by the help of the Spirit of God, that Christ rendered perfect obedience to the Father, and provided a complete sacrifice for the salvation of humanity.

**“That passed between those pieces”** — The symbolism of the smoking furnace and the burning lamp represents God manifest in the flesh in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this vision, Yahweh is shown as meeting Abram “between the pieces” of the covenant-victims: thus, entering into covenant with him. The covenant with Abraham was confirmed in Christ (Rom. 15:8), and in this, the transaction was completed and made sure. To his Apostles Christ represented His offering as the token of “the new covenant” in his blood. He was the covenant-victim, and Yahweh was manifested in him to that end.

### **VERSE 18**

**“In the same day Yahweh made a covenant with Abram”** — The Hebrew *karath berith* signifies “cut a covenant.” The very word for covenant, *berith*, im-

plies the slaying and eating of a covenant-victim. Strong gives the meaning: "a compact (because made by passing between pieces of flesh)." The covenant-victim referred to was that described in v. 9; but that, in turn, pointed forward to the Lord Jesus. As such, this transaction with Abram foreshadows the instruction of the Lord to his Apostles in the upper room prior to his offering.

**"Saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land"** — At no stage has Israel occupied all the land hereafter described; demonstrating that the fulfilment of the promise still lies in the future.

**"From the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates"** — This is the Nile, as the Hebrew *nahar* implies. The border of Israel never reached that far south. References to "the river of Egypt" as in 1 Kings 8:65 have a different word in Hebrew: *nachal*, signifying a winter torrent. The Promised Land, therefore, comprises all that territory from the Euphrates to the Nile (see Ezek. 48).

"Here, then," declares *Elpis Israel* (p. 237), "is a noble domain, lying between Assyria, Persia, Arabia, the Red Sea, Egypt, and the Mediterranean; capable, when peopled by an industrious, enlightened, and well and strongly governed, nation, of commanding the commerce and sovereignty of Asia, and the wealth of Europe and America. Such is the land, containing, according to the survey of the British Government, 300,000 square miles, concerning which God said to Abram, 'To thee will I give it and unto thy seed for ever'."

#### VERSE 19

**"The Kenites"** — Signifies *Fixed, established*.

**"And the Kenizzites"** — Signifies *Hunters*.

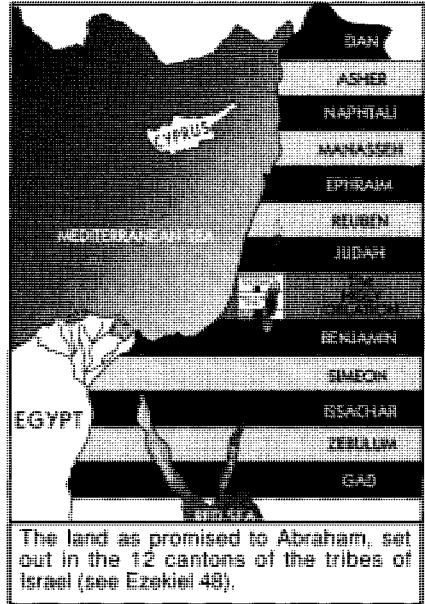
**"And the Kadmonites"** — Signifies *Ancient, well established*.

#### VERSE 20

**"And the Hittites"** — Sig. *Terror*.

**"And the Perizzites"** — See Gen. 13:7.

**"And the Rephaims"** — See Gen. 14:5.



#### VERSE 21

**"And the Amorites"** — See Gen. 14:7.

**"And the Canaanites"** — See Gen. 12:6.

**"And the Gergashites"** — Signifies *Driven Out*.

**"And the Jebusites"** — Signifies *Treaders down*.

All these names speak of the power of the flesh. Moreover, the attitude of the Canaanitish tribes illustrated their titles, and inspired fear in the hearts of ten of the twelve spies who, ultimately, were sent out to survey the land (Num. 13). Figuratively, they speak of the flesh which has to be subdued for the man of the Spirit to manifest himself. Unfortunately, when Israel did gain the land, they did not carry out the Divine instructions to utterly destroy the Canaanites, and the latter triumphed over them for a time.

Meanwhile, in the transactions so far recorded in the life of Abraham, the covenant was announced (Gen. 12:1-4), confirmed (Gen. 13:14-17; 15:1-7), and now typically ratified (Gen. 15:18-21).

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

*This chapter records how that Abram attempted to accomplish God's purpose of providing him with a son by natural means. Under persuasion from Sarai, he marries Hagar, and she conceives. Her subsequent action causes dissension in the encampment, and, at the instigation of Sarai, Hagar is banished. In commenting upon these circumstances Paul taught they were both historical and allegorical: "Which things are an allegory" (Gal. 4:24). In the light of his explanation, Hagar represented the covenant from Sinai, and Sarai the covenant of faith.*

### **Abram Marries Hagar — vv. 1-3.**

*Sarai, proving barren, Abram is induced by her to take Hagar to wife. The practice of taking a concubine under such conditions as are outlined in this chapter was recognised by the law and custom of the time, and should not be considered in the light of modern attitudes. Archaeological discoveries at Nuzu revealed that the marriage regulations of the day stipulated that if a wife is barren, she must furnish her husband with a slave wife.*

### **VERSE 1**

**"Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children"** — We must consider this chapter from the viewpoint of both narrative and allegory. In regard to the first, the barrenness of Sarai must have been a sore trial to Abram, whose hopes now rested upon the coming of the promised seed (Gen. 15:2-4). From the standpoint of the allegory, Sarai represents the Abrahamic covenant, and faith was required to produce the desired seed (Gal. 3:23). It is significant that later "through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive" (Heb. 11:11). Meanwhile, typically, "Faith had not yet come" (see Gal. 3:23).

**"And she had an handmaid"** — The Mosaic covenant was but a handmaid to the Abrahamic covenant. It was designed to illustrate the sinfulness of sin (Rom. 7:13), that those exercised thereby should realise that salvation is possible only through the promised redeemer. Therefore it was as "a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith"

(Gal. 3:24).

**"An Egyptian"** — This slave girl was probably acquired when Abram visited Egypt as recorded in Ch. 12. Likewise, the Mosaic covenant was provided when Israel was in Egypt, and ratified at Sinai.

**"Whose name was Hagar"** — Her name signifies *Wanderer, Fugitive, Sojourner*, and thus is appropriate to Israel according to the flesh, under the Law.

### **VERSE 2**

**"And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, Yahweh hath restrained me from bearing"** — Sarai rightly attributed her condition to Yahweh, Whom she recognised as the sovereign and supreme disposer of mankind and of nature. She had evidently made her barrenness the subject of prayer.

**"I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her"** — See introductory comments above. Notice that God had not promised that the son would come from Sarai (Gen. 15:4), but merely that Abram would be his father. Considered from the standpoint of the allegory, in which Hagar represents the covenant of Sinai (Gal. 4:25), the Mosaic covenant was designed that the Abrahamic covenant might "obtain children" (Rom. 7:10; Gal. 3:24).

**"And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai"** — He did so because his childless state seemed to require some such action on his part. Cp. Gen. 3:16. In Paul's day, Israel after the flesh, "being ignorant of God's righteousness" endeavoured to

“establish their own” by natural means in the absence of faith (Rom. 10:1-3).

### VERSE 3

**“And Sarai, Abram’s wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife”** — Abram’s patience for the promised seed, began to be exhausted. We, too, can become impatient at delay. We must remember that Yahweh is all-wise, and sometimes withholds His action for our benefit. We need also to remember that “there is a set time to favour Zion,” and we must patiently wait for it (See Psa. 27:14; 40:1). The birth of Isaac foreshadowed that of the Lord Jesus, and regarding the latter, we read: “When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Gal. 4:4). Abram should have waited for Yahweh to reveal His intentions instead of listening to the voice of his wife.

### Hagar Despises Sarai — vv. 4-6.

*Hagar becomes arrogant towards Sarai, whom she treats with contempt. Discipline is administered, and Hagar flees from Abram’s encampment.*

### VERSE 4

**“And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived”** — Hagar, the slave girl, as representative of the Mosaic covenant, “gendered to bondage” (Gal. 4:24). Her child would be of the flesh, and a slave like herself.

**“And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes”** — In like manner Hannah was despised by Peninnah (1 Sam. 1:6), for barrenness among the Hebrews was regarded as a dishonour and a reproach (Gen. 19:31; 30:1,23; Lev. 20:20). It was the hope of all Hebrew women to play a part in the development of the “seed of the woman” promised in Eden, and therefore fecundity was looked upon as a special mark of Divine favour (Gen. 21:6; 24:60; Deut. 7:14). “Despised” is *qalal*, to make light, to treat as of no consequence. Hagar

treated Sarai with contempt, setting herself forward as of superior merit. So did those who rested upon the Law as a means of justification, instead of faith. Israel “after the flesh” came to view the message of faith delivered by the prophets as of no consequence (2 Chron. 36:15-16). In his parable relating to this, the Lord described them as “making light of it” (Matt. 22:5). It was treated just as Hagar treated Sarai. This led to disciplinary action against Israel on the part of Yahweh, which resulted in them being scattered among the nations.

### VERSE 5

**“And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: Yahweh judge between me and thee”** — *The Amplified Bible* renders: “May (the responsibility for) my wrong and deprivation of rights be upon you.” It was contrary to their homeland custom for servant wives to show disrespect to the principal wife. When Sarai saw that she was despised she blamed it on to Abram, perhaps because he had not openly rebuked Hagar. But the whole transaction had stemmed from lack of faith on Sarai’s part. In like manner, the Law was given “because of transgressions” (Gal. 3:19).

### VERSE 6

**“But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee”** — Abram claims that the remedy is in Sarai’s own hands. Hagar was her handmaid, not Abram’s! Sarai had the right to discipline her. Similarly, the Mosaic covenant was subject to the Abrahamic covenant. In the natural interplay of human reactions, the purpose of God was being foreshadowed, for the edification of those who would come after.

**“And when Sarai dealt hardly with her”** — The margin supplies the Hebrew: *afflicted her*. She did this by thrusting her back into her position of servitude, probably setting her tasks designed to humble her and make her obedient. In agreement with the allegory, natural Israel was reduced to slavery, and subjected to disci-

pline, until, as the result of the people continuing to treat the appeal of faith lightly "there was no remedy," and they were taken into captivity (2 Chron. 36:16-17).

**"She fled from her face"** — She refused to submit to Sarai's instructions and discipline, and was forced to flee. Hagar fled from the encampment of Abram on two occasions (see Ch. 21). Paul quotes the latter occasion in Galatians 4 as being applicable to the dispersion of natural Israel by the Romans. In the light of that interpretation, this first occasion evidently foreshadowed the first banishment by the Babylonians. Thus in type, Abram was shown the future history of his people.

### Hagar In Banishment Finds Help Of God — vv. 7-14

*Hagar makes her way back towards Egypt when she is met by an angel, who enquires of her purpose, and commands her to return and submit to Sarai. Allegorically, that is what happened when Israel was taken into captivity by the Chaldeans.*

#### VERSE 7

**"And the angel of Yahweh"** — This is the first time the expression occurs in the Bible. The Hebrew *malak* is from a root meaning to *despatch* as a deputy, and therefore, a *messenger*. It is translated *ambassador, angel, king, messenger*, and is used both in regard to Divine and human beings. The angels, as such, are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14). They are sent forth on missions of mercy as well as of wrath.

**"Found her"** — This expresses a mission of mercy. Cp. Luke 19:10.

**"By a fountain of water in the wilderness"** — Among the Gentiles. Cp. Rev. 17:3.

**"By the fountain in the way to Shur"** — Shur signifies *Wall*. It was the name given to a great wall of forts that closed off Egypt from Palestine. In 1 Sam. 15:7, it is described as being "over against Egypt." Hagar was making her way back to Egypt (cp. Gen. 16:3). Israel was drawn from Egypt by the hand of Moses (Hos. 11:1), but in its apostasy was driven back

to spiritual Egypt when it went into dispersion (cp. Deut. 28:68).

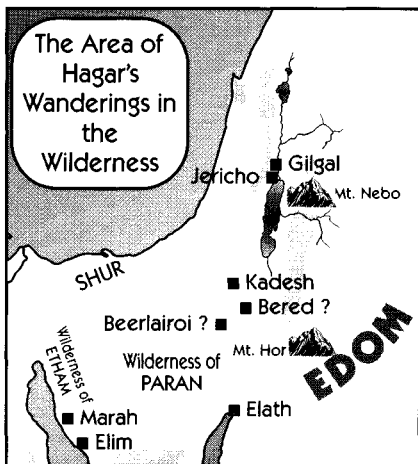
#### VERSE 8

**"And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go?"** — By addressing her by name, the angel revealed that he knew her personally, and the background of her life. It also showed that he was no ordinary person. The Lord used a similar method in addressing the woman of Samaria (John 4:29). Further, the form of address was designed to remind Hagar of her subordinate position of servitude. In like manner, Yahweh's messengers were sent to Israel in Babylonia to effect a conversion, and were successful in doing so, preparing the way for the return under Zerubbabel (Ezra 1,2).

**"And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai"** — In return, Hagar acknowledges her subordinate position; she is humbled by reverses.

#### VERSE 9

**"And the angel of Yahweh said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands"** — This was an appeal to return and submit to Sarai as a woman of faith. The exhortation to "return" was frequent in the mouths of the prophets Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, as well as such leaders as Ezra. They called





upon Israel in dispersion to become humble and submissive to the requirements of faith.

#### VERSE 10

**“And the angel of Yahweh said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude”** — In the terms of the narrative, this promise has relation to Ishmael from whence came the Arabs. They have multiplied into a numerous people, and will yet find an honoured place in the Kingdom of God (see Isa. 60:6-7). In the terms of the allegory, however, Ishmael stands for Israel after the flesh (Gal. 4:25), who, likewise, are to become a large and numerous nation in the Kingdom of God (Mic. 4:8; Ezek. 37:21-22).

#### VERSE 11

**“And the angel of Yahweh said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael”** — His name signifies: *Whom El Hears*. The name certainly applies to Israel after the flesh, according to the allegory (see Exod. 3:7; Deut. 4:29-31).

**“Because Yahweh hath heard thy affliction”** — There is thus a play upon the word Ishmael. Evidently Hagar had lifted up her voice in prayer in regard to her yet unborn child. In their affliction, Israel after the flesh, still subject to the terms of the covenant (Gal. 5:3), cried unto God, and He heard and delivered the people from Babylon. He will do so again in the future (Deut. 4:30, R.V.).

#### VERSE 12

**“And he will be a wild man”** — *Pereh adam*, a wild ass of a man; that is, hardy, swift, difficult to catch and to tame. The characteristics of the wild ass are outlined in Job 39:5-8. A consideration of these will reveal that they are appropriate to both the Arabs and the natural Jews, and therefore applicable to both the narrative and the allegory.

**“His hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him”** — This is true of Israel in dispersion, and is exemplified in the turbulent character of the Bedouin Arabs.

**“And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren”** — This is literally, *before the face of*, and therefore, in the sight of his brethren. Again, this is applicable to the Arabs, and to Israel after the flesh. In the Age to come, the Arabs will be removed east to Arabia (Isa. 21:13-15; Isa. 60:6-7), whilst Israel after the flesh will dwell in the Land of Promise “in the presence (*over against*, *RSV*) of all his brethren” — the true seed of Abraham. See Isa. 49:19-21 for the astonishment expressed then at the great influx of spiritual sons of Abraham; and the confession of such in Isa. 63:16, “Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O Yahweh, art our Father, our Redeemer; Thy name is from everlasting”. Israel after the flesh, that “wild ass of a man”, will then dwell in the presence of all his brethren, and the allegory will find its fulfilment. At the same time, the natural descendants of Ishmael will occupy the land adjacent to the Land of Promise, and likewise will fulfil this prophetic promise made to Hagar.

#### VERSE 13

**“And she called the name of Yahweh that spake unto her”** — It was an angel that spake unto her (v. 7), but he was the representative and manifestation of Yahweh (cp. Exod. 23:20-21).

**“Thou God seest me”** — *El-Roi*, *El of Seeing*. The name *Ishmael* proclaims that El hears; whilst the name *El-Roi* declares that He sees. *El* signifies *strength*, *power*, and teaches that God not only hears and sees, but has the power to provide help in trouble. The word is derived from *ra’ah*, *to see*, translated *Seer* and applied to the prophets as those who saw in vision the matters they reported (1 Sam. 9:9,11, 19; 2 Chron. 16:7; cp. Rev. 1:1). A cognate word is *Mar’ah* found in the phrase, *the visions of God* (Ezek. 1:1; 8:3; 40:2). The title, therefore, is expressive of the fact that El sees, and enables His servants to likewise see through the prophetic visions delivered unto them.

**“For she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?”** — All versions render this phrase differently. The

word translated "after" *'ahar*, also signifies *last days, after times or hereafter* (Dan. 2:29,45). Hagar could have said: "Have I also here seen the latter purposes or designs of He Who sees me?" as rendered by Adam Clarke. The *Amplified Bible* gives as a rendition: "Have I here also seen (the future purposes or designs) of Him Who sees me?" This would signify that Hagar recognised that the statement of the angel was a prophecy of the future; and realised that if she complied with his instructions regarding Sarai, all would be well with her and her unborn child.

#### VERSE 14

**"Wherefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi"** — The margin gives the meaning as: *The well of Him that liveth and seeth me*. Strong renders: *The well of the Living One — my Seer, taking Roi as Seer or Prophet*. Moffatt renders: *The Well of Life and Vision*, both of which Hagar had found. The well speaks of the water of life; its name proclaims what that water reveals in relation to the God whom Hagar worshipped. Her words show that she was educated by Abram in the Truth; and that she, together with other members of his household, looked forward to what it will provide ultimately.

**"Behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered"** — These two names are significant. Kadesh signifies *Sanctuary*: Bered means *hail or storm*, which is often used by Yahweh in order to punish (see Psa. 148:8; Job 38:22-23). Thus the Well of Life and Vision is strategically placed between the Sanctuary and the Storm. It

provides the means whereby the storm may be avoided and the shelter of the Sanctuary reached.

#### Hagar Restored Gives Birth to Ishmael — vv. 15-16.

*Hagar gave birth to Abram's son as the Mosaic covenant gave political birth to Yahweh's firstborn (Exod. 4:22), constituting the people of God as "the Ecclesia in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38).*

#### VERSE 15

**"And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael"** — This implies that Hagar returned humbled and submissive to Sarai. See Gen. 21:10.

#### VERSE 16

**"And Abram was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram"** — This was a long time to wait, and nothing tests faith like apparent delay on the part of God. The chapter provides evidence of this. It reminds us that there is no surer evidence of simple faith than "patient continuance in well-doing." *Talking* of faith is all very well; *walking* by faith is far better. It is difficult, but honouring to Yahweh, to plod along in the path of duty, with little to encourage us beyond the consciousness that such is the will of God. The daily exercise of confidence in Him, will, in due season, reap its reward if we faint not. The story of Abraham teaches that, and encourages us to follow along the path that he trod, and which ultimately will bring us to the Kingdom of God.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### PROMISE OF ISAAC: THE SEED OF THE COVENANT Genesis 17:1-18:15

*In this important section of Genesis, we have recorded a change of name for Abram. From henceforth he is to be called Abraham. At the same time, God also revealed Himself under a new name, and gave Abraham the sign of circumcision as the*

*token of the Covenant. Further, the patriarch was told that the heir of this covenant was to be a son born to Sarai; and her name, too, was changed to Sarah. In the light of this information, Abraham immediately arranged that all the males of his household be circumcised. Later, he entertained three angels who, to the unbelief of Sarah, predicted that she would bear a son.*

### **Abram's Name Changed to Abraham — Vv. 1-8.**

*God reveals Himself by a new name, and also proclaims a change in the name of Abram. In the Hebrew, this merely involves the addition of a single letter: the Hebrew letter "He," the fifth letter in the Hebrew alphabet—five being the number of grace.*

### **VERSE 1**

**"And when Abram was ninety years old and nine"** — In the mystical symbolism of numbers, ninety-nine suggests incompleteness such as was brought to an end by the birth of Isaac. From the literal viewpoint, it reveals the long wait imposed upon Abram, and implies the faith and patience he was compelled to display in consequence. Twenty-four years had passed since he entered the Land (cp. with Gen. 12:4), without, as yet, any tangible evidence of the confirmation of the Covenant.

**"Yahweh appeared to Abram"** — This is Moses' statement. In fact, Abram did not know God by that name (Exod. 6:3). Yahweh signifies *He Who Will Be*, and proclaims His purpose to reveal Himself in certain of Adam's race. His "appearance" was evidently a theophany manifested through an angel who displayed the glory of the Father as in Exod. 23:20-21. Notice that in v. 6, Moses declared that it was God, *Elohim*, who spake with Abram.

**"And said unto him, I am the Almighty God"** — This is the first usage of this Name, which, however, frequently occurs throughout the Word. In Exod. 6:3, Moses states that this was the Name by which Deity particularly revealed Himself to Abraham (see Gen. 28:3; 35:11). As we have stated earlier in relation to the Name and Titles of Deity, it is important to consider the circumstances in which a particu-

lar name or title is first given, as well as the meaning. In this place the Hebrew is *El Shaddai*, which Bro. Thomas renders as *The Strength of the Destroyers*. *El* signifies *strength* or *power*. "Whenever the term *El* passed before the mind of the Israelite, the idea of *might* and *power* stood out in bold relief" (*Phanerosis*). The word *Shaddai*, according to Dr. Strong, is from the root *shadad*, *to be burly, powerful*, and by implication, *to ravage*. It is rendered *destroyer* (Job 15:21), *spoiler* (Jer. 6:26; 15:8; 51:48, 53,56). It is a plural word, so that the title suggests the idea of Divine (*El*) judgments manifested through the *Elohim*. It was *El Shaddai* who plunged Sodom into the abyss, and whose mighty power, therefore, is to be feared. Developed from this root, the title signifies *The Strength of the Destroyers*. Others derive the plural *Shaddai* from the singular form *shad* which is "invariably used in Scripture for a woman's breast" (Schofield). It is translated in the A.V. by three words: "breast (18 times), "pap", "teat".

Applied to *El* this word becomes a graphic metaphor for God as the Nourisher of His people, as well as the Destroyer of their enemies. Yahweh is both a sun (to destroy) and a shield (to protect); He is the Giver of every good and perfect gift (Psa. 84:11; James 1:17), and the Avenger of His people.

*El Shaddai*, therefore, can signify either *The Strength of the Destroyers*, or *The Strength of the Nourishers*. The Name proclaims that Yahweh is both a Destroyer of evil, and a Nourisher of good. Paul declared: "Behold the goodness and severity of God" (Rom. 11:22). The Name is expressive of both principles.

Consider the significance of this Name in this its first use. Abram, after long test-

ing, had come to the realisation that the son of promise could not come from his strength (see Gen. 17:1,2). It was at that moment of long deferred hope, of old age, and of unfulfilled expectation, that Yahweh appeared, as the Nourisher of His people and the Destroyer of their enemies, with a message of hope (vv. 4-8), and of warning (v. 14). He would save, or He would destroy, according as they responded to His will.

Now trace its use throughout the Scriptures. Notice that Isaac blessed Jacob in his search for a bride in this Name (Gen. 28:3); that Jacob blessed Joseph in this Name, seeking the nourishment that the Shaddai can provide (Gen. 49:25-26). Naomi saw in the punishment she received from the Shaddai, the discipline of a Parent-Power (Ruth 1:20-21) so that Yahweh proved to be to her both Destroyer and Nourisher.

Notice that of the 48 occurrences of the Name in the O.T., 31 are found in the *Book of Job* — the book of chastening and of tender love, which, in the discipline and care that it records of Yahweh, is illustrative of the twofold significance of this title (see also James 5:10-11; Heb. 12:5-12).

The proclamation of this Name teaches us that we can expect both discipline and help from Yahweh; that He will nourish us, but also punish us if we need it. It proclaims that He does not look on unmindful at oppression, but will extend Himself to protect His own, and at the same time, will defend them against their enemies. That was the lesson Abraham learned, as he received the benefits of a glorious everlasting promise; whereas Sodom was punished with everlasting destruction.

As *The Strength of the Destroyers*, Yahweh says, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay" (Rom. 12:19); as *The Strength of the Nourishers* He says, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5-6).

"**Walk before Me**" — In view of My character revealed in this Name, walk with Me always in view. *Walk* is expressive of conduct or behaviour. To *walk before* God is to act as though we are constantly in His presence; as though He is present to our

view, and we are in His. If we always keep this command in view, how circumspect we will be in thought and deed. Unfortunately, through the weakness of the flesh (Rom. 8:3), we constantly forget. Abraham fulfilled this command as recorded in Gen. 48:15, though obviously not to ultimate perfection. It is a command that has been passed on to all the seed of Abraham: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Yahweh require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to humble thyself to walk with thy God" (Mic. 6:8 mg.). Man must humble himself to walk with Yahweh.

"**And be thou perfect**" — The margin gives this as *upright, sincere* (Heb. *tamiym*). That, obviously, is its significance in such places as Gen. 20:5 where it is rendered *integrity*, and in 2 Sam. 22:24 where it is translated *upright*. Noah (Gen. 6:9), Jacob (Gen. 25:27), and Job (Job 1:1) are described as being "perfect," though each one sinned. In Genesis 25:27, the word is translated *plain*, and used in regard to Jacob, but, here again, it signifies *sincere, or upright*. The word is also used to describe spiritual maturity (1 Cor. 2:6; 14:20 — where it is rendered *perfect and men*, both from the same Greek word, *telios*), a mental attitude to the things of God that is modelled on the mind of Christ (Phil. 3:15), suggesting that one must learn to grow up in the things of God (Eph. 4:13).

The purpose of God is to bring us to absolute perfection. In measure, this can be effected now, through the forgiveness of sins. Paul taught that the Law of Moses could not accomplish such perfection (Heb. 7:11; 9:9), but that it was possible by the forgiveness of sins through the sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 10:14). Absolute perfection will be attained by the elect, at the Judgment Seat, as they will be clothed upon with Divine nature which cannot sin. Christ set this before us as our goal: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). According to B.F. Atkinson, "in the original Greek the verb is in the future indicative, and may be read either as a command, or as a statement for the future."

Perhaps both senses are applicable. It is a command to strive to that end, and also a promise that it will be attained ultimately.

#### VERSE 2

**“And I will make My covenant between Me and thee”** — Better: “I will *establish* My covenant.” Heb. *nathan, give, establish, appoint*. The covenant had already been given; it was now to be typically confirmed by the token of circumcision, and the birth of Isaac.

**“And I will multiply thee exceedingly”** — This is always the result of entering into covenant relationship with Yahweh (see 2 Pet. 1:5-8). Fruitfulness follows, as we develop the fruits of the spirit within us, and extend the power of the Gospel to others. Abraham was promised that his seed would be multiplied exceedingly. In Rev. 7:9 it is described as “a great multitude whom no man could number.” In Rev. 17:14, their characters are shown to conform to his, for whereas he was “called, and chosen, and faithful”, so also are they.

#### VERSE 3

**“And Abram fell on his face”** — He prostrated himself with his face to the ground in humility, feeling a sense of unworthiness to look upon the Divine glory manifested by the angel. We, too, should show due reverence in prayer, and not presume upon an easy familiarity in addressing God.

**“And God talked with him, saying”** — The word is *Elohim*. In this chapter, therefore, *Yahweh, El Shaddai, and Elohim* are all linked together. *Yahweh* is the family name of God, proclaiming His intention to reveal Himself in a family; *El Shaddai*, speaks of His protective care as a Father; the term *Elohim* has reference to the medium of manifestation. Though *Elohim* is a plural noun, it is also used for an individual angel as the representative of all the Elohim of heaven, much the same as a single voice can speak on behalf of an Ecclesia, or a company of people.

#### VERSE 4

**“As for Me, behold, My covenant is with thee”** — It is established with Abra-

ham, and he alone is the channel of Divine blessing (cp. Eph. 2:11-13).

**“And thou shalt be a father of many nations”** — See v. 5. God’s message to Abram came in four parts: 17:5-8; 9-14; 15-16; and 19-21; in two cases interspersed with conversation involving Abram.

#### VERSE 5

**“Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham”** — In the original Hebrew, printed without vowel points, the only addition was the insertion of the letter *h*, the fifth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, five being the number of grace. Abram signifies *Lofty Father*, whereas Abraham signifies *Father of a Multitude*. It is an abbreviation of *rab-hamon*, and concerning *hamon*, Gesenius states that it signifies “a multitude, as of the drops of rain, the swelling of springs, the voice of singers” all allusions that are significative of the saints in glory. Abram is the father of Israel; Abraham, is the father of Jew and Gentile made one in Israel. The four consonants of Abram (and four is the number of Israel) become five in Abraham, with the insertion of the fifth letter of the alphabet. Thus four (control) moves on to five (grace).

**“For a father of many nations have I made thee”** — From one nation to many, so that the covenant privileges are extended to Gentiles. “Many nations” is better rendered a *multitude* of nations, as in the margin, and so conforming to the name of Abraham. Paul quotes these words in Romans 4:16-17 as applying to believing Gentiles, justified by faith (Gal. 3:29). But the promise also has a national application. All nations will be forced to accept the covenant in the Age to come (Isa. 60:12), and to send their representatives regularly to Jerusalem for worship (Zech. 14:16). In that day “all nations shall call him (the seed of Abraham) blessed” (Psa. 72:17). In the family of nations thus constituted, Israel after the flesh will be granted the “first dominion” (Mic. 4:8).

#### VERSE 6

**“And I will make thee exceedingly fruitful”** — Fruitfulness, particularly in

עוֹד אֶת־שֵׁמֶךָ אֲבָרָם וְהִיא שְׁמֶךָ אֲבָרָהָם כִּי אֲבִי־הֵמוֹן  
of father a for ,Abram your but ;Abram name your longer  
many name be shall

The Hebrew letter *he* is added to both Abram's name (v. 5, above) and Sarai's (v. 15, below). It is the FIFTH letter, ה, which is the number of grace. Thus, by a change of name they were reminded that the principle of grace is demonstrated in the covenant Yahweh made with this faithful pair. This same principle is added to our name through baptism into Christ, whereby his name is "named upon us".

אֲשַׁתְּךָ לֹא־תִקְרָא אֶת־שֵׁמֶךָ שָׂרַי כִּי שָׂרָה שְׁמָהּ: וּבֵרַכְתִּי  
have I and (be shall) Sarah for ;Sarai her (by)  
blessed name her name shall you not Your  
call wife

spiritual qualities, is the central part of the Divine blessing. From his association with Hagar, Abram had learned that true fruitfulness does not come from human agency, but from God. The barren Sarai would ultimately bear a son, "because she judged Him faithful who had promised." Isaiah predicted that from the barren Sarah would come a vast multitude typical of the spiritual seed. He declared: "All thy children shall be taught of Yahweh; and great shall be the peace of thy children" (Isa. 54:1,13). Paul adds: "Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. These all died in faith ..." (Heb. 11:11-13). These spiritual children of Abraham are represented as praying to the Father: "Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O Yahweh, art our Father, our Redeemer; Thy name is from everlasting" (Isa. 63:16). Paul declared, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:29). Every member of the spiritual family of Abraham will manifest fruit to the glory of the Father (John 15:2; Gal. 5:22).

**"And I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee"** — Under the old covenant, this was fulfilled in the kings of David's line who ruled from Jerusalem. Under the new covenant, it is partially fulfilled in Christ (Luke 1:32-33), and will be completely fulfilled in those immortalised saints who will be the associates of the Lord in his reign

(Matt. 19:28; Rev. 5:9-10; 7:4; 20:4; Isa. 32:1). Notice that whereas kings ruled in Jerusalem, the other descendants of Abraham (Ishmael and Edom) had only princes (v. 20), and dukes (Ch. 36:40). This foreshadowed what shall be in the kingdom.

**VERSE 7**

**"And I will establish My covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee"** — He would bring to pass the means by which it would be brought to fruition. That involved the birth of the son of promise. "Establish" is from *quwn* to rise up; to stand firm and upright; to continue. In v. 2 the promise was to "establish" the covenant with Abraham; now it is extended to include Abraham's "seed". See also vv. 19,21.

**"In their generations for an everlasting covenant"** — The word *dowrim* translated *generations*, signifies a *circle of time*, in contrast to Gen. 2:4 etc. where it is from a root signifying *to bear*, or *beget*. The Abrahamic covenant was designed to be kept alive generation after generation (cp. vv. 9,12). It became a memorial of the Divine purpose unto all generations. See the use of the expression in the following places (Exod. 3:15; 1 Chron. 16:15; Psa. 45:17; 72:5; 79:13; 102:12; 105:8-9; 135:13; 145:13; Luke 1:48).

**"To be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee"** — Literally *to be for Elohim unto thee*. This expresses the purpose of the covenant: to develop Elohim out of the Adamic race. The Lord taught: "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resur-

rection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Luke 20:35-36). This is the import and meaning of the Memorial Name. Notice the wording of Exod. 3:15 in the light of the verse before us: "This is My Name for the Olahm, and this is My memorial for a generation of the race" (*Phanerosis*).

#### VERSE 8

**"And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession"** — The marginal rendition has: *the land of thy sojournings*. The children of promise are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11:13). A *stranger* is an alien; a *pilgrim* is one who is moving towards an objective.

**"And I will be their God"** — Literally: *I will be to them for Elohim* (Eureka vol. 1, p. 224). In this declaration *El Shaddai* proclaimed the principle of the Divine Name later revealed at the bush (Exod. 3:14-15; Exod. 6:3). Why not proclaim it at this stage? Because, in the lifetime of Abraham, the circumstances were not ripe for the declaration. Jacob enquired as to what it might be, but was not given the information (Gen. 32:29). The principle of separation for the Name had first to be dramatised (see Exod. 6:7; Lev. 11:45; 22:2,32; Deut. 29:13), which was done at the Exodus (Exod. 3:12). The name of Yahweh is prophetic in its significance, proclaiming what He will be. Notice how the future intentions of *El Shaddai* were proclaimed in the verses before us (Gen. 17:2-8). But how would He *be to them for Elohim*? The context supplies the answer: by circumcision of flesh (v. 11), and obedience to the will of God.

#### Circumcision Appointed as the Covenant Token — Vv. 9-14

*The second portion of God's message to Abraham is now given. It emphasised the keeping of the covenant, and gave instructions concerning the token of the covenant: the rite of circumcision.*

#### VERSE 9

**"And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep My covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations"** — The keeping of the covenant implied more than the mere act of circumcision. In fact, that was but the outward sign of an inward disposition. As the rite was not displayed to view, so the true keeping of the covenant, in heart, is not apparent to external appearance. It is the true circumcision, that of the heart, that is all-important to Yahweh. See Deut. 30:6; Rom. 2:25-29; Col. 3:11-12.

#### VERSE 10

**"This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised"** — Because of this command, the covenant made with Abraham is described as "the covenant of circumcision" (Acts 7:8). From John 7:22 we learn that the law of circumcision took precedence over the Sabbath law: it was "of the fathers," whilst the latter was "of Moses." The Sabbath law, providing *the rest* of the seventh day, pointed forward to the Millennium; circumcision, which took place on the eighth day, pointed forward to the era beyond the Millennium when all flesh shall be cut off by the bestowal of immortal glory upon those who show themselves worthy of this honour during the thousand years' reign. Circumcision was a disowning of flesh and of fleshly descent. Abram had tried to supply the promised seed through the flesh (see Gen. 16:2), but was taught that the seed was to be provided "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13). Far from circumcision establishing any hereditary right, it did the very opposite: it stressed that fleshly descent in no way qualified for enjoyment of covenant privileges, and was a ground, not for pride, but rather for humility. This mark in the flesh was something intimate and personal, and hidden from normal view, pointing to circumcision of the heart, which only Yahweh can detect (Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4). The rite expressed the repudiation of flesh, and gave pain to the flesh. It was the token of the covenant, as the Divine Name was its Memorial. Such

passages as Deut. 10:16-17; 30:6; Ezek. 44:7-9 imply that it is a token of allegiance to Yahweh, "a token of the covenant betwixt Me and you" (Gen. 17:11; Rom. 4:11). It has a spiritual lesson for believers now, for "circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom. 2:29). It is expressive of the "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh" which, commencing with baptism, reaches into the new life in Christ (Col. 2:11-12). Thus:

"None but circumcised persons can inherit the promises. This may startle; but it is strictly true. It will, however, be remembered that true circumcision is of the heart. Circumcision of the flesh is but an outward sign of Abraham's circumcision of heart; and everyone who would inherit with faithful Abraham must be circumcised of heart likewise. When he was circumcised of heart, his faith in God was imputed to him for remission of sins that were past. His former idolatry, etc., was forgiven, and the body of the sins of his flesh put off. Now, a man believing what Abraham believed, with the same effect on his disposition and life, is also circumcised of heart, when, *in putting on Christ*, he is 'circumcised with the circumcision made without hands by the circumcision of Christ,' performed on the eighth day according to the law. In putting on Christ, his faith is counted to him for righteousness as Abraham's was. 'The body of the sins of his flesh,' is cut off. The foreskin of his heart is circumcised, and he is the subject of 'circumcision in the spirit'; and his praise, though not of men, is pronounced of God (Rom. 2:29)." (*Elpis Israel* p. 250).

Circumcision, therefore, is more than baptism; it is the repudiation of a former way of life, and the manifestation of the new way in Christ Jesus; it is a figurative "crucifixion of the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24).

Nevertheless, the Judaisers identified the Mosaic covenant with the rite of circumcision. They did so without possessing the faith of Abraham. Thus:

"What obligation, then, did this sign of the covenant, and seal of Abraham's justification by faith without circumci-

sion, impose upon the circumcised? Let the apostle answer the question. 'I testify,' says he, 'to every man that is circumcised, that *he is a debtor to do the whole law*' (Gal. 5:3). This was a fearful obligation for a man to be brought under, who sought to be justified, to the end that he might obtain an *everlasting* inheritance in the land of Canaan, which implies the acquisition of eternal life and glory. The law was weak through the flesh; and gave only the knowledge of sin. It was an unbearable yoke of bondage; and a law which no man born of the will of the flesh had been able to keep without sin. If, then, a man sought to obtain a right to an everlasting possession of the land by obedience to it, he had undertaken an impossibility; for the law, on account of human weakness, could give no one a right to live for ever; and without life eternal a man could not everlastingly possess the land; and this life no one can attain to who is not justified from all his past sins... A circumcised person is therefore bound to keep that which he cannot possibly keep; and which if he did keep could not benefit him, because justification to life is by faith in the promise, and not by conformity to the Mosaic law" (*Elpis Israel* pp. 247, 248).

Circumcision, therefore, taught that the flesh should be cut off or repudiated, and to the extent that this is not done, forgiveness of sins should be sought through Jesus Christ. Consider the facts of the Law in the light of the pretensions of the Seventh Day Adventists. They claim that the Sabbath law should be observed, but not the law of circumcision; yet, taught the Lord, the former was from Moses, and the latter from Abraham (John 7:22). It should be more binding than the Sabbath law. Both laws are fulfilled in Christ (Col. 2:10-17).

## VERSE 11

"**And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin**" — Heb. *orlah*, the prepuce, from *arel* to be *naked, unclean, impure*. Nakedness is a symbol of sin (Gen. 3:11; Rev. 16:15; cp. Hab. 2:16), and therefore circumcision is a cutting off of sin's flesh.

"**And it shall be a token of the cove-**



**nant betwixt Me and you**” — Circumcision is spiritually manifested in the “putting off of the sins of the flesh,” the first act of which is baptism. All “in Christ” are circumcised, being “in him” who was circumcised on the eighth day, according to the Law (see Phil. 3:3; Col. 2:11-12; Eph. 4:22; John 6:63). A token is both a pledge and a picture. Thus Paul writes that circumcision was a seal of Abraham’s righteousness (Rom. 4:11). As a token, it was not a mark intended to be seen by others, but only by the circumcised individual himself. It reminded him of Yahweh’s reception of him personally as a partaker in the covenant blessings; whilst, on the other hand, reminding him of his individual responsibilities as a member of the covenant people.

Being situated in the organ of generation, the mark of circumcision brought home to the individual that he was a member of the Divine family; and that his redemption would not be through the flesh. It reminded him of his responsibilities to God which were greater than those to the members of his fleshly family.

#### VERSE 12

**“And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed”** — Three provisions are stated in this verse: age, sex, status (home-born or stranger). A male child of eight days old was to be circumcised. Circumcision was compulsory for all, whether one was born in the house (an Israelite after the flesh), or the son of a stranger (a Gentile). In Christ, both Jews and Gentiles are to be spiritually circumcised, and so inducted into the covenant people.

#### VERSE 13

**“He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant”** — Notice that it says “*for*” an everlasting covenant, and not “*as*” one. No covenant in flesh could be everlasting, because of the mortality of flesh (Isa. 40:6-7). Circumcision was a token of

something external to flesh; the everlasting covenant, which reaches forth into the Kingdom (Ezek. 44:9).

#### VERSE 14

**“And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised”** — Such was denied the Passover (Exod. 12:48; Ezek. 44:7-9), and was without hope (Eph. 2:12).

**“That soul shall be cut off from his people”** — Death was the penalty of those who refused circumcision; death will be the punishment of those who neglect spiritual circumcision (Rev. 21:8).

**“He hath broken My covenant”** — That was the ground of the indictment levelled against Israel (Isa. 24:5). The covenant will be restored through the preaching of the Gospel (Isa. 61:8), and a new, resurrected Israel established within the bonds of the new covenant (Jer. 32:40; Ezek. 37:26).

#### Sarai’s Name Changed To Sarah

— **Vv. 15-16.**

*The letter “h” (Heb: he) is added also to Sarai’s name, as she is incorporated within the compass of the extended covenant (see p. 214).*

#### VERSE 15

**“And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be”** — According to Gesenius, Sarai signifies *my princess*, but Sarah *princess*. Formerly she was Abram’s princess exclusively; but henceforth she was to be recognised as a princess generally, for the covenant had been extended to incorporate all nations.

#### VERSE 16

**“And I will bless her”** — She ultimately received strength to conceive. See Heb. 11:11.

**“And give thee a son also of her”** — Children are a blessing from God, “an heritage of Yahweh” (Psa. 127:3).

**“Yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations”** — Notice the marginal rendition: *she shall become nations*. She is an ancestress of both a natural and a spiritual progeny. Cp. Gal. 4:31;

1 Pet. 3:6. Hence others own allegiance to her, justifying the change of her name from the exclusive Sarai, *my princess*, to the all-embracing Sarah, *princess*.

**"Kings of People shall be of her"** — See Rev. 5:9-10.

### Abraham Is Promised Isaac

— Vv. 17-22.

*Abraham is promised a son. He laughs in joy at the incredible news, in faith believing it. In consequence, and as a play upon words, he is told that his son's name would be Isaac or Laughter. He prays also for Ishmael, and a blessing is promised for Hagar's son also.*

#### VERSE 17

**"Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed"** — This was not the laughter of doubt, but of joyful anticipation based on faith. He saw in the circumstances surrounding Isaac a foreshadowing of Christ. "Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad," declared the Lord (John 8:56). God had spoken, and he believed. He was not unduly concerned at his age, or Sarah's barrenness. Paul comments: "He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead because he was about a hundred years old, or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what He had promised. That is why his faith was reckoned to him as righteousness" (Rom. 4:19-22, RSV). Abraham prostrated himself in believing reverence before God, and rejoiced in heart at what he had heard.

**"And said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?"** — A question of amazed wonderment. What reason declared to be impossible, faith proclaimed would be done: "Against hope believed in hope that he might become the father of many nations" (Rom. 4:18).

#### VERSE 18

**"And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee"** —

This does not signify that Abraham preferred Hagar's son before Isaac, the promised seed, but, rather, that Ishmael, also, might live eternally in the kingdom to be set up. He realised that Ishmael would have a lower status than Isaac, but prayed that he be not entirely dispossessed. In Paul's allegory, based on Genesis (Gal. 4:24), Ishmael represents Israel after the flesh. This, then, becomes a prayer on behalf of Israel, that the people might be restored to inherit the land. God granted the prayer of Abraham, as He will also restore Israel back to the land, and to a position of privilege in the kingdom of God (Mic. 4:8).

#### VERSE 19

**"And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac"** — In the terms of the allegory, Sarah represents the new covenant, Jerusalem above (Gal. 4:26), the barren that would bear (Isa. 54:1), the Ecclesia of God.

**"And I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him"** — Isaac was typical of the Christ through whom the covenant was confirmed. See Luke 1:68-71; Rom. 15:8.

#### VERSE 20

**"And as for Ishmael"** — In the terms of the allegory, Ishmael represents Israel after the flesh (Gal. 4:22-31).

**"I have heard thee"** — The Hebrew *shama*, *to hear* is obviously a play on Ishmael's name: *whom El hears*. It is the root from whence the name Ishmael is developed.

**"Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly"** — These words must be considered literally, as applying to the Arab descendants of Ishmael, and allegorically, as applied by Paul to Israel after the flesh. The Arabs will obtain an honoured position in the Kingdom of God (Isa. 60:6-7), but the "first dominion" will be granted to Israel after the flesh (Micah 4:8). In the blessings of Gen. 17:19-20, therefore, there is promise to both the spiritual and the natural seeds of Abraham.

**“Twelve princes shall he beget”** — In agreement with the allegory, the descendants of Ishmael were divided into twelve groups (Gen. 25:12-16), foreshadowing the twelve tribes of Israel, the twelve princes that were established over the united kingdom (1 Kings 4:7), and the similar division in the Age to come, when the Apostles will constitute the “twelve princes” over natural Israel (Matt. 19:28-30).

**“And I will make him a great nation”** — See the promise repeated in Gen. 21:18. It will be fulfilled in the Age to come when both the Arab nations and Israel after the flesh, will be incorporated into the Kingdom of God.

#### VERSE 21

**“But My covenant will I establish with Isaac”** — Typically the seed of promise, Christ: both personally and multitudinously. See Paul’s application of the promise to the Ecclesia (Gal. 4:31).

**“Which Sarah shall bear unto thee”** — She would receive strength to conceive (Heb. 11:11). The seed of promise was to be a child of faith and of divine grace.

**“At this set time in the next year”** — Twelve months hence. Conception did not take place until after the events narrated in the next chapter (cp. v. 10). Evidently Abraham was visited by the three angels within three months of this present visitation.

#### VERSE 22

**“And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham”** — The angel ascended from him into the heavens.

**Abraham Circumcises The Men Of His Household — Vv. 23-27.**

*Ignoring any risk attached to observing the rite, and dominated by faith, Abraham instantly submitted to the will of God.*

#### VERSE 23

**“And Abram took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham’s house;”** — The word men is

*enoshim*, signifying weak, mortal men.

**“And circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him”** — So Abraham brought all his household within the covenant to be established through the seed of promise, of which Isaac was the type. The rite was performed on all males on the same day (v. 26). This would mean that for some days, the community of Abraham would be incapacitated and helpless in a foreign land among potential enemies. There was, in this, a foreshadowing of the state of the Ecclesia whilst in the flesh. The spiritual circumcision of its members, by which the “body of the sins of the flesh” is put off (Col. 2:11), debars them from the use of violence or any other worldly method of self-defence, and makes them entirely dependent upon the protection of Yahweh (2 Cor. 10:3-5; 1 Pet. 3:12-15). From a natural viewpoint, they are helpless in the face of opposition, as Abraham and his household were physically immediately after their circumcision. From a real viewpoint, they are very effectively protected by *El Shaddai*.

#### VERSE 25

**“And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin”** — Circumcision is practised on Arab boys of thirteen to this day.

#### VERSE 26

**“In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son”** — There was no hesitation nor procrastination on the part of Abraham. That great man of faith acted instantly upon the request of God. See note on Ch. 18:10.

#### VERSE 27

**“And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him”** — The household of Abraham (Gal. 3:26-29) comprises both Jews and Gentiles: those natural born, and those purchased with the precious blood of Christ Jesus.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

*This important chapter describes the visit of three angels in the guise of men, who visited the encampment of Abraham and are entertained by him. They repeat the promise made earlier that Sarah would bear a son to Abraham, and afterwards make known to the patriarch their intentions of dealing with the wicked city of Sodom where Lot had now settled as a citizen. Abraham bargains with the angel, and receives assurance that ten righteous in the city would preserve it from destruction.*

### Abraham Entertains Angels Unawares — Vv. 1-8.

*Abraham sets an example of cordial hospitality as he goes out of his way to entertain three strangers. This forms the basis of an exhortation by Paul: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Heb. 13:2).*

#### VERSE 1

##### "And Yahweh appeared unto him"

— On this occasion, the manifestation of Divine glory was revealed through three angels, one of whom seems to have had higher status than the other two. Cp. vv. 16-17 with Exod. 23:20-21. There are gradations of rank among the Elohim as is implied by the titles they bear. Thus Michael is described as the archangel (Jude 9), Gabriel, as *he who stands in the presence of God* (Luke 1:19) etc. See also notes on Gen. 17:1.

"In the plains of Mamre" — See note Gen. 14:13. The phrase is better rendered *oaks of Mamre*. Mamre is close to Hebron. Josephus claimed that Abraham's oaks were standing there in his day. Today an ancient tree is shown to gullible tourists as the oak of Abraham.

"And he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day" — This suggests rest from the pressures of life (cp. Rev. 7:16). Abraham sought such, giving himself to meditation. It is profitable for us to do likewise.

#### VERSE 2

##### "And he lift up his eyes and looked"

— He was obviously interrupted in his cogitations, sensing that something unusual was taking place.

##### "And, lo, three men stood by him"

— This is what Abraham saw, but it was not the reality. The three "men" proved to be angels, but for the moment that fact was hidden from the eyes of Abraham. He saw three men who showed every sign of being weary and in need of refreshment, and he hastened to help them. This is implied by the word used to describe them, for it is the word *enoshim* (men), implying weak, mortal men. That is how they appeared to Abraham, and their condition excited his sympathy and sense of hospitality. See the use of the word in Psa. 9:20.

"And when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door" — Indicating his eagerness to help them.

##### "And bowed himself toward the ground"

— This was not because he recognised them as the Trinity as some suggest, but because it was the normal form of greeting, indicating that the one concerned is at the service of the others, and that he was prepared to humble himself to do their bidding (see Gen. 23:7; 33:6-7; 42:6 etc.). Abraham was ignorant of the identity of these three men. See Heb. 13:2.

#### VERSE 3

"And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant" — The title is in the plural, *Adonai, Lords*. The greeting was the normal formula of an

eastern address (Gen. 30:27; 1 Sam. 20:29; Est. 7:3). Nevertheless, it is obvious from Abraham's action and words that he discerned something in the appearance of these three men that marked them out as different from the Canaanites.

#### VERSE 4

**“Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree”** — The three angels looked travel-stained and weary, and so the use of the term *enoshim* in the narrative. This was from the appearance only, for the Elohim possess divine nature, and such do not become exhausted. However an angel is a messenger of Yahweh whether mortal or immortal and we can readily entertain such (even though they do not possess angelic nature) in our pilgrimage through life (Heb. 13:2). When Paul exhorted the brethren to “entertain strangers” because in so doing they may “entertain angels unawares,” he did not mean angels from heaven, but God's messengers on earth. The messengers that Cornelius sent to Peter are an illustration of this (Acts 10:7).

#### VERSE 5

**“And I will fetch a morsel of bread”** — This was a very modest description of what proved to be a sumptuous feast (vv. 6-8). We have an indication of the liberal generosity of Abraham's character, such as would commend itself to Yahweh. A liberal hospitality is enjoined in Scripture (Rom. 12:13). Peter exhorted: “Use hospitality one to another without grudging” (1 Pet. 4:9). The latter word in Greek, *gongusmos*, signifies *murmuring, muttering of displeasure in an undertone, complaining privately*. How often does a smiling face at a door hide irritation, displeasure, impatience of feeling within! Let the willing hospitality of Abraham move us! Perhaps the unwanted guest that upsets our privacy may be a messenger from God sent to try us, or to help us! Abraham offered water for refreshment, rest for recuperation, food for strength. We should do no less.

**“And comfort ye your hearts”** —

See margin. The Hebrew word means *stay*, literally *strengthen*. The refreshment that he offered them was designed to do this. This, also, should be the objective of saints in offering hospitality; and not that of mere ostentatious display.

**“After that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant”**

— See margin. Abraham urged them to stop on the grounds that he believed the visit was providential, and not merely a matter of chance. As such it provided him with the opportunity to extend hospitality. It is obvious that there was something about the appearance of these three men that excited the curiosity of Abraham.

**“And they said, So do, as thou hast said”** — They accepted with grateful thanks his offer of hospitality. They paused under the shade of the tree, submitted to the dust of the journey being washed from their feet, and awaited the meal that Abraham proceeded to order. It is claimed by some that these men comprised the Trinity. Did Abraham wash the feet of the Trinity? Those that urge this fallacy are compelled to acknowledge that there are three separate gods and not merely one in three. Certainly there were six feet that needed washing that day!

#### VERSE 6

**“And Abraham hastened into the tent”** — His eagerness bespeaks his warm hearted, enthusiastic hospitality. He acted as though the three angels had placed him under an obligation by accepting his invitation. Let us be warm in such gestures.

**“Unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly”** — Literally, *hasten*. He urged Sarah to share his enthusiasm. How awkward it is when one partner is cold towards that which is of warm and enthusiastic interest to the other; how encouraging it is when both co-operate to the same end.

**“Three measures of fine meal”** — The Hebrew word is *seah*. A *seah* is a third of an ephah, approximately seven litres, so that the three *seahim* suggests completeness. Three measures were requested because there were three men to be fed.

**“Knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth”** — The word *uggah*, *round*, signifies round, unleavened cakes. Abraham called upon Sarah to do this, so that she, too, could participate in the honour of entertaining these unusual guests. Remember, Abraham had a large household of some hundreds of persons (Gen. 14:14), and could easily have delegated these duties to subordinates. But he did not do so, because he wanted to honour his visitors. The joyous alacrity with which he gave himself to the entertaining of the three men, and the unstinted liberality that he displayed unto them, was calculated to put any guest at ease, and induce in such a sense of deep gratitude.

#### VERSE 7

**“And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetch a calf tender and good”** — He was anxious to supervise the selection of the animal himself, and so he fetched a calf “tender and good.”

**“And gave it unto a young man; and he hastened to dress it”** — The meal Abraham prepared became sacrificial in its significance. Hospitality can become an act of sacrifice unto Yahweh; or it can be but ostentatious display. Unleavened cakes speak of the labour of one’s hands given unto that which is pure in the sight of God (cp. 1 Cor. 5:7). A calf “tender and good”, and devoted to the purpose Abraham had in mind, speaks of strength given unto Yahweh. Butter and milk suggest the nourishment of the Truth (cp. Isa. 7:15). Giving it into the hands of “a young man” to prepare, suggests the mediatorial services of a priest. Certainly it speaks of co-operation in a labour that provides God pleasure. In considering the sacrificial aspect of Abraham’s feast, it must be borne in mind, that though he “entertained angels unawares,” he was not unaware of the sacrificial aspect of his action as far as Yahweh is concerned. What he did for those men of weary appearance, he did unto God. Perhaps that is why the feast is described in such detail in the narrative. Hospitality can become a very pleasing sacrificial offering unto the Father; let us always bear Him in mind as we engage in

such service.

#### VERSE 8

**“And he took butter”** — The Hebrew *chemah* signifies curdled milk and cheese: “butter of kine and milk of sheep” (Deut. 32:14). Thus the flock, or *hemah* as well as the herd, contributed to the feast. For the spiritual significance of butter and milk, see Isa. 7:15.

**“And milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them”** — Hebrew *chalab*, from a root signifying to be fat. Cp. Gen. 49:12. That milk would have all its natural richness and food value; it would not be “homogenised and pasteurised”!

**“And he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat”** — He humbly assumed the status of a waiter, to look after their needs. This is the attitude that we should show towards God and Christ. When we help anybody in the name of Christ, it is as though we helped the Lord himself (Matt. 25:40). The Psalmist wrote:

*“Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters,*

*And as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress;*

*So our eyes wait upon Yahweh our God, until that He have mercy upon us”* (Psalm 123:2).

Abraham was heir of the world, yet, for Christ’s sake (see John 8:56), he was prepared to humble himself in service to three weary men — as it appeared to him.

#### Sarah’s Unbelief At The Promise Of A Son — Vv. 9-15.

*The three strangers make inquiry of Sarah, naming her by her new name. The inquiry must have struck Abraham as lacking in good manners, and yet the use of her name must have given him surprise. His reply carries an overtone of amazement. The conversation continued in such a way as to reveal that these were no ordinary men whom he was entertaining. To his astonishment, the most notable among them predicted that Sarah would have a son. Though Abraham had heard this news before, Sarah apparently had not been informed, and laughed in unbelief. She is shocked when she hears the stranger ques-*

*tion her secret unbelief, and denies that she had laughed. It was now borne home to Abraham that these three men were messengers of Yahweh.*

#### VERSE 9

**“And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife?”** — This was a strange question coming from strangers! Furthermore, how did they know Sarah’s new name? Abraham seemed to have been taken aback by the inquiry. It was the first indication that he had of the supernatural identity of the three strangers. He had earlier been impressed by their appearance. They were different from the Canaanites; now, with growing wonder, the reason for the difference begins to dawn upon him.

**“And he said, Behold, in the tent”** — There are overtones of surprise in this answer, as though he were taken aback by the question, as well he might be.

#### VERSE 10

**“And he said”** — One of the three became spokesman for the others. Later, he remained with Abraham when the other two moved down into the direction of Sodom, and the name Yahweh was given him (v. 17). This was not Yahweh in person, for no mortal can look upon Him and live (1 Tim. 6:16; John 1:18). It was Yahweh in manifestation. There was an angel placed over the affairs of Israel of whom it was said: “My name is in him” (Exod. 23:20-21), and who is described as “the similitude of Yahweh” (Num. 12:8). It was probably the same angel who now stood before Abraham, assuming a higher status than the other two. He bore the divine Name in a special sense.

**“I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life”** — The period of gestation: nine months or 280 days. Evidently this incident was three months later than the previous intimation (Ch. 17:17). Meanwhile, conception had not taken place (Abraham’s circumcision would have temporarily delayed intercourse), and now the promise is repeated more definitely.

**“And, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son”** — These words are cited by Paul in Rom. 9:7-8 with the following comment:

“Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children (Ishmael was such); but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.” A mere Jew after the flesh is not a son of promise; whereas a Gentile embracing the Abrahamic hope, and manifesting the Abrahamic faith, is accounted a true seed of Abraham. Christ repudiated the claim of the Jews of his day that they were the true seed of Abraham, and declared that they were “of the devil”, the flesh (John 8:39-45). Sonship is predicated upon action, not upon flesh or upon words. A person can claim that he is a Jew, either by birth or by faith (Rev. 3:9), but unless his character conforms to his belief, the claim will be repudiated. It is a true faith manifested through action that will demonstrate the spiritual parentage of an individual. This was borne home to Abraham at this time. All the natural indications were against Sarah having a son. There was the fact of Abraham’s circumcision; there was the fact of his age; there was the fact of the barrenness of Sarah herself. But Abraham’s faith was adequate to those adverse circumstances. He considered them all without being weakened in faith (Rom. 4:18-19). In stating, “I will certainly return unto thee,” the angel showed that Sarah would have to be miraculously strengthened to conceive (Heb. 11:11), and Abraham believed God. Sarah’s faith had to be built up to that end, and that was the reason for the mysterious visitation of the three angels to Abraham.

**“And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him”** — She, too, was curious regarding these mysterious strangers. What staggering news she overheard as she hid behind the flap of the door. She was probably induced to do this as she heard her name mentioned.

#### VERSE 11

**“Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age”** — They had been brought to a condition where fruitful-

ness was no longer naturally possible, in order to emphasise the principle advanced by Paul in Romans 9:8-9. It is naturally impossible for man to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit to the glory of God; but Yahweh makes it possible through the motive power of faith.

**“And it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women”** — Abraham knew this, but it did not weaken his faith in the promise of God (Rom. 4:19). Sarah had passed her change in life, and was therefore in a barren condition relative to motherhood identical with that in which human nature stands in regard to the fruit of the Spirit. Paul taught that “they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. 8:8). Something more than the flesh is necessary for the development of the principle of the Truth, as was the case also in the natural condition of Sarah. See Heb. 11:11.

#### VERSE 12

**“Therefore Sarah laughed within herself”** — Abraham had done likewise (Gen. 17:17), but his action had been through the joy of faith (John 8:56; Rom. 4:19), whereas Sarah’s had been that of disbelief. Nevertheless, her doubts were eventually also turned into joy (Gen. 21:6).

**“Saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure”** — She referred to the joy of motherhood.

**“My lord being old also?”** — The word “lord” is *adon* and signifies *ruler*. She thus spoke of her husband with respect, acknowledging his position in the home (1 Cor. 11:3). Peter draws attention to the expression she used, as being indicative of “a meek and quiet spirit” (1 Pet. 3:4-6). He claims that it showed that she “trusted in God,” and calls upon sisters in the Truth to emulate the example she thus set.

#### VERSE 13

**“And Yahweh said unto Abraham”** — The supernatural identity of the guests was now evident to Abraham. The principal angel represented the Creator. See Exod. 23:20-21; Josh. 5:14; Isa. 63:9.

**“Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?”** — Notice that Sarah had not laughed aloud, but only “within herself” (v. 12). Yet though that was the case, and she was hidden within in the tent, the guests knew what had happened (cp. 1 Sam. 16:7; Heb. 4:13). This amazing knowledge on the part of the visitors, demonstrated they were angelic messengers, thus opening Sarah’s eyes to the facts of the case. The realisation of this was the first step in turning her from doubt and incredulity, to an attitude of faith and acceptance of this improbable tidings, by which “she received strength to conceive seed” (Heb. 11:11). The more we recognise the reality of God, His infinite power, and the extent of His influence in our lives, the more will we be generated by faith to produce fruit that will find pleasure in His eyes.

#### VERSE 14

**“Is any thing too hard for Yahweh”** — This is a question that faith alone can answer correctly. It was “against hope that Abraham believed in hope” (Rom. 4:18). He accepted the improbable tidings knowing that nothing “is too hard for Yahweh.” The same truth was brought home to Moses (Num. 11:23), and Jonathan (1 Sam. 14:6). It was the message that Gabriel brought to Mary when proclaiming the coming birth of the seed of promise. “For with God nothing shall be impossible,” he declared (Luke 1:37). What a comforting, life-giving fact that is! Paul makes the point that He “is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20). It is this reservoir of power that we can tap in time of need. Thus, given faith, all things become possible. Look at the heavens above. Consider the mighty Power that brought all those bodies into existence, that hold them in position, that hurls and guides the mighty world in its constant journeyings around the sun — that Power is ready to help us if we humble ourselves under His requirements.

In the declaration to Abraham, “thing” is *dabar* in Hebrew, and signifies *word*.



Nothing that Yahweh has proclaimed is too difficult for Him to accomplish. He will fulfil all that He has said that He will do. The word "hard" is *pala, wonderful*. Is any declaration of Yahweh too wonderful for Him to accomplish? Sarah thought it was, and doubted; but her incredulity was swept away, and she was caused to laugh for very joy. We can go through the same process. The Lord Jesus quoted these words of the angel in a most significant context (see Matt. 19:26; Mark 10:27). A young man had approached him with a question as to what he should do to enter the kingdom of God, and the Lord used the occasion to emphasise the difficulty of obtaining an inheritance therein, particularly through personal "works." The circumstances posed an impossible situation as far as the apostles were concerned, and they asked the question, "Who then can be saved?" The wonderful answer is: "With men it is impossible; but with God all things are possible." That which is impossible to flesh becomes possible through faith, because nothing that God has proclaimed is too wonderful for Him to accomplish.

**"At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son"** — God determined the very time that Isaac, as the seed of promise, would be born. He did so

also in regard to His son. "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His son, made of a woman" (Gal. 4:4). The "times are thoroughly adjusted to God's command" (Heb. 11:3, Diaglott), and therefore things proceed according to plan, and the chronological limits He has established. They will continue to do so in the future as well. There is a set time for Christ to return (Acts 1:6); a set time for the judgment of his household (Psa. 75:2, RSV); a set time to favour Zion (Psa. 102:13).

#### VERSE 15

**"Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid"** — Her sense of guilt in being found out caused her to fear as she realised that her guests were visitants from heaven, and in her confusion, she tried to cover her lack of faith by a lie. How often her attitude has been repeated throughout the years.

**"And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh"** — Sarah's lack of faith was brought into the open that she might recognise sin for what it is, and finding forgiveness for it, be led to a stronger faith, in which her laughter of doubt would be swept away by the joy of belief.

How much we need in all our ways to keep in mind that "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13).

## THE LAST TERRIBLE NIGHT OF SODOM

### (Chapter 18:16-19:38)

*Having reaffirmed the Divine promise of a son coming by means of Sarah, and having demonstrated a supernatural ability to discern the secret thoughts of the heart, the angel had little difficulty convincing Abraham of the gravity of the next item of news he delivered. The brief soliloquy that follows (vv. 17-19) reveals the confidence Yahweh had in this man, based upon a careful evaluation of his character. So the terrible news of impending judgment on Sodom was revealed to Abraham. Abraham, concerned for the future of his nephew Lot, bargained for the city on terms*

that the angel accepted. The wickedness of Sodom was soon revealed, and the just judgment of God was poured out in destructive power upon that evil city and her sisters. The destruction of Sodom is set forth in Scripture as typical of that of the latter days. The Lord declared that “the days of Lot” foreshadowed those of his second coming (Luke 17:28-33).

**Abraham Is Warned Of The Impending Judgment of Sodom — Vv. 16-21.**

Whilst Sarah is left in the tent to ponder over the wonderful news she had received, by which her doubt was changed to faith, Abraham accompanied the angels on their journey. They move towards Sodom, and the patriarch is apprised of the purpose of the journey.

**VERSE 16**

“And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom” — The angelic visitors set their countenances towards that wicked city, and well might the inhabitants have trembled had their conscience impelled them to do so. In His longsuffering, Yahweh will wait that whosoever will hearken may heed (2 Pet. 3:15), but ultimately His judgment will flare forth. He waited five hundred years for the Canaanites (Gen. 15:13-16); He waited for Judah until there was no remedy (2 Chron. 36:16); He waits for apostate Christendom (Rev. 16:19); but the waiting inevitably will come to an end, and the “day of the Lord will come” in fiery judgment (2 Pet. 3:10). This was foreshadowed in the destruction of Sodom and its sister cities in the days of Abraham; so that, in type, the patriarch saw the impending judgment of Yahweh upon a godless age.

The Hebrew text has *enoshim* for “the men” in this verse, but the Samaritan text correctly indicates that here, and in Ch. 18:22; 19:12,16, it should read *ishim*, as referring to a superior class of man. The “men of the city” in Ch. 19 are *enoshim*, while Lot is *ish* in 19:9. Refer to notes, Ch. 18:2.

“And Abraham went with them to bring them on the way” — This was an act of courtesy that provided an opportunity for intercession on behalf of Lot.

Mamre is in a valley close to Hebron. From the heights a little to the east a view of the Dead Sea can be obtained. Hence, as they moved in that direction, it became appropriate for the angel to disclose the purpose of his mission to the patriarch.

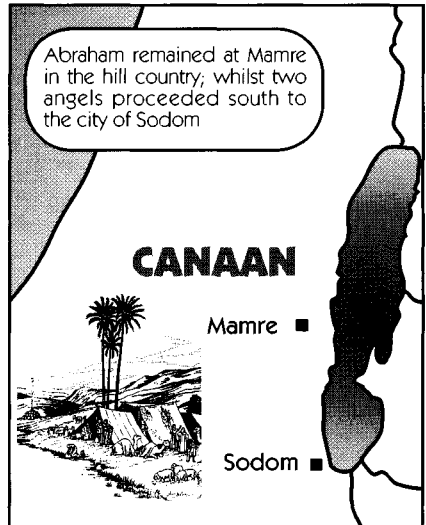
**VERSE 17**

“And Yahweh said” — This was a soliloquy in which the angel assessed the character of Abraham.

“Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?” — Elsewhere, Abraham is styled *the friend of God* (2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23). It is part of the privilege of friendship to show confidence by revealing future intentions (John 15:15; Amos 3:7. See Psa. 25:14).

**VERSE 18**

“Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and



**all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?"** — This verse supplies the reason for Yahweh revealing His intention regarding Sodom unto Abraham. The patriarch had been told that "all nations" shall be blessed in him. But there are conditions to that. The blessing will only come if they accept the conditions for its bestowal. Sodom would not, and therefore Abraham was about to learn of the outpouring of frightful judgment. Even in the Age to come, the nations that refuse to serve Christ will perish (Isa. 60:12).

### VERSE 19

**"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him"** — The A.V. expresses this as a natural characteristic of Abraham, but the R.V. treats it somewhat differently. It renders it: "For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children..." To "know" Abraham in that relationship (see Amos 3:2) is to reveal to him the divine purpose; and this, in turn, should move him, and all like him, to "command his children and his household" that they may become obedient to the Will of God and participate therein. This demands the exercise of authority to that end. Children are given to parents as an "heritage of Yahweh" and as "His reward" (Psa. 127:3). The greatest care should be exercised in their upbringing. On all occasions, the responsibilities of the Truth should be brought to their attention (Deut. 6:7), and firmness in discipline should be blended with love to bring out their best qualities. In that regard, corporeal punishment is sometimes necessary (Prov. 19:18). "Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul" (Prov. 29:17). The principles set down in the Word are quite contrary to those set out by modern child psychology; but the widespread breakdown in marital relationships, and the prevalence of juvenile delinquency, witness to the failure of the modern method. Christ, like his Father, knew what was in man "and needed not that any should testify of man" (John 2:25), for this reason God has legislated for what is best for him.

**"And they shall keep"** — The R.V.

renders this: "They *may* keep the way of Yahweh." There was no certainty that they would do so as suggested by the A.V. Once Abraham had instructed them in the Truth, his responsibility was at an end; he was not held accountable for the subsequent conduct of his children. See the instruction of Deut. 4:9-10; 6:6-8; Psa. 78:2-9; Eph. 6:4; 1 Tim. 3:4,5,12.

**"The way of Yahweh"** — This was preserved in Eden through sacrifice (Gen. 3:24); it was corrupted by man (Gen. 6:12); it is desired by the faithful (Exod. 33:13); but persecuted by the world (Acts 22:4). See note on Gen. 3:24.

**"To do justice and judgment"** — To "keep the way of Yahweh" demands the doing of works of faith. This involves justice and judgment. Justice is the doing of that which is right, and judgment is the ability to discriminate therein. They are both fundamental moral requirements.

**"That Yahweh may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him"** — Yahweh had declared that He would make of Abraham a "great nation" (Gen. 12:2). This necessitates that his descendants should be instructed and disciplined according to the Word. It is because they have refused that Word that they have been scattered and disciplined throughout the world. Ultimately they will be humbled, instructed, and brought within the bonds of the covenant (Ezek. 20:33-37; Jer. 31:31-34). This shall provide the basis of their elevation as a great nation in the Age to come (Ezek. 37:21-23).

### VERSE 20

**"And Yahweh said"** — The principal angel now openly addressed Abraham.

**"Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous"** — The description suggests loud, discordant noise rising to heaven, and forcing itself upon the attention of God. See notes on Gen. 13:13 for the wickedness of Sodom. Similar words are recorded of Babylon the Great, modern Christendom, whose sins, likewise "have reached unto heaven" (see Rev. 18:5). The sin of Sodom is being repeated today, and Yahweh is not unmindful of the fact.

## VERSE 21

**“I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know”** — This is a figure of speech, a Hebraism, termed *anthropatheia* in which God expresses Himself in human terms. There was no need for the angels to leave heaven in order to find out the condition of Sodom; they already knew it. But by so acting, Yahweh was able to reveal to man that which was already known to Him, namely the true condition of the city in question, and the perfect justness of the manner in which He acted towards it. The angelic visitation did much good: it confirmed Abraham in his faith; it strengthened the faith of Sarah; it brought home to Lot a realisation of his own folly.

### Abraham Pleads For The Righteous Of Sodom — Vv. 22-33

*Appalled by what he heard concerning the judgment about to be poured out upon Sodom, and fearful of the fate of Lot therein, Abraham takes up the pose of an intercessor, and pleads the cause of the righteous of Sodom. Unfortunately, there was a difficulty in finding any such as he would have been well aware of the effects of the environment of Sodom.*

## VERSE 22

**“And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom”** — They are still described as men, because they continued to assume that appearance, as the work before them required.

**“But Abraham stood yet before Yahweh”** — Two went on their way (Ch. 19:1), whilst one of higher rank (cp. Jude 9) remained to converse with Abraham who took up a pose before him. He represents Yahweh, as did the priests and judges in Israel (cp. Deut. 19:17; 2 Chron. 19:6). Massorites claim that the text originally read: “Yahweh stood before Abraham,” and they claim that this suggests Divine condescension on the part of Yahweh.

## VERSE 23

**“And Abraham drew near”** — He saw in the angel the representative of El Shaddai and therefore approached him in the attitude of prayer, recognising that he would speak for God. Yahweh encourages His servants to draw nigh to Him in such an attitude (James 4:8). Through the services of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have access by faith (Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:18), and are invited to freely approach the throne of grace (Heb. 4:16). We do so with greater confidence knowing that we have a high priest who is not untouched with the feeling of our infirmity; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15).

**“And said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?”** — This is the beginning of Abraham’s prayer, which continues to v. 32. The construction of the prayer should be noted as providing an example for us to follow. The prayer was specific, and so also should be ours (Phil. 4:6); it was persevering, and this, too, we should follow (Luke 18:1; Eph. 6:18); it was based upon the righteousness of God (Rom. 3:26) which should be the foundation of all prayer. Certainly the righteousness of God would not permit of Him destroying the righteous with the wicked (cp. Ezek. 18:20-24; Gen. 20:4; Num. 16:22; 2 Sam. 24:17).

## VERSE 24

**“Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?”** — Fifty is the number of Jubilee or deliverance (Lev. 25:10). It was a significant number with which to commence.

## VERSE 25

**“That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous shall be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”** — In what way does this title apply to Yahweh? It is Yahweh’s intention to “judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He has appointed” (Acts

17:31), even the Seed of Abraham of whom Isaac was a type. The destruction of Sodom was a foreshadowing of the judgment that will come upon the world at Christ's return (Luke 17:28-30). Abraham's spiritual vision penetrated to that future (John 8:56), and took in the events that will usher in the Kingdom of God. His comment, therefore, is relevant to times about to unfold.

#### VERSE 26

**"And Yahweh said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes"** — Abraham's prayer was accepted; the city would be saved if fifty righteous were found therein. The righteous are as the salt of the earth, preserving it whilst they remain therein (Matt. 5:13).

#### VERSE 27

**"And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak"** — Abraham considers it presumptuous to bargain with God, but his sense of need, his concern for Lot, drove him to it. He does so, however, in a very reverential manner which can well be imitated by us in our approaches to the Father. Abraham was "heir of the world" (Rom. 4:13), and yet manifested deep humility towards God.

**"Unto the Lord"** — In the Hebrew, the word is *Adonai*. However, some texts show *Yahweh*.

**"Which am but dust and ashes"** — This statement indicates the humility of Abraham, who recognised that he was earthly (1 Cor. 15:45-49), and mortal (Rom. 5:12), whereas God is heavenly (Matt. 5:48), and immortal (1 Tim. 6:16). Abraham's description of himself is in accord with the statement of Gen. 2:7; 3:19, "Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." But why did he claim to be "ashes"? The Hebrew *epher* is from a root signifying to *bestrew* or *disintegrate*. Gesenius aligns it with *aphar* to *cast dust* or to *pulverise*. Abraham, therefore, stated that he originated from the dust, and will disintegrate into dust again. He contrasted his mortal state with the Divine nature of

the Deity and His angels.

#### VERSE 28

**"Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous; wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it"** — This is a rare example of bargaining in prayer. It is obvious, too, that Abraham was skilful in the art. Instead of pleading for the city's safety if there are found forty-five righteous therein, he deprecates its destruction for the lack of five. In spiritual numerics, the number forty-five is expressive of judgment and grace. This plea was also accepted.

#### VERSE 29

**"And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake"** — Abraham became bolder in pleading as his bargaining was accepted. Forty is the number of probation; this further reduction was also accepted.

#### VERSE 30

**"And he said unto him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak"** — The Hebrew title is *Adonai*, "rulers." Abraham is moved by the mercy of God in granting his request, and humbly pleads for a further reduction.

**"Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there"** — Thirty is compounded of  $6 \times 5$  which is the number of flesh (6) blended with grace (5). That number was accepted of the angel.

#### VERSE 31

**"And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake"** — Twenty is four times five: control and grace. The number of twenty was accepted as the basis of Sodom's salvation.

#### VERSE 32

**"And he said, Oh let not the Lord be**

**angry, and I will speak yet but this once**” — This would end the bargaining. He had almost reached the objective that he had been aiming at previously.

**“Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten’s sake”** — Ten is the number of completeness. Made up of two times five, it speaks of grace to the two great families of the human race. It was probably the minimum number Abraham thought had remained faithful. There was probably ten in Lot’s immediate family: he had at least two sons (19:12), two married daughters (19:14), two unmarried daughters (19:12, 15, 31), and two sons-in-law. These, with Lot’s wife, made up at least ten. Abraham prayed with the conviction that at least Lot and his family would all be accounted righteous. He was right in regard to Lot, who was accounted “righteous,” or just-

fied, in spite of unworthy conduct (2 Pet. 2:7), but he was wrong re-garding the rest of the family. He sought for the salvation of Lot, and now retired from prayer, confident that he had obtained his objective.

#### VERSE 33

**“And Yahweh went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham”** — The *New-Old Testament* renders the words “went his way” as *vanished*. The angel’s work was completed as far as Abraham was concerned. This was similarly the circumstance of the Lord’s conclusion of his meeting with two disciples on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:31; Acts 8:39).

**“And Abraham returned unto his place”** — He was deeply concerned as to Lot’s future; though reassured as to the mercy of God.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### DESTRUCTION OF SODOM

*This chapter records the frightful moral conditions of Sodom. It reveals how Lot was ensnared by his environment, so that his family had contracted marriages with the inhabitants; the vile conduct of the inhabitants; and the awful destruction of the city. Christ used the circumstances as being typical of those that will exist at his second coming.*

#### Angelic Visitation At Even — Vv. 1-3.

*These verses provide the setting of the story. The two angels arrived at eventime, and the destruction came in the morning. Thus the chapter narrates the last terrible night of Sodom. Lot’s condition in this evil city is described in 2 Pet. 2:6-9. It describes Lot as vexed from seeing and hearing the unlawful deeds of the people. Disturbed at the environment in which he found himself, he should have withdrawn from such a place. Instead, doubtless dominated by his wife and family (Luke 17:32), he remained there. As the fate of Sodom is set forth twice in Scripture as an example for these times (2 Pet. 2:6; Jude 7), it will be found profitable to consider all references to it in Scripture (and they range*

*from Genesis to Revelation) and so create a word-picture of the conditions in the evil city, the attitude one should adopt in the face of the repetition of like conditions today, and its fate in view of impending judgments on the modern world.*

#### VERSE 1

**“And there came two angels”** — See note on Ch. 18:22. The R.V. renders: “the two angels came...”

**“To Sodom”** — The name of the city can signify *Scorched*.

**“At even”** — Typically this points forward to the evening of Gentile times when modern Sodom shall come up for judgment. See Isa. 17:14.

**“And Lot”** — His name signifies

*Veiled*; his spiritual vision was blurred.

**“Sat in the gate of Sodom”** — He could not appreciate the full effects of his action in taking his family into Sodom. He sat in the gate as judge (v. 9) involving himself in the civil society of this wicked city. This is indicative of his folly. He should have remained separate from the men of Sodom; in fact he should never have entered the city. Already he had received one warning when the forces of Chedorlaomer had taken the city. At that time, he had been saved through the intervention of Abram, but subsequently made his way back into the city, and now was found among its honoured citizens, in a position of authority. In that position, he seems to have remonstrated with the Sodomites, and certainly was distressed by the evil circumstances occurrent (2 Pet. 2:6-9). Perhaps he attempted a reformation through legislation; if so, the narration shows the fallacy of such attempts. See Isa. 26:9-10. Lot's position as a citizen of Sodom was the final step in his decline. See notes Gen. 13:7.

**“And Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground”** — The courtesy that he extended to these two strangers was made on behalf of Sodom. Though Lot was worldly enough to live in Sodom, he was righteous enough to loathe its ways (2 Pet. 2:7).

#### VERSE 2

**“And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways”** — Lot, like Abraham, extended hospitality to “angels unawares” (Heb. 13:2). As subsequent events showed, this turned out to his great profit.

**“And they said, Nay”** — There was no desire on their part to partake of the hospitality of Sodom, and Lot had greeted them as its representative.

**“But we will abide in the street all night”** — Their refusal of Lot's hospitality may also have stemmed from their knowledge of the uncongenial conditions existing in Lot's divided household. Lot's

wife had no desire to leave the city in spite of its wickedness; and his “modern” permissive daughters and sons-in-law saw little wrong with its environment. Perhaps they looked upon Lot as old fashioned, and not “with it.”

#### VERSE 3

**“And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house;”** — Lot was appalled at the suggestion that the two strangers should remain in the streets of the city all night. He knew the evil and unsavory conditions that operated in Sodom after dark. Like many modern cities, it was not safe for people to frequent these places once the sun had set. Therefore he urged them more vehemently to accept the hospitality he was so willing to offer.

**“And he made them a feast”** — Abraham had sought the co-operation of his wife to that end; but Lot's wife is conspicuous by her absence in these arrangements. This suggests a lack of co-operation in the home.

**“And did bake unleavened bread”** — Again the narrative represents Lot as doing this, and it is silent concerning his wife. In fact, her speech is not recorded anywhere in Scripture, though graphic reference is made to her influence (cp. Luke 17:32). Unleavened bread would be baked more quickly than leavened bread; but the fact that the account specifies this item would suggest that there is some other significance to it. Perhaps Lot prepared unleavened bread for his visitors to imply the purity of his household.

**“And they did eat”** — They accepted his hospitality, and thus placed themselves under a measure of obligation to Lot.

#### Extreme Wickedness As Night Draws On — Vv. 4-11.

*Under the cover of night the gross wickedness of Sodom reached its climax. The men of the city, having observed Lot conduct his guests to his home, probably gave the most evil interpretation to the action. The city was noted for the most vile form of sexual perversion, and they may*

have considered that Lot was as they were. Not only so, but Lot was far from popular in that city, and the men probably took a delight in putting him in fear, and in molesting the visitors he had with him. Therefore sexual perversion and revenge probably account for the unnatural, vile and violent reaction of the men of the city towards the angelic visitors. Christ observed: "men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds (are) evil" (John 3:19). As darkness spread over that wicked city so the full enormity of the conduct of the people became apparent. It was now obvious why Lot was so insistent that the two visitors should not remain in its streets all night!

#### VERSE 4

**"But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom"** — The word "men" is *enoshim*, and relates to weak, mortal men, or to morally depraved men.

**"Compassed the house round"** — Just before bedtime, Lot and his visitors became aware of a commotion outside the house. It was being assaulted by a multitude of the men of Sodom of every age, fired with bestial lust. The famed sin of the city was displayed to the angels in all its ugliness and violence. The men demanded that the strangers be delivered to them so they could engage in homosexual acts with them, a sin which has become known as sodomy. This unnatural vice which derives its name from this incident, subsequently was viewed in Israel as the lowest depth of moral perversion and corruption (Lev. 18:22; 20:13,23; Ezek. 16:50; Jud. 19:22. Cp. also Rom. 1:24-27). This shocking conduct justified the Divine indictment upon the city (Gen. 13:13; 18:20), and helps to illustrate the comment of Peter concerning Lot (2 Pet. 2:7-8). But Lot showed great weakness in remaining in such an environment when he could have left, thus jeopardising the future of his family.

**"Both old and young, all the people from every quarter"** — This term is to be understood in a relative sense, as indicative of all ages and classes, both old and

young (v. 4), small and great (v. 11). In fact, homosexuality was common in Sodom, and accepted as the normal way of life as it is in parts of the world today. Moreover, where such sexual depravity is evident, every moral consideration is abandoned, and violence becomes the order of the day. That was the case in Sodom, and it is so today. Violence among homosexuals seems to be a characteristic of their perversion.

#### VERSE 5

**"And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us that we may know them"** — This means carnal knowledge (cp. Gen. 4:1). The demand was shamelessly made as if it were a right (cp. Isa. 3:9). Christ declared that "as it was in the days of Lot" "even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Luke 17:28-30). The flood of lewd literature, the prevalence of pornography, the cheapening of the marriage tie, the legalising of homosexuality, abortion and kindred sins, that are features of modern life, witness to the literality of his prediction. As Lot lived on the eve of divine judgment against Sodom, so we live at the coming of the Great Judge who will bring the salvation of all who "vex their righteous soul" (2 Pet. 2:8) because of present evil.

#### VERSE 6

**"And Lot went out at the door unto them"** — Lot acted with admirable courage to protect the guests who had accepted his hospitality. Eastern customs required that a man who took a stranger under his care was bound to defend him at the expense of life itself. Lot was prepared to do that, and in doing so contributed to his own salvation. The word *door* is *pethach*, and signifies *doorway*.

**"And shut the door after him"** — Here the word is *deleth* and signifies the leaf of the door, the swinging door itself. In shutting the door behind him, Lot again acted with great courage. He sought to protect his guests, and so boldly faced the violent, lust-craved mob. This was a very heroic attitude to adopt.



**VERSE 7**

**“I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly”** — This was a conciliatory rebuke, designed to pacify and to restrain; but it did neither. It was followed by a proposition that is hard to justify if it is to be accepted literally.

**VERSE 8**

**“Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man”** — These were evidently the two daughters that escaped the city with Lot, as distinct from those already married (v. 14).

**“Let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes”** — If accepted literally, this infamous suggestion would reveal how completely the Sodomite environment had influenced Lot. But was his suggestion meant to be taken seriously? Could Lot have made it, not to be acted upon, but as a form of reproach, to bring home to the Sodomites the enormity of their conduct! The men evidently viewed it in that light,

for they took issue with Lot for acting as judge against them (v. 9). In support of a literal interpretation of his words, it is sometimes alleged, in defence of Lot, that he was bound by the custom of the time to defend his guests at the risk of his own life; but even so, that would not justify him purchasing their safety at the sacrifice of his daughters.

**“Only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof”** — Again the word “men” is *enoshim*, indicating that at that stage Lot had no idea of their angelic status. In giving them hospitality, he had guaranteed their protection; thus his appeal.

**VERSE 9**

**“And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them.”** — “Get out of the way” indicates that there was a threat in the demand. There is no word for *fellow* in the original.

## **Sodom: The Example**

The sin of Sodom and the destruction of the city is set forth in Scripture as an example for all time (2 Pet. 2:6; Jude 7). References to the judgment are found throughout the Bible (cp. Rev. 11:8), and when they are drawn together they provide a typical foreshadowing of the conditions that are now developing throughout the world. Today, on a scale never known to history, with greed, brutality, beastliness and criminal instincts in the ascendancy, the history of Sodom is being repeated, and the world is heading towards a terrible crisis, in which, as in the case of that evil city, the political heavens and earth together with the elements thereof, shall be overwhelmed as by fire.

Sodom’s greatest sin was not merely the prevalence of immorality, but the attitude of the people towards it. It was committed without shame or any attempt to hide it. Isaiah implies that rewards were given for new forms of perversion (Isa. 3:9). The people openly supported the wicked in opposition to the righteous, or to any demands for moderation of evil (Jer. 23:14). They manifested pride induced by “fulness of bread and abundance of idleness” (Ezek. 16:49).

These are all characteristics of the modern world in its developing wickedness indicating the truth of Christ’s words predicting the conditions that would appertain in the day of his coming (Luke 17:28-30). When “darkness” covers the earth (Isa. 60:1-2) then the grossest wickedness will be manifested as it was in Sodom, justifying the severest judgment by the Almighty.

"This one" is an expression of contempt, as if the leaders of the mob were scornfully pointing at Lot. *The Berkeley Version* renders this: "This fellow came here as an immigrant and he keeps acting as a judge." Lot was ill at ease in view of the Sodom environment (2 Pet. 2:7-8), and evidently tried to correct it. Perhaps that was why the angels found him in the gate of the city: the position normally taken by judges and prominent citizens. If that was what he attempted, it proved an utter failure, as any attempt today, on the part of saints, to correct prevailing political and social abuses, is bound to end in failure. Saints must look to Christ's coming to effect such changes.

**"And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot"** — They attacked him violently and apparently he resisted sturdily.

**"And came near to break the door"** — They attempted to smash the remaining barrier between them and the two angels.

#### VERSE 10

**"But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door"** — The two angels now took the situation in hand, and came to the rescue of Lot. The word for "door" is *deleth*, as in v. 9, and relates to the swinging door. Having pulled Lot back into the house, they closed the door upon the mob.

#### VERSE 11

**"And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great"** — Here the word *sanverim* denotes *dazzlings*, or *deceptions* from excessive brightness. The word does not signify natural blindness, but a loss of sight, or confusion of vision induced by some external means. Perhaps there was a shining forth of divine glory in light which confused their vision.

**"So that they wearied themselves to find the door"** — They would hardly have done this if suddenly they had been afflicted with physical blindness, but they may well have done so if some sudden shining forth of glory temporarily con-

fused their vision. There will be a shining forth of glory at Christ's return, that will temporarily confuse the men of Sodom (see Rev. 11:8; 17:14).

#### Fear In The Night — Vv. 12-14

*It now becomes obvious to Lot that his guests are messengers from God! He listens with consternation to their warning of impending destruction. The influence of Sodom had rubbed off on to the members of his family as he realises, and he fears that they might be involved in the general calamity.*

#### VERSE 12

**"And the men said unto Lot"** — There was no need for them to press the investigation further. The moral condition of Sodom was abundantly clear. Nor was any further explanation needed as far as Lot was concerned. The circumstances had revealed that his guests were no ordinary men; but messengers of doom from God.

**"Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters"**

— Here was opportunity to make up Abraham's ten righteous persons if possible. The invitation demonstrated that "the Judge of all the world shall do right." The mention of Lot's relations indicates that there were at least ten related to Lot. See note on Ch. 18:32.

**"And whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place"** —

The RSV renders this "whomsoever," identifying it with persons, not with property. Yahweh always shows special care for the family of the righteous (see Isa. 44:3; 65:23; Acts 2:39; 16:32-33). Yahweh's care of such is implied in Ezekiel's Temple prophecy. Mention is made of "strangers" who will find inheritance in the land with Israel after the flesh though Gentiles generally will be excluded from living in the holy land (Ezek. 47:22-23). These "strangers" are mortals because they "beget children," yet they are given special privileges over those of other Gentiles, for they dwell in the land. Who are they? The answer seems to be, the children of believers living at Christ's return,

who have not reached the age of responsibility to accept Christ, but who receive privileges as the offspring of the accepted saints. After the judgment, they will have the great privilege of being in the land and having the benefit of an upbringing under the supervision of their immortal parents (cp. Isa. 65:23). At the same time, they will not be permitted to presume upon their privilege. As they develop to an age of discretion, they will have to accept the Truth in doctrine and practice if they are to worship in the Sanctuary (Ezek. 44:9), and in that day, such worship will be compulsory. Their actual salvation, therefore, will depend upon their own attitude towards the Divine call.

That principle was brought home to Lot. The angels showed a preference towards him because of his relationship to Abraham, and his endorsement of Divine principles, and therefore, they were prepared to extend a special opportunity to the members of his family to separate themselves from a city doomed to destruction; but they had to act for themselves (see vv. 14, 26). The command was: *Bring them out of this place*. That is also the command of the Gospel today. God is prepared to grant people a position of privilege if they recognise that there is no future in the way of flesh, and to act upon the invitation: "Come out from among them, and be separate." He sets this forth as a condition of sonship, so that only those who act in accordance with the command, can claim such a relationship with God (see 2 Cor. 6:14-18). Prior to the destruction of Babylon the Great, after the overthrow of Gog in the land, the call will go forth to the natural seed of Abraham: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities" (Rev. 18:4-5). These words are reminiscent of those spoken to Lot, as is also the description of mystical Babylon's overthrow, for the surrounding people are said to "see the smoke of her burning" (Rev. 18:18). In the narrative before us, therefore, Lot represents those relations of Abraham whose eyes are

veiled to the Truth, but who will be "plucked out of the burning" because of the intercession of his Son.

### VERSE 13

**"For we will destroy this place"** — There was no future for Lot in Sodom, so that he would have been much better off with Abraham in comparative isolation. Nor is there any future for saints in the world of Gentilism. They are as strangers and pilgrims in the world. They "use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Cor. 7:31). For "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:17). That being the case, they "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18). The overthrow of Sodom is set forth as an example of the destruction that will overwhelm the wicked. See Jude 7; Psa. 11:5-6.

**"Because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of Yahweh"** — This speaks of the mounting clamour of sin, as today.

**"And Yahweh hath sent us to destroy it"** — Cp. 2 Pet. 2:6; 3:9-15.

### VERSE 14

**"And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law"** — There was an urgency about the matter, so Lot went out seeking his relations in the darkness of the night, in spite of the risk attached to so doing. He appealed to the husbands of his daughters because the latter were subordinate to them. The fact that his children had contracted marriages in Sodom shows how completely the family had been drawn into its social activities.

**"Which married his daughters"** — The word *laqach* signifies *to take* either in espousal or in marriage. It is frequently used for the latter. However, Josephus states that they were to marry Lot's daughters, but had not as yet done so. It is hardly likely that Lot would have risked the dangers of the street if that were the case, and the most likely explanation is that they

were married. The mention by the angels of "sons and daughters" beside the two unmarried daughters in the home (v. 12) strongly suggests this.

**"And said, Up, get you out of this place; for Yahweh will destroy this city"** — This was the peremptory message that the distraught Lot delivered to the surprised members of his family as he burst in upon them. But it was too late for such an appeal. It will be too late to educate our families in the Truth when Christ returns; "now is the day of salvation"; now is our moment of opportunity. Let us not put off our responsibilities in that regard.

**"But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law"** — Peter also warned that similar scoffers would arise at the end of the Age (2 Pet. 3:3-4).

#### Escape In The Dawn — Vv. 15-22

*With the dawning of a new day, the time for judgment came to Sodom, as the appearance of the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:1-2) will bring judgment upon Babylon the Great. Nevertheless, there was mercy blended with severity, as there will be in the future.*

#### VERSE 15

**"And when the morning arose"** — The word *shachar* signifies the dawn. The dawning of that day of judgment for the city, and escape for Lot, foreshadowed the dawning of the future Age in which the Sun of Righteousness shall shine forth from the political heavens (Mal. 4:1-2).

**"Then the angels hastened Lot"** — A state of complete depression seems to have settled upon Lot. He had hurried through the dark streets of the doomed city seeking to save his family, conscious of the lost opportunities of the past, and now the dread realisation came to him that the greater part of his family were lost. His life seemed completed wasted.

**"Saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here"** — The margin gives the literal Hebrew: which *are found*. This implies that the others were lost. Lot had failed as a true father to them.

**"Lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city"** — It was imperative that

he separate himself from the doomed city if he desired salvation. The same will apply at the coming of the Lord before the destruction of Babylon the Great (see Rev. 18:4). Those who refuse to separate themselves will be swallowed up in the destruction that will overcome the world, even as the inhabitants of Sodom were involved in the overthrow of that city.

#### VERSE 16

**"And while he lingered"** — Lot was reluctant to leave his relations, and this would have been his ruin, but for his attendants.

**"The men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; Yahweh being merciful unto him"** — The word *merciful*, in its Hebrew form, *chemlah*, signifies *gentleness, compassion, pity, commiseration*. In Isa. 63:9 it is rendered *pity*. Yahweh extended compassion and pity to Lot in the misery and destitution to which he had been reduced.

**"And they brought him forth, and set him without the city"** — He had left Abram a wealthy man (Gen. 13:5); but he left Sodom absolutely destitute. The world can rob us of our riches both material and spiritual, emphasising the truth of Christ's exhortation in Matt. 6: 19-20.

#### VERSE 17

**"And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life"** — They were now beyond the city limits. The "he" referred to relates to the angel that led Lot out from the city. The word for *life* is *nepshesh, soul*.

**"Look not behind thee"** — Christ offers the same advice to those fleeing from mystical Sodom (Luke 9:62). "This one thing I do," declared Paul, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14). Lot was exhorted to forget his possessions and relations; that also is an aspect of Christ's Bride that will

commend her to her husband (Psa. 45:10-11).

**"Neither stay thou in all the plain"** — Lit. the *circle*: the circuit of cities south of the Dead Sea in those days.

**"Escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed"** — The mountains west of this area would lead to Hebron, Mamre and the encampment of Abraham.

#### VERSE 18

**"And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord"** — The word is *Adonai*, a plural word signifying *rulers*, and including both angels.

#### VERSE 19

**"Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die"** — Lot was deeply appreciative of the mercy of Yahweh in sending His angels to save him from the impending judgment, but he was unaware of the magnitude of the disaster that was to come. Doubtless he was tired out with the exertions of the night before, and the depression of feelings that had overcome him, so that he felt that escape to the mountains was beyond him. The Hebrew for *some evil* is *the evil*. He was referring to the impending judgment of Sodom, though he had no idea of its magnitude as yet.

#### VERSE 20

**"Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one"** — Lot suggests that the mercy of Yahweh is so great that He could well spare this smallest city of the Pentapolis. Thus he presumed upon the kindness of God. The word *little* is *mits'ar*, *little* or *petty*, from *tsaar* (from whence *Zoar*), *to be small, ignoble* (Strong). *Zoar* is the place of compromise through weakness of flesh. It is a place of little faith, and Lot took shelter there, though only for a little time.

**"Oh, let me escape thither"** — Lot's eyes were still veiled to what was required.

**"Is it not a little one?"** — The place had previously been named *Bela* (Gen. 14:2), but now became known as *Zoar*, a play upon the word rendered *little one*.

**"And my soul shall live"** — Trusting in Yahweh's mercy to spare it.

#### VERSE 21

**"And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken"** — Why did the angel agree to this, seeing the request was made in the spirit of compromise? Probably out of commiseration as he saw the physical tiredness and distress of Lot, and perhaps also that Lot might personally witness the terrible holocaust that was to take place, as a warning against the spirit of compromise.

#### VERSE 22

**"Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither"** — The preservation of the righteous is of more importance to the righteous Judge of all the earth (Gen. 18:23) than the punishment of the wicked (Ezek. 18:20).

**"Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar"** — It was previously known as *Bela* (Gen. 14:2), but its name was changed to *Zoar* because of Lot's description of it. It is mentioned in the account of the death of Moses as one of the landmarks which bounded his view from Pisgah (Deut. 34:3), and it appears to have been known in the time of both Isaiah (15:5) and Jeremiah (48:34). It is also referred to as late as the time of the Crusades. The narrative of Genesis 19 implies that it was very near to Sodom, which was located at the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, now under the waters of the southern shallow part of the Salt Lake. *Zoar* is usually identified as *Ghures-Safiyeh*, about 5 miles S.E. from the present shore of the Sea.

#### Destruction In The Morning

— Vv. 23-29

*Lot reaches Zoar as the moment of destruction arrives. The full magnitude of*

*the disaster bursts upon him. Probably an earthquake released explosive gases from the earth, which, mixed with the deposits of sulphur that are in the area, exploded in fiery destruction. Lot's wife looks back and is involved in the catastrophe. From Hebron, Abraham also looks east, and sadly observes the smoke of the doomed cities ascending.*

### VERSE 23

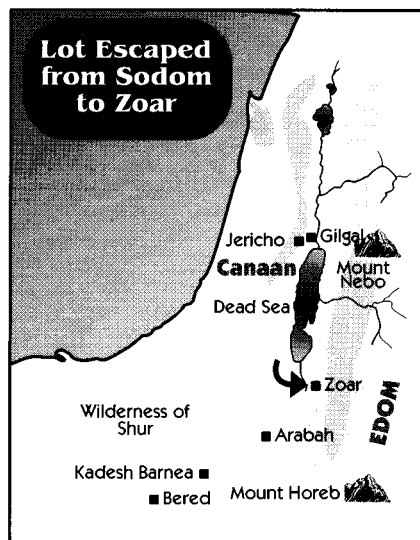
**“The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar”** — That was the time signal for the unleashing of forces that brought about the destruction of wicked Sodom. It foreshadowed the future, when the Sun of righteousness shall arise, and the wicked shall be consumed (Mal. 4:1-2).

### VERSE 24

**“Then Yahweh rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Yahweh out of heaven”** — The text claims that the destruction was “from Yahweh”, which signifies that it was God-directed. It also states that the “brimstone and fire” rained down upon the cities from “out of heaven,” or from the sky. Today the area south of the Dead Sea is completely arid: a barren waste of salt-encrusted earth, across which run great cracks in the soil. It is glaringly white, and has all the appearance of a lunar scene. Genesis 13:10 states that prior to the calamity it was a highly fertile area.

According to the archaeologists Albright and Kyle, evidence of five fresh-water oases have been located at the southeast corner of the Dead Sea, obviously used for irrigation to service *the cities of the circuit* when they were in existence. Adjacent to these oases, on a plain elevated above the level of the Dead Sea some 500 feet (152.4m), there were found the remains of a great fortified enclosure, a high place for religious festivals. According to these archaeologists, the evidence suggests that the population of the area ended abruptly about 2000 B.C. It also showed, that at that time, the area was densely populated, fertile and prosperous. The calamity apparently changed both the

soil and the climate. Moreover, geologists claim that the area is noted for bitumen, an asphalt pitch which melts and burns (cp. Gen. 14:10), considerable quantities of which have risen to the surface during earthquakes. The entire valley is on the long fault line which forms the Jordan Valley, the Dead Sea and the Arabah. An earthquake-ridden region throughout its history, geological activity was doubtless an accompanying factor in the destruction of the cities, though the Bible makes no mention of this. However, Yahweh could have “shaken terribly the earth” as He will again at Christ’s return (Isa. 2:19). If that were the way in which Yahweh worked the miracle, the salt and free sulphur of this area were apparently mingled by this earth movement. A fault at the south of the sea would be sufficient to cause the earth to subside. Gases would then be ignited and the pressure of earth would force burning sulphur, bitumen and red hot salt into the air, which would then rain down upon Sodom. The subsided area finally formed the southern portion of the Dead Sea. According to Josephus (*Wars*, iv., Ch. VIII, Sect. 4) the ruins of the destroyed cities were still visible in his day, though they have been submerged since by the slowly rising water. In recent years, as the



result of the draining of the salt waters to the south, a few unplanted trees have suddenly made their appearance.

Though natural means, such as earthquakes, may have been used to destroy Sodom, the calamity was doubtless miraculous. It took place at the moment required, and therefore was "from Yahweh." The Septuagint translates *brimstone* as *sulphur*, and the Hebrew word can be similarly rendered, as its meaning indicates some inflammable matter. This could have been exploded by pressure through earthquake, or ignited by lightning. Whatever it was, and whatever the true geological explanation, God was behind it, and to that extent it was miraculous. As a result, the "vale of Siddim" now became "the salt sea" (Gen. 14:3), whereas previously the whole upper area most likely was a fresh water lake. In the future, an even more tremendous earthquake will shake the earth, and cause large rivers of underground fresh water to emerge from an elevated Zion to flow east into the present Dead Sea (Zech. 14:8). This vast underground river will heal the waters of the Dead Sea so that it will again become a sea of life (Ezek. 47:1-10). See *The Temple of Ezekiel's Prophecy* by H. Sulley. By that means, the desolation wrought through the wickedness of Sodom will be corrected, and the area again will be fertile and flourishing as before the calamity.

#### VERSE 25

**"And he overthrew those cities"** — Including Admah and Zeboim (Deut. 29:23; Hos. 11:8), thus becoming an object lesson to succeeding generations of the reality of the Divine judgment, and the certainty of the future punishment of the wicked (Jude 7). To "overthrow" is to *turn over* suggesting an earthquake.

**"And all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities"** — Hebrew *kikkar*, *circle* or *circuit*, the pentapolis of five cities.

**"And that which grew upon the ground"** — Reducing a highly fertile area to the arid waste of today. What had looked so attractive to Lot when he made his foolish choice and left Abraham, had

turned to ashes. So it will prove ultimately in regard to the present attractions of the world.

#### VERSE 26

**"But his wife looked back from behind him"** — The early morning sun was shining, bathing the city of Sodom in a golden light. The plain looked peaceful and pleasant under its warm caress. Perhaps from some eminence she looked down on the city she loved so much, and regretted the need of flight. She was not prepared to accept the discipline and separation required by the Truth. Though she believed the angels, she had no love for their message, nor real revulsion against the way of life she had witnessed in Sodom. Perhaps she had doubts about the urgency and the necessity of the flight. If so, she is a warning to all (Luke 17:32). The solemn warning: "Remember Lot's wife," is very much to the point in this materialistic age with its emphasis on pleasure and permissiveness. The more a person becomes involved in such matters, the more attractive the world appears, and the greater its influence upon us.

**"And she became a pillar of salt"** — The sudden explosion of burning salt and sulphur in the air caught her unawares, and before she could escape, she was enveloped by the falling ash, and overwhelmed. This incident is frequently connected with the great salt mass in the val-



ley called *Jebel Usdum* or "Mountain of Sodom." This is a hill some five miles long at the south-western shores of the Dead Sea. Tradition has it that Lot's wife, as a pillar of salt, is buried beneath this huge mound.

#### VERSE 27

**"And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before Yahweh"** — Abraham, too, was a sad spectator of the tragedy. Early in the morning he ascended the heights to the east of Mamre, and looked towards Sodom.

#### VERSE 28

**"And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld"** — There is a cutting in the hill country east of Hebron that permits a view of the southern portion of the Dead Sea.

**"And, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace"** — He could see the smoke above the hills to the east. This provided him with the answer of Yahweh: there were not ten righteous in the city! To Abraham that meant that even some of Lot's family had succumbed to the wicked environment. The heavy cloud of smoke that would have obscured the shining forth of the early sun, proclaimed the reality of the appalling catastrophe to Abraham.

At the same time the effect of the curse has been imposed upon the bleak and desolate area itself. It is significant that a similar description is given of Babylon the Great in its overthrow (Rev. 18:9).

#### VERSE 29

**"It came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt"** — This reveals how effectual the prayer of a righteous man can be (James 5:16-17). Through the intercession of Abraham, and his personal repudiation of the way of life about him (2 Pet. 2:7-8), Lot was deemed *righteous*, or justified.

Yahweh remembered Abraham, as He had previously remembered Noah (Gen. 8:1), and He provided care for Abraham's nephew. The term "righteous" does not signify sinless. Abraham was "justified" (made righteous) by faith (Rom. 4:3), God accounting him as "righteous" thereby. See the use of the term in Ch. 20:4.

#### Incestuous Birth Of Moab And Ammon — Vv. 30-38

*The final record concerning Lot's life is not a savoury one. Fearful that even Zoar might be involved in the calamity, Lot retired into the mountains he had avoided earlier, to seek refuge. He set up home in a remote cave, and there, influenced by wine, he was stimulated to ungodly intercourse with his two daughters.*

#### VERSE 30

**"And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him"** — He did, through fear, what the angels had advised him to do in the beginning. As he saw the magnitude of the disaster, he feared that the whole circuit of cities, including Zoar, would be destroyed.

**"For he feared to dwell in Zoar"** — This indicated further lack of faith, for the angel had declared that Zoar would not be destroyed.

**"And he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters"** — Consider the utter destitution of Lot at this stage, in comparison with his previous affluence. The temporary prosperity of wickedness does not prosper ultimately.

#### VERSE 31

**"And the firstborn said unto the younger"** — The unchaste suggestion made by the firstborn to the younger indicates how much the influence of Sodom had rubbed off on to the family of Lot. Doubtless incest was a matter of common occurrence and of little moment in Sodom.

**"Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth"** — What did she mean by this statement? She could not claim that all were dead, be-



cause Zoar was not destroyed. Perhaps she meant that Lot had so separated himself from all other people, that there were none who would have them in any case. Doubtless they had found it difficult to obtain husbands in Sodom. Obviously these daughters had not aligned themselves with their mother, whose sympathies were with Sodom (v. 26). But now they found themselves in a position without hope of a seed, and they were prepared to involve themselves and their father in vile immorality to achieve their end.

### VERSE 32

**"Come, let us make our father drink wine"** — Cp. Gen. 9:21; Prov. 20:1.

**"And we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father"** — This revolting suggestion was Sodomitic in character, and reflected the moral pollution of that city.

### VERSE 33

**"And they made their father drink wine that night"** — Paul says that of wine cometh excess (Eph. 5:18). They must have carried the wine with foodstuffs and provisions from Zoar.

**"And the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose"** — The next night the younger daughter did the same (vv. 34-35). This degrading picture is the final one we have of Lot. It portrays him as drunken, helpless, fearful, lonely, destitute, worn out by shock, burdened with an evil conscience, and in the power of unscrupulous women. Previously, when with Abraham, he was prosperous, honoured and walking in the pathway to life and glory.

This sad picture shows the results of a Laodicean attitude, rejoicing for a time in material comforts but not realising the foolish position into which such an environment draws a person. The Lord criticised those of Laodicea for saying, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:17). Such folly ultimately results in spiritual poverty.

### VERSE 36

**"Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father"** — Thus Lot ended his days in poverty, discomfort and disgrace, and with the fearful realisation that his daughters were with child through an incestuous association. In this case, the flesh dominated. Christ, in upbraiding the Jews of his day, accused them of spiritual fornication: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do" (John 8:44). The Jews saw the point of the Lord's rebuke and denied that they were "born of fornication" (v. 41); but, in fact, their attitude demonstrated that they were.

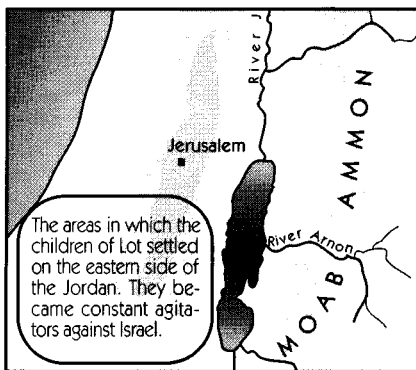
### VERSE 37

**"And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day"** — Moab signifies (*Begotten*) of a (*my*) father. It speaks of one dominated by the flesh as in John 8:44.

### VERSE 38

**"And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Ben-ammi:"** — Ben-ammi signifies *Son of my people*, or, *Son of my (paternal) kinsman*; the son of the flesh.

**"The same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day"** — Ammon signifies *tribal*, i.e. *inbred*, relating to the flesh. Both peoples were to play an important part in the future history of Israel. The evil influence of Sodom was to live on in them.



## CHAPTER TWENTY

## ABRAHAM INTERCEDES FOR GENTILES

*This chapter comprises a serious warning to all men and women of faith. In it we find Abraham repeating the mistake that he made in Egypt at the beginning of his sojourn in the land (Ch. 12:10-20). In each case he gave way to fear of man, which invariably brings a snare (Prov. 29:25). In a merely human document such an apparently trivial lapse probably would be overlooked; but the Scriptures reveal flesh for what it is, that believers may be warned, and so learn to avoid its weaknesses. There was no need for Abraham's fear, because the encircling arms of Yahweh were about him all the time, illustrating the promise of Gen. 12:3, "I will curse him that curseth thee." There is no need for us to fear when we are in similar situations, but through weakness of the flesh, we often do. In this incident, Abraham fails to be a blessing until at the last. He foreshadowed the state of his people after the flesh: "And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen... so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing; fear not, but let your hands be strong" (Zech. 8:13).*

**Abimelech Takes Sarah Into His House  
— vv. 1-2**

*Visiting Philistine territory, Abraham in fear, again represents Sarah as his sister, and she is taken into the harem of King Abimelech.*

**VERSE 1**

**"And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country" —** We are not told what caused Abraham to remove from Mamre, and in the absence of a statement, we can but offer a suggestion. It could be that the terrible calamity of Sodom affected the surrounding country, causing famine conditions, and creating the need to seek for fresh pastures. Certainly, it must have been something severe to cause him to leave the district where he had found immunity from great trouble, and to move into an area that he realised presented an element of risk. See v. 11. The "south" is the *negeb*, signifying that which is *dry*.

**"And dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar" —** Kadesh signifies *sanctuary*; and Shur signifies *wall*. The former is in the northern *negeb*, the latter is described as "before Egypt" (Gen. 25:18; 1 Sam. 27:8). Shur was a barrier of some kind across the great north-eastern highways out of Egypt. It was probably constructed of forts. Reference to such a fortified border is contained in Egyptian records as far back as 2000 B.C.

**VERSE 2**

**"And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister" —** This is the second time that he made such a mistake (Gen. 12:13). After his sad experience previously, it is certainly surprising that he should repeat it. Perhaps the lapse of twenty years had dulled his remembrance of his previous experience. Perhaps fear had increased with his advancing years, and contributed to the mistake he now made.

**“And Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah”** — Abimelech signifies Father-King. It seems to have been a title assumed by the Philistine kings (Ch. 21:22; 26:1). Gerar signifies *watercourse*, or *rolling country*. Gerar is known today as *Tell-Jemmeh*, and was partly excavated by Flinders Petrie. The excavations revealed a place of considerable wealth, dominating a lucrative caravan route between Egypt and the north, inland from the coastal route. It appears that Abraham first went south into the Negev, then moved his flocks northward again to the coastal region inland of Gaza in the search for food.

Abimelech took Sarah into his harem, even though she was nearly ninety years of age. She must have been a most attractive woman, who had not aged with the passing of the years. Perhaps her youth had been revived by the news of the promised birth of a son (Ch. 18:13-14).

#### **Abimelech Is Warned Of God Not To Touch Sarah — vv. 3-8**

*Abimelech is ordered by God in a dream to release Sarah.*

#### **VERSE 3**

**“But God came to Abimelech”** — The word *Elohim* is used instead of the Covenant Name of Yahweh, as in the case of Lot (Ch. 19:16,24).

**“In a dream by night”** — God intervened to save His friend from the consequences of his own folly. It is comforting and encouraging to learn that Abraham was not abandoned to the results of his own actions. How often we find ourselves in similar positions, and have to turn to Yahweh for help to extricate us from the consequences of our own folly. How valuable is this narrative if it only impresses that fact.

**“And said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man for, the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man’s wife”** — Abimelech was afflicted with a serious illness that kept him from Sarah (cp. v. 17), and is now warned that he will be left to die unless he releases her, “for she is married to a husband” (mg.). “Wife” in v. 2 is from *ishshah* (see note to Ch. 2:23).

Here the word *“baal”* is used, to indicate “she had a lord, a husband” (see e.g. Deut. 22:22).

#### **VERSE 4**

**“But Abimelech had not come near her”** — Being withheld by his affliction.

**“And he said, Lord, wilt Thou slay also a righteous nation?”** — The nation was far from righteous in the true sense of the word (cp. v. 11), but the term is obviously used in the sense of being innocent of the particular sin with which it might be charged. In the true sense of the word, Paul’s words apply: “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10).

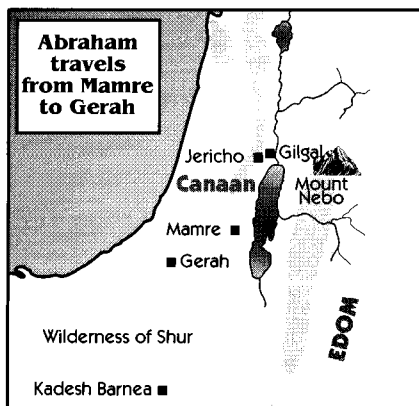
#### **VERSE 5**

**“Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother”** — Unfortunately, this was true. Abraham’s duplicity brings his word into disrepute, and provides for the just accusation of this Gentile.

**“In the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this”** — Abimelech assumes the right of kings to take unmarried persons into their harems, and in this case did so believing the story told him. But Abimelech sinned in even taking Sarah as he did; for it is obvious that she would not have gone willingly.

#### **VERSE 6**

**“And God said unto him in a dream,**



**Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart**” — God acknowledged that Abimelech had acted in accordance with the custom of the times, though He did not necessarily endorse the custom as being right.

**“For I also withheld thee from sinning against Me”** — Abimelech doubtless acted in the integrity of his heart as far as Abraham was concerned, but he was ignorant of his accountability to God. To have touched Sarah would have been to have sinned against God, which is a far more serious matter than sinning against man, as David came to realise (2 Sam. 12:9,13). Concerning his illicit association with Bathsheba David prayed: “Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight” (Psa. 51:4). Abimelech acted in innocence and ignorance, but nevertheless was held accountable.

**“Therefore suffered I thee not to touch her”** — There was a Divine providence overshadowing the lives of Abraham and Sarah, as there is in every age. The Psalmist gave expression to this:

*“When they went from one nation to another,*

*From one kingdom to another people;  
He suffered no man to do them wrong;  
Yea, He reprov'd kings for their sakes;  
Saying, Touch not Mine anointed,  
And do my prophets no harm.”*

*(Psa. 105:13-15).*

God prevented Abimelech from touching Sarah by natural means; for the king was afflicted with some physical (probably sexual) illness (v. 17), and this affliction delayed any such approach.

## VERSE 7

**“Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is prophet”** — See the same title given to Abraham in the Psalm quoted above. As prophet, Abraham acted as public instructor and priest (see 1 Cor. 14:3; 1 Kings 18:21; Jer. 7:16). A prophet was the mouthpiece of God (Exod. 4:15-16; 7:1-2). This is the first time the word *prophet* is used in Scripture.

**“And he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live”** — The intercessory prayer of Abraham would heal Abimelech from his affliction. The same action was

granted to Job on behalf of his friends who had acted foolishly (Job 42:8-10).

**“And if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine”** — Sin is social and can affect others if it is not acknowledged and forsaken. “Evil communications corrupt good manners,” wrote Paul (1 Cor. 15:33). By remaining obstinate, Abimelech would have involved his entire family in a calamity. God was merciful in warning him of the consequences; Abimelech was wise in acting upon it.

## VERSE 8

**“Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears: and the men were sore afraid”** — Abimelech is to be commended upon his immediate response to the Divine message. He lost no time in taking steps to comply with it, and to correct his previous conduct. He rose *early* in the morning to put the reform into effect. He instructed his officers in the matter, and passed on to them the Divine warning. This induced a Godly fear in them that led to repentance (cp. 2 Cor. 7:9).

### Abimelech's Attempt to Justify Himself — vv. 9-13

*Abimelech commanded Abraham to appear before him, and bitterly upbraided the patriarch for what he had done. He demanded an explanation. It is a sad thing to see a faithful man reduced to that state before a pagan.*

## VERSE 9

**“Then Abimelech called Abraham”** — He commanded that he appear before him for a conference.

**“And said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou has brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin?”** — Abimelech assumed the position of one who had been wronged, and to a certain degree he was right. Nevertheless, Abraham's deception did not justify the king taking Sarah into his harem. Both men were found to be in the wrong.

**“Thou hast done deeds unto me that**

**ought not to be done**” — It is a sad thing when a righteous man is rebuked with some justification by a sinner. See Gen. 12:18,19; 1 Tim. 3:7.

#### VERSE 10

**“And Abimelech said unto Abraham”** — Evidently Abraham was silenced before the rebuke of the pagan king. When we see a faithful and courageous man such as Abraham reduced to such a state, who can show great confidence in his own continued integrity? There is great consolation in the fact that God overshadowed Abraham for good, even though his own folly reduced him to the difficult position in which he now found himself.

**“What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing?”** — Abimelech waxed bolder on the assumption that both he and the nation were exemplary (cp. v. 4). In this he made a mistake, as Abraham proceeded to reveal.

#### VERSE 11

**“And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place”** — Abraham had a more factual assessment of the alleged righteousness of the nation than did its king. In fact, there was more right on Abraham’s side than there was on that of Abimelech, as subsequent events revealed (Gen. 21:25).

**“And they will slay me for my wife’s sake”** — Abraham must have had reason for this allegation. Nevertheless, it was a case of “the fear of man bringing a snare” (Prov. 16:6). Caught in that fear, Abraham became temporarily forgetful of the care and protection of *El Shaddai*. Unfortunately, the weakness of the flesh causes us all to succumb to such influences at times.

#### VERSE 12

**“And yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife”** — This was an explanation, and an attempted justification, but it was also an evasion of the real issue. It is interesting to notice that such a marriage was prohibited under the Law of Moses (Lev. 18:9), indicating that in Ur where the

marriage took place, Abraham lived in ignorance of God’s will concerning this matter (Josh. 24:2-3).

#### VERSE 13

**“And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father’s house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt shew unto me, at every place whither we shall come; say of me, He is my brother”** — Abraham is frank in his statement, and assumes the responsibility for what had been done, thereby exonerating Sarah. His excuse is three-fold: (1) the character of the men of Gerar; (2) Sarah was his half-sister; (3) the agreement entered into with Sarah (Gen. 20:13). None is conclusive. It was not the lack of fear of God in Gerar that was the root cause of the deception, but the fear of man on the part of Abraham (Prov. 29:25). Abraham had no need to fear. *El Shaddai* had promised him protection; his large household had acquitted itself well in battle on an earlier occasion (Gen. 14:14); and faith in God should have sustained him in the integrity of his heart now. Of course, it may have been that he had left most of his household at Hebron whilst he and Sarah with a few retainers moved to Gerar seeking pasture lands. Notwithstanding that, no such agreement as he had entered into with Sarah should have been made.

#### Abimelech’s Gift To Abraham — vv. 14-16

*The intervention and revelation of God deeply affects Abimelech. Concerned at his own standing in the matter, he endeavours to make suitable restitution.*

#### VERSE 14

**“Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and womenservants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife”** — Abimelech’s gift was a token of genuine repentance on his part, and a desire for reconciliation with Abraham.

#### VERSE 15

**“And Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before thee: dwell where it**

**pleaseth thee**” — Abimelech recognised that Abraham was a great man, enjoying special privileges from God, and respected him for this. Notice his declaration in Gen. 21:22. His attitude compares more favourably than that of Pharaoh. The king of Egypt attempted to hasten Abraham’s departure (Gen. 12:20), whereas Abimelech invited Abraham to dwell where he pleased. Abraham accepted the invitation (Gen. 21:34).

#### VERSE 16

**“And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother”** — Notice the sarcastic rebuke of Abimelech. He does not refer to Abraham as the husband of Sarah, but as her brother!

**“A thousand pieces of silver”** — Silver is the metal of redemption (Exod. 30:13; Lev. 5:15). It is significant that Isaiah quotes this figure as the rate of hire of a vineyard (Isa. 7:23); and that in the *Song of Solomon* this same amount is quoted as the tribute payment for the Bride’s vineyard (Song 8:11). Abimelech now paid this amount for the “loan” he had of Abraham’s “sister.”

**“Behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes”** — It was the custom for a bride to cover her face, including her eyes, with a veil (See Gen. 24:65). Abimelech claimed that the payment of the money, and the return of Sarah, restored her to Abraham as his wife. As such she could cover her face, and so manifest her proper status.

**“Unto all that are with thee, and with all other”** — That she was the wife of Abraham and not merely his sister would be evident to all men: both the patriarch’s retainers, and those who were strangers.

**“Thus she was reprov’d”** — As it reads in the A.V. this appears as a comment on the words of Abimelech; but the Septuagint adds it as part of the king’s speech, rendering it: “and in all things speak the truth.” The Hebrew *venokachath* is from a root, *yakach* or *yakah* signifying *to make straight, direct, right, or to speak rightly and correctly*. Hence the Septuagint rendition. The *New Old Testament*

renders: *and thou art justified*. Taking the latter rendition, Abimelech claimed that Sarah’s honour with her household, which would have been injured by her forcible abduction, would be justified, or set right.

#### Abimelech’s Restoration — vv. 17-18

*Abraham intercedes for Abimelech who is healed of his affliction. In this he stands as a type of the faithful redeemed of the future, who, notwithstanding their failings from time to time, are saved by God and elevated to being Mediators for all humanity.*

#### VERSE 17

**“So Abraham prayed unto God”** — Abimelech had no direct access of approach to God, and had to depend upon the intercession of Abraham. In similar manner, Job was commissioned to pray for his three friends. James taught that the prayer of a righteous man availeth much (James 5:16). Men of faith need to exercise that grace on behalf of non-believers.

**“And God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare children”** — He was cured of his affliction which had affected him in the manner indicated.

#### VERSE 18

**“For Yahweh had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech”**

— Notice how the covenant Name is suddenly introduced into the narrative. Previously the reference was to the *Elohim*; now it is to Yahweh Who had overshadowed the circumstances described in this narrative to protect Sarah in view of the covenant that she would have a son by Abraham. In the allegory, she represented the Ecclesia (Gal. 4:26), the Israelitish portion of the “wife of the Lamb” (Rev. 21:9). Though the Bride of Christ passes through times of apparent danger, she has the assurance that no weapon formed against her shall prosper (Isa. 54:17).

**“Because of Sarah Abraham’s wife”** — The motive being to protect the purity of the promised seed. This incident probably stimulated the faith of Sarah as she again received tangible evidence of the overshadowing care of Yahweh.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

## THE BIRTH &amp; OFFERING OF ISAAC

(Chapter 21–22:19)

*The centre of attention reverts to the fulfilment of the promise of a child, with Sarah as the mother. The birth of Isaac results in a series of crises in the household of Abraham involving Hagar and Ishmael. The narrative is not only a literal account of what actually happened, but is also allegorical of the purpose of God. Paul uses it in that way (see Gal. 4:21-31), and shows that in these incidents there is a typical foreshadowing of Yahweh's dealings with the spiritual and natural seeds of Abraham. Considered as allegory, the history foreshadows the future of the Ecclesia of God in relation to the nation of Israel, to the setting up of the Kingdom of God on earth.*

**Sarah's Joy At The Birth Of Isaac**

— vv. 1-7.

*Strengthened in her faith, Sarah conceives and bears a son. Her previous laughter of disbelief is turned into one of real joy. The child, the seed of promise, is given the name of Isaac, and incorporated into the covenant of promise by the rite of circumcision.*

**VERSE 1**

**“Yahweh visited Sarah as He had said”** — The covenant name is again introduced as is appropriate in any development which directly affects its fulfilment. The verb “visited” is the Hebrew *paqad* which signifies to *remember with love or in judgment*. Obviously the former applies in this context.

**“And Yahweh did unto Sarah as He had spoken”** — He strengthened her to conceive (Gen. 17:19,21; 18:10,14; Heb. 11:11). What Yahweh promises, He will perform. See Num. 23:19; Heb. 6:18. Three times, in these two verses, all that happened is said to be in accordance with the Word spoken. It gave strength to Abraham to beget, it strengthened Sarah to conceive, it strengthened Isaac to be born (cp. Luke 1:72). It is appropriate, therefore,

that Christ, the true seed of promise should be described as the Word made flesh (John 1:14). In this also the virgin Mary was strengthened to conceive (Luke 1:35) and the Son was strengthened to fulfil the divine will in him (Psa. 80:15).

**VERSE 2**

**“For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age”** — She had become full of faith in the promised seed now revealed in fact.

**“At the set time of which God had spoken to him”** — See Gen. 17:21. The term *Elohim* is used here, for Yahweh's Elohist ministers had acted thus on His behalf. See Gen. 17:16; Psa. 103: 20-21.

**VERSE 3**

**“And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac”** — Isaac signifies *Laughter* or *Joy*. His name suggests the rejoicing to which the covenant introduces true believers (Phil. 4:4).

**VERSE 4**

**“And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac”** — He thus was inducted into the covenant. See Gen. 17:12. Circumcision

was the typical repudiation of the flesh — Rom. 2:28; Deut. 30:6; 1 Cor. 7:19.

**“Being eight days old”** — Eight is the number of perfection, pointing forward to the eighth millennium, when finally all flesh shall be cut off (Rev. 20:12-15).

**“As God had commanded him”** — Ch. 17:10-12.

#### VERSE 5

**“And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him”** — This is the number of completion. He had waited twenty-five years for the fulfilment of the promise, blending faith and patience in the process (Rom. 4:20). The birth of Isaac is set forth as a display of Divine power (Rom. 4:17; Heb. 11:12).

#### VERSE 6

**“Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh”** — Her previous laughter of doubt (Ch. 18:12) had changed into that of the joy of faith. Yahweh made man to be happy, and has given him the means to be so. The word *blessed* as used in Psalm 1 and Matthew 5, means *happy*. It is possible to be happy now in the joyous benefits provided by the hand of Providence; how much more so in the age to come when we see the realisation of our hopes: “Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart” (Isa. 65:14).

**“So that all that hear will laugh with me”** — All who hear what? Hear of the promised seed, of whom Isaac was the type. Those who embrace Christ are enabled to “rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Rom. 5:2). The words of Sarah find an echo in Mary’s song of rejoicing at the impending birth of her son: “He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden; for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed” or happy (Luke 1:48).

#### VERSE 7

**“And she said”** — It is possible to catch the note of excitement and joy in the expressions of Sarah at this time. She must have uttered the words of v. 6, then, after meditating upon the circumstances, com-

menced again with words that expressed her wonderment at the amazing occurrence.

**“Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck?”** — The fact that Sarah not only gave birth to a son but also suckled him, shows how complete was the miracle performed.

**“For I have born him a son in his old age”** — In the terms of the allegory, it was late in the history of the nation of Israel when the promised seed, the Messiah, was born. It was at “the set time” which God had appointed. Cp. v. 2 with Gal. 4:4.

#### The Weaning of Isaac — v. 8

*Isaac is weaned, and a great feast is made to celebrate the occasion. Allegorically, this points forward to the change of diet brought about in Christ, and to the feast that he prepared for his followers (Luke 22:15).*

#### VERSE 8

**“And the child grew”** — See similar language used in regard to Christ: Luke 2:40.

**“And was weaned”** — Paul taught that these things are allegorical (Gal. 4:24), so that the account can be interpreted in that light, as well as being accepted as a literal narrative of what happened. The verb *gamal* (to wean) signifies *to treat or benefit* a person. A child commences a more independent existence at such a state, and moves on to a stronger diet. The allegory represents Isaac as the multitudinous seed of promise. The ministry of Christ, *the son of promise*, brought about a change of diet as far as the multitudinous seed were concerned. Paul taught: “Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed ... but after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:23-26). Delivered from the curse of the law, given a stronger diet of faith in Christ, the Ecclesia was weaned of the law and given a stronger food to eat.



What was the age of Isaac when he was weaned? The declaration that Isaac was Abraham's seed and heir, took place some four hundred years before the Exodus (Gen. 15:13; Acts 7:6). On the other hand, the Exodus was 430 years after the call of Abraham and the covenant-promise made to him (Gen. 12:1; Gal. 3:17). As Abraham was 75 years old when he answered the call by entering the land (Gen. 12:4), and 100 years old at the birth of Isaac, the latter must have been five years old when he was weaned, and Abraham celebrated the occasion with the great ceremonial feast. Children were weaned much later in those days than is generally the case now. Samuel was given to Eli as soon as he was weaned, and commenced his service (1 Sam. 1:22-28; 2:11). Weaning could be from a milk diet, and not merely from that of the mother.

**"And Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned"** — It is in conformity with the allegory that Christ did likewise for his ecclesia (Luke 22:15) to commemorate a great change of diet. Law gave place to grace and faith.

### **Sarah's Anger At The Mocking Of Ishmael — Vv. 9-11**

*Ishmael is found mocking at Isaac, and, Sarah's anger being aroused, he, and Hagar his mother, are expelled from the encampment of Abraham. This incident is used by Paul as being allegorical of the casting out of Israel from the land in A.D. 70: Isaac representing the spiritual seed of Abraham; and Ishmael standing for the natural seed in bondage to the law.*

### **VERSE 9**

**"And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian"** — Hagar's name signifies *wanderer, fugitive*. Evidently she was acquired by Sarah when Abram went down into Egypt. In the allegory she represents the covenant made at Sinai (Gal. 4:25), which was given when Israel was a fugitive from Egypt.

**"Which she had born unto Abraham"** — The Law was the handmaiden to the Gospel (Gal. 3:24), as Hagar was handmaiden to Sarah. Israel reached

national birth under the Law, so that the expressions of this verse are applicable to the allegory.

**"Mocking"** — The Hebrew *tsachaq* signifies *to laugh in scorn, to deride*. As Ishmael mocked at Isaac, so Israel under the law persecuted the Ecclesia. Paul commented: "As then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now" (Gal. 4:29). The R.V. renders *mocking* as *playing*, implying that Sarah's anger was unreasonable; but the A.V. rendition is borne out by Paul's words quoted above.

### **VERSE 10**

**"Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son"**

— In Paul's allegory, Hagar represents the old covenant, and Ishmael those descendants of Abraham who are under it. The confirmation of the covenant of promise through the offering of Christ, set aside the old covenant established by Law. Christ warned that the Kingdom of God would be taken from natural Jews, and given to a people revealing the fruits thereof (Matt. 21:43), which Peter identifies as the Ecclesia (1 Pet. 2:9). The old covenant was brought to an end by the sacrifice of Christ, and the people who clung to it were expelled from the land. Abraham was shown this in type.

**"For the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac"** —

These words are cited by Paul in Gal. 4:30 as applying to the greater inheritance that Israel of the spirit receives as distinct from that which shall be obtained by Israel after the flesh. There was a typical fulfilment of this in the lifetime of Abraham when, just prior to his death, he "gave gifts" to the sons of the concubines he had, and "sent them away from Isaac" to whom he had given all his possessions (Gen. 25:5-6). The *son of the bondwoman* describes Israel under the curse of the law as Jews after the flesh are to this present day (Gal. 5:3). *Elpis Israel* includes the following comment:

"Israel was not always to be in bondage to the law of Moses. A great revolution was predetermined of God, which

should result in the abolition of the Arabian covenant, and the dispersion of Israel among the nations. This is allegorically styled ‘*casting out the bondwoman and her son*’; which was necessary for the good and all-sufficient reason that the Sinaitic constitution of the commonwealth of Israel was not adapted for the people and state when Christ should sit upon the throne of his father David, and the saints should possess the kingdom. The Law of Moses enjoined ordinances concerning the flesh, such as ‘the water of separation’ (Num. 19; Heb. 9:13), which would be quite incompatible with the realities of the Age to come. Under the law there was ‘a remembrance again of sins every year’ (Heb. 10:3) but under the New Constitution from heaven, ‘the sins and iniquities of the people will be remembered no more’ (Jer. 31:31-34). The Sinaitic constitution was faulty; it was therefore necessary that it should give place to one better, which shall be established on better promises (Heb. 8:6-7). Hence, the bondwoman was to be cast out to make room for a more perfect arrangement of the commonwealth” (see p. 252).

Thus the allegory of Ishmael and Isaac witnessed to the fact that the Law was not designed as a means of justification, and would have to give place to the Gospel of grace and of faith. In Romans 11:15, Paul, again makes reference to the “casting away” of Israel wedded to the Law as a means of justification, and this, too, seems an echo of Sarah’s words.

Her words to Hagar may appear bitter; but they were drawn forth by the mocking of Ishmael. This created bitterness in Sarah, as the Jewish persecution of the Ecclesia, and the Judaistic mocking at the Gospel message, brought bitterness to the brethren of Christ.

#### VERSE 11

“**And the thing was very grievous in Abraham’s sight because of his son**” — Abraham thus experiences the feelings of Yahweh towards His son, Israel. The defection of Israel was grievous in the sight of the Father. Paul expressed the mind of God when he wrote: “I have great

heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart” regarding them (Rom. 9:2-4). Abraham had a natural affection for Ishmael, and desired that his two sons would live in amity one with the other.

#### **Ishmael Banished But Protected By God — Vv. 12-13**

*Though exiled from the encampment of Abraham, Ishmael receives promise that he would ultimately develop into a great nation. In this he foreshadowed the state of Israel after the flesh to this day.*

#### VERSE 12

“**And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight**” — When God takes charge of a matter it will work out for the benefit of all concerned. There may be temporary discomfort, but the ultimate result will more than compensate. The present affliction of Israel will finally be to the benefit of the nation. The prophet declared: “Ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, even concerning all that I have brought upon it ... and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith Adonai Yahweh” (Ezek. 14:22,23). As it would have been impossible for Ishmael and Isaac to remain in the same encampment together, so it was impossible for God to overlook the bitter opposition of the Jewish people to the Gospel in Apostolic times. To do so would have permitted evil to triumph, and the proclamation of the Gospel to cease. Moreover, there was no future for an Israel in disobedience to God. To provide it with a future, it had to be disciplined, humbled, reformed; and the tribulation it experienced and continues to do so, is a contributory factor to that end. Similarly there would have been no peace in the encampment of Abraham while the mocking Ishmael remained. He needed severe discipline — as does Israel after the flesh (Jer. 30:11).

“**Because of the lad**” — In the terms of the allegory, Ishmael represented Israel under the Law.

“**And because of thy bondwoman**” — Representative of the Sinaitic covenant

which Paul described as holy, and just and good (Rom. 7:12; cp. Gen. 16:3).

**“In all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice”** — Sarah represents the Abrahamic covenant which sets forth the principles of grace and faith.

**“For in Isaac shall thy seed be called”** — These words are cited in Rom. 9:7 to prove that the call of the Gospel is on the basis of faith and not of flesh; and in Heb. 11:18 as the type of the seed of promise.

### VERSE 13

**“And also of the son of the bond-woman will I make a nation”** — The antitypical Ishmael is Israel after the flesh. This constitutes a promise that it will become a “great nation” (Gen. 12:2; Ezek. 37:21-22).

**“Because he is thy seed”** — Emphasizing that it is not on the grounds of personal merit, but because of relationship to a man of outstanding faith. The righteous are a blessing to all connected with them (cp. Gen. 12:3). Thus a special privilege was granted to the families of Lot (Gen. 19:29), Rahab (Josh. 6:25), the descendants of David (1 Kings 11:12; 2 Kings 8:19; 19:34). On the same principle, the saints are accounted as the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13), and are themselves saved “for Christ’s sake” (Eph. 4:32; Acts 13:38-39). So with Israel after the flesh. It will not be nationally redeemed because of personal merit, but “for the fathers’ sakes” (Rom. 11:28); because of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

### Ishmael’s Desperate Distress

— Vv. 14-16

*Hagar and Ishmael wander in the wilderness of Beersheba until, their provisions spent, they despair of life. Ishmael as the weaker of the two, is placed under a shrub to die, whilst Hagar despairingly lifts her voice in weeping to God.*

### VERSE 14

**“And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar”** — These are the two necessities of life. Symbolically they represent the Lord Jesus

Christ as the bread of life, (John 6:32-35) and the water of life (John 4:13-14). These were incorporated in the principles of the old covenant and both are found in the ritual of the tabernacle worship: the water in the laver, and the bread of the shewbread (fellowship) Table.

**“Putting it on her shoulder”** — As a burden to be borne. This is what the Word is to those limited to the old covenant (cp. Matt. 23:4).

**“And the child”** — The Hebrew *yeled* signifies a *youth*. Ishmael was approximately 18 years of age. He was thirteen when he was circumcised, and at least fourteen when Isaac was born. The narrative suggests, however, that Ishmael was not physically strong, for he was unable to endure the rigours of the journey as well as did his mother.

**“And sent her away: and she departed”** — This was the second time that Hagar had been banished from Abraham’s encampment (cp. Gen. 16:7): answering to the two scatterings of Israel; first, at the hands of the Babylonians; then by the power of Rome.

**“And wandered”** — The Hebrew verb, *ta’an* signifies to *vacillate*, to *stray*, to *reel*, to *wander hither and thither*. This suggests that she lost her way in the arid wilderness of Beersheba. Natural Israel has likewise strayed in the wilderness of the Gentile powers, without sound spiritual direction or purpose for many centuries (Isa. 8:21-22).

**“In the wilderness of Beersheba”** — Beersheba signifies *Well of the oath*. It derives its name from wells dug in the area by Abraham. The eyes of Hagar and Ishmael, however, were closed to such sources of water. Allegorically, Israel after the flesh, bound only to the old covenant, has wandered uncertainly in the wilderness of the nations (Rev. 17:3), with eyes blinded to the *well of the oath*, the Gospel confirmed by Christ. See Rom. 11:7.

### VERSE 15

**“And the water was spent in the bottle”** — Allegorically, the Mosaic covenant had fulfilled its usefulness (Rom. 10:4), and, with the perfect sacrifice of Christ, its

involved ritual was no longer effective (cp. Col. 2:20).

**“She cast the child under one of the shrubs”** — The translation is unfortunate. It gives the impression of a mother, in desperation, throwing an expiring infant under a bush. But, as we have seen, Ishmael was a young man of about eighteen years of age. The Hebrew word rendered “child” is *yeled*, signifying a youth. It is a word that is used to describe Daniel when he was taken to Babylon as a captive.

Hagar evidently had been supporting her fainting son until it was beyond her, and then she pushed him under the shade of a shrub to avoid the intense heat of the wilderness sun. Allegorically, Israel after the flesh can derive no help from the old covenant, and must perish unless their eyes are opened to the living water of the Gospel of Christ. In the absence of this, the Law is only a “ministration of death.” Not until Israel is brought to the extremity to which Ishmael was reduced, will their eyes be opened to the Truth (Ezek. 37:11; Jer. 30:5-7). Until then, “blindness in part” will remain with them (Rom. chapter 11). Nevertheless, it will be in “the wilderness of the peoples” that Yahweh will meet with His people (Ezek. 20:35), to revive their fainting spirit.

Meanwhile, in the historical allegory, Hagar pushed the fainting Ishmael under a shrub, and left him to die. The old covenant cannot rescue its children from death (Rom. 7:9-10). Ishmael had mocked at the seed of promise, not comprehending that there is no hope in any other.

#### VERSE 16

**“And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off”** — She could not help him, any more than can the Mosaic covenant lead to life in the absence of faith.

**“As it were a bowshot”** — This strange expression is rather appropriate to the allegory. Literally it signifies: *about a shot of a bow*. There is forgiveness in Christ; there is none in the Law in the absence of Christ. A Jew, under the Law and in the absence of grace, is always within “a shot of a bow.” The Law was

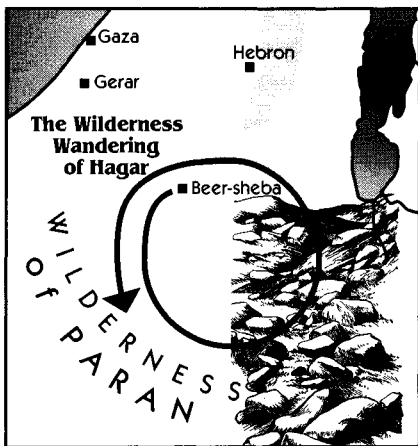
designed to emphasise the fact of sin (Rom. 7:13), and demonstrate that a person is physically related to death. In this regard it revealed the need for a Redeemer.

**“For she said, Let me not see the death of the child”** — The old covenant was intended to lead on to the life to be found in the new. It was intended to act as a school-master leading to Christ (Gal. 3:24), and thus was “ordained to life” (Rom. 7:10).

**“And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice, and wept”** — The old covenant instilled only fear and lamentation (Heb. 12:18-21). It can only weep; it cannot provide true comfort. Only the new covenant, made with Abraham and confirmed by Christ (Rom. 15:8) can do that.

#### Ishmael Saved by God — Vv. 17-21

*In Abraham's house, Ishmael had ample food. In fact, he “waxed fat and kicked” (cp. Deut. 32:15). But outside of it he is reduced to dire distress, and becomes desperately sick. The fact that Hagar has to support him implies that he was far from strong as a youth, and in need of help. In the wilderness his desperate state is such that only God can help him. In desperation, Ishmael cries unto God, and an angel is sent to reassure and strengthen him; and, above all else, to open his eyes to a well of saving water. God continues with him so that he receives renewed strength. He obtains a dwelling*



*place in the wilderness, and a wife from Egypt.*

**VERSE 17**

**“And God heard the voice of the lad”** — In the extremity to which he was reduced, the moans, or prayers, of Ishmael must have been very weak. Yet God heard them, as He always will do so if we turn to Him. Ishmael means *El hears*, and is derived from the verb of this passage: *shama, to hear*. The time is coming when Israel, in great extremity (Jer. 30:5-9), and at the point of political death (Ezek. 37:11), will cry unto Yahweh, and He shall hear (Deut. 4:30, R.V.; Jer. 29:13-14; Matt. 23:39).

**“And the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her”** — Hagar knew this voice, for she had heard it before (Gen. 16:7-11). The old covenant was an expression of the divine will, and Yahweh’s voice had been heard in regard to it.

**“What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is”** — There is no real need for this distress, for Yahweh is always present to help. In turning unto God, Ishmael had come to realise that there was no hope of help in Hagar, that he must look in faith beyond her to what God can provide. The Law was designed to teach that. It is significant that when Paul desired to emphasise the need of justification by faith as against justification by the works of the Law, he quoted from the Law itself (Rom. 10:6-10). The Law was intended to lead to God, to Christ, and to faith, and so long as it was combined with Abrahamic faith and hope (allegorically, whilst Hagar remained within the house of Abraham) it could do that. Its sacrifices were a representation of the Christ-offering; its statutes and commandments an expression of the divine will; and forgiveness of sins was possible through the Seed of promise who would come. But in the encampment of Abraham, that seed had typically come, but had been rejected as such and mocked at by Ishmael, with the result that both mother and son had been ejected from Abraham’s house and, allegorically, only the curses of

the Law remained. That is the allegory revealed by Paul, and so wonderfully recorded here.

**VERSE 18**

**“Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand”** — The Mosaic Covenant is yet to perform a service in bringing Israel back to God. Elijah will be the channel of this ministry. He will be to Israel in dispersion, as the angel of Yahweh was to the expiring Ishmael in the wilderness, and will reveal the true meaning of the Law unto Israel (see Mal. 4:4).

**“For I will make him a great nation”** — Literally interpreted, this promise reveals that the Arab nations will become great in the Kingdom of God (see Isa. 60:6-7).

In the terms of the allegory however, the promise relates to Israel according to the flesh. Israel is to become great in the Kingdom of God (Mic. 4:8; Ezek. 37:21-22; Ezek. 48).

**VERSE 19**

**“And God opened her eyes”** — Fore-shadowing the opening of the eyes of Israel to the truth in Christ Jesus (Zech. 12:10).

**“And she saw a well of water; and she went”** — Allegorically, the life-giving water of truth. It was by such a well that the Lord Jesus spoke words of life to a woman at Samaria (John 4), and provided for her and others to draw from the “water” of salvation. Zechariah predicts: “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness” (Zech. 13:1).

**“And filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink”** — In that day the true teaching of the Mosaic Covenant will be given to Israel after the flesh in order to lead them to Christ (Mal. 4:4; Rom. 11:25-26).

**VERSE 20**

**“And God was with the lad”** — As He will be with Israel after the flesh in the Age to come (Jer. 31:3-4, 15-20, 31-34; Ezek. 39:25-29; Joel 3:16; Zech. 8:13-15).

**“And he grew”** — The Hebrew *gadal* comes from a root signifying *to twist*, hence *to grow large, or strong*. This implies that Ishmael, previously, was a weakling, but after this experience, he quickly developed. The antitype is in accordance therewith. Israel has been weak in faith, and in dispersion, but Micah predicts the gradual growth in strength of Israel after the flesh, until it becomes the “first dominion” in the Kingdom of God (Mic. 4:6-8).

**“And he dwelt in the wilderness”** — The Hebrew *midbar* signifies *pasture land*. It is rendered *speech* (R.V. *mouth*) in Song 4:3, from *dabar*, *to arrange (words)*. *Midbar* was the place where cattle were driven or pastured. Ishmael, therefore, became a cattle-man or a shepherd. Life in the open agreed with him, and aided his development. What a remarkable similarity to Israel today! Many Jews have left realms of commerce and trade for an open-air life in the Land, and Israel has developed accordingly. In the Age to come, the nation will act the part of shepherd to the rest of mankind, helping to draw them to God.

**“And he became an archer”** — The Hebrew *qesheth* is from a root, *to bend*, figuratively, *to be strong*, hence, capable for war. The Israel of the future is described as a warrior in Zech. 9:13, a warrior that Yahweh will use against the forces of Gentilism, bringing them into submission to Christ.

#### VERSE 21

**“And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran”** — Paran signifies *ornamental* from a root to *gleam, embellish, clear oneself, explain*. Figuratively this will apply to Israel after the flesh in the Age to come. The nation will become prominent among all the other nations on the earth. Literally, the wilderness of Paran is a region located in the east central region of the Sinaitic Peninsula. It is bordered by the Arabah and the Gulf of Akaba on the east, and incorporated the wilderness of Zin, and Kadesh Barnea within its area. From Paran, the spies were sent out to search the land (Num. 13:26).

**“And his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt”** — Hagar was from Egypt and would find such a daughter-in-law congenial. Figuratively, Egypt represents the world. There will be close union established between Israel and the Gentiles in the Age to come. As the former has been a curse, it will find Divine salvation, and will become a blessing (Zech. 8:13).

#### Abraham’s Covenant with Abimelech — Vv. 22-26

*The allegory continues, but now involves the Gentiles. It fittingly follows the story of the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael, which Paul interprets as the rejection of an Israel seeking justification through works of the Law only. It takes us to a transaction between Abimelech and Abraham. Abimelech seeks to enter into covenant-relationship with Abraham. He realizes that Abraham is a prophet (Ch. 20:7), for he received benefits from God because of him (Ch. 20:17), and accordingly had invited him to dwell with him in peace (Ch. 20:15). Now he seeks closer recognition, and Abraham shows that this is conditional upon him accepting the covenant, as had his Amorite friends previously (Gen. 14:14). This is typical of the future, when nations shall be incorporated into the Kingdom of God through the Abrahamic covenant (Rev. 11:15). Meanwhile Abraham and Isaac sojourn in the wilderness of Beersheba, and though persecuted by the inhabitants (v. 25), unlike Hagar and Ishmael, their eyes are open to available wells of water. As the allegory represents Ishmael as Israel after the flesh, so Isaac represents the Ecclesia of faith.*

#### VERSE 22

**“And it came to pass at that time”** — At the time that Hagar and Ishmael were banished from the encampment of Abraham, typically at the first advent of the Lord.

**“That Abimelech and Pichol”** — Abimelech signifies *My Father-King*, and Pichol means *The mouth of all* (*The English and Hebrew Bible Students’ Concordance*). In the allegory they are repre-

sentative of Gentiles who were drawn to the Truth at the casting away of Israel. Paul wrote: "Have they (Israel) stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy" (Rom. 11:11).

**"The chief captain of his host"** — Host is better rendered *army*. As such, Picol represented the Gentiles as a whole who recognise the divine benefits available in the faith of Abraham.

**"Spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest"** — The time will come when Gentile rulers will acknowledge the Truth (see Ezek. 37:28; 39:23,28-29; Jer. 16:19). It will be apparent from the blessings that Yahweh will pour out upon Israel. Jeremiah predicts: "I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against Me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against Me. And it shall be to Me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it" (Jer. 33:8-9). Abimelech saw that God blessed Abraham, and rightly desired to share the privilege; the Gentiles shall do similarly in the Age to come, as they observe the blessings poured out upon Israel (Isa. 2:2-4).

### VERSE 23

**"Now therefore swear unto me here by God"** — The word "swear" is *shaba*, a cognate word to *sheba*, *oath*, in Beersheba.

**"That thou wilt not deal falsely with me"** — He desired to enter into an irrevocable promise, one that would endure for all time. He observed Abraham's growing power, and realised that God was with him.

**"Nor with my son, nor with my son's son"** — He knew sufficient of the Gospel to realise that the benefits Abraham was enjoying would continue on to his posterity. Perhaps he had been told about the divine promises made to Abra-

ham.

**"But according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me"** — God had declared that He would bless those who bless Abraham, and whether Abimelech knew of this or not, it was upon that basis that he desired to enter into covenant relationship with Abraham. A kindness done to Israel for Abraham's sake will have its reward. Paul's earnest desire was to help the Jewish people. He wrote: "If the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things" (Rom. 15:27). Abimelech attempted to do that, and as his knowledge of Abraham and his beliefs increased, he desired to enter into closer relationship with him. His experience typified the eventual entrance of Gentiles into the family of faith, and demonstrated the truth of the divine covenant "In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Gen. 12:3; Gal. 3:8).

**"And to the land wherein thou hast sojourned"** — The covenant required that there should be no devaluation of the land by conquest on the part of either.

### VERSE 24

**"And Abraham said, I will swear"** — He was prepared to enter into agreement with Abimelech; however, there was a matter of dispute between them that first had to be cleared up.

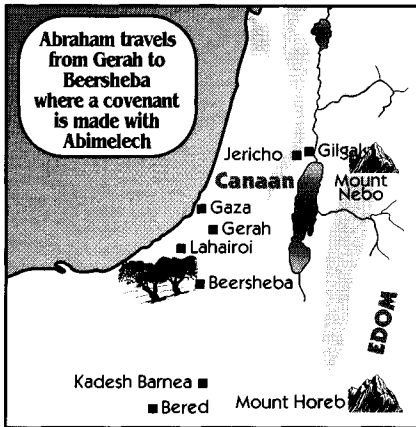
### VERSE 25

**"And Abraham reproved Abimelech"** — The Hebrew *yakach* signifies *to reason with* and so prove to the satisfaction of the other party. Evidently Abimelech was unacquainted with the circumstances that Abraham now drew to his attention.

**"Because of a well of water"** — In the allegory, a well is representative of the Gospel, the water of life.

**"Which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away"** — During Gentile times, the spiritual seed of Abraham has suffered opposition from the powers that be. In the future Age, nations will be held accountable for their actions in that regard,

and will be forced to acknowledge their error before being received by Christ (cp. Dan. 7:10-12). Babylon the Great will be completely destroyed because of her endorsement of such persecution (Rev. 18:24). As Abraham required that his right to the "well of water" be acknowledged before entering into covenant with Abimelech (v. 30); so in the future, nations will have to acknowledge the Abrahamic nature of the Hope before being incorporated into the Kingdom. The allegory, therefore, anticipated the opposition that the preaching of the Gospel would receive from Gentiles who, afterwards, would be compelled to accept the Abrahamic covenant.



#### VERSE 26

**"And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing: neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it, but today"** — Gentiles have been largely ignorant of the enormity of their conduct in opposing the preaching of the Gospel. Abimelech complained that he had never heard of this matter until that day. Let us so preach the Word that at Christ's return our Gentile neighbours will not be able to complain that they have never heard of the Gospel.

#### VERSE 27

**"And Abraham took sheep and oxen"** — He accepted Abimelech's excuse

and assurances, and made ready to enter into covenant relationship with him.

**"And gave them unto Abimelech"** — These comprised a covenant present, as was normal (cp. 1 Kings 15:19). Notice, however, that on this occasion, the giving of gifts was one-sided. Abraham gave them to Abimelech, but Abimelech did not give them to Abraham! In like manner, the benefits of the Gospel are one-sided (cp. Eph. 3:2-8; 4:7-8).

**"And both of them made a covenant"** — The Hebrew is *karath*, *cut* a covenant. See note Gen. 15:18. Abraham thus entered into covenant-relationship with this Philistine, as previously he had done so with the three Amorites: Mamre, Aner, and Eshcol (Ch. 14:13).

#### VERSE 28

**"And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves"** — He designed these as a witness that the well by which they sat belonged to Abraham (cp. v. 30).

#### VERSE 29

**"And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves?"** — Abimelech's covenant of perpetual amity was followed by this *oath of witness* by which he acknowledged Abraham's right to the well. The word *seven* in Hebrew is the same as is used for oath (Heb. *sheva*, see v. 31), so that Abraham's action endorsed the basis by which amity would continue: acknowledgement of Abraham's right to the well, and the Abrahamic nature of the hope. Why ewe lambs? To express the hope that the covenant entered into would bear fruit.

#### VERSE 30

**"And he said, For these seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well"** — They were a witness proclaiming Abraham's right to the Well of the Covenant.

#### VERSE 31

**"Wherefore he called that place Beer-sheba"** — Beersheba signifies *The*



*Well of the Oath.* The word *sheba* is Hebrew for *seven*, and seven ancient wells have been found adjacent to the city. One ancient well is traditionally identified as that of Abraham.

**“Because there they swore both of them”** — This establishes the meaning of Beer-sheba; it was the place of the covenant oath contracted.

### VERSE 32

**“Thus they made a covenant at Beer-sheba”** — The covenant of v. 27 is the one referred to. The oath of witness was an integral part of it.

**“Then Abimelech rose up, and Phichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines”** — There has been criticism of the Bible account. For example, Abimelech and Phichol are both mentioned again in transactions with Isaac (Gen. 26:26). Were they the same two men? We do not believe that they were. The names seem to be titles assumed by different people to designate their authority. Again, the description of the region as the *land of the Philistines*, has been criticised on the score that archaeological research indicates that the settlement of Philistines in Palestine was at a much later period. But though it is not disputed that the main wave of Philistine migrants took place much later than the days of Abraham, there is no reason to dispute that there were earlier migrations of those remarkable people. In fact, the evidence supports this. Who were the Philistines? Their name signifies *Migratory or Wanderers*. They came out from Caphtor (*Casluhim*), being descendants of Mizraim and Ham (1 Chron. 1:12; Amos 9:7). Caphtor has been identified as Crete, and the term *kerethi* (“Cretans”) is used in Ezek. 25:16; Zeph. 2:5; 1 Sam. 30:14, to designate the Philistines. They are referred to 250 times in Scripture, mainly in Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, and 1 Chronicles, and only 42 times outside of these books. It was during the period of the Judges that they established themselves in the land in consequence of which it received the title of Palestine: *The Land Of The Wanderers* (an apt title for Israel

after the flesh). Archaeology reveals that the Cretans asserted themselves in other areas as well; and were noted for their advanced culture and military prowess. We will delay further consideration of them until dealing with the *Book of Judges*.

### VERSE 33

**“And Abraham planted a grove in Beer-sheba”** — He obviously built an altar at this place, and the “grove” was related thereto. We have noted previously that the building and naming of altars were of great significance in the worship of the patriarch (see notes on Ch. 12:7,8; 13:18 etc.). The altar represented God in sacrificial manifestation and, therefore, was typical of Christ our altar (Heb. 13:10). The title given to it epitomised the hope of Abraham, expressing the revealed purpose of Yahweh. In this verse “grove” is *eshel* and should be rendered *tamarisk* tree, as in the R.V. The tamarisk tree is an evergreen, bearing pink and white flowers in spring, and growing to a height of 20 or 30 feet (6 or 9 metres). It is a bushy tree, and provides excellent shade. It yields a substance popularly known as manna. It is claimed to have some similarity to the manna provided the Jews in their wilderness wanderings (see *Davis Dictionary*).

Why did Abraham plant this tree? For ornamental purposes? For its shade? By no means. At his age it must have seemed doubtful whether he would live long enough to enjoy either its appearance or its shade. He planted it as a memorial, as a symbol of his belief. It pointed forward to one who would “bear our sins in his own body on the tree” (1 Pet. 2:24), that we “being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness.” One who would provide the manna of life, and himself become, as that tree at Beersheba, “planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (Psa. 1:3).

The tree was “in Beersheba,” and thus in association with the *Well of the Oath*. Probably the water of the well fed the tree. Tamarisk trees grow readily in the dry

environs of Beersheba to this day.

**“And called there on the name of Yahweh, the everlasting God”** — This was an outstanding act of worship, and for that purpose Abraham built the altar at Beersheba. See note on Gen. 13:7. He called upon the name of *Yahweh El Olam* — *He who will be the Strength of the Hidden Period or Eternity*. When the Age to come dawns, Yahweh will be manifested as the Strength of the righteous, and that Strength will have been revealed through the tree (1 Pet. 2:24; Psa. 1:3), and the altar (Heb. 13:10). Let us drive our roots deeply into soil fructified by the *Well of the Oath*, that we might draw upon its nourishment, and as trees of righteousness, display in ornamental beauty, the glory of Yahweh our strength, whilst also extending the manna of life to others.

The tree, the place, the altar, and the name are all significant, and dramatise Abraham’s faith and hope.

#### VERSE 34

**“And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines’ land many days”** — He was still a “stranger and a pilgrim” in the earth; he did not recognise the pact with Abimelech as anything more than a temporary arrangement typifying the permanent pact to be established with Gentiles in the Age to come. Evidently Beersheba was on the border of the territory dominated by the Philistines in the days of Abimelech, so that Abraham’s household and flocks must frequently have sojourned in the area. Cp. Ch. 26:15. He did so, doubtless, recognising that it was part of the promised land.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

### THE OFFERING OF ISAAC

#### Chapter 22:1-19

*This is one of the great chapters of the Bible, the implications of which reach down to our own times and beyond. It reveals how that faith produced works in Abraham, permitting James to write that he was justified by the works of faith. In consequence, Abraham received an unconditional guarantee that he will inherit the promises. Previously (chapter 12), the promises had been given conditionally, but now, he manifested such faith and courage that Yahweh confirmed them with an oath. The trial called upon Abraham to offer up his beloved son, Isaac as a burnt offering. Was he prepared to do this knowing that his future depended upon Isaac, the promised seed? Would he remain faithful to God when commanded to destroy the very evidence that showed that God’s promises would be fulfilled? Would Abraham still cleave to God though his dearest treasure be taken from him? Would he be prepared to accept God’s way, though he could not understand the reason and purpose behind it?*

*Verse 1 suggests a new series in the allegory of Abraham’s life, setting forth in order the following parable:*

1 — *Sacrifice on Mt. Moriah: Christ's death and resurrection (Ch. 22).*

2 — *Death of Sarah, buried among Gentiles: Overthrow of Jerusalem's polity A.D. 70 (Ch. 23).*

3 — *Seeking a wife for Isaac: preaching the Truth in Gentile lands (Ch. 24).*

4 — *Sons of the concubines: Abraham becomes typically a "father of many nations" foreshadowing the future (Ch. 25).*

*Thus the allegory sets forth in proper sequence events that developed out of the offering of the Lord on Calvary's hill.*

### Abraham is Tried — Vv. 1-5

*God subjects all his sons to trial in order to purify them. When the multitudinous Christ is glorified in the Age to come, it will be found that whilst only one man will have rendered perfect obedience to the Father, not one would have been untried. Abraham's trial is a severe one as this chapter narrates. He is called upon to offer up his son. No explanation is given. Killing Isaac seems to serve no clear purpose, and, apparently, would be a useless waste. Moreover, what of the promises of God which rested in the son! Nevertheless, dominated by faith in God and seeing beyond the present circumstances, Abraham complies with the request.*

### VERSE 1

**"And it came to pass after these things"** — This suggests a new division in the allegorical history of Abraham's life.

**"That God did tempt Abraham"** — In respect to the action of sin God tempts nobody (James 1:13), but He does try all His servants. The same Hebrew word here rendered *tempt* is translated *prove* in Exod. 15:25; 16:4 and elsewhere. The R.V. renders it *test*. God desired to develop and reveal the powerful faith that had motivated this man in his pilgrimage. But now he was to face the supreme test — that of life itself! It was also to reveal the divine purpose of redemption through sacrifice.

**"And said unto him, Abraham"** — Yahweh called him by name, which implies a degree of intimacy between God and His friend.

**"And he said, Behold, here I am"** —

Indicating a ready response on the part of Abraham. In this Abraham types the Lord Jesus Christ (Psa. 40:6-8).

### VERSE 2

**"And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest"**

— This suggests that Ishmael was not a true son of Abraham. What constitutes a true son? One who reflects his father's qualities. The Lord told the Jews of his day that they were not true descendants of Abraham, even though they could claim fleshly lineal descent. "If ye were Abraham's children", he declared, "ye would do the works of Abraham" (John 8:39). But they did not, and he castigated them as being "of your father the devil" (v. 44). The comment, *thine only son Isaac* suggests that he was walking in the footsteps of his father, and implies that he was of responsible age certainly in teenage years or later. Josephus claims that Isaac was twenty-five years of age at the time.

**"And get thee into the land of Moriah"** — Strong gives the meaning of Moriah as *Seen of Yah*, compounded of *ra'ah* and *Yah*, *Vision of Yah*. The land of promise is said to be constantly subject to the scrutiny of Yahweh (see Deut. 11:12). Jerusalem, particularly, dominates His attention (Deut. 12:5). Moriah was on the east of Jerusalem, where, later, the temple and altar were built (2 Chron. 3:1). Today it is dominated by the Moslem Dome of the Rock, which shelters the ancient slab of rock where, it is claimed, Isaac was offered.

**"And offer him there for a burnt**

**offering**” — Abraham and Isaac were to typify the work of God with His Son and demonstrate the real purpose of sacrifice. Christ also offered himself without spot to God (Eph. 5:2; Heb. 9:14).

There are two things essential for the offering of a burnt offering. The first is that it be offered freely and voluntarily (Lev. 1:3). Thus Christ came to do the Father’s will, and in accordance therewith laid down his life voluntarily in obedience (John 10:17-18; Phil. 2:5-8). The second is that it be offered whole, or entire (Lev. 1:9). Nothing must be kept back. Christ kept nothing back; but gave his whole being to his Father. We, too, are required to give all in service to Him (Rom. 12:1).

**“Upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of”** — The offering was to be made on a high, exposed sight, not hidden away where it might not be seen. Christ’s offering was similar. It could well have been that Isaac was offered upon Golgotha’s hill as was the Lord.

### VERSE 3

**“And Abraham rose up early in the morning”** — This was characteristic of Abraham when he was commanded to do anything of God (see Ch. 19:27; 21:14), and suggests his readiness to comply to all that was asked of him. Notice also Abraham’s calmness of faith. The quiet, deliberate nature of the narrative, is expressed in the repetition of the preposition *and* in vv. 3-10; and the methodical way in which the patriarch went about the work of preparation. Faith governed all his actions. He had thought the matter out carefully, and realised that even if Isaac were put to death he would have to be restored, for God’s purpose was channelled through him. Moreover, Yahweh had described Isaac as Abraham’s “only son,” and in so doing gave divine approval of his character. Therefore, in faith, Abraham “accounting that God was able to raise up (Isaac), even from the dead” (Heb. 11:19), proceeded to act accordingly.

**“And saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went**



**unto the place of which God had told him”** — This verse describes seven acts of calm deliberation and unflinching heroism motivated by faith. Seven is the covenant number; the number of completeness.

### VERSE 4

**“Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes”** — Christ’s public ministry was a three and a half years’ pilgrimage to the grave. He was in the tomb three days and three nights, answering to the time of this journey. As far as Abraham was concerned, during the whole journey Isaac was as good as dead for three days.

**“And saw the place afar off”** — Perhaps it took a further half-day to reach the site, answering to the exact period of Christ’s public ministry, leading to his death.

### VERSE 5

**“And Abraham said unto his young men... I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you”** — The Hebrew is in the plural: “so we may worship and return to you” (Berkeley Version). This is evidence of Abraham’s faith and understanding of the promises given to him. He knew that Isaac must be restored to him, after he had been put to death, and therefore he confidently told the young men that the two of them would return. See Heb. 11:19. Abraham had a living faith, for he applied it to the circumstances of life.

**Isaac A Willing Sacrifice — Vv. 6-8**

*Abraham kept silent concerning the terrible trial, confiding in nobody, only relying on his faith in God. Apparently, he did not disclose the purpose of the journey even to Sarah. He bore the trial alone. But as father and son ascend the mount, Isaac begins to ask questions, and ultimately received the wonderful reply: "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering."*

**VERSE 6**

**"And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son"** — This shows that Isaac was of stronger physique than Abraham, implying an age of responsibility; perhaps at least in his middle teens. How completely agreeable the type is to the antitype. Of the Lord it is written: "He *bearing his cross* went forth into a place called the place of a skull" (John 19:17).

**"And he took the fire in his hand, and a knife"** — Why should Abraham carry fire for this purpose? It was most likely divine fire that had consumed offerings made earlier on one of the altars, and which, now, was preserved and carried from place to place. Such fire was supplied to Israel (Lev. 9:24), and the instruction was that it should always be kept burning (Lev. 6:12). There is no reason why the patriarchs should not have been similarly supplied, and instructed. Perhaps the fire was given when the first altar in the land was erected and used (Gen. 12:7).

**"And they went both of them together"** — The father and the son in mutual co-operation. Again the type beautifully foreshadows the offering of Christ; for that also was a co-operative work between the Father and the Son. Christ told the Apostles that the Father would be with him in his offering (John 16:32), and they, in turn, taught the doctrine of Divine co-operation and mercy on the part of the Father and Son on behalf of doomed humanity (see 2 Cor. 5:19; Rom. 8:32).

**VERSE 7**

**"And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said,**

**Here am I, my son"** — Similarly, Christ spake unto Yahweh and said "Abba Father" (Mark 14:36). God responded in approval, for Christ was "heard in that he feared" (Heb. 5:7).

**"And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"** — Abraham had not yet explained to Isaac the full reason for the journey. He knew that it was for purpose of worship, but had no idea that he was to be the offering! In this his situation was different to that of the Lord Jesus who was fully conscious of what was before him. On one occasion he told the Apostles: "How am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12:50).

**VERSE 8**

**"And Abraham said, My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering"** — How true these words are! Only God could provide a lamb of such a nature as to atone for the sins of humanity (John 1:29). Abraham spake to Isaac from the depths of his faith. He knew that Isaac must be brought from the dead in order to ultimately provide the Lamb of God for the sin of the world. He therefore spake these words of conviction. He could hardly say anything further, for he was ignorant of the Divine intention regarding Isaac, though his faith caused him to recognise that he would be brought again from the dead (Heb. 11:18-19) — else the promise would fail.

**"So they went both of them together"** — Although the full import of the action (as far as its antitype is concerned) was not understood by either, there was a complete and lovely harmony in their worship. The sacrifice was to involve both, and there was trusting confidence in the obedience thus manifested. This statement is repeated from v. 6, so as to emphasise their unity.

**Faith Triumphant — Vv. 9-14**

*At last they reach the place appointed of God. The supreme moment has arrived. But Abraham's faith is equal to the test. Calmly, deliberately, he prepares for the sacrifice, and takes the knife in hand. Isaac, also, matches his father's faith by under-*

*standing his part in the transaction and extending his willing co-operation. Then the voice of the angel is heard. Isaac is saved through the offering of a ram, and Abraham proclaims his conviction in the antitypical fulfilment of all that has taken place.*

#### VERSE 9

**“And they came to the place which God had told him of”** — Though the supreme moment had come, there was no faltering of Abraham’s faith. With implicit trust in God, he recognised that to perform the divine will would be for the best. The calmness of Abraham’s faith is suggested in the very deliberateness of his actions as implied in the narrative of this verse.

**“And Abraham built an altar there”** — See notes on Gen. 12:7. The altar of unhewn stones represented Christ our living altar (Heb. 13:10).

**“And laid the wood in order”** — This was done in a burnt offering to permit the fire to more easily take hold of the pieces. The divine fire represents the Spirit-Word, the consuming zeal of which constitutes the antitypical burnt offering. Cp. John 2:17.

**“And bound Isaac his son”** — By now Isaac must have realised the purpose of the journey, yet the narrative does not record any resistance on his part. Evidently Abraham had explained the matter to him, and encouraged him to go through with his part in the transaction, with the assurance that such an attitude must bear fruit to the glory of God. In doing so, Isaac typified the willing obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ (see John 10:17; 12:27; Isa. 53:7) to the express will of his Father.

**“Laid him on the altar upon the wood”** — This, too, typified the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ; for whereas he was slain by “wicked hands” it was in accordance with “the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23).

#### VERSE 10

**“And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son”** — We might imagine the feelings of Abraham as he came to this dread moment. Why did God call upon him to

endure such a terrible ordeal? For a very important reason, namely, to impress believers with the tremendous price paid to obtain their salvation. God, Who is a God of love, and of Whom it is said, that He is afflicted with the afflictions of His people (Isa. 63:8-9), was not unmoved at the sufferings of His own son. The unfeeling hatred of the Lord’s oppressors moved Yahweh to anger; as the loving obedience of the Son excited His pleasure. Yet who concerns themselves with God’s feelings? We can sympathise with Abraham, and criticise God for placing him under such a terrible trial; forgetting that the offering of Christ represented suffering on his part, which the Father shared.

The narrative of this chapter teaches us something of the feelings of the Father in providing for the salvation of humanity. Perhaps it will impress us with the real meaning of those familiar words: “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Consider also Abraham’s action. In making ready to slay his son, he proved the reality of his faith; and revealed that it was manifested by works. James comments: “Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?” (James 2:21). Many, who would criticise God for calling upon Abraham to make such a terrible sacrifice, are not reluctant to sacrifice their sons or daughters upon the altars of worldly ambition or fashion consigning them to a spiritual death from whence there is no awakening. There was a purpose and a reward in the sacrifice which God asked of Abraham that is lacking in sacrifices which we might offer for the world (1 John 2:15)

#### VERSE 11

**“And the angel of Yahweh called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham; and he said, Here am I”** — There is a note of both urgency and triumph in the repetition of the patriarch’s name.

#### VERSE 12

**“And he said, Lay not thine hand**

**upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him**" — What relief must have surged through Abraham's being at those words. He saw his son prostrate upon the altar, he saw his seed under the shadow of death. His son was saved "out of death" by the offering he made (Heb. 5:7), which dramatised the fact that Christ also would be saved through his own offering (Heb. 13:20).

**"For now I know that thou fearest God"** — Some render this: *I have known*. If that rendition is accepted, the angel is stating that Abraham's action of faith accorded with that which Yahweh knew of him (Gen. 18:19). In any case, the trial has caused others to recognise the strength of Abraham's faith and to acknowledge that he was justified by works that sprung from that faith (James 2:18). By those works his faith was perfected (James 2:22).

**"Seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me"** — Nor did Yahweh in return, withhold His only begotten Son from providing the basis whereby Abraham and his seed can be saved (John 1:14). Again notice the repetition of the word "son" as the angel emphasises the great offering that had been made. Although Isaac was not literally offered, he was figuratively; thus Paul says that "by faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac" (Heb. 11:17).

### VERSE 13

**"Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns"** — A ram is the protector of the flock; the Hebrew word signifies *strength*. This ram was caught in a thicket by his horns, typically representing the Lamb of God as helplessly caught in the redemptive work of mankind. Both Isaac and the ram represent Christ. Conjointly they show the Lord as saved by his own sacrifice (Heb. 13:20).

**"And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son"** — This does not imply that Christ was a substitutionary sacrifice. Both Isaac and the ram represent Christ in different aspects, and the obvious teaching is that Christ was

saved by his own offering (see Phil. 2:8-9; Heb. 5:7; 9:12 — R.V.). Christ offered himself as representative of those he came to save, and not in the place of them. If he died instead of others, rather than for them, he would have been a substitutionary sacrifice, and those for whom he died should not themselves die, because he would have paid the penalty. But as representative, he dramatised on the cross what all must do if they would live (Gal. 5:24). They must crucify the lusts of the flesh, and live unto God. This was exemplified by Abraham's offering.

### VERSE 14

**"And Abraham called the name of that place Yahweh-Yireh: as it is said to this day"** — The name signifies *Yahweh will provide*. The question is, what will He provide? The answer is, the antitype of all that took place that day. Earlier, Abraham had declared: "God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering" (v. 8), and now he is able to assert that truth with greater assurance and meaning. *Yahweh-Yireh* is another of the great names of Deity, proclaiming that He will provide all of man's needs; though He may not supply all his wants! The Principle is expressed in Psalm 23: "Yahweh is my Shepherd; I shall not want" (v. 1). Israel had tangible evidence of the truth of this name. See Deut. 2:7; 8:9. See also Psa. 34:10; 84:11. In pondering the significance of this name, let us give practical illustration of it in the way suggested by Christ. See Matt. 6:25-34.

The term in the AV as *Jehovah* is incorrect; it is a hybrid name developed by the apostasy and was not known before AD1520 when it was introduced by Galatinus. The Name should be pronounced Yahweh: see Foreword to Rotherham's Literal Translation of the Bible.

**"In the mount of Yahweh it shall be seen"** — What shall be seen? The antitype of that enacted by Abraham and Isaac; the apocalypse of the Lamb of God; first in tribulation, afterwards in triumph; first as a sacrifice, afterwards as a sovereign. The mount of Yahweh is Zion, or Jerusalem (Psa. 132:13-14; Deut. 33:19). It was the site of Christ's humiliation 1900 years

ago; it will be the scene of his glory in the future. Abraham saw that coming day of victory and was glad (John 8:56).

### The Promises Confirmed — Vv. 15-19

*A second time the angel speaks. On this occasion he proclaims that Yahweh has sworn by an oath that Abraham shall obtain the promises, and enlarges on the future blessing that will come to the faithful.*

### VERSE 15

**“And the angel of Yahweh called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time”** — All that the angel had said on the first occasion (vv. 11-13) was fulfilled at the first advent of the Lord; all that he proclaimed on this the second occasion will be fulfilled at Christ’s second coming.

### VERSE 16

**“And said, By Myself have I sworn, saith Yahweh”** — Paul makes comment upon this statement: “When God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee ... Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation” (Heb. 6:13-20). The two immutable things are the promise and the oath, for that latter makes the former irrevocable. See how frequently it is referred to: Gen. 24:7; 26:3; 50:24; Exod. 13:5,11; 33:1; Psa. 89:35; 132:11; Luke 1:73.

**“For because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son”** — This is the third time in this chapter that reference is made to *thine only son*, illustrating how completely Isaac was identified with his father; and how great was the sacrifice of Abraham. In his action, the patriarch reached the climax of achievement. He had “patiently endured,” and so “obtained the promise” (Heb. 6:15). Similarly, as Paul declared: “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall He

not with him also freely give us all things?” (Rom. 8:32). See notes on v. 12.

### VERSE 17

**“That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore”** — A repetition and accumulation of the promises previously made (Gen. 12:2-3; 13:14-16; 15:5; 17:1-5). Originally, the promise was set forth conditionally (Gen. 12:1-2); now it is unconditional: I will bless thee.

Why the two expressions, stars and sand? The stars represent divine glory (Dan. 12:3), the sand, divine governance (Job 38:11). The final fulfilment awaits the future, but the promise has been partially vindicated (Rev. 1:7; Deut. 1:10). See comment: Gal. 3:26-28, and the great company of the redeemed in Rev. 7:9.

**“And thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies”** — The reference to “*his*” rather than “*their*” enemies shows that the singular seed, the Lord Jesus Christ, is here referred to. See Paul’s comment in Gal. 3:16. To “possess” is to acquire by force. The word *yaresh* signifies, “to expel, seize, drive out, dispossess”, and often refers to the driving out of previous occupants. The phrase, *possess the gate of his enemies* suggests the forcible control of the entrance of a walled-up, fortified city of ancient times. The gate was the point of control to the city, for it provided the means of both entrance and exit. It was the place of authority, for judges and kings took their place at such public sites to administer the laws of the land. Christ is the to exercise such authority over the nations, “for God hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath appointed” (Acts 17: 31). Typically he will possess the gate of his enemies. The statement thus refers to the effect of Armageddon and its aftermath. See Isa. 60:12.

Notice the progression of development in the promise: *first*, the seed is multiplied at the Judgment Seat (v. 17a); *second*, Christ subdues his enemies at Armageddon (v. 17b); *third*, the Kingdom is established



throughout the earth (v. 18). See the same progression in 1 Cor. 15:22-25.

All Christ's enemies are to be subdued (Psa. 110:1). Politically this will be accomplished in the subjugation of the nations (Luke 1:71-75; Zech. 14:9; Dan. 2:44); physically it will be done in the ultimate conquest of death itself (1 Cor. 15:26).

#### VERSE 18

**"And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed My voice"** — This is cited by Peter in Acts 3:25, and by Paul in Gal. 3:8. Peter quoted it to show that it was the divine purpose that the Gospel should be proclaimed to all peoples, but first to the Jews; Paul quoted it to show that Gentiles

were to be incorporated into the divine purpose. The preaching of the Gospel indicates that epoch of universal blessedness that will be experienced by the establishment of the Kingdom at Christ's return (Num. 14:21; Psa. 72:17; Isa. 2:2-4; 61:11; Jer. 3:17; Dan. 2:44; Zech. 14:9; Rev. 11:15 etc.). See notes Gen. 12:2-3.

#### VERSE 19

**"So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went to Beer-sheba"** — As he had declared he would (v. 5). Thus was his faith in God confirmed, and others were enlightened thereby.

**"Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba"** — He returned to reside at the *Well of the Oath*.

## THE DEATH & BURIAL OF SARAH

### Chapter 22:20–23:20

*To record the death and burial of a woman is unusual in Scripture. But Sarah was no ordinary woman; she was the mother of the long-awaited son of promise, the faithful companion of Abraham in all his wanderings. Her character is set forth as an example for sisters to follow: "She obeyed Abraham, calling him lord; whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well" (1 Pet. 3:6). In the terms of Paul's allegory (Gal. 4:22-31), Sarah represented the Abrahamic covenant of faith: the Jerusalem from above. Originally that was limited to the nation of Israel, but in A.D. 70, with the overthrow of the Jewish State, this came to an end as far as a national covenant was concerned, and was buried among the Gentiles where it has remained ever since. This was foreshadowed in the death and burial of Sarah.*

#### Abraham's Relations In Haran

— Vv. 20-24.

*Abraham seeks news of his relations in Haran probably left there when he ventured into Canaan, and is informed concerning their children.*

#### VERSE 20

**"And it came to pass after these things"** — This statement connects the

events of this section in some way with that which went before it, namely, the offering of Isaac. What bearing could the news Abraham now received have upon Isaac? Obviously the patriarch's mind was cogitating the possibility of marriage for his son. This was necessary to provide for the Seed. The bride had to be selected with care, in accordance with divine principles and Abraham's mind turned to his rela-

tions in Haran.

**“That it was told Abraham”** — He must have sought the information. If so, this was preparatory to the quest of Chapter 24.

**“Saying, Behold, Milcah, she hath also born children”** — Milcah signifies *A Queen*. She was sister to Lot. Gen. 11:29.

**“Unto thy brother Nahor”** — See Gen. 11:27. No mention is made of him leaving Ur with Abram, but he evidently did so then, or at a subsequent period.

#### VERSE 21

**“Huz his firstborn”** — Huz signifies *Counsel*. The same word identifies the land of Uz, the country in which Job lived (Job 1:1).

**“And Buz his brother”** — Buz signifies *Despise, Contempt*. Elihu is said to be a Buzite (Job 32:2). He could have been a descendant of this Buz.

**“And Kemuel the father of Aram”** — Signifies *Risen of God*. Not the founder of the Arameans (cp. Gen. 10:22), but the forefather of the family of Ram, to which the Buzite Elihu belonged; “Aram being written for Ram” (Keil).

#### VERSE 22

**“And Chesed”** — Probably signifies *Increase*.

**“And Hazo”** — Signifies *Vision or Seer*.

**“And Pildash”** — Signifies *Flame of Fire*.

**“And Jidlahph”** — Signifies *He weeps, or melts away*.

**“And Bethuel”** — Signifies *A Revelation of God*. See Gen. 24:15.

#### VERSE 23

**“And Bethuel begat Rebekah”** — This statement becomes the link between the events of Chapter 22 and those of Chapter 24. See Gen. 24:15.

**“These eight Milcah did bear to Nahor, Abraham’s brother”** — This family tree thus introduces the events of Chapter 24 in which Abraham sets about to obtain a bride for his son. It shows the care that was exercised in marriage (Ch. 24:3), and the overshadowing hand of God

in selecting a wife for the seed of promise (cp. Prov. 18:22). Of the eight, Bethuel was the youngest, but he was elevated to this great honour of becoming related to the special seed. God made choice of him, as later He made choice of David, the youngest of Jesse’s eight (1 Sam. 16:10-12). Only Rebekah is mentioned of the children of Bethuel, though he had other children (e.g. Laban), thus indicating that the family tree is here recorded specifically to link with Abraham’s search for a bride for his son.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

### Age and Death of Sarah — Vv. 1-2

*Sarah is the only woman whose age is mentioned in Scripture. As the wife of Abraham she is set forth as the mother of believers (Isa. 51:2; 1 Pet. 3:6). She is also allegorical of the Abrahamic covenant, the heavenly Jerusalem, or polity of the faithful (Gal. 4:24-27), and Yahweh’s Bride (Isa. 54:5). As an organised entity, the heavenly Kingdom came to an end in A.D. 70 (Matt. 21:43), and was buried in Gentile lands, awaiting a political resurrection (Ezek. 37). Meanwhile the Gentiles have been visited to acquire a bride for the seed of promise. Thus the death of Sarah, and her burial among Gentiles awaiting the resurrection, foreshadowed the death of the polity of the faithful in A.D. 70, and its burial among the Gentiles awaiting the political resurrection of the future.*

#### VERSE 1

**“And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old”** — She was ninety when Isaac was born (Gen. 17:17), so that now he was thirty-seven.

**“These were the years of the life of Sarah”** — Repeated for emphasis in order to fix attention upon her age. It is unique for the age of a woman to be recorded in the Bible. Why this exception to the rule? The number of her years appears to point to her unique character. It stands between 126 on the one hand, and 128 on the other. One hundred and twenty-six is a multiple

of  $9 \times 7 \times 2$ . Nine denotes finality of judgment. It is 3 times 3, the product of divine completeness, seen in the resurrection of nature on the third day (Gen. 1:9-13). Seven points to the oath which guarantees this (Gen. 22:16). Two indicates the two great families of the human race, found in her spiritual offspring taken out of Israel and the Gentiles. In age, however, Sarah had passed beyond this point in time and was moving on to 128. One hundred and twenty-eight is a multiple of  $8 \times 8 \times 2$  indicating resurrectional regeneration of the two great seeds. Sarah's death was at an age that lay between these two numbers, and thus represents a disruption of the two principles expressed in the symbolical use of these two numbers. Her resurrection to life eternal will move her on to the spiritual significance of 128. That these numbers have some such spiritual significance appears obvious, for otherwise there was little reason for breaking a general rule to record her age.

#### VERSE 2

**"And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba"** — Kirjath-arba signifies *City Of The Four*. The New Jerusalem, with which Sarah is identified (Gal. 4:26), is described as lying "foursquare" (Rev. 21:16). Israel, before its dispersion, represented the polity of the New Jerusalem, which was brought to an end at A.D. 70.

**"The same is Hebron"** — Signifying *to unite, to have fellowship*.

**"In the land of Canaan"** — See notes, Gen. 12:6. Foreigners also dominated the land when the Kingdom was brought to political extinction in A.D. 70 following the death of Christ.

**"And Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her"** — The Septuagint renders this as *went to mourn*, however, if the A.V. is preferred it possibly means that Abraham went to the tent of Isaac to mourn. There was mourning at the death of the polity of the Kingdom in A.D. 70, because of the blindness of its people. See Psa. 81:13-15.

#### Purchase of a Burying Place — vv. 3-16

*Abraham had sojourned in the land as a stranger and pilgrim; but with the death*

*of Sarah he seeks a portion of the territory as a permanent possession, for a burying place. He insists upon paying for it so as to secure it to himself. The transaction is conducted with magnanimity and extreme politeness on both sides and the cave of Machpelah in Kirjath-arba is finally purchased for the purpose. This insignificant plot was the only land-possession Abraham was to obtain in his lifetime.*

#### VERSE 3

**"And Abraham stood up from before his dead"** — During the days of mourning, it was customary to sit upon the ground (cp. Job 2:13).

**"And spake unto the sons of Heth, saying"** — Reference to Heth is found in Gen. 10:15, as a son of Canaan. The word signifies *annoyance* or *terror*, suggesting a warlike people. The Hethites have been identified with the Hittites, a powerful kingdom, with the headquarters adjacent to modern Boghazköy, about ninety miles east of Ankara, on the great bend of the Halys River. The ancient capital was known as Hattusas, and its ruins suggest that it was an immense city with strong fortification. Bands of Hittites apparently roamed the Middle East, the encampment of the sons of Heth being among their number. In v. 7, the children of Heth are described as "the people of the land," and it is claimed by Stanley that the land is called Heth on both Egyptian and Assyrian monuments. Esau married Hittite wives (Gen. 26:34-35; 36:2), perhaps beguiled by their compromising kindness, such as the chapter before us reveals. References to Hittites are found in connection with Israel (Num. 13:29; Josh. 9:1-2; Jud. 1:26). Hittites were converted and served in David's army (1 Sam. 26:6; Uriah being one such; 2 Sam. 11:3). Solomon married Hittite wives (1 Kings 11:1), and Hittites became laborers for him (1 Kings 9:20-21).

#### VERSE 4

**"I am a stranger and a sojourner with you"** — Abraham represented himself as a foreigner with no continuing city. That was his state during his mortal pil-

grimage in the land. This description of himself applies to all his seed today, whose eyes are centred upon the glorious future (Psa. 39:12; 1 Chron. 29:15; Heb. 11:13).

**“Give me a possession of a burying-place with you”** — The whole land was Abraham’s by promise, as all things are ours similarly (1 Cor. 3:21), but meanwhile he did not possess “so much as to set his foot on” (Acts 7:5). The purchased grave became a token of his right and title to the promised land (Isa. 22:16).

**“That I may bury my dead out of my sight”** — Abraham “sorrowed not, as others which have no hope” (1 Thess. 4:13). Full of faith in the resurrection, he sought a place of burial for his wife and himself.

#### VERSE 6

**“Hear us, my lord: thou art a mighty prince among us”** — The margin gives the literal Hebrew as a *prince of Elohim* among us. Thus the children of Heth recognise Abraham’s status among them, and, as is normal with worldly people, they flattered him with their tongues. See Psa. 5:9; and contrast the attitude adopted by Christ’s followers, with whom there is no guile (1 Pet. 2:21-22; Rev. 14:5).

**“In the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead; none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre”** — This was not intended to be taken seriously, but constituted a compliment which Abraham understood. The pretended generosity was a cover for bargaining. This is typical of the world, which often says what it does not mean; and whose compliments should never be taken seriously.

#### VERSE 7

**“And Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land”** — Abraham complied with the decorum of the times, and treated his acquaintances with the greatest courtesy. See 1 Pet. 3:8. The Hethites might well be described as “the people of the land,” for they were descendants of Canaan (Gen. 10:15).

**“Even to the children of Heth and he communed with them, saying”** — See

notes above.

#### VERSE 8

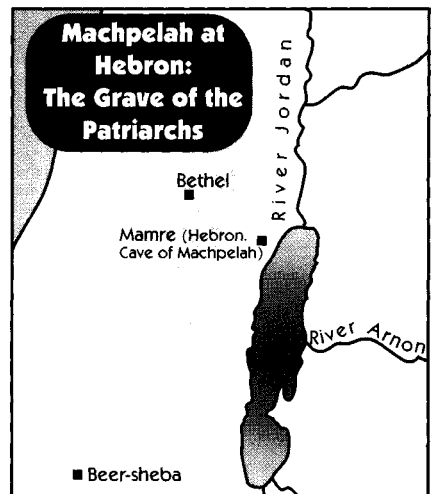
**“If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight”** — If they were genuine in their approach.

**“Hear me, and intreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar”** — It is normal among people of the east, to employ mediators in such a transaction. Abraham conformed to the custom of the day, and was prepared to use others in a legitimate way to further his plans. Ephron signifies *Fawnlike, Gazelle*, which suggests his shy, elusive nature — a reason for the use of the familiar mediator. Zohar signifies *whiteness*, suggesting purity.

#### VERSE 9

**“That he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which is in the end of his field”** — Machpelah signifies *Double*, and therefore denotes the *Cave of the Firstborn* (cp. Deut. 21:17). Sarah, Abraham (Gen. 25:9), Isaac and Rebekah, and Leah and Jacob (Gen. 49:30; 50:13), were buried there.

**“For as much money as it is worth he shall give it me for a possession of a burying place amongst you”** — The Hebrew signifies *full money* (see mg.). Abraham waved aside the game of bargaining. He wanted to know what the full



price was, and he was prepared to pay it. He did not want favours of the Hittites. (Cp. Gen. 14:22-24).

**VERSE 10**

**“And Ephron dwelt among the children of Heth: and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth”** — The R.V. renders: *was sitting in the midst of the children of Heth*. He was there in front of Abraham, and the initiative was now with him. The eyes of all would turn to him to see how he would treat this matter introduced by Abraham.

**“Even of all that went in at the gate of his city, saying”** — This transaction took place in the gate of the city, where most such dealings took place (Cp. Ruth 4:1).

**VERSE 11**

**“Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it thee”** — This very generous offer, incorporating not merely the cave but the field as well, seems to suggest more than the formal and hollow courtesies of bargaining. The offer seems to be made genuinely, in respect to the status of Abraham. He had gained a great reputation with those “without” (1 Tim. 3:7). Nevertheless, Ephron could well expect adequate remuneration from such as Abraham and was fair and honest as his faith required.

**“In the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee”** — The transaction is over; the cave is yours!

**VERSE 12**

**“And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land”** — He courteously acknowledged the liberality of Ephron; but nonetheless proceeded with the actual purchase of the cave. Throughout the transaction, Abraham continued to assert his separateness. He kept himself distinct, proclaimed himself a stranger, would accept no favour at their hands, would not countenance intermarriage between his race and theirs, refused the gift of a sepulchre from Ephron as he previously had done with the spoils from the

king of Sodom. The tomb of Machpelah is a constant reminder of Abraham’s separateness (Acts 7:5).

**VERSE 13**

**“And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou wilt give it, I pray thee, hear me: I will give thee money for the field; take it of me, and I will bury my dead there”** — Abraham firmly adhered to his original resolve. Whilst appreciating their kindness and courtesy, he remained determined in his separateness.

**VERSE 15**

**“My lord, hearken unto me: the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver”** — The value of this is difficult to assess. This is the first time reference is made to the shekel. It signifies *weight* without specifying how much. In the days of the Maccabees, the shekel of Israel was minted, and the silver coin was worth approximately \$3 (current in 1991). At that rate, the field would be worth about \$1200 according to Ephron. The silver shekel was the coin of redemption under the Law (Exod. 30:13; Lev. 5:15).

**“What is that betwixt me and thee? Bury therefore thy dead”** — This is an invitation to bargain.

**VERSE 16**

**“And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth”** — Abraham was in no humour to bargain. If necessary he preferred to suffer himself to be defrauded (cp. 1 Cor. 6:7).

**“Four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant”** — Silver is the price of redemption by which inheritance in the land is obtained. See its relationship to the price paid for the redemption of humanity, 1 Pet. 1:16-19. Abraham weighed out the silver according to approved standards, so that his right to the cave (the token of his inheritance) was secured legally.

**The Burial of Sarah — Vv. 17-20.**

*Abraham pays the price for the cave,*

and the title deeds are made over to his name. Afterwards Sarah is buried, to await the day of resurrection when she shall enter into her lot.

#### VERSE 17

**“And the field of Ephron”** — Notice the legal exactness of this verse, which describes the situation of the cave as exactly as modern title-deeds do the land described on them.

**“Which was in Machpelah”** — Signifying *Double*, perhaps typically pointing to Jew and Gentile who are united as one in Abraham.

**“Which was before Mamre”** — The cave of Machpelah is in Hebron, a short distance to the east of Mamre. Today an Arab mosque covers the site. Mamre signifies *Power*.

**“The field”** — Figuratively speaking of the Gospel planting (see Matt. 13:38).

**“And the cave which was therein”** — The token of death which plagues all the work of the Truth under present circumstances.

**“And all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about”** — Figuratively, the people of God (Psa. 1:3; 92:12; Isa. 60:13).

**“Were made sure”** — The precise legal language of this verse, suggests that it was made legally sure and binding. The promise to Abraham is also sure; and the grave in Machpelah is a token of that. The certainty of Abraham’s inheritance has been brought home to the world by the



mosque at Hebron;  
additional site of  
grave of Machpelah.

preaching of the Gospel; therefore, we believe, this verse should be viewed literally and figuratively. Literally as describing the legal purchase; figuratively as expressive of the preaching of the Gospel in these times of mortality.

#### VERSE 18

**“Unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth”** — Abraham’s right to the portion of the land purchased, was made sure in the sight of the Canaanites. In like manner, the preaching of the Gospel has brought the certainty of Abraham’s future inheritance before all humanity.

**“Before all that went in at the gate of his city”** — They had already acknowledged that he was a prince of God (v. 6), and now they conceded his legal right to the land. This will be repeated at the coming of Christ, when he will “possess the gate of his enemies” (ch. 22:17)

#### VERSE 19

**“And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre”** — Thus the faithful Sarah, loyal wife of Abraham, and sharer with him in all the vicissitudes of life, was laid to rest, in the sure and certain hope of a resurrection therefrom to life eternal.

**“The same is Hebron in the land of Canaan”** — Hebron means *to join, unite, have fellowship*. The original name of the city was Mamre.

#### VERSE 20

**“And the field, and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a burying place by the sons of Heth”** — There appears a discrepancy between the account of this chapter, and Stephen’s statement in Acts 7:15-16: “So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers, and were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem.” Jacob was buried in Machpelah, the rest of the fathers, apparently in Shechem. The statement, *and were car-*

ried, therefore, relates to "our fathers" and not to Jacob. What cave in Shechem did Abraham purchase according to this statement? He could have purchased such a cave, which afterwards was used as a burying place, though nothing is recorded of this transaction in the Old Testament. It

may have taken place when he visited Shechem as recorded in Gen. 12:6. Certainly Stephen reveals such a thorough knowledge of the history of the Old Testament, that it is inconceivable that he should make a mistake in such a well-known and famous transaction.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

### A WIFE FOR ISAAC

*As with the previous chapters, we consider this one from two standpoints: the literal and the figurative. Paul taught that "these things are an allegory," urging us to make such use of the historical accounts of what actually happened. The literal interpretation reveals Abraham as deeply concerned as to the marriage of his son Isaac. That Isaac must marry is obvious, for otherwise there would be no heir reaching to the Promised Seed. A suitable bride, therefore, must be obtained for Isaac, and none of the pagan daughters of the land were suited to such a position of privilege. Therefore Abraham sends his servant back to his own people on a quest that a willing bride might be found for Isaac. Rebekah is brought into the picture, and displays a character suited to the purpose of God. She elects to follow the servant back to the land and to Isaac, the Son of Promise, for the purpose of marriage.*

*Figuratively, Isaac becomes a type of Christ; and Rebekah, a type of the Ecclesia "espoused to one husband". From that viewpoint, the seeking of a bride in Gentile lands foreshadows the preaching of the Gospel among the nations, inviting men and women to leave their old way of life "and join themselves unto his wife," that they might be made one in Christ. We shall consider both the literal and the figurative applications of the narrative in our treatment of the chapter.*

#### **The Commission — Vv. 1-6.**

*Abraham arranges with "his eldest servant" to seek a bride for Isaac. He instructs him to avoid the Canaanites, and return to his people, to choose one who is willing from among them. But he warns that his son must never leave the land.*

#### **VERSE 1**

**"And Abraham was old; and well**

**stricken in age"** — He was now one hundred and forty years of age (Gen. 17:1; 25:20), and Isaac was forty.

**"And Yahweh had blessed Abraham in all things"** — Even in his pilgrimage, Abraham had experienced the blessing of Yahweh. We do so also. The Divine blessing reaches out to us now (whatever our state might be) as well as promising blessings for the future. Yahweh does not

exempt us from trials and troubles, but He extends strength for us to endure them and rise superior to them.

## VERSE 2

**“And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house”** — This was probably Eliezer (Gen. 15:2). Eliezer signifies *El is my help*. In the allegorical interpretation of this chapter, he is representative of the Apostles, who have been the main instrumentality in obtaining “a bride” for the Seed of Promise from among the Gentiles. Note the Lord’s comment to that effect in his intercessory prayer: John 17:20. However, notice that Eliezer is not named in the narrative before us, and the Apostles are not openly manifested in the work of preaching today, though the effects of their work is felt.

**“That ruled over all that he had”** — Eliezer had access to Abraham’s means, and was trusted to use them faithfully. The preaching of the Apostles has enabled the Ecclesia to gain access to the divine wealth in Christ, the “unsearchable riches” in him (Eph. 1:17-18), which the Ecclesia is called upon to make known to Gentiles (Eph. 3:8-10).

**“Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh”** — See also Gen. 47:29. This most solemn form of abjuration, involved making contact with the genital organ, the part of the body that bore the mark of circumcision, the token of the covenant. It thus was tantamount to swearing on the basis of the Truth. The thigh, or loins, are considered as the source of posterity (Gen. 35:11; 46:26), and the oath had relation to the posterity of Abraham, and in particular to the promised seed, even Christ. The mission of Eliezer had relation to him that was to come, and upon that basis, Abraham called upon him to solemnly affirm that he would implicitly carry out instructions to be given. Our preaching of the Truth (the allegorical application of the events of this chapter) must be with the instructions of Christ in mind, and in due regard for the token of the covenant, the cutting off of the flesh. The rite of circumcision reminded that the true seed of promise would not be “of the will of the

flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13).

## VERSE 3

**“And I will make thee swear by Yahweh, the God of the heaven, and God of the earth”** — The name *Yahweh* was not revealed unto Abraham. It was later given to Moses (Exod. 6:3 see notes on Gen. 12:8), but the word is compounded from a common Hebrew verb, signifying *He will be*. Abraham knew that God would manifest Himself in a Redeemer, and, therefore, to that extent, knew Him as *He Who will be*, or *Yahweh*, without comprehending it as the appointed name of God. He called upon Eliezer to swear by *He Who will be*, the Coming One. This was most appropriate, as a bride for Isaac was necessary for the ultimate manifestation of the promised seed.

Abraham also made reference to the *Elohim* of heaven, and the *Elohim* of the earth. The *Elohim* (a plural word signifying *mighty ones*) comprise the medium of Yahweh’s manifestation. Through their agency, His control embraces heaven and earth. Nothing can be done without His knowledge; and His help is available to all. We are invited to place our confidence in Yahweh; to seek His strength at all times (Phil. 4:6). Access to Him is available through prayer. Among the many things for which we are invited to pray are increase of labourers in His vineyard (Luke 10:2), and success in preaching (Eph. 6:19). By such means, we are able to assist in developing the multitudinous bride of the promised seed (Eph. 5:24).

**“That thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell”** — Abraham exercised extreme care in the choice of a bride for Isaac. Parents are wise to supervise their children’s selection in such relationships, and give them sound advice and guidance wherever possible. The conditions of courtship are different today than in the days of Abraham, but they are not necessarily better. A wise parent will tactfully supervise all friendships of children under his care, and whilst success may not inevitably follow (as exam-



ples in Scripture reveal — Samuel, David, etc.), at least the responsibility has been recognised and acted upon. Deuteronomy 22:10 commands: "Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together." Not only was one animal clean and the other unclean (implying a marriage out of the Truth), but the two animals referred to are of different sizes, temperaments and motions, and to yoke them together would bring pain and discomfort, and would interfere with the efficiency of the work in hand. Marriage (human yoking) should not only be "in the Lord" (1 Cor. 7:39), but with a congenial partner who will willingly co-operate in the work of the Truth which should be our main concern.

The term *daughters of the Canaanites* has a figurative as well as a literal significance. A daughter of the Canaanites would be a woman dominated by the principles of Canaan. See note Gen. 12:5-6. Such a daughter could become a "daughter of Sarah" if she changed her ways to conform to those of that great woman of faith. The apostle refers in 1 Pet. 3:6 to Gentile believers who follow Sarah's example. Rahab was a "daughter of the Canaanites" who became a "daughter of Sarah."

#### VERSE 4

**"But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred"** — Eliezer was directed to a people more amenable to Abraham's way of thought. A wife for Isaac, typically the Bride of Christ, is selected from such company (Psa. 87:6). In preaching the Gospel we must seek out those who are prepared to conform to the principles of Abraham's house. It is of no value presenting "that which is holy unto the dogs" nor of "casting pearls before swine" (Matt. 7:6). Careful discrimination needs to be shown.

**"Take a wife unto my son Isaac"** — Typically this wife represents the Ecclesia, the Bride of Christ, selected from those "afar" (Eph. 2:17), but who can develop the family characteristics of Abraham.

#### VERSE 5

**"And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land" —**

This is always a possibility in the preaching of the Word. The Truth demands certain action on the part of believers. They must apply the Word as well as endorse it. This demands separation and dedication (Acts 15:14; 2 Cor. 6:14-17). It requires purification of character, the elimination of "spot or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. 5:27). The responsibilities of the Truth should be plainly taught those interested, before they undergo baptism, so that they clearly recognise what is expected of them, and what acceptance of the Truth entails.

**"Must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?"** — To take Isaac from out of the land of promise meant relaxing the standards that Abraham had set. Therefore, the question of the servant amounted to: If the woman is not willing to come, shall I relax your standards, and take Isaac to her? The answer is given in v. 8. In the terms of the allegory, the question amounts to: If people are discouraged at the high standards the Truth demands, shall we relax them in order to secure their interest? The answer is in the negative.

#### VERSE 6

**"And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again"** — Abraham recognised the dangers of relaxing his faithfulness, and reminded his servant that his instructions must be followed to the letter. Let the standards of the Truth be lowered, and soon there will be no truth remaining. See Psa. 11:3; 1 Tim. 4:16.

#### Faith in Divine Guidance — Vv. 7-9

*Abraham exhorts Eliezer to seek divine guidance in the mission before him, recognising that it is always available through prayer (cp. Jas. 1:5).*

#### VERSE 7

**"Yahweh God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send His angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my**

son from thence” — Abraham calls upon his personal experience to teach the reality of divine providence. The God who called him from Ur, Who guided him to the land, and gave him a wonderful promise that guaranteed his future, would overshadow this important venture, sending His angel before Eliezer, to prepare the way for him. The angels of heaven minister on behalf of the elect in every age (Heb. 1:14), overshadowing the circumstances of their lives to further the purpose of Yahweh. The seeking of a Bride for Christ in the preaching of the Truth, will not yield fruit unless the blessing of Yahweh is with it (Psa. 127:1). The Lord, himself, taught: “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him” (John 6:44). He showed that the angels are interested in the salvation of individuals (Luke 12:8-9), so that there is great rejoicing in heaven over one sinner that repenteth (Luke 15:7). In some way, unknown to us, the angels co-operate with us in the preaching of the Word. Moreover, that Word itself, is as the messenger of Yahweh, calling people to the Truth (Heb. 7:19; John 17:17).

#### VERSE 8

“And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath” — When the Truth has been thoroughly proclaimed, the accountability for acting rests upon the one to whom it has been preached. Paul declared: “Woe is unto me, if I preach any other gospel” (1 Cor. 9:16); but to the same community, he wrote: “I thank God that I baptised none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptised in mine own name” (1 Cor. 1:14-15).

“Only bring not my son thither again” — Eliezer is again warned against relaxing the standards required, merely because the one invited is not willing to separate herself for the purpose of marriage.

#### VERSE 9

“And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master,

and swore to him concerning that matter” — He thus dedicated himself to seeking a wife for Isaac, as the Apostles, and those similarly charged (see 2 Tim. 2:2), became dedicated to seeking a multitudinous Bride for Christ. Paul wrote: “I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (2 Cor. 11:2).

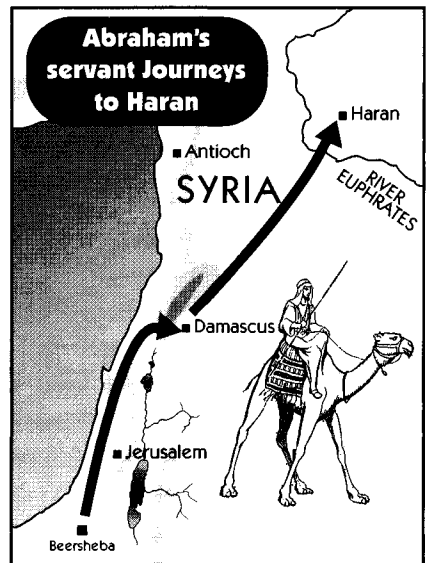
#### Prayer For Success in the Venture — Vv. 10-14.

*Eliezer selects from his master's supplies to help him on his way, makes his way to the city of Nahor, seeks out the most public part of the city, and having done all that was possible, commits the success of the venture to God. These are measures that should be taken in the proclamation of the Truth.*

#### VERSE 10

“And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed” —

He used the resources that were at hand to further him in his quest. He also gained the co-operation of other servants in the household of Abraham (cp. v. 32). These are measures that should be taken in the proclamation of the Word. When God



bleses us with material things, we should respond by using them in the work of the Truth. In that way, we can "make to ourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness" (Luke 16:9), that will stand us in good stead in the day of judgment.

**"For all the goods of his master were in his hand"** — We are custodians of material blessings that come from God, and should use them in His service to develop the Bride of Christ.

**"And he arose, and went to Mesopotamia"** — Mesopotamia signifies *The Fortress Between The Rivers*; the area of ancient Babylonia. Figuratively, it represents Babylon the Great from whose dominion the Bride of Christ is redeemed.

**"Unto the city of Nahor"** — Nahor signifies a *Snorer*; those spiritually asleep; the world at large. Archaeologists have found references to the city of Nahor. "It occurs often as Nakhur in the Mari tablets, discovered in 1935. To judge from the Mari references and Assyrian records of the seventh century B.C. where Nahor occurs as Til-Nakhiri (*the Mount of Nahor*), it seems to have been located in the Balikh Valley below Haran" (Unger). It is located in northwestern Mesopotamia.

#### VERSE 11

**"And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water"** — He thus selected the most public place for his mission. This feature of the proclamation of the Gospel is frequently forgotten by those who set forth its message. How often a dingy little hall in a back street is selected for this purpose, when a more prominent site is available. Lack of finance is often blamed for this, though there appears no lack of such for other, worldly, purchases. Let us remember that lives may be saved by a little extra expenditure. We should not be backward in giving the greatest publicity to the Truth; and, like Eliezer, seek out the most prominent way in which to proclaim the message.

**"At the time of the evening"** — The Apostles went forth in the evening of Judah's Commonwealth to proclaim the Word to the Gentiles. This is foreshad-

owed in the allegory of Abraham's life. Sarah was dead (Gen. 23:2). She represented the polity of the Mosaic Kingdom of God that ended in A.D. 70, being followed by the "taking out of the Gentiles" a people for the Name (Acts 15:14), during the "evening" period of Gentile darkness.

**"Even the time"** — Note the shrewdness of Eliezer. He carefully plans his campaign, waiting for the appropriate time to engage upon his quest. Similarly, the Apostles seized hold of opportunity when it presented itself, that they might set forth the principles of the Truth. We should carefully plan for the proclamation of the Truth and use incidents in current events (for example) to enhance our message.

**"That women go out to draw water"** — This suggests an attitude of seeking. Christ used an opportunity at the well of Shechem to draw the Samaritan woman's attention to the water of life (John 4:14). We must put ourselves in the way of those who are seeking for the things of God.

#### VERSE 12

**"And he said, O Yahweh God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham"** — All is ready; he has made every possible preparation himself, and now he seeks the divine blessing in prayer. The prayer is simple, direct, dictated by faith and the requirements of the moment. He was standing "without the city" by the well as he uttered these words.

Do we forget prayer, whilst making other practical preparations for the work? Do we place reliance upon fleshly ability, ingenuity and skill, but overlook that "except Yahweh build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Psa. 127:1)? Abraham's servant made every possible preparation, but he did not neglect prayer. He placed his quest in Yahweh's hands and asked Him to bless the work. Let us do likewise in our preaching. Learn to be specific in prayer (Phil. 4:6), and to avoid vague generalities. God is not mocked, nor has He pleasure in idle words, and vain repetition. Nehemiah, like Abraham's servant, combined action with prayer: "We

made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against" the enemy. Some will pray but foolishly not work; others will work but not pray. We must do both. God will not do for us what we are able to do ourselves; but He will bless the prayer of faith.

The *Amplified Bible* gives the servant's request as: "Cause me to meet with good success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham." Thus his prayer is answered upon the basis of the covenant made to Abraham. This servant was one of those of Abraham's household, who were initiated in the things of the Truth. See note on Gen. 14:14. He was "trained" in matters of faith.

#### VERSE 13

**"Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water"** — That is the attitude adopted by those who publicly proclaim the Gospel message; they stand, ready to serve, by the well of life. They carefully watch those about them who may show signs of the qualities sought by the Father in a Bride for his Son.

#### VERSE 14

**"And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that Thou hast appointed"** — Eliezer's prayer describes the type of woman he desires for Isaac. This is firstly suggested in his use of the word "damsel." This is from *na'arah*, the feminine form of the Hebrew word used to describe Abraham's young men of Gen. 14:24. It is from a root signifying to be active, and thus suggests a girl of vivid personality, bright demeanour. Secondly, she was to be of a kindly disposition, prepared to help another in need. Thirdly, she was to be energetic, going beyond what was asked of her. But surpassing all these attributes, she must be God-approved, the one "Thou hast appointed" in order to suit the purpose Abraham had in view. Similarly,

those who will ultimately come to immortality are "drawn of God" (John 6:44), being "foreknown" of Him (Rom. 8:29). This was the type of young woman that Eliezer was seeking for Isaac, and for which he sought the blessing of God. He prayed for "a token for good," which is legitimate in such circumstances. See Psa. 86:17.

**"For thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master"** — As such, Isaac foreshadowed Christ "who took upon him the form of a servant" (Phil. 2:7). The term is used frequently for Christ.

#### Rebekah's Beauty of Appearance and Character — vv. 15-16.

*No sooner is the prayer completed than the attention of Abraham's servant is drawn to a young woman approaching the well. He carefully observes her, for her appearance seems to answer his requirements.*

#### VERSE 15

**"And it came to pass, before he had done speaking"** — He had not been speaking to God aloud, but in his heart. It was a silent prayer (cp. Matt. 6:6), but brought an obvious and public response (v. 45).

**"That, behold"** — His attention is drawn to a young woman approaching the well. Thus, in a remarkable manner, the ways of Providence unfold.

**"Rebekah came out"** — Her name means *A rope with a noose*, suggesting a beauty that would capture men.

**"Who was born to Bethuel"** — Strong gives the meaning of his name as *Destroyed of God*, from *bathah*, to lay waste. His status is a peculiar one in the narrative. He is passed over as insignificant, as though he was incapable through age or imbecility, of managing his own affairs. Rebekah refers to her "mother's house," rather than to that of her father (v. 28), and it was her brother Laban who conducted the negotiations with Abraham's servant (v. 29), though they were later confirmed by Bethuel (v. 50). Laban

evidently was energetic and over-bearing (as his later dealings with Jacob indicate) whereas Bethuel apparently was feeble and retiring.

**“Son of Milcah”** — Signifies *A Queen*, perhaps mentioned first, before her husband, to indicate that she was the dominant partner of the two.

**“The wife of Nahor, Abraham’s brother”** — Signifies *A Snorer*. All these names, apart from that of Milcah, imply sleepiness or indifference.

**“With her pitcher upon her shoulder”** — Rebekah is thus displayed as industrious. In this she types the “virtuous woman” of Prov. 31 whose activity and ability was well-known (vv. 13-17).

#### VERSE 16

**“And the damsel was very fair to look upon”** — She was active and beautiful, as well as industrious.

**“A virgin, neither had any man known her”** — Cp. 2 Cor. 11:2. Purity was also one of her qualities. Spiritual purity must be observed in the way of life of the Christ-bride, as she separates from the contamination of a wicked world (Rev. 14:4).

**“And she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up”** — Indicating strength. Her subsequent actions also showed her to be helpful, kind, considerate and generous. These characteristics, revealed that she was a fit subject for the servant’s quest.

#### Her Response To The Request

— Vv. 17-21.

*Observing the general demeanour of Rebekah, and seeing in her a likely response to his prayer, the servant eagerly ran towards her, to subject her to further tests. Rebekah responds in such a way as to indicate the guidance of Yahweh.*

#### VERSE 17

**“And the servant ran to meet her, and said”** — There was enthusiasm in his approach. He did not wait for her to come to him. Similarly the father of the prodigal son went forth to meet him (Luke 15:20). Yahweh is ever ready to receive us, and we should manifest a similar attitude

toward those interested in the Truth. We must show enthusiasm with respect to friends who come to hear a public address or to discuss the way of life with us.

**“Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher”** — He placed her under test. Her response to his request would determine whether he would claim her for his master. There is a need to test the response of those who would seek Christ; are they prepared to submit to the full teaching and responsibilities of the Word? That is the purpose for the usual examination on matters of doctrine, understanding and commitment that is required of those who seek baptism. It constitutes a “witness” of faith (1 Tim. 6:12).

#### VERSE 18

**“And she said, Drink my lord”** — Most of the young women who went to draw water would have said as much; it was the normal gesture of courtesy.

**“And she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink”** — The fact that she “hastened” to do it indicates a readiness to help which was somewhat out of the ordinary. It indicated a receptive character, such as must be shown by those who come to the Truth with a desire to co-operate in its work.

#### VERSE 19

**“And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking”** — Whilst it would have been normal for a young woman to give drink to a thirsty traveller, it was unusual to offer to draw for camels as well. It revealed that Rebekah was extremely thoughtful, and placed her in a unique category. To draw for the camels as well as for the servant necessitated much labour and trouble and evidently was a sudden thought on the part of Rebekah, placed in her mind by God in answer to Eliezer’s prayer. Frequently, the response of a person drawn to the Truth is in answer to a thought stimulated by God through His Word.

#### VERSE 20

**“And she hastened, and emptied her**

**pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels**” — To draw water to supply the demands of ten thirsty camels would involve a great amount of tiring labour. Obviously the servant had imposed a difficult test. Yet Rebekah responded in a remarkable way: “she hastened,” “she ran again.” The test imposed upon a candidate for eternal life is no less difficult. He must set aside the world and its appeal, and embrace a teaching that is contrary to the flesh. This is not easy. Yet there are some who show the same eagerness as did Rebekah at the well (cp. Acts 8:36). There was a completeness about her labour: “she drew for *all* his camels.” There should be an equal thoroughness in teaching the Truth, and in examining those who seek it, to determine their state of mind and understanding of its requirements in their lives.

#### VERSE 21

**“And the man wondering at her”** — The *Berkeley Version* renders this: “Silently the man stood gazing at her, to observe whether or not Yahweh had made his trip successful.” He was astonished at her readiness to help — as sometimes we are astonished and delighted at the manner in which a stranger will seek after the Truth.

**“Held his peace”** — He put her under the test, allowing her to complete the exhausting labour. He could have commanded those with him to help her (cp. v. 32), but did not do so. There were to be no short cuts to this quest. He wanted to make sure that she was worthy of Isaac.

So also with teaching a candidate the Truth. It is important to make sure that every doctrine is thoroughly grasped, as candidates draw water from the well of life. Let them continue to do so until they have thoroughly mastered every element of truth. Do not ease the burden for them, for by so doing, the work of teaching may be imperfect.

**“To wit whether Yahweh had made his journey prosperous or not”** — Having made every preparation, and having placed the success of the venture in the hands of God, Eliezer awaited the outcome. We need to follow his example in

the Work of the Truth. It is God who is taking out of the Gentiles a people for His Name (Acts 15:14), therefore, when we have done all in our power to preach the Word, we must leave the final issues in the hands of Yahweh.

#### Rebekah's Reward For Her Kindness — Vv. 22-25.

*Abraham's servant, impressed by the general demeanour and outstanding kindness of Rebekah, rewards her with gifts of jewellery, and then enquires as to her name. With rising excitement, he learns that she is related to Abraham. She invites him to her home.*

#### VERSE 22

**“And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight”**

— Half a shekel represents about a quarter ounce (about 7grams) in weight. The Hebrew for earring signifies a jewel for the forehead, or the nose (see mg.). Nose-rings comprised a light ring of gold or silver with three or four jewels or beads dangling at the bottom part from smaller rings of the same metal. By placing this ring upon Rebekah's nose, the servant, in effect, made claim upon her face, or person, as the Truth does upon those of whom it takes hold. The Bride of Christ reveals the distinctive “jewellery” of the “Father's Name” in their foreheads (Rev. 14:1) with mouths of guileless beauty (v. 5).

**“And two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold”** — This represented two five ounce (142grams each) golden bracelets, such as would be worn about her wrists. Thus he made claim upon her service, as the Truth does of those upon whom it takes hold (cp. 1 Cor. 4:12; Gal. 2:9; Eph. 4:28). Altogether, this was a very valuable present, and must have astonished Rebekah, as her outstanding kindness had amazed Abraham's servant.

#### VERSE 23

**“And said, Whose daughter art thou?”** — Abraham's servant had been silent with wonder at the spontaneous way Rebekah had responded to his request; and

now, breathlessly, he awaited her reply to this vital question.

**“Tell me, I pray thee: Is there room in thy father’s house for us to lodge in?”** — This is a question that is basically asked of any convert to Christ: Is there room there for Christ to dwell? Compare John 14:23.

#### VERSE 24

**“And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bore unto Nahor”** — So she answered the first question asked of her. With rising excitement, the servant realised that Yahweh had been with him in his quest, for she was of his master’s relations.

#### VERSE 25

**“She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in”** — Here is outstanding hospitality to strangers. Moreover, Rebekah still thinks of his camels, and would extend her kindness to them. The statement, *There is room to lodge in*, calls to mind the appeal of Christ: “I stand at the door, and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev. 3:20). That is the best form of hospitality to show! Rebekah’s kindness was indicative of this.

In providing for both the servant and his animals, there is implied the interest and care, that a worthy “daughter of faith” would show to those of the spiritual family of Abraham, (the Household of Faith) and the nation of Israel (after the type of the animals — cp. Rom. 9:3). We should seek to nourish both.

#### Thanksgiving to God For His Blessing — Vv. 26-27.

*The realisation that his quest had been outstandingly successful unleashes great joy in the servant, so that immediately without embarrassment, he bows his head and utters a prayer of praise and thanksgiving to God. When a venture has been completed, we should never hesitate to thank God for His part in it. Such action is*

*pleasing to the Father (see 1 Thess. 5:18).*

#### VERSE 26

**“And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped Yahweh”** — The example is timely. Blessings from God, must be recognised and acknowledged, being lavish in our praise and thanksgiving for His goodness.

#### VERSE 27

**“And he said, Blessed be Yahweh God of my master Abraham”** — The term *blessed* in this context, signifies an ascription of praise. It is from the Hebrew word *barak*, to kneel. By using it, the servant acknowledged that Yahweh is worthy of humble adoration. He is first honored in praise before details of the prayer are mentioned. So with the Lord’s prayer: “Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name” (Matt. 6:9). Careful note of the forms of prayer mentioned in Scripture can help in the formulation of acceptable words.

**“Who hath not left destitute my master of His mercy and his truth”** — “Mercy” is *chesed* and signifies *kindness, grace, favour*. The RSV renders the word as *steadfast love*. It relates to the goodness of God; that which He freely gives to those in whom He delights. In this context, the great favour and kindness shown towards Abraham, had been illustrated by the success that had attended the servant’s quest. “Truth” is *emeth* signifying *faithfulness, stability, certainty*. It speaks of the certainty of the fulfilment of the promises made to Abraham. The servant’s faith in the God of Abraham had been strengthened through his own experience. We, too, can find answer to prayer, and be strengthened in conviction accordingly.

**“I being in the way, Yahweh led me to the house of my master’s brethren”** — Abraham’s servant recognises that he had used the proper means to obtain his objective. He had acted according to his God-given wisdom. Then, having done all that was humanly possible, having set his feet upon “the way,” he received divine help and guidance to the end. This is the proper method of proceeding with the

Lord's business. Yahweh has given us reasoning intelligence, and He expects us to use that to the best of our ability. When we have done what we can, and have sought the divine guidance and help, we will receive a blessing.

But in saying that, let us add a note of warning. Though there is no doubt about the effectiveness of prayer, God may not use the means that we would like to answer it! We must await His decisions and directions in these matters.

### Rebekah's Relations Are Impressed

— Vv. 28-31

*Full of excitement, Rebekah hastens home, and seeks out her mother in order to confide in her. She senses that the visitors have some news of outstanding importance for her. As she passes this on, the whole family is stirred into activity. Laban hastens out and urges Abraham's servant to lodge with them.*

#### VERSE 28

**"And the damsel ran"** — See note v. 16. Rebekah, too, was filled with excitement at the unusual visitors. The gifts she had received betokened a present much more significant than would be expected from mere lodgers overnight. Perhaps she sensed who these strangers were, and anticipated their mission.

However, was not Rebekah's attitude similar to the reaction of an enthusiastic person when first drawn to the Truth? Do not they wonder at the beauty of the message, and desire to pass it on to others, even before they have completely absorbed it themselves? This demonstrates a keenness and pleasure at the receipt of Yahweh's benefits.

**"And told them of her mother's house these things"** — Note the comment on Bethuel, v. 16. Evidently the mother was the more dominant of the two.

#### VERSE 29

**"And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban"** — Laban was present with other members of the family when Rebekah burst into the home with her astounding news. They looked at her in wonder, startled at her changed appear-

ance. They observed the golden ornaments she now wore, that signified the ornaments of faith; they heard her strange message, that revealed a new viewpoint; and were induced by these circumstances to make enquiry for themselves.

Is not this the reaction that often follows when one is excited at the discovery of the Truth and seeks to impress his relations with it?

Laban was present at the time. His name means *white*, and is derived from a root word that is used both for the whiteness of leprosy as well as the whiteness of purity.

**"And Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well"** — The man remained by the well. Allegorically the preacher of righteousness stands by the well, ready to dispense its refreshing water to "whosoever will" (cp. John 4:14).

#### VERSE 30

**"And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well"** — Laban saw the changed appearance of his sister, and sought to discover its cause. He acted as the head of the family, though Bethuel was still living (v. 50). As first-born, he evidently had taken over the duties of the household, though the reason is not given. Perhaps Bethuel was infirm or ill.

#### VERSE 31

**"And he said, Come in, thou blessed of Yahweh; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels"** — The Hebrew word translated *blessed* (*barak*) implies an act of condescension. When the word is used in relation to the attitude of man towards God it signifies a state of humble prostration before the Creator in worship; in the case of God towards man, it implies the condescension of the great Increate in bending down to view man in order to help him. Laban blessed the servant in the name of Yahweh; how could he



do so seeing he was ignorant of the Name and of the Divine purpose? He probably referred to God by a common Semitic verb signifying *He Who Will be*; i.e. "He Whose purpose with the earth had yet to be revealed", anticipating the Name of Yahweh which had not then been proclaimed as such. No doubt the basic principles of the worship of the true God had been kept alive in the household from the time that Terah left Ur of the Chaldees (cp. Ch. 31:29,53).

### Eliezer Proclaims His Mission

— Vv. 32-49

*Eliezer accepts the hospitality extended to him, and then explains his mission. In doing so, he preaches the Gospel, and reveals how that Providence had guided him to the house.*

#### VERSE 32

**"And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him"** — Notice his care for the animals and men with him. He does not overlook their needs in proceeding with his quest. The true shepherd (John 10:1) will not overlook the needs of his own community whilst preaching to others. In that regard, charity begins at home (Gal. 6:10).

#### VERSE 33

**"And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on"** — Hospitality is extended to him, but before he is prepared to fully engage upon social intercourse, he demands to outline his errand. His important quest will brook no delay (see Christ's exhortatory parable — Luke 17:7-10; 12:37,41-44). If we labour for Christ now, we will sup with him in the future.

#### VERSE 34

**"And he said, I am Abraham's servant"** — The servant does not put forward himself, but Abraham. In fact, he merges his identity completely in his master. We should do the same in proclaiming

the Truth. It is not ourselves that we should put to the forefront, seeking personal honor and glory, but the fact that we are of the household of Abraham (Gal. 3:29). Notice how Paul submerged his identity in God (Acts 27:23).

#### VERSE 35

**"And Yahweh hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses"** — The servant reveals the blessings that had come to Abraham by the bountiful hand of God. Since Abraham had left his relatives in Haran (Gen. 12:1, 5), he had been greatly benefited in all manner of material matters. He had not lost anything by his devotion to the things of the Truth (nor did Paul: Phil. 3:8 — for although he had renounced worldly ambitions, and "suffered the loss of all things", the Truth had compensated him over and above: "that I may win Christ"). Eliezer lists eight items in which Abraham had been blessed, setting them forth in four pairs: flocks and herds (animals for food), silver and gold (the precious metals for glory), menservants and maidservants (members of Abraham's ecclesia), camels and asses (beasts of burden and labor). See note Gen. 13:5.

We enhance the presentation of the Truth by acknowledging that the spiritual benefits of our life are evidence of God's overshadowing care, as did the apostle Paul (Eph. 3:8,16; 6:19; Col. 1:27; 2:2).

#### VERSE 36

**"And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old"** — A son of promise had been born to the covenant people through divine intervention; for Sarah was old, and had to be strengthened to conceive. Thus the servant informed the relations of Abraham concerning the amazing circumstances in the provision of this son and heir; as we, in preaching the Gospel reveal the facts concerning the conception and birth of the Lord. Like Isaac, Jesus was born when "Sarah was old," (understanding Sarah as representing the Jewish polity of the King-

dom of God). But now that Sarah was dead, someone was required to take her place (cp. v. 67). When the Jewish polity was temporarily set aside, the call went out to the Gentiles to embrace the Truth in Christ, and fill the vacancy thus created.

**“And unto him hath he given all that he hath”** — This is true of Christ the antitype of Isaac. See John 16:15; 17:10; Phil. 2:9.

#### VERSE 37

**“And my master made me swear saying,”** — He now sets forth the solemn obligation placed upon him to seek a wife of a special kind. No ordinary woman would do. The appeal of the Gospel is similar. It is only to those with a hearing ear and willing mind. It is based upon invitation and selection (Acts 15:14), and thus is not for all.

**“Thou shalt not take a wife to my son”** — The ecclesia constitutes the Bride of Christ, the antitype of Isaac. See John 16:15; 17:10; Phil. 2:9.

**“Of the daughters of the Canaanites”** — These constituted the “daughters of men” whose influence in the days of Noah was so disastrous (Gen. 6:1-2,5). See note v. 3.

#### VERSE 38

**“But thou shalt go unto my father’s house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son”** — Abraham had seen the need to leave his “father’s house” (Gen. 12:1), but nevertheless recognised that the inmates of such a “house”, having more respect for God than the God-defying Canaanites, would be more amenable to the appeal of the Truth than the daughters of the Canaanites. Hence he sent to his father’s house, seeking a wife for his son.

#### VERSE 39

**“And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me”** — Cp. v. 5. The servant had foreseen difficulties in preaching.

#### VERSE 40

**“And he said unto me, Yahweh, before whom I walk, will send His angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and**

**thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father’s house”** —

The servant now emphasised the belief and character of Abraham, and then hinted at the divine providence in the life of Rebekah. This is always important in the preaching of the Gospel. Paul referred to the life of Abraham as an example of a walk of faith, and claimed that it is recorded for that very purpose (Rom. 4:23-25). Actually, as far as *recorded* conversation is concerned, Abraham never claimed to his servant that he walked before God (see v. 7), although it could be implied. Eliezer therefore gave an interpretation of Abraham’s words. In referring to the angelic overshadowing of his mission, he revealed an important element of the Truth, namely, that the Gospel is a specific call through the medium of preaching, and recipients will be held accountable if they flout the mercy of Yahweh. See Acts 15:14; John 15:16. There will be no success in seeking to know the Truth, or in applying the principles of the Truth, unless it is recognised that divine help is needed. See 1 Cor. 3:6; Isa. 60:21. Let us be conscious of the close proximity of God to us in all the circumstances of life.

#### VERSE 41

**“Then shalt thou be clear from this my oath, when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give not thee one, thou shalt be clear from my oath”** — See notes v. 8. Our responsibility in the matter of preaching the Truth ends when it has been proclaimed faithfully, courageously and properly. The watchman had a solemn obligation to warn the people of his city concerning the events of the time, and would be held accountable if he did not do so (Ezek. 33:6), but the warning having been given, it was now the responsibility of his hearers to obey (v. 4).

It is valuable to bring this home to people, emphasising that the benefits of accepting it lie with them, and declaring that they, personally, must make a decision for Christ.

#### VERSE 42

**“And I came this day unto the well, and said, O Yahweh God of my master**

**Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go:**" — He supplements his account of the divine providence in the life of Abraham, by explaining that he has made his quest a matter of prayer. By so doing, he implies that Rebekah and her relations should seek into their lives for similar evidence of divine discipline, care and guidance.

**VERSE 43**

**"Behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw water, and I say to her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink"** — The R.V. renders this: "Let it come to pass" consistent with v. 14. The servant recounts his prayer showing that he is convinced that the circumstances that had occurred were Providentially directed.

**VERSE 44**

**"And she say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels: let the same be the woman whom Yahweh hath appointed out for my master's son"** — The prayer required an unusual characteristic in the damsel selected; thus confirming Eliezer's belief that Rebekah was the divine choice in the matter. In similar fashion Yahweh is selecting a wonderful woman to become the Bride for His Son, and such a spiritual woman will display the qualities which please him and advance His purpose to fill this earth with divine nature.

**VERSE 45**

**"And before I had done speaking in mine heart"** — It was a silent, but heartfelt prayer that Eliezer addressed to the Father. See 1 Pet. 3:15; James 5:16. A similar instantaneous answer to prayer recorded is in Daniel 9:20-22. However, in the wisdom of Yahweh, prayer is not always so quickly answered in the manner we might anticipate.

**"Behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew water: and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee"** — She came forth

looking for water, and received the water of life! (John 3:5; 5:26). Now as she heard this, Rebekah learned of the ways of Providence in her life.

**VERSE 47**

**"And I put the earring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands"** — See note v. 22. The R.V. renders: "the ring upon her nose." Such ornaments were usually attached to the left nostril. By placing the ornaments on her face and hands, Eliezer changed her appearance. The preaching of the Gospel does similarly. It causes a person to change his ways, and to amend his character. His interests are diverted to the hope of the future; and the change in attitude and behaviour to which he is subjected is observed by his friends and intimates (Acts 4:13). Notice the ornaments that beautify Christ's espoused bride (1 Pet. 3:3-4).

**VERSE 48**

**"And I bowed down my head, and worshipped Yahweh, and blessed Yahweh God of my master Abraham, which had led me"** — Eliezer recognised that he had been led of God to a successful conclusion in his quest. Similarly, God would lead all His servants by His Word (see Rom. 8:14); in fact, His guidance is essential to a successful walk (Phil. 2:13).

**"In the right way"** — There is a right and a wrong way in life; and so often the wrong way appears to flesh as though it is the right way (Prov. 14:12). We need to seek the right way, as did the Psalmist (Psa. 27:11; 86:11; 139:24).

**"To take my master's brother's daughter unto his son"** — There was a close family relationship between Isaac and Rebekah; and there is a close relationship between Christ and his Bride, for spiritually they acknowledge the one Father (see John 17:21).

**VERSE 49**

**"And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me"** — Eliezer concluded his narration with an appeal for action. Peter did likewise when preaching on the Day of Pentecost (cp. Acts 2:38-40). Abraham's servant called upon

Bethuel and Laban to consider Abraham's search for a wife for his son with kindness and sincerity, recognising that he was limited in his choice. He therefore appealed to them to make a decision.

**"And if not, tell me"** — The need of a decision on their part is pressed home. A similar request should be made of one learning the Truth after sufficient instruction has been given. This was the challenge of Paul to Felix: Acts 24:25 — unfortunately he responded with delay.

**"That I may turn to the right hand, or to the left"** — Where the appeal is rejected, the search for a suitable bride will continue. Failure to bring a person to full acceptance of Christ, does not mean that we cease our labours in preaching the Gospel. But if a person stubbornly rejects the Truth, there is no value continuing such an association (Matt. 7:6).

### **Rebekah Is Bought With A Price**

— Vv. 50-53.

*Laban and Bethuel acknowledge that the matter proceeds from God, and therefore give their consent. The servant of Abraham recognises this as the result of divine blessing, and offers thanksgiving for the success of his mission, at the same time urging a valuable gift as dowry upon the relations of Rebekah.*

### **VERSE 50**

**"Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said"** — The son takes the initiative over the father, who is evidently incompetent. See note v. 15.

**"The thing proceedeth from Yahweh"** — They recognise divine guidance in the whole matter, and acknowledge His superiority.

**"We cannot speak unto thee bad or good"** — They could not demur to a proposition so obviously directed by God.

### **VERSE 51**

**"Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife"** — They thus gave consent to the proposition. How often this is done by the unbelieving partner of one who has come to a knowledge of the Truth, when the facts of the matter are

properly explained. Rebekah had already indicated her willingness by accepting the presents bestowed upon her.

**"As Yahweh hath spoken"** — They accepted the decision as from God, and this acknowledgment again kindled the fire of grateful thanks in the heart of the servant of Abraham towards the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

### **VERSE 52**

**"And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped Yahweh bowing himself to the earth"** — In all his ways he acknowledged God, and was not hesitant in pouring out a prayer of thanksgiving (cp. 2 Cor. 2:14; 9:15; Eph. 1:16; 5:20).

### **VERSE 53**

**"The servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment and gave them to Rebekah"** — These gifts are given to Rebekah, and are appropriate to the allegory of the chapter. Silver is the metal of redemption; gold speaks of tried faith (1 Pet. 1:7), raiment of a covering in Christ (Gal. 3:26-28). The bride of Christ, the seed of promise, is "bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6:20; Eph. 5:25; 1 Pet. 1:18; Isa. 61:10; Rom. 4:7).

**"He gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things"** — There is always a benefit received by the relations of the Bride of Christ. That is illustrated in the offer of escape that the angels made to the relatives of Lot. The most "precious thing" that a relative of the multitudinous Bride can receive is an opportunity to come to an understanding of the Truth, and become likewise an element of the bridal community.

### **Eliezer's Anxiety to Return — vv. 54-56**

*Rebekah's relations are anxious to delay Eliezer's return to the Promised Land, but he is just as keen to complete his mission.*

### **VERSE 54**

**"And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him"** — Eliezer had delayed doing so until he had explained his mission (v. 33). But now,

with its successful completion, there was time for relaxation. The "labourer is worthy of his hire" (Lk. 10:7), and Abraham's servant now felt free to enjoy himself in that legitimate way.

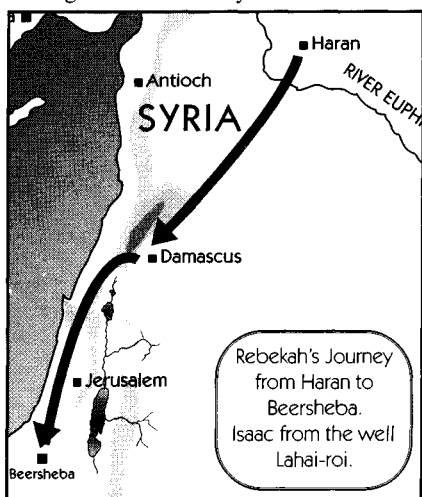
**"And tarried all night"** — Rest and recuperation from the arduous toil of life is also necessary for this mortal body.

**"In the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master"** — He was anxious to bring the project to a final completion. He was filled with zeal to that end. He looked forward to the consummation of all things (2 Tim. 4:8).

#### VERSE 55

**"And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days"** — When the time of parting came, their natural feelings got the better of them. They attempted to delay it, realising that Rebekah would be leaving home for good, and that a far distance would separate them.

The application to the separation demanded by the Truth is obvious. Eliezer saw the delay as dangerous. It could cause Rebekah to change her mind. When a person's mind has determined to accept the Truth, the matter should be completed, as soon as reasonable possible. No good, and only ill, can result from allowing natural feelings to counsel delay.



**"At the least ten; after that she shall go"** — A ten day delay seems reasonable under the circumstances; but it was opposed by Eliezer, and wisely so. Rebekah had stood up to all the tests imposed upon her, and therefore should delay no longer. How often have suggestions been made by relatives of young people desiring to accept Christ, that they should delay, so that they might be certain in their minds. Sometimes delay might be advisable; indeed, where the Truth is not firmly held, it is necessary; but in other circumstances, when all the tests have been applied successfully, delay becomes a danger.

#### VERSE 56

**"And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing Yahweh hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master"** — Eliezer saw the suggestion as an attempt to hinder his work of separating the bride for the promised seed.

#### Rebekah's Pilgrimage To The Land

— Vv. 57-61.

*Rebekah is called upon to decide as to whether she will immediately return. She agrees to do so, receives the blessing of her people, and commences a journey that causes her to tread in the footsteps of Abraham in a pilgrimage to the Land and to her Husband, the Seed of Promise.*

#### VERSE 57

**"And they said, We will call the damsel, and enquire at her mouth"** — This was a wise suggestion. Rebekah had to make her own decision in the matter; as must everybody who would accept Christ. Salvation is a personal matter. We must "work out (our) own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12).

#### VERSE 58

**"And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go"** — It was a clear and unequivocal decision. She did what the Psalmist prophetically declares Christ's Bride will be noted for: "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly

desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him" (Psa. 45:10-11. See also Eph. 5:31-32).

#### VERSE 59

**"And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men"** — Rebekah's nurse went with her to minister unto her needs.

The Hebrew *yanaq* translated "nurse", is from a root signifying to give milk, hence one to nourish her. The new convert to Christ requires similar help, and receives it in the milk of the Word (1 Pet. 2:2). It is significant that Paul likens himself to a nurse, in his care for the Ecclesia in Thessalonica (1 Thess. 2:4-8). Similarly the study classes and meetings of the ecclesia can perform this valuable work, and should not be "left behind in Haran"!

#### VERSE 60

**"And they blessed Rebekah, and said"** — They wished her well in her new venture.

**"Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions"** — Perhaps they enquired further of Eliezer concerning Abraham, and had been told of the promises made to him. They therefore requested for her a numerous progeny.

**"And let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them"** — Again this appears to be an echo of the promise made to Abraham (Gen. 22:17), of which they may have heard from the servant. The promise will be fulfilled by Christ (Gal. 3:16).

#### VERSE 61

**"And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and"** — These were as her bridesmaids, comprising the bridal party. See Psa. 45:14.

**"They rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way"** — He acted as a shepherd, leading the way to the seed of promise. That is the duty of true shepherds in Christ (John 10:1-2). A good example must be set new converts (cp. 1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17).

#### Rebekah's Meeting With Isaac

— Vv. 62-65

*The cavalcade moves down from Haran towards Beersheba, and comes upon the encampment of Abraham towards evening. Isaac is out in the field meditating. He sees the company approaching. From a distance Rebekah also sees him. As they approach she alights from the camel and places a veil upon herself as the token of subjection to her Lord.*

#### VERSE 62

**"And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi"** — The narrative now takes in the other end of the journey, focusing on Isaac, the typical husband of faith. So the scriptures portray the work of Christ as he awaits the moment when he will receive to himself his bride (cp. 2 Cor. 5:19). Perhaps Isaac was tending the sheep; perhaps he moved in the direction from whence he would realise that Eliezer would return. He came to the well *Lahai-roi*. Reference to this well is found in Ch. 16:14 (see notes). It is the *Well of The Living One Who Sees*, or *The Well Of Life And Vision*. This is an appropriate site for such a significant man to meet his bride. The name suggests the promise of the Gospel. It is through such an approach that the multitudinous bride finds her husband, the Lord Jesus.

**"For he dwelt in the south country"**

— In the *negeb*; a far distant country from Haran, suggestive of that "far country" to which the nobleman travelled in the Lord's parable (Luke 19:12).

#### VERSE 63

**"And Isaac went out to meditate in the field"** — The margin has to *pray*. As the prospective bride is making her way to him, he is praying, probably for the success of Eliezer's mission. How appropriate to typify the present work of the Lord Jesus in interceding for his future multitudinous bride.

**"At the eventide"** — Figuratively, the time of Christ's return and the marriage of the Lamb (cp. Isa. 17:14).

**"And he lifted up his eyes, and saw,**

**and, behold, the camels were coming"**

— The way in which the incident is described suggests the rising excitement of Isaac. What he saw was an answer to his prayer. There is great interest in heaven at the consummation of the Divine purpose (see 1 Pet. 1:11-12). For that time, even Yahweh "waits" (see Isa. 30:18).

**VERSE 64****"And Rebekah lifted up her eyes"**

— She too, was excited at the prospect before her. Doubtless she had enquired of Eliezer concerning the characteristics of the man she was about to marry, and had learned to love him though she had never met him. Similarly the prophets (the servants of faith) have spoken of the coming Messiah, and have described him as the "altogether lovely one" (Song 5:16).

Such a marriage without the usual courtship seems strange to western custom, but has proved quite successful in the east. A western marriage frequently is the result of mere fleshly feelings; an eastern marriage is one of selection, and goes beyond mere emotion. The attitude of Christ's bride to her groom is expressed by Peter: "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. 1:8). Rebekah, too, loved her prospective husband, though she had never met him, and thus, at journey's end, she rejoiced at the sight of him.

**"When she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel"** — At the glimpse of the man she had chosen wholly by faith, she was not disappointed. She recognised this as the end of the journey, and alighted from the camel that she might humbly approach him on foot.

**VERSE 65**

**"For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us?"** — She felt she recognised him, possibly through discussions with Eliezer and desired to have her hopes confirmed.

**"And the servant had said, It is my master"** — One day the summons will go

forth to the bride: Behold the bridegroom cometh (Matt. 25).

**"Therefore she took a veil"** — The veil is the symbol of subjection, by which the flesh is hidden from view (cp. 1 Cor. 11:3-16).

**"And covered herself"** — The symbol of marriage (see Rev. 19:8). This was marriage guided by Yahweh, and though the parties had not previously met, it was consummated with love.

**The Marriage — Vv. 66-67**

*There is mutual affection in this marriage. Isaac makes enquiry of Rebekah through Eliezer, and learns of her great faith. He marries her, and she assumes the position of privilege in the empty tent of Sarah.*

**VERSE 66**

**"And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done"** — There will be an accounting of duties performed by Yahweh's servants at the coming of the Lord. See Matt. 25:20-21.

**VERSE 67**

**"And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah"** — She replaced Sarah in the encampment of Abraham, assuming Sarah's position of authority. Typically, Sarah represents the covenant of Abraham, the Jerusalem above (Gal. 4), politically manifested in Israel as the Kingdom of God. This came to its end in A.D. 70, when the way was opened for Gentiles (like Rebekah) to be incorporated within the multitudinous bride, and to assume the position once enjoyed by Israel.

**"And she became his wife; and he loved her"** — The antitype: Eph. 5:25.

**"And Isaac was comforted after his mother's death"** — Isaac was then forty years (Gen. 25:20), and his mother had been dead three years (cp. Gen. 17:17 with 23:1). The breaking of the covenant by Israel after the flesh, brought much sorrow (Isa. 24:5), but there is comfort in the fact that its place was filled by the Israel of God, drawn from the Gentiles (Gal. 6:16).

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

### THE DEATH OF ABRAHAM

*Abraham had another wife, Keturah, who bore him six sons. From these came seven grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. Through these descendants, the promise that Abraham would be the father of many nations was typically fulfilled. Nevertheless, the superior rights of Isaac as the true son were preserved, in that whilst Abraham gave gifts to all his sons, the residue, forming the major portion, was given to Isaac. The other sons were sent eastward out of Canaan, so that there would be no question as to the right of inheritance. Afterwards Abraham died, and was buried by Isaac and Ishmael in the cave of Machpelah.*

#### Abraham's Family By Keturah

— Vv. 1-4.

*Keturah, Abraham's concubine (1 Chron. 1:32-33), is promoted to the status of wife, and bears him six sons.*

#### VERSE 1

**"Then again Abraham took a wife"**

— This section of Genesis poses a problem. Why should Abraham, at his advanced age, take a further wife; and how was it possible to have children by her in view of Paul's statement in Romans 4:19? The R.V. omits *again*, and renders: "And Abraham took another wife," leaving the chronological setting of the incident in doubt. However, the literal Hebrew has: "And Abraham continued and took a wife," or "And Abraham added and took a wife". In 1 Chron. 1:32-33, Keturah is called a concubine, or a secondary wife (see also v. 8). Possibly Keturah had been appointed concubine before the death of Sarah, and on her death, was elevated to the status of wife.

**"And her name was Keturah"** —

The word signifies *Incense*, the symbol of prayer, perhaps indicative of the character of Keturah.

#### VERSE 2

**"And she bare him"** — The record of Scripture claims that at the age of 100 years, Abraham's body was practically dead. However, his physical vigour obvi-

ously had been renewed to bring about the birth of Isaac, and evidently it remained with him like that of Moses (Deut. 34:7). Thus he represents those of the Spirit who receive "new life" as a result of the promises given (2 Pet. 1:4). Abraham out-lived Sarah by some thirty-eight years, providing ample time for the birth and growth of his six additional sons. These sons developed into nations, so that there is a foreshadowing of the fulfilment of the promise that Abraham would become a "father of many nations". It is quite appropriate to the fulfilment of the promise, that Abraham should be divinely strengthened to beget sons.

**"Zimran"** — His name means *Musical*, or *Singer*. His descendants have not been identified with certainty. Perhaps they may be identified with the *Zabram* west of Mecca.

**"And Jokshan"** — Sig. *Fowler*.

**"And Medan"** — Sig. *Judgment*.

**"And Midian"** — Sig. *Strife* or *Contention*. The Midianites comprised a race dwelling to the east and south of Palestine. Through intermarriage, or close association, they are classed with the Ishmaelites (Gen. 37:25,27,28,36). Moses married a Midianitish wife, after having taken refuge with her father (Exod. 3:1). Later, at the instigation of Balaam, women of Midian associated with those of Moab, to seduce the Israelites (Num. 22:4,7; 25:6-15). In



the days of Gideon, the Midianites invaded the land of Israel in force (Jud. 6:1-8). Reference is made to Midian in relation to Christ's future conquest of the nations (see Hab. 3:7). Isaiah prophesies that they will be converted to the true worship in the Age to come (Isa. 60:6). Modern-day Midianites comprise some of the Arab tribes.

**"And Ishbak"** — Signifies *Free, Empty, Exhausted*. The progenitor of a North African Tribe (Unger).

**"And Shuah"** — Signifies *Prosperity*. Perhaps the progenitor of the Shuhites (Job 2:11).

### VERSE 3

**"And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan"** — Signifies respectively *Seventh, or Oath and In Judgment*. These two brothers are several times mentioned together. Here they are named as sons of Jokshan, but in Gen. 10:7 they are given as the sons of Raamah, son of Cush. Probably there was intermarriage between the Cushites and the descendants of Abraham, with the result that the tribes established were an intermixture of both. Sheba established a monarchy in the spice country adjacent to modern Aden (Muscat). The descendants of Dedan settled to the north of the Persian Gulf, adjacent to Muscat. They occupied the southern and northern extremities of Arabia, and doubtless are incorporated in Ezekiel's prophecy (Ezek. 38:13) as representative of all the Arab tribes within the compass of those two extremes. The descendants of Sheba are known also as the Sabeans; and those of Dedan as the Dedanim. Both are represented as entering the Kingdom when established by Christ (Isa. 60:6; Isa. 21:13-15; Psa. 72:10). The Arabs will be converted to Christ at his return, fulfilling the requirements of these prophecies.

**"And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim"** — Signifies *Mighty Ones*. Identified by some with the warlike tribe of the Asir, to the south of Hejas.

**"And Letushim"** — Signifies *Oppressed or Struck*. The names are in the plural, as are all the names of the sons of Dedan. This would seem to indicate tribes that descended from them.

**"And Leummim"** — Signifies *Peo-*

*ples, Nations, Unidentified.*

### VERSE 4

**"And the sons of Midian; Ephah"** — Signifies *Obscurity, Darkness*. A tribe of Arabia situated on the east coast of the Persian Gulf. Referred to in the Kingdom prophecy of Isa. 60:6-7, as worshipping in Jerusalem.

**"And Ephar"** — Sig. *Young calf*. A tribe of Arabia, unidentified.

**"And Hanoch"** — Sig. *Dedicated*.

**"And Abidah"** — Sig. *Father of Knowledge*. No knowledge of Him!

**"And Eldaah"** — Sig. *El of knowledge*.

### Abraham's Preference For Isaac

— Vv. 5-6

*Gifts for the others; but the inheritance for Isaac. He thus represents the Son of God who receives the divine inheritance, though blessings are provided to the other members of the human family — that is, Israel after the flesh.*

### VERSE 5

**"And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac"** — The superior rights of Isaac as the true son were preserved, though the claims of the other children were not ignored. Gifts were given to the latter, but the inheritance of promise, the divine blessing, and most of Abraham's possessions went to Isaac. For the antitype see Heb. 1:2.

### VERSE 6

**"But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had"** — The concubines were Hagar and Keturah, though the latter was elevated to the status of wife on the death of Sarah. In the terms of the allegory, the sons of the concubines represent Israel after the flesh, and the Gentiles, whilst the seed of promise represents the Ecclesia. Though the former will receive blessing in the age to come, the true inheritance is vested with Isaac, the seed of promise, the multitudinous Christ.

**"Abraham gave gifts"** — There will be given "gifts unto men" in the Age to come, comparable with those that are received through the Gospel today (see

Eph. 4:8). But the main inheritance will be reserved for the antitypical Isaac.

**“Sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country”** — They departed to what is known today as Arabia.

#### **Abraham’s Death & Burial — Vv. 7-11**

*He dies at a good age, and his two sons are united at his funeral.*

#### **VERSE 7**

**“And these are the days of the years of Abraham’s life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years”** — He outlived Sarah by about 38 years. Esau and Jacob were about 15 years of age at his death. The number of the years of his life are divisible by either five or seven, the numbers of grace, and of the covenant. As he was 75 when he entered the land (Gen. 12:4), he had been a sojourner therein for one hundred years.

#### **VERSE 8**

**“Then Abraham gave up the spirit”** — The RSV renders: “breathed his last”. It was evidence of his mortality which resulted from the calamity of Gen. 3:19.

**“And died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years”** — There is a note of completeness, of finality and satisfaction in these words, as though life had provided him with all that was possible in view of the imperfection of human nature.

The phrase “full of years” does not mean a long life, but of a life filled with valuable experiences and packed with the blessings of God (cp. 1 Chron. 29:28; Job 42:17; Jer. 6:11).

**“And was gathered to his people”** — Abraham died and was buried. His people were idolators (Josh. 24:2), so it cannot relate to his immortal soul wending its way to heaven as some suppose! Both the righteous and the wicked are “gathered” in the grave (Ecc. 3:19-20).

#### **VERSE 9**

**“And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre”** — As the heir Isaac takes the precedence. In the allegory, the two sons represent Israel after the spirit and Israel after the flesh. They are united in paying their respects to their father. They will be united again when he arises from the dead. For the cave of Machpelah, see the notes on Chapter 23.

#### **VERSE 10**

**“The field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth”** — See notes Ch. 23:16.

**“There was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife”** — So they were united in death and await the coming day of resurrection. See Ch. 49:31. Though buried Abraham will yet witness the glory of the kingdom and the elevation of his exalted Son (Mat. 8:11; Luke 13:28).

#### **VERSE 11**

**“And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son, Isaac”** — He gained in prosperity; a token that God was with him.

**“And Isaac dwelt by the well Lahai-roi”** — See notes Ch. 16:14; 24:62. He dwelt by the *Well of Life and Vision*. The multitudinous seed of promise will be found dwelling by such a well; for Christ provides the antitype of this. The water of that well is so satisfying, that when one drinks from it he never thirsts again (John 4:14). Meanwhile, as Isaac dwelt there, Ishmael developed into a nation of twelve princes, typifying Israel after the flesh (Gal. 4:22-31). This statement completes the section of Genesis headed: *The Generations of Terah*, and recording *The Calling Out Of A Family*. It comprises Genesis 11:27-25:11.

## **Personalities of the Old Testament**

### **Abdeel — Son of Ishmael**

His name means *Miracle of God* (El) according to Gesenius. He was the third son of Ishmael.

### **Aholibamah — Wife of Esau**

Her name is given as Oholibamah in the Revised Version. It signifies *Tent of the High Places*. She was the wife of Esau (Gen. 36:2); and the mother of three “dukes” or chiefs by name of Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah. There is some confusion about the references to her. For instance, she is referred to as a daughter of Anah, the daughter of (*Rotherham* has “son of”) Zibeon the Hivite in Gen. 36:2, but is styled Judith the daughter of Beerli the Hittite in Gen. 26:34. The probable explanation is that her proper name was Judith, and that Aholibamah was the name she received as the wife of Esau and foundress of the three tribes of his descendants.

### **Aholibamah — The Duke**

Among the descendants of Esau is Duke Aholibamah (Gen. 36:41). The word *alluwph*, Duke, is from a root signifying the *first*, or *chief*. According to Young it signifies “a leader, head of a thousand,” for *aleph*, the root of *alluwph*, does service for *first* or *thousand*. Duke Aholibamah was probably given that name because of the territory he ruled over, and not because it was his original name. This is suggested from the expression in the heading, “*after their places, by their names,*” (v. 40), when compared with v. 43: “*according to their habitations in the land of their possession.*” Perhaps Aholibamah, Esau’s wife, gave her name to a certain territory over which this son assumed authority, and so was given this title.

### **Ahuzzath: Friend to Abimelech**

Ahuzzath (Gen. 26:26) was among the deputation under the Philistine King Abimelech which approached Isaac in order to enter into covenant with him. His name means *Possession*. He is described as Abimelech’s “*friend,*” an official who acted as confidential adviser, or “*vizier*” to the king (cp. 2 Sam. 16:16; 1 Kings 4:5; 1 Chron. 27:33).

### **Ajah: The Horite**

He was the son of Zebeon the Horite, or Cave dweller. His name signifies *Screamer* according to Gesenius, whereas others give it as *A Bird of Prey*. References to him are found in Gen. 36:24; 1 Chron. 1:40.

### **Akan: Great-Grandson of Seir**

Akan was the son of Ezer, grandson of Seir the Horite (Gen. 36:27; 1 Chron. 1:42). His name means *Twisting*, and is also given in the form of Jakan.

### **Alian: Descendant of Seir**

His name is given as Alvan in the A.V., but is changed to Alian in the margin. According to Gesenius, his name signifies *Unjust*. He was a son of Shobal and a descendant of Seir (Gen. 36:23; 1 Chron. 1:40).

### **Almodad: The Agitator**

Almodad was the eldest son of Joktan, of the family of Shem (Gen. 10:26; 1 Chron. 1:20). His name, according to some, signifies *Fond Of Compressing*; and by others *The Agitator*. Nothing further is known of him.

## THE GENERATIONS OF ISHMAEL:

### The Separation of the Natural from the Spiritual Seed (Chapter 25:12-18)

*The record of Genesis is subdivided by the eleven "generations" listed throughout the book, and which separate it into twelve parts. Previously we have commented upon the use of this word, and the significance of the divisions effected by it. We have shown that The Generations of Ishmael come between those of Terah and Isaac. The former relate to the calling out of a family; the latter to the development of the seed of promise. In comparison with both of these, the Generations of Ishmael speak of the separation of the natural from the spiritual. Therefore, it is appropriately set between those of Terah and Isaac.*

*Ishmael represents the man of flesh. God put him aside in favour of Isaac, the seed of promise. It is characteristic of Genesis to first notice, and then dismiss, persons closely related to those whom God chose, leaving the true line of descent intact. Thus Cain, Japheth, Ham, the descendants of Shem other than Terah's family, and now Ishmael, are first noted then dismissed. Now the time had come to remove Ishmael's family from the mainstream descent of those in whom God was directly interested. The record concerning Ishmael provides a partial fulfilment of the promise made to Hagar (Gen. 21:18), though its complete fulfilment awaits the future.*

#### **Ishmael's Descendants, Inheritance and Death — Vv. 12-18.**

*According to the allegory of Genesis, as interpreted by Paul (Gal. 4:21-31), Ishmael typed Israel after the flesh, whereas Isaac represented the true seed, whether of Israel or the Gentiles. Prophetically, Ishmael relates to the Arab tribes. It is significant, both from the allegorical as well as the prophetic aspects of related Scripture, that Ishmael should develop into twelve princes, inheriting a wide territory.*

#### **VERSE 12**

**"Now these are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare**

**unto Abraham"** — See notes on Ch. 16:15.

#### **VERSE 13**

**"And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations:"** — There are twelve names listed, linking Ishmael of the allegory with the tribes of Israel.

**"The firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth"** — This was Ishmael's firstborn son. His name signifies either *Husbandry*, or, according to Gesenius, *High places*. His descendants are listed among the Arab tribes that will be converted to Christ, and find a national place in the Kingdom of God (Isa. 60:7). Nebajoth gave his name

to the Arabs generally. Under the title of Nabateans, they spread their influence westwards in the days of the Maccabees, occupying the fortified places of Edom (including Petra), and extending their influence through the Negeb in southern Palestine. At one time, they controlled the whole area through a line of forts that stretched from Petra, through Avdat, on to Gaza; and from these centres, they dominated the trade-routes of the Middle East.

**“And Kedar”** — His name signifies *Powerful*. His descendants, likewise, are listed among those who will accept Christ, and worship, as mortals, at Jerusalem in the Age to come (Isa. 60:7).

**“Abdeel”** — Signifies *Languishing for God*, or, according to Gesenius, *Miracle of God*.

**“Mibsam”** — Signifies *Sweet odour*.

#### VERSE 14

**“And Mishma”** — Signifies *Fame* or *Hearing*.

**“And Dumah”** — Signifies *Silence* or *Remembrance*. A prophecy is devoted to Dumah in Isa. 21:11-12. In it this Arab tribe is represented as occupying Seir, or Edom, and enquiring as to the significance of the signs of the times. An invitation is extended to the people of Dumah to turn, come and listen. The prophecy implies that the descendants of Ishmael, in the Age to come, will turn to God, and worship before Him as mortals.

**“And Massa”** — Signifies *Burden*.

#### VERSE 15

**“Hadar”** — Signifies *Mighty* or *Fierceness*.

**“And Tema”** — Signifies *Sunburnt* or a *Desert* (Gesenius). A reference to Tema, or Thema, is found in the prophecy of Arabia recorded in Isa. 21:13-15, relating to the future. The inhabitants of Tema are portrayed as offering hospitality to the Jews fleeing from the effects of military invasion. The prophecy concerns the latter-day Assyrian, who, in the person of Gog, will invade the land, at “the time of Jacob’s trouble”. The Arab powers will be subdued under Christ (Hab. 3:3); and evidently the terms of capitulation will include a demand that they cease their

age-old hostility towards their half brothers, the descendants of Isaac. Thus descendants of Tema will find inheritance in the Kingdom as mortals.

**“Jetur”** — Signifies *Defence*.

**“Naphish”** — Signifies *Numerous*.

**“Kedemah”** — Signifies *Eastern* or *Precedence*.

**“These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names”** — The names of Ishmael’s sons form a sentence, thus: “In the *high places* a *powerful people* will experience a *miracle of God*. For they shall cause *sweet odours* to ascend, calling His *fame to remembrance*. Their *burden* will be lifted, they will become *mighty* in power, conquerors of the *desert*, strong in *defence*, *numerous* in population, at the *forefront* of the nations.”

Whether or not the names are intended to express this meaning, it does state what Israel after the flesh will attain to in the Age to come. And, allegorically considered, Ishmael represents natural Israel (Gal. 4:22-31); whereas the true Israel of God (Gal. 6:16) are represented by Isaac, the seed of promise.

Literally, however, Ishmael represents the Arab tribes. They will be incorporated into the Kingdom of God, though not in the land of promise. They will be “sent eastward” (Gen. 25:6) into Arabia (Isa. 21:13), which country will then flourish exceedingly (Isa. 43:19-20). There they will comprise a powerful and honored people, whose offerings will be received with acceptance on Yahweh’s altar in Jerusalem (Isa. 60:6-7). Thus, when Abraham arises from the grave, he will play a part in reconciling the descendants of his two sons, and his ardent prayer on behalf of Ishmael (Gen. 17:18) will be realised.

**“By their towns”** — The Hebrew *chatsirim* is from a root signifying *to surround*, suggesting *separation* (Dr. Strong). Thus, a settlement. Abraham’s descendants, whether of Israel or of Ishmael, should maintain a separation from the Gentile nations.

**“And by their castles”** — Heb. *tiyrach*, walls, hence *fortresses*. The R.V. renders *encampment*.

**“Twelve princes according to their**

**nations**” — It is significant that both Ishmael and Israel should be founded upon twelve patriarchs. See Gen. 17:20.

#### VERSE 17

**“And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, an hundred and thirty seven years”** — This statement of Ishmael’s death anticipates the events of the chapters that follow, for Esau and Jacob were born fifteen years before the death of Abraham, and nearly fifty years before the death of Ishmael. In fact, Esau visited Ishmael before his death, in order to seek Mahalath, his daughter, to be his wife (Gen. 28:9). These times have an important bearing on the chronology of Jacob’s life as we shall see.

**“And he gave up the spirit and died; and was gathered unto his people”** — See note v. 8.

#### VERSE 18

**“And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur”** — Havilah signifies *sandy*, and comprises a large tract of sandy desert in Arabia. Shur signifies *wall*. It was the name given to a great wall of forts that shut off the Negeb from Egypt.

**“That is before Egypt”** — The wall of forts closed in a tract of territory that acted as a buffer between Egypt and Palestine. The description shows that Ishmael’s

descendants spread from Arabia throughout the lower Negeb at least. The statement “before Egypt,” can be applied spiritually to Ishmael when considered allegorically. Like the unbelieving Jew under the old covenant (of whom he is a type: Gal. 4:23-25), he did not exactly live in the world, but his inclinations were towards it, and he lived on its borders.

**“As thou goest toward Assyria”** — There was a trade route linking Egypt with Assyria in those days. It followed the coast through Gaza to the north.

**“And he died in the presence of all his brethren”** — This repeats in essence the promise of Gen. 16:12. The Hebrew word “died” as here used, is not the normal one for death. It is *naphal* and literally means *to fall*. It has been translated in a variety of ways. The R.V. suggests that the right meaning is *abode*.

The reference, therefore, may be to the geographical position of the descendants of Ishmael. They dwelt “in the presence of” or to the east of their brethren. Ishmael had left the land of promise, and dwelt on its outskirts. In that he typed Israel after the flesh, or that class of person who knows of the Truth but will not take hold of it. He mocked at the son of promise, and so was “cast out” of the privileged position that could have been his.

## Personalities of the Old Testament

### Alvah: The Duke

His name is given as meaning *Sublime*. He was a duke of Edom descended from Esau (Gen. 36:40; 1 Chron. 1:51).

### Amalek: The Warrior

He was the son of Eliphaz and grandson of Esau (Gen. 36:12). His name signifies *Warrior* according to some, and *Labouring* according to others. He is not to be confused with the nation of Amalek, which existed before his time. Cp. Gen. 14:7.

### Ammon: Son of Lot

Ammon was the younger son of Lot by his younger daughter. He was born in a cave near Zoar, and became the ancestor of the Ammonites (Gen. 19:38; Num. 21:24). His original name is given as Ben-ammi, or *The Son of My (paternal) Kinsman* according to Driver, or *The Son Of My People*, according to others. His name emphasises his fleshly origin. Ammon signifies *Tribal or Inbred*, underlying flesh-loyalties.

## THE GENERATIONS OF ISAAC

### The Development of the Seed of Promise (Chapter 25:19-35:29)

*This is the eighth of the series of Generations which divide Genesis. Having considered the natural seed of Abraham in the life-history of Ishmael, attention is now diverted to the Seed of Promise. Though the life of Isaac is overshadowed by the wonderful faith of his father, Abraham, and the dramatic qualities of the life of his son Jacob, yet his life is not lacking in wonder. He was the seed of promise, fulfilling the desire of his father, Abraham, and vindicating the promise of God. He was ever submissive to the will of his father: as a sacrifice on Mount Moriah; as well as to his father's efforts in obtaining a bride for him. Thus he typed the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Son of Promise. The remainder of his life is mainly recorded in two chapters in which weaknesses of his character are revealed. In those chapters he represents the multitudinous Christ rather than the personal Christ, beset by fears, making mistakes. Meanwhile, he dwelt by the well Lahai-roi, the Well Of Life and Vision (Gen. 25:11).*

## JACOB SECURES THE BLESSING

### (Ch. 25:19-27:46)

*First we are introduced to the stark contrast between the appearance of the characters of Esau and Jacob: between the profane man and the religious man. They are clashing personalities, causing strife and contention in the tents of Isaac, and even antagonism between his parents. Jacob was the man whom Yahweh remade. His history is typical of Israel after the flesh, or of a man of God who allows the moulding hands of Yahweh to change him for the future. Two outstanding facts emerge from his life-history which should not be overlooked in studying it:*

*(1) God is "not ashamed" to be surnamed his God (Heb. 11:16); and (2) The Temple of the Age to come is described as "the house of the God of Jacob" (Isa. 2:3), and he is the type of all who shall worship therein.*

*For all his weaknesses, Jacob is described as "a perfect man", a complete man, one who resolutely set before him the hope of the promise, and strove to attain unto it. Jacob is the man whom Yahweh reformed, through bitter experience. Therefore, he has many lessons for those who strive for spiritual success in circumstances of difficulty. Paul cites the history of Esau and Jacob as illustrative of the principle of election in Christ Jesus (Rom. 9:10-13).*

### **The Prophecy and Birth of Esau and Jacob — Vv. 19-24**

*Isaac, deeply distressed at the barrenness of Rebekah, prays that they may be granted children. The prayer is granted, but Rebekah's pregnancy proves difficult. On ascertaining the cause of this, she is advised that she is carrying twins, and that they are so different in character, as to cause her the distress she feels. She is given a prophecy relating to both her sons which colours her viewpoint for the rest of her life, and is partly responsible for the antagonism in the home that subsequently resulted.*

### **VERSE 20**

**"And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife"** — Forty is the number of probation. It is significant that Isaac, the type of Christ, should take his bride at such an age. It foreshadows the "marriage of the Lamb" after the period of probation for those who constitute "the Lamb's bride."

**"The daughter of Bethuel the Syrian"** — See notes on chapter 24.

**"Of Padan-aram"** — The word signifies *The highland, or plateau, of Syria.*

**"The sister to Laban the Syrian"** — See note Ch. 24:29.

### **VERSE 21**

**"And Isaac intreated Yahweh for his wife, because she was barren"** — See note Gen. 11:30. The bride of Christ remains barren in the absence of a faith which will cause the "seed of God" (1 Pet. 1:23) to germinate and produce fruit. Isaac, as a man of faith, gave himself to prayer in view of the prolonged barrenness of Rebekah. He realised that she was the

divinely-appointed bride through whom the seed would come, and accepted the delay as a challenge to faith (cp. Psa. 127:3).

**"And Yahweh was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived"** — His prayer was answered. Both parents and later the children should have realised that the resultant births were an answer to prayer. It should have given them a sense of Divine purpose in their lives. Let parents recognise in their children, channels of continued blessing from Yahweh, and scope of service to Him (Psa. 127:3-5). They should educate them with that in view.

### **VERSE 22**

**"And the children struggled together within her"** — Before their birth their mutual antipathy became apparent. They were to be different in character and in destiny. They typify the flesh and the spirit, always antagonistic (Gal. 5:17). The Hebrew *ratsats*, "struggled together" signifies *to violently crush, to bruise, to break*. This would have given Rebekah great pain, as the antagonism of flesh and spirit always does. There was a struggle for priority of birth, anticipating the struggle predicted from the beginning (cp. Gen. 3:15).

**"And she said, If it be so, why am I thus?"** — If I have conceived as a blessing from Yahweh, why this distress? This is a question frequently asked by those in whom "Christ is being formed." The Godly life brings its measure of distress and antagonism; its trials and difficulties. Why? Because characters must be shaped and moulded, and this is best done under trial. Paul taught that "it is through much



tribulation" that we will enter the Kingdom (Acts 14:22). The word, *thlipsis*, in the Greek, signifies *pressure*. The pressure of trial, suffering, opposition, striving, and so forth, helps to mould a character in which Yahweh will find delight. Trouble is beneficial in its effects, when faced in faith, and when we understand its purpose. Paul recognised this, and declared: "We glory in tribulations also; *knowing ...*" (Rom. 5:3). He did so because he had come to understand the purpose that Yahweh has in permitting such. Let us learn the same lesson, and we will recognise the benefit of trouble. It humbles flesh; causes a man to recognise that he cannot place any confidence in it; reveals to him his need of God; and results in him more ardently desiring and praying for the coming of Christ.

**"And she went to enquire of Yahweh"** — The record implies that she approached somebody to act as mediator to that end. Perhaps she approached Abraham, her father-in-law, to seek his help in interceding for her.

### VERSE 23

**"And Yahweh said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb"** — The two nations are Israel and the Gentiles, representing the spirit and the flesh, for Edom is typical of the latter. The political striving of Jew against Gentile today is illustrative of the pain of Rebekah, for the anxiety and agony caused by it are really the birth pangs of a new era under Christ.

**"And two manner of people"** — Jacob is described as a "plain" (or perfect) man; Esau is styled "a profane" person (Heb. 12:15-16). They thus represent the spiritual and the profane. For all his faults, Jacob never lost sight of the objective that Yahweh had placed before him, and constantly strove to overcome his difficulties and himself in attaining unto it.

**"Shall be separated from thy bowels"** — It is separation from the flesh that commends one to God (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

**"And the one people shall be stronger than the other people"** — Each possessed a strength of his own. Esau would prove stronger in physical ability;

Jacob stronger in spiritual qualities. Which would prevail ultimately? This question is experienced in all who feel the combat of flesh and spirit. Paul found two opposing laws in his life (Rom. 7:23) and sought divine help that the spiritual "law of the mind" might succeed (v. 25).

**"And the elder shall serve the younger"** — The elder Esau was stronger physically; but the prophecy revealed that spiritual strength is much more enduring than that of the flesh. By divine choice and purpose those who are spiritually stronger will ultimately gain the power over those physically stronger. These words of the prophecy are quoted by Paul to illustrate the purpose of election. In Romans 9:8-13, the Apostle points out that the flesh profiteth nothing in the absence of spiritual virtues. He showed that mere fleshly descent from Abraham was not enough to entitle one to claim to be a son of the promise. Both Esau and Jacob were sons of Isaac; but Yahweh had declared: "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Mal. 1:2-3; Rom. 9:13). God had made choice before the birth of the two boys, before they had done "any good or evil" (v. 11). Is such a choice just? On the part of man — No; but on the part of God — Yes. Why is it unjust for man to make such a choice and yet entirely just for God to do so? Because man does not know the "end from the beginning," but God does. In His omniscience, He could foresee the characters of both boys, and in His foreknowledge, made choice accordingly. Therefore, He shows mercy on whom He will have mercy, not in any arbitrary way, but because He knows what the future will reveal, and the qualities of an individual before they are developed. His ability in that direction is shown in the subsequent characters of Esau and Jacob, and the qualities of the two races that sprung from them. When these are considered it is recognised that Yahweh's choice was a wise one, and obviously governed by His foreknowledge. On that basis, He is calling individuals unto Himself from out of the Gentiles (Acts 15:14), recognising that each one so called has the ability to reveal in character that which Yahweh requires of

him or her.

The prophecy also pointed forward to the grand purpose of Yahweh in relation to the human race. Normally, an elder son was placed over his younger brother, as a privilege of the birthright. But in this case, it was to be reversed: the "elder shall serve the younger". It typed Yahweh's intentions in regard to the two outstanding sons of God, revealed in Scripture. The "elder son" was Adam (Luke 3:38); the younger son, born some four thousand years later, was the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:14). Adam as a sinner, was deposed from his privileged status as firstborn, and the title bestowed upon the Lord Jesus (Psalm 89:26-27; Col. 1:15). Such an appointment was provided by the Law of Moses. It was legal for a parent to depose an elder son from the status of firstborn if he proved incompetent or unworthy, and to pass the title and position on to a younger son. A case in point is provided in Reuben (cp. 1 Chron. 5:1). At the same time, the Law guarded against abuse of such a privilege (Deut. 21:17). Obviously, this strange law was incorporated into the Mosaic ordinance to illustrate the purpose of Yahweh with humanity and seen in the elevation of the Lord Jesus Christ over the "elder son" Adam. Now, in the case of Esau, the wisdom and purpose of this instruction were to be dramatised.

### The Characteristics of Esau and Jacob — Vv. 25-27

*The difference in appearance of the two babies was viewed with wonder, and gave rise to the names that were given unto them.*

#### VERSE 25

**"And the first came out red"** — The Hebrew *admoni* is from the root *adam*, and signifies "red" or "ruddy". The ruddy complexion of the first child indicated his abundant physical health. There was ample of the "life of all flesh" (Lev. 17:14) in him; but it is a principle of Scripture that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 15:50).

**"All over like an hairy garment"** — A red, hairy covering is a direct contrast to

the smooth, white, linen garment of righteousness (Rev. 19:8). The word "hairy" is from the Hebrew *sa'ar*, "rough," from whence is derived the word *Seir*.

**"And they called his name Esau"** — That is, *The Hairy One*. The word is from a root, *asah*, signifying "to do or make," "to handle," that is, to make or establish a thing in one's own strength. It is expressive of fleshly ability to handle a matter to one's advantage.

#### VERSE 26

**"And after that came his brother out"** — First the natural, afterwards the spiritual.

**"And his hand took hold on Esau's heel"** — This act was regarded by Hosea as symbolic of prevailing power. The antagonism of the brothers was apparent at birth; but Jacob's action indicated that he would ultimately prevail (Hos. 12:3).

**"And his name was called Jacob"** — Jacob signifies *Supplanter*, or *Heel-Catcher*. James is the Grecized form of the name.

**"And Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them"** — Thus over twenty years had passed away before the birth of the boys.

#### VERSE 27

**"And the boys grew"** — As they grew their characters developed; they had inherited latent characteristics that they began to manifest.

**"And Esau was a cunning hunter"** — He lived by his wits, following the example of Nimrod (Gen. 10:9). He knew how to stalk and destroy the beasts and birds of the field.

**"A man of the field"** — This expression is used by the Lord to describe the world (Matt. 13:38). Esau was a typical man of the world. He provided a contrast to Jacob. He was *cunning*, whereas Jacob was *sincere*; he was a *hunter* killing with the sword, whereas Jacob was a *shepherd*, building up the flock; he was *of the field*, whereas Jacob was *of the tabernacle*. The variations are clearly defined in this verse.

**"And Jacob was a plain man"** — The word *tam* signifies a *complete, sin-*

*cere*, or *pious* man. The same word is translated "perfect" in Job 1:1,8; 2:3; Psa. 37:37; 64:4 etc. He was a sincere, single-hearted man, with one objective: to attain unto the Kingdom of God. He obviously thought long and deeply upon the covenants of promise, and determined to make them the main objective of his life. He was a pious man, worshipping God in sincerity and truth. But at the same time he made grievous mistakes — as do we all.

**"Dwelling in tents"** — Jacob was a shepherd, caring for the flock, seeking to build up the herd. The Hebrew *Ohelim* is the plural of the word rendered "tabernacle". In Hebrews 11:9, the fact of him "dwelling in tabernacles" is set forth as an action of faith. It indicates that those so doing recognised that there was no permanent dwelling-place for them then, no more than there is for us today. Therefore they "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10).

#### **Disharmony In the Home — v. 28**

*The contrasting characters of the two boys brought out contrasting preferences in the parents, which emotionally separated them. The self-effacing Isaac developed a stronger preference for the outgoing Esau; the forthright Rebekah sought to protect and advance the more timid Jacob.*

#### **VERSE 28**

**"And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison"** — Isaac does not appear with good effect in this statement. He showed a preference to the manly, easy-going, pleasant Esau who so willingly satisfied his fleshly desires. The word "venison" is the Hebrew *tsayid*, "hunting". Esau brought home the results of his hunting, and Isaac enjoyed it. The Hebrew is: "his hunting was in his mouth" (see mg.). The gullible Isaac was taken in by the hearty generosity of his elder son, for what he supplied appealed to the flesh. Esau probably deceived his father by his attitude towards the family worship, for it is obvious that he was accustomed to wearing the special family priestly robes (see Gen. 27:15).

**"But Rebekah loved Jacob"** — Her protective nature drew her more closely to her younger, more timid son. Thus, the house became divided, as enmity was developed between the two seeds. As in the case of Adam's family, these two sons of Isaac in turn represented the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman.

#### **Esau Sells His Birthright — Vv. 29-34**

*This incident is cited by Paul to illustrate the profane character of Esau, and to show the "two manner of people" that are found in relation to the Truth (see Heb. 12:16-17). The true character of Esau becomes manifest under pressure. The naturally free and easy, good nature of this profane son of Isaac, is ruined and rendered useless by his fickleness, unsteadiness, want of faith and principle. On the other hand, the craft, duplicity, and timidity of the religious Jacob is turned finally to lasting good by his steadfast purpose, his resolute sacrifice of present advantage for future glory, and his fixed principles which ultimately purified and elevated the baser qualities of his character. His single-minded determination to seek God's way is seen even in his purchase of the birthright from his brother who despised his God-given credentials.*

#### **VERSE 29**

**"And Jacob sod pottage"** — The term "sod pottage" is old English for "cooked stew". The *Berkeley Translation* renders: "Jacob was boiling a stew". He was using the things of the world legitimately. Paul exhorts: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).

**"And Esau came from the field"** — He had evidently been hunting — cp. v. 27.

**"And he was faint"** — He had completely exhausted himself in the chase. He had probably expended his energy for several days without reward, and without food, and staggered back to Jacob's tent on the point of collapse. He illustrated the principle of complete domination by the flesh and the desire for physical gratification (1 John 2:16-17).

**VERSE 30**

**“And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint”** — The Hebrew expresses it: “With that red red ...” (*adom, adom*). He saw the stew as reddish in colour, and craved for the strength and satisfaction it would bring him. In doing so, he typed the “profane” of every age, who prefer the things of Adam to those of God, and despise their birthright (the discipline of the Truth which leads to the right of sonship, the right of the “firstborns”; Heb. 12:23) to obtain them (see Heb. 12:16-17).

**“Therefore was his name called Edom”** — Edom signifies *red*, and is from a common root with the word *Adam*. The name is a title for profane earthy men or nations. Prophetically it is used of the flesh in political and religious manifestation, which will be completely overthrown by Christ at his coming (see Obadiah). The prophetic references to Edom show that the nation should not be confused with the Arabs who are descendants of Ishmael, not Esau.

**VERSE 31**

**“And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright”** — To Jacob, the birthright meant everything; to Esau it was of secondary consideration. Whereas Jacob saw the possession of it as the great objective in life; Esau treated it with flip-pant disregard.

The privileges of the birthright were threefold: priesthood, authority and inheritance. The firstborn was consecrated to God (cp. Exod. 13:2; 22:29); the authority of the family was conferred upon him (2 Chron. 21:3); he received a double portion of inheritance (Deut. 21:15-17).

The benefits of the birthright, therefore, all lay in the future, whereas Esau’s pleasure was in the present. He was not particularly interested in “laying up for himself a good reward in time to come.”

**VERSE 32**

**“And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die”** — His weakened physical state caused him to feel the impact of mortality.

**“And what profit shall this birthright do to me?”** — Esau, as a profane man, saw profit only in present advantage. His attitude was that expressed in the words “Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die” (1 Cor. 15:32). On the other hand, the attitude of Jacob was: “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable” (v. 19). Esau completely misunderstood the benefits of the birthright, having little faith in the resurrection.

**VERSE 33**

**“And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he swore unto him”** — He took advantage of his brother’s hunger. Many consider this demand to be mean, but it was an opportunity which Jacob seized because of his intense desire for the spiritual advantages it conferred. Perhaps, too, he was irritated at Esau’s lack of appreciation of that which meant so much to him. In *The Ways Of Providence*, (p. 35) the incident is summarised:

“Some might say it exhibits Jacob in an unneighbourly aspect, and that he ought not to have seized the moment of hunger to extort a bargain; but ought rather to have unconditionally ministered to his brother’s need. The answer is, there is a time for everything, and that these men were in the hands of the special providence for the working out of a national purpose in their posterity, and for the development of a spiritual allegory, serviceable for all time. Esau’s character comes out, and he seals his own doom. Physical craving is more powerful with him than the perceptions of wisdom. For a moment’s gratification, he bargains away a position germinally containing countless gratifications in the future. He stands before us as a man swayed by his senses, and not by the dictates of enlightened judgment; and, therefore, as the type of class who love the present world, and have not faith sufficient to practise that self-denial by which the birthright of the future Age is preserved and secured”.

**“And he sold his birthright unto Jacob”** — Paul uses this incident to describe the worldly man, whose sense of

values is perverted by his own fleshly desires and describes Esau as “profane” or unhallowed. He contrasts his state with that of holiness (a state of being separated for God’s use) “without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14,16). A profane person is one who lacks a sense of relationship, affinity or responsibility to God, being wholly governed by fleshly self-interest. Such was Esau “who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright” (v.16).

#### VERSES 34

**“Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles”** — Esau received his part of the bargain. He rated these things higher in value than the divine birthright.

**“And he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way”** — These words describe the almost flippant way in which Esau disposed of his birthright. He did so in complete ignorance of the wrong he had committed. In that lay his greatest sin. He was profane, or worldly-minded, and for “one morsel of meat” — for that which was shortlived and provided but temporary satisfaction and pleasure — he threw away

the riches of eternity. That attitude is repeated by the transient generation of the present (Luke 12:19) and can be easily imitated by foolish believers.

**“Thus Esau despised his birthright”** — He despised it not merely because he bargained it away, but in the manner in which he did so. The birthright seemed to him of little value. He lacked spiritual vision and was absorbed with the present. The temporary satisfaction of his appetite weighed more heavily with him than a future inheritance; and so “he went on his way”. Notice that no other crime nor great fault is laid against Esau than the fact that he “despised his birthright”. In short, there is no greater sin than this! The person who treats the Truth lightly is “profane” (Heb. 12:16) and in the same position as Esau. He despises that for which Christ died.

In the case of Esau, apart from this sin, he shows forth to advantage over Jacob. But, there is an attractiveness about his character that is deceptive. He was an impulsive, thoughtless man rather than a bad one: his great sin, being his indifference towards the things of God.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

### TROUBLE WITH THE PHILISTINES

*Famine drives Isaac to the Philistine territory of Gerar. There the blessing of Abraham is repeated to him, but fear of the inhabitants drives him to practise the same deceit in regard to his wife as had his father. Though rebuked for this, and oppressed by the Philistines, he is encouraged by the vision of Beersheba, and finds recognition by his enemies at the Well of the Covenant.*

#### Isaac’s Troubles In The Land — Vv. 1-5

*Famine drives Isaac into hostile territory, but he is reassured by the blessing of Yahweh.*

#### VERSE 1

**“And there was a famine in the land”** — Isaac, as the seed of promise, types both the individual Christ, and the multitudinous Christ. As the former he submits to the test of Moriah and rises tri-

umphant from it; on the death of Sarah, he submits to Abraham’s direction that Eliezer should go forth to obtain a bride for him. As the latter, he gives preference to Esau because of his venison, and now, in this chapter practises deceit in regard to his wife.

Yahweh brought him under the test of famine. This points forward to the spiritual famine which is the experience of the multitudinous Christ at the present. See

Amos 9:11.

**“Beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham”** — This statement indicates that these famines were sent by God to try His servants. See note Gen. 12:10. The *Book of Ruth* describes the breaking of a famine as “Yahweh visited His people in giving them bread” (Ruth 1:6). Men would interpret the matter differently, and describe famine, or the breaking of famine, “as the laws of Nature.” The Truth sees these matters in a different light, and educates those exercised thereby to appreciate the gracious benefits of Yahweh as the Giver of every good and perfect gift. The Hebrew *ra'ab* rendered “famine”, signifies *hunger*: “There was hunger in the land.”

**“And Isaac went unto Abimelech King of the Philistines”** — Abimelech signifies *Father of the King*; and it was probably a title assumed by all the monarchs of Gerar. See Ch. 20:2.

**“Unto Gerar”** — Gerar signifies *rolling country* (Strong). It is near Gaza, on the ancient route to Egypt. Previously he had been dwelling by the well Lahairoi (Gen. 25:11), or *The Well Of Life and Vision*, but evidently the water became depleted. This Well is situated to the south of Beersheba, between Bered and Kadesh. Instead of making his way to Beersheba, Isaac moved towards Gerar with the intention of taking the coastal route to Egypt.

## VERSE 2

**“And Yahweh appeared unto him, and said”** — In what way, whether by angelic visitation or by vision, is not revealed.

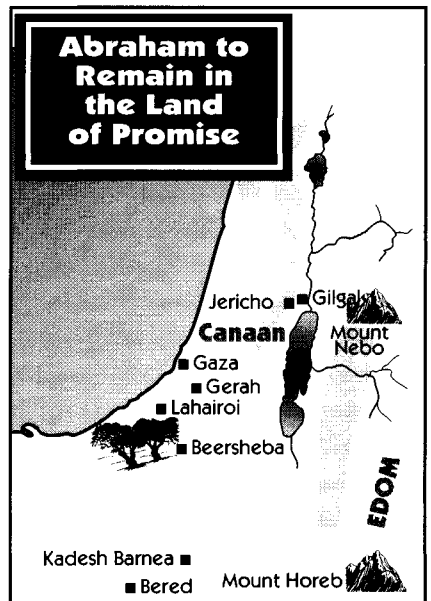
**“Go not down into Egypt”** — This statement suggests that it had been the intention of Isaac to do so. Egypt is the symbol of spiritual darkness and worldliness (Rev. 11:8), and so Isaac was told to avoid it. To go *down* to Egypt suggests deterioration. See note Gen. 12:10.

**“Dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of”** — He is to remain in the land of separateness. The word “dwell” is from the Hebrew *shakan* from whence is derived the word *Shekinah*, used of the light in the tabernacle and temple which

was indicative of Yahweh’s indwelling presence. Isaac thus was warned to avoid Egypt, to remain in the Promised Land, and the blessing would be confirmed in him. Thus encouraged, Isaac remained at Gerar, in the coastal plain of Palestine, over which Abimelech ruled. A life of isolation, as a stranger and pilgrim in the land, had made Isaac timid and retiring in the company of Gentiles. He feared Abimelech, and was uncomfortable in his presence; but the overriding care of God was with the son of Promise and shielded him from harm, so that he prospered (v. 13).

## VERSE 3

**“Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee”** — This assurance of protection and help should have been sufficient for Isaac to maintain his integrity under all circumstances. But in the face of pressure and trial, he temporarily forgot the divine assurance, and resorted to deception which brought disunity to his camp. In this renewal of the Abrahamic covenant to Isaac, God promised present benefits (His protection) as well as future blessings.



The land promised included that which was then in the control of Isaac's enemies. As Isaac never received that land in his lifetime, the promise obviously takes in the resurrection.

**"And I will perform the oath which I swear unto Abraham thy father"** — This involves the resurrection of Abraham from the dead. Isaac would have remembered the oath sworn by God, for he had heard its terms proclaimed by the angel following the ram offered upon the altar on Mt. Moriah (Ch. 22:16-18).

#### VERSE 4

**"And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed"** — Thus the Gospel was preached to Isaac (Gal. 3:8; Gen. 12:1-3).

#### VERSE 5

**"Because that Abraham obeyed My voice"** — The verb *shama* signifies to *hear intelligently, so as to act upon*, implying that he heard, believed, and acted. Thus faith brought forth its fruits (Rom. 10:17).

**"And kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws"** — Rotherham adds, "and *so* kept My charge" etc. Abraham listened intently to the Voice of Yahweh, and so faithfully maintained the system of religion that was revealed unto him. The reference to charge, commandments, statutes, and laws suggests how complex were the things proclaimed to Abraham, but which are not recorded. They evidently included much of the teaching that was later codified in the Law of Moses.

#### Isaac's Deceit Regarding His Wife

##### — Vv. 6-11

*Once again, in the experience of the patriarchs, the fear of man brings a snare (Prov. 29:25). Concerned lest the attractiveness of his wife might bring him into danger, Isaac dissimulates by stating that she was his sister. This brings him into disgrace with Abimelech. On the other hand, Abimelech is sometimes justified in contrast to Isaac, as a "good and holy*

*man."* But his statement (v. 10) which implies that a man in his kingdom would be considered guiltless if he forced an unmarried woman, does not speak well of the moral conditions of his rule. It shows that Isaac's fears were well-founded.

#### VERSE 6

**"And Isaac dwelt in Gerar"** — God had warned him against going down into Egypt, and he obeyed this instruction. Nevertheless, he had moved towards the border of Egypt, and this had a deteriorating effect upon him. He was in danger of repeating the experience of his cousin Lot, who moved towards Sodom (ch. 13:12). The site of that ruined area was a little to the east of his present abode and should have been a warning to him of following its fate.

#### VERSE 7

**"And the men of the place asked him of his wife"** — Rebekah was "fair to look upon", and this caused Isaac to view the enquiry with the greatest suspicion. Timid and retiring, he sought refuge in deception.

**"And he said, She is my sister"** — She was actually his cousin; but the term "sister" in Scripture (Heb. *akhouth*) embraces such relationships. Nevertheless, Isaac's deliberate intention was to deceive.

**"for he feared to say, She is my wife; lest, said he"** — This is the cause of Isaac's failing, he feared the men of the place. The Proverbs declare: "The fear of man bringeth a snare" (Prov. 29:25). Fear of man drove fear of God from his mind.

**"The men of the place should kill me for Rebekah"** — It is obvious that the prevailing moral conditions in Gerar were sufficiently permissive to justify Isaac's conclusion, and Abimelech's comment of v. 10 supports this. Nevertheless, whilst taking necessary precautions, Isaac should have shown greater faith in Yahweh's protective care.

**"Because she was fair to look upon"** — Sin in others turned this gift of God into a danger and a snare.

#### VERSE 8

**"And it came to pass, when he had**

been there a long time" — The Hebrew expresses it as *the days being prolonged*. Whilst living this life of deception, apparently the famine continued.

**"That Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window"** — In the ways of Providence, this apparently fortuitous act produced great benefit for Isaac, for his lie was detected.

**"And saw, and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife"** — He chanced to see Isaac in what would have been a compromising situation with a sister. Isaac was caressing and taking playful liberties with Rebekah which caused Abimelech to suspect the truth. The term *behold* suggests the surprise of the King at his discovery. The verb *sporting* is from the Hebrew *tsachaq* and signifies *to laugh*. It is the root from whence is derived the name Isaac, and therefore constitutes a play on his name. Perhaps Abimelech observed the connection between the stranger's name and his happiness with his wife, and the more readily came to his conclusion.

#### VERSE 9

**"And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety she is thy wife; and how saidst thou, She is my sister? And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die for her"** — In answer to this charge, Isaac was frank and true. He feared for his life in Gerar, and explained his attitude to Abimelech.

#### VERSE 10

**"And Abimelech said, What is this thou hast done unto us? one of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife"** — The Hebrew implies that this was about to take place. Literally, it reads *"Almost had lain one of the people with thy wife."* The seeming fortuitous circumstance of Abimelech observing Isaac caressing Rebekah, was God-directed to prevent this tragedy occurring.

**"And thou shouldst have brought guiltiness upon us"** — The implication of Abimelech's comment is that he would not have looked upon such conduct as guilty if Rebekah had not been married. Evidently

the moral condition of the city was rather low.

#### VERSE 11

**"And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death"** — He warned that the death penalty would be the lot of any who harmed Isaac or Rebekah. The Psalmist saw this as the overriding care of Yahweh:

*"He suffered no man to do them wrong;*

*Yea, He reprov'd kings for their sakes;*

*Saying, Touch not Mine anointed;*

*And do My prophets no harm"*

*Psa. 105:14-15.*

#### Isaac's Prosperity — Vv. 12-16

*Previously, the occupation of the patriarchs seems to have been only pastoral. Isaac now adds agriculture to the keeping of sheep and cattle. He makes good use of wells dug by Abraham, and by irrigation secures a remarkable yield of grain. This blessing of God excites the jealousy of the Philistines who fill up all the wells, and expel Isaac.*

#### VERSE 12

**"Then Isaac sowed, in that land, and received in the same year an hundred-fold: and Yahweh blessed him"** — With his household restored to normal, and settled in the area, he sowed crops, which he apparently irrigated from wells dug by Abraham. The result was a remarkable yield of grain, particularly in view of the famine conditions. This was further evidence of Divine blessing in spite of the trials he had experienced. The Ecclesia can do likewise with the preaching of the Gospel (see Mark 4:14-20; 10:30). We are exhorted to "preach the word; be instant in season and out of season" (2 Tim. 4:2). Though deceit had brought Isaac to near disaster, he faithfully revealed patience under pressure.

#### VERSE 13

**"The man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great"** — He continued to enjoy the



divine blessing, so that he continuously increased in prosperity.

**VERSE 14**

**“He had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants”** — The margin supplies *husbandry* instead of “servants”. The Hebrew is susceptible of either, though the R.V. renders it as “a great household,” which could include either servants or possessions. If Isaac inherited the servants in the household of his father Abraham, his retinue would number many hundreds (cp. Gen. 14:14). One would imagine that Abimelech would fear him rather than otherwise. But, perhaps, on the death of Abraham, most of the servants of his household were freed to pursue their own independent lives.

**“And the Philistines envied him”** — This is characteristic of Philistines ever since. Cp. 1 Pet. 2:12,19,23; 3:16; 4:4,14. They not only envied Isaac, they began to fear him, and this caused them to seek out means to hinder his progress.

**VERSE 15**

**“For all the wells which his father’s servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth”** — To stop up wells was considered an act justifying war. It was a violation of the solemn agreement that Abimelech or a predecessor had entered into with Abraham (Gen. 21:25-31). Its counterpart is the suicidal opposition to the Truth manifested by many in the world today. The transactions of this chapter were allegorical as well as literal.

It is obvious that Isaac was using these wells to irrigate his crops, and that, through jealousy at his success, the Philistines filled them up, thus endeavouring to ruin his prosperity and destroy his future.

**VERSE 16**

**“And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we”** — Abimelech’s comment was motivated by envy and developing hatred (v. 27). It shows that Isaac’s earlier fears

were well founded.

**Isaac Oppressed By Philistines****— Vv. 17-22**

*Isaac receives continued opposition from the Philistines, but in the spirit of Matthew 10:23, he removes himself from one place to another. In doing so, he enacts an allegory that foreshadows the experiences of the Ecclesia. Paul treats the incidents of Genesis as both literal and allegorical (Gal. 4:30-31), and likens Isaac to the Ecclesia. In that context, Isaac, like the Ecclesia, maintains his separateness from the world about him (v. 17); though persecuted he does not retaliate but persists in his way and service before God. Finally his status is acknowledged by his adversaries.*

**VERSE 17**

**“And Isaac departed thence”** — He acted as Christ advised his brethren to act: namely, when persecuted in one city to move on to the next (Matt. 10:23).

**“And pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there”** — The Hebrew *nachal*, translated *valley*, signifies *wadi* or *water course*. A watercourse is a most appropriate site for well-digging.

**VERSE 18**

**“And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham”** — The Gospel is likened to a well of water (John 4:14), and relates to the promises made to Abraham (Gal. 3:8). Symbolically, Isaac turned to the same water of life as did his father. He went back to the “old paths” the “pioneer” wells, for such refreshment. In digging anew these wells which the Philistines had stopped up, Isaac symbolically enacted the part of one who revives the Truth after it has been obscured by error.

**“He called their names after the names by which his father had called them”** — He thus claimed continuity with Abraham. The Ecclesia does the same. It denies that it is a new sect, and claims to be a modern revival of Apostolic faith, based upon the promises made to Abraham.

**VERSE 19**

**“And Isaac’s servants digged in the valley”** — They digged in the dry water-course of the famine-stricken land. This required hard laborious work; but the results were worthwhile. The antitype is the revival of the Truth in the time of spiritual famine (Amos 8:11).

**“Found there a well of springing water”** — The literal Hebrew (see mg.) is *living water*. The antitype is found in the Gospel message — John 4:14.

**VERSE 20**

**“And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac’s herdmen, saying, The water is our’s”** — Strife between the rival herdmen (with their individual congregations of animals) answers to religious controversy. This repeats the principle of enmity established at the beginning (Gen. 3:15), and seen also in the experience of Abraham and Lot (Gen. 13:7).

**“And he called the name of the well Esek; because they strove with him”** — The word signifies *strife, contention*. “Because they strove with him,” is a play upon words. The revival or proclamation of the Truth genders strife and contention.

**VERSE 21**

**“And they digged another well, and strove for that also”** — The process was repeated, with the same result.

**“And he called the name of it Sitnah”** — This word signifies *hatred* (see mg.). The opposition hardened into hostility.

**VERSE 22**

**“And he removed from thence”** — See note v. 17.

**“And digged another well; and for that they strove not”** — This well, and attendant promise of blessing, points to the future, when beyond controversy and contention, there will come a time of compatibility and blessing.

**“And he called the name of it Rehoboth”** — This word signifies *room*. There was room for men who seek peace to live in peace. Patience is rewarded in peace and prosperity.

**“And he said, For now Yahweh hath made room for us”** — Apparently the famine was over.

**“And we shall be fruitful in the land”** — The divine blessing would be with him. This well has been identified with *er Ruhaibeh*, in the wadi of the same name, about 20 miles S.W. of Beersheba.

**Isaac Encouraged By the Vision of Beersheba — Vv. 23-25**

*Isaac receives a further theophany from God. The covenant is reaffirmed, and he builds an altar.*

**VERSE 23**

**“And he went up from thence to Beersheba”** — About twenty miles to the *Well of the Oath*.

**VERSE 24**

**“And Yahweh appeared unto him the same night”** — Yahweh appeared to him on his arrival at Beersheba. Isaac’s obedience to the demand of God that he remain in the land; his faithful persistence in digging for wells in a time of famine; his patient endurance of opposition, revealed an attitude that pleased Yahweh.

**“And said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee”** — The same encouraging message had been received by Abraham at a time of stress and difficulty. See notes: Gen. 15:1.

**“And multiply thy seed for My servant Abraham’s sake”** — Abraham thus lived in Isaac; Isaac’s faithful actions stemmed from Abraham. See Gen. 18:19. It is significant that this proclamation should be received at Beersheba — *The Well of the Oath*.

**VERSE 25**

**“And he builded an altar there”** — For the significance of altars, see comments on Gen. 8:20; 12:7. The altar was built in association with *The Well of the Oath*, dramatising the manner in which the promise, endorsed by the oath (Gen. 22:16), will be fulfilled: namely, through the antitypical altar, the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 13:10).

**“And called upon the name of Yahweh”** — Hebrew: *kara beshem*, he “invoked in the name of He Who will be”. This is the Mediator whom Yahweh had proclaimed to provide from the beginning (Gen. 3:15), and through whom the promise will be fulfilled.

**“Pitched his tent there: and there Isaac’s servants digged a well”** — He established himself at the *Well of the Oath* adjacent to the altar of worship.

### **The Philistines Submit To Isaac** — Vv. 26-31

*Isaac now learns that patience can beget peace. He is visited by Abimelech with certain of his officers. He first receives them with suspicion, accusing them of hating and persecuting him. But his visitors allay his feelings by stating that they have been impressed by his forbearance and prosperity and by the clear evidence that Yahweh is with him. They ask that Isaac enter into covenant-relationship with them, and this is confirmed at a feast prepared for the purpose.*

### **VERSE 26**

**“Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar”** — He came on a mission of peace, which was a great contrast to his previous hostility (cp. v. 16). The incident illustrates the Proverb: “When a man’s ways please Yahweh, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him” (Prov. 16:7). Abimelech’s attitude foreshadows that of the Gentiles in the Age to come, when they shall desire peace with those with whom they have been at enmity because of their adherence to the Truth. See Isa. 45:14-17; Zeph. 3:19-20.

**“And Ahuzzath one of his friends”** — The word Ahuzzath signifies *possessions*. The term “*the friend of the king*” was the title given to the king’s confidential adviser or vizier. See 2 Sam. 16:16; 1 Kings 4:5; 1 Chron. 27:33.

**“And Phichol the chief captain of his army”** — His name signifies *Great, Strong, or Mouth of all*. He represented the military authority, whilst Ahuzzath represented the civil authority. The three men thus constituted an official deputation, rep-

resenting the mighty of the land. They approached Isaac submissively, as the mighty of the land will do the Lord Jesus Christ and his associates in the Age to come (Psa. 72:9-10).

### **VERSE 27**

**“And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you?”** — Isaac administers a well-merited rebuke to Abimelech, as he enquires the reason for the approach made to him. It is natural for the world to hate the people of God. The Lord warned of this (John 15:18-20). The hatred is foolish, sinful, and unreasonable, stemming from the mind of the flesh in its opposition to the mind of the spirit (Rom. 8:7; Gal. 5:17). It is a manifestation of the serpent-mind in its opposition to the seed of the woman.

### **VERSE 28**

**“And they said, We saw certainly that Yahweh was with thee”** — They do not deny that they once hated Isaac and acted in an unreasonable way towards him; but they acknowledge that circumstances have forced them to see their mistake. The antitype will be fulfilled when the Gentile world will do likewise. Speaking of the Lord in glory, the prophet declared: “The Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit” (Jer. 16:19; Isa. 45:14; Psa. 72:10-11).

**“And we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us”** — Having been forced to recognise that Isaac was blessed and prospered by God, the Philistines were afraid of opposing Him any longer.

**“And thee, and let us make a covenant with thee”** — The Hebrew signifies “Let us *cut* a covenant.” See our notes on Gen. 15:10. The time will come when the Gentiles will seek to enter into covenant-relationship with Christ. In a Messianic Psalm, referring to the Age to come, Christ is represented as saying: “All nations compassed me about; but in the name of Yahweh will I destroy them” (Psa. 118:10). Rotherham renders the latter

phrase as “surely I will make them be circumcised,” or enter into covenant relationship. Isaiah declares: “The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish” (Isa. 60:12). Zechariah speaks of them going up to Jerusalem “to keep the feast of Tabernacles” (Zech. 14:16) which involves entering into covenant-relationship with Yahweh through His Son. The Philistine deputation, therefore, foreshadowed the approach that Gentiles shall make to Christ in the future.

### VERSE 29

**“That thou wilt do us no hurt”** —

The Hebrew (see mg.) is: “If thou shalt do us evil.” Having observed that Yahweh was with Isaac, and that all their opposition availed nothing, they feared lest he might turn upon them, and so bring God’s curse to bear against them. To prevent that, they requested that Isaac “cut a covenant,” with them. This would prevent him turning against them, for if he did so, having broken his covenant, the curse of God would reach forth to him.

**“As we have not touched thee”** —

This was certainly not true, as they, through their servants, had robbed Isaac of at least two wells. But perhaps Abimelech had in mind Isaac’s earlier sojourn among them when he had practised deception on the Philistines. Be that as it may, nations will be called into account at the return of the Lord for their attitude and actions against Yahweh’s people. See Dan. 7:10-12.

**“And as we have done unto thee nothing but good”** — This statement is even more extraordinary. They had filled in the wells dug by Abraham, and had driven Isaac from those which he had dug. But perhaps the opposition Isaac received from the herdmen of Gerar was not with the connivance of Abimelech. Nevertheless the king disclaimed responsibility for it. He urged that Isaac should enter into covenant-relationship with him on the basis of his attitude to him. National judgment will be administered on a similar basis in the Age to come (Matt. 25:32). Those nations that have “helped forward the affliction” of Israel will be treated

accordingly (see Zech. 1:15-16; Isa. 49:26; 51:22-23). The time is coming, when the nations, like Abimelech, will recognise the Divine providence that overshadows God’s people, and they will be compelled to acknowledge that “God is in thee” (Isa. 45:14). This was foreshadowed in the drama that took place so long ago at the *Well of the Oath*, Beersheba.

**“And have sent thee away in peace”**

— In fact, they had driven Isaac away out of envy and hatred (cp. Vv. 16,27). But Abimelech is trying to plead his own cause, and, constantly interprets his behaviour in a manner favourable to himself. As the Proverb expresses it: “All the ways of man are clean in his own eyes; but Yahweh weigheth the spirits” (Prov. 16:2).

**“Thou art now the blessed of Yahweh”** —

This was apparent to Abimelech, and constituted the real reason for his changed attitude towards Isaac. In stating this, he gave acknowledgement of the Truth. The time is coming when the nations will similarly acknowledge that Yahweh is with Israel, and will seek a covenant with Christ on that basis (see Ezek. 37:28; 39:23-29).

### VERSE 30

**“And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink”** —

This was a sacrificial feast whereby they were joined in covenant. It was normal to confirm covenants in that way in ancient times. A similar act accompanied Jacob’s covenant with Laban (Gen. 31:54); while in the Mosaic system the sacrificial meal formed an important part of the worship (Lev. 7:15,31). See notes on Gen. 15:9-10. Christ will invite the nations to partake of a sacrificial feast that he will provide, and whereby they will enter into covenant-relationship with him. See Isa. 25:7-10.

**“They did eat and drink”** — They entered into agreement with him.

### VERSE 31

**“And they rose up betimes in the morning, and swore one to another: and Isaac sent them away”** — Here again, there is a foreshadowing of things to

come. The morning comprised a new day in their relationships, foreshadowing the “new day” when the nations shall be brought into subjection to Christ (Mal. 4).

**“And they departed from him in peace”** — To Abimelech, Isaac now appeared as a prince of peace! Thus the incident, which opened in an atmosphere of deceit and doubt, to move on to one of envy, hatred and opposition, finally terminated in all the parties being united in peace. Abimelech sought this because he had come to recognise the reality of Yahweh’s work in Isaac, and now was afraid to oppose His servant. His attitude foreshadowed the divine purpose in the Gentiles to be fulfilled at the second advent of the Seed of Promise when the Lord Jesus appears as Prince of Peace.

The word *shalom*, rendered “peace,” is from a root signifying *to be at one*. This unity was established between Isaac and the Philistines through Abimelech acknowledging the purpose of God in Isaac, testifying that the divine blessing was manifested in him, and entering into covenant-relationship between Isaac and the Philistines through the sacrificial feast, provided by the son of Abraham.

### The Re-establishment Of The Well Of The Oath — Vv. 32-33

*The peace established with Abimelech is climaxed by the happy discovery of a plentiful supply of water through the digging of a well adjacent to where Isaac was staying. Isaac recalls the name that his father gave to the place, and endorses it.*

#### VERSE 32

**“And it came to pass the same day, that Isaac’s servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and said unto him”** — The time indicated links this incident with the one recorded previous to it. On the same day that peace is established, the *Well of the Oath* is uncovered, and its refreshing, living water is enjoyed. The well symbolises the “water of life” that is capable of springing up into everlasting life in all those who partake of it.

**“We have found water”** — This is what all servants of the true Seed of promise exclaim when they are drawn to the Gospel. Cp. John 4:14.

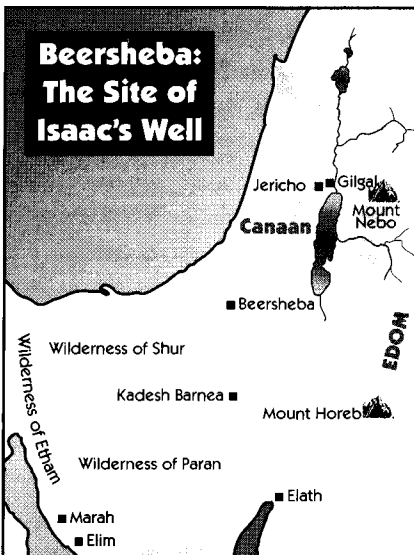
#### VERSE 33

**“And he called it Shebah”** — Shebah signifies an *oath*. It is from a root, *shaba*, signifying *to be complete*, hence *to give satisfaction*.

**“Therefore the name of the city is Beer-sheba unto this day”** — It signifies the *Well Of The Oath*, or the *Well Of The Seven*, for the same Hebrew word does service for *seven* and *oath*. Hence the idea of seven in Bible numerics being related to completion.

### Esau’s Marriages Grieve His Parents — vv. 34-35

*Esau’s lack of judgment when he sold his birthright to Jacob, is now matched by his poor choice in regard to his wives. He therefore selects two pagan women for that purpose, refusing to be guided by his parents’ wishes in the matter. He ignores the spiritual environment and outlook of those of his choice, and the fact that the moral standards of the nations from whence they were drawn were much lower than those of his family. He seeks to please the flesh rather than God.*



**VERSE 34**

**“And Esau was forty years old”** — Forty is the number of probation. Esau’s probation was climaxed by this unfortunate choice. It shows that the contempt that he had displayed for the birthright in selling it to Jacob was not mere accident, but reflected his character.

**“When he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite”** — Judith is the feminine form of Jehudia, which has the same meaning as Judah, namely *Praise*. When Esau violated the Abrahamic principle which opposed marriage with an idolater (Gen. 24:3) Esau was exactly the same age as his father Isaac had been when, sixty years before, he married Rebekah. Beeri signifies *Spring-man*. Apparently he was given this name because he discovered hot springs in the area. His original name appears to have been Anah (Gen. 36:24 — R.V.).

**“And Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite”** — Bashemath and Elon signify *Fragrance* and *Oak* or *Strength* respectively. Both Esau’s wives came from the Hittite race, a name that signifies terror. The Hittites were among the Canaanitish tribes from whom the patriarchs were warned to keep separate.

**VERSE 35**

**“Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah”** — The Hebrew is *bitterness of spirit* (see mg). Isaac and Rebekah experienced mingled anger and sorrow through the action of their son. Perhaps he tried to pacify them by changing the name of his first wife from Aholibamah (Ch. 36:5), to Judith which is a completely Semitic name. But if this were the case, it did not succeed. Esau’s action in defying the wish of his parents in the case of these marriages, demonstrates just how profane he was.

He not only despised his birthright, but by marrying Hittite women showed that he was not worthy of it. Evidently he wanted to abandon the pilgrim life for that of the world. His wives obviously were women of the world (cp. Ch. 28:9), whilst he, himself, is described as a “fornicator” (Heb. 12:16). They drew him further and further away from the Truth, causing additional grief to his parents. Though Isaac and Rebekah were divided in their love for their two sons, Rebekah preferring Jacob, and Isaac showing greater affection for Esau, they were united in their opposition to such ungodly marriages (cp. Ch. 26:35; 27:46).

**CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN****JACOB SUPPLANTS ESAU IN THE BLESSING**

*The events narrated in this chapter, show how the divine purpose is worked out through a tangled skein of human weakness and deception. The characters of the story are the four members of the patriarchal family. Two of them, Isaac and Esau, seek to frustrate the revealed purpose of God; the other two, Rebekah and Jacob, seek to carry it out, but by wrong methods. Each of the four is rebuked and disappointed. Isaac is deceived and frightened; Esau is denied the birthright; Jacob has to flee; Rebekah loses her favourite son. These circumstances illustrates the Proverb: “There are many devices in a man’s heart; nevertheless the counsel of Yahweh, that shall stand” (Prov. 19:21).*

### Isaac Prepares To Bless His Firstborn — Vv. 1-4.

*Isaac doubtless had been told by Rebekah that God had decreed that the blessing was to be confirmed on Jacob, but with a deep love for Esau, in the absence of any direct revelation, and weakened by sickness which could well have affected the clarity of his thinking, he makes arrangements to confer the blessing where he desired it to be bestowed. Perhaps he enquired of God Who gave no answer in order to test the faith of Jacob and Rebekah. Once the blessing was conferred on Jacob, he did not demur, but recognised it as an act of God*

#### VERSE 1

**“And it came to pass”** — We shall show later that Jacob left home when he was about fifty-seven years of age. It is most likely that the events of this chapter took place on the eve of his flight; so that some seventeen years had passed since Esau had married the Hittite women: time enough for the shock of these marriages to fade.

**“That when Isaac was old”** — He was one hundred and seventeen years of age.

**“And his eyes were dim, so that he could not see”** — He was afflicted with some malady which caused him to believe that he was about to die, and which weakened his sight and strength. This affected his spiritual vigour. He needed “eye-salve that (he might) see” (Rev. 3:18). He should have realised that Esau was unfit for the blessing: both through his action in selling his birthright, as in marrying pagan wives.

**“He called Esau his eldest son”** — Throughout the narrative Esau is treated as *his* son and Jacob is described as *her* son (cp. Vv. 5,6), showing how divided this household had become.

**“And said unto him, My son: and he said, Behold, here am I”** — Esau showed respect and subservience to his father when it pleased him so to do; but on other occasions, he did not hesitate to defy him. He was the actual deceiver, not Jacob. He traded on his father’s love to obtain some-

thing which he had already sold to Jacob (Gen. 25:30-34). He despised his birthright, and would risk nothing for it; but he was not above robbing Jacob of his right if it cost him nothing to so do. Isaac could well have been in ignorance of the transaction between Esau and Jacob.

#### VERSE 2

**“And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death”** — He had a premonition that he was about to die (cp. v. 7). Actually he subsequently recovered from this illness, and lived for another sixty-three years (Gen. 35:28).

#### VERSE 3

**“Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow”** — This is the only occasion where *teli* has been translated “quiver.” It is from a root signifying *to suspend*, and could relate to a javelin, a sword, or a quiver.

**“And go out to the field, and take me some venison”** — In his weakened state, Isaac craved the meat that Esau’s hunting could provide him; so he urges his son to go out and hunt, as a man of flesh. Literally the words signify “hunt me some hunting.” See mg. Cp. Gen. 25:27.

#### VERSE 4

**“And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die”** — Notice how Isaac is temporarily dominated by the flesh. This is part of his sickness which has affected him spiritually. Notice how *I, me* and *my* dominate the verse: “make *me* savoury meat”, “as *I* love”, “Bring it to *me*, that *I* may eat; that *my* soul may bless thee before *I* die.”

#### Rebekah’s Counter-plot — Vv. 5-10

*Motivated by love for “her son,” Rebekah is prepared to endure any curse to secure his interests (Gen. 27:13). Moreover she is fortified by the realisation that the divine right in the bestowal of the blessing is with Jacob (vv. 7-10). Though she does not desire to deceive Isaac, she can see no other way out. The narrative reveals her as a woman with a self-sacri-*

*ficing love, a keen mind, and with ability to seize every opportunity. She reveals the same strength of will on behalf of Jacob, as she had shown when she elected to follow Eliezer to the land (Ch. 24:58); and the same awareness of a divine purpose as she exhibited at the birth of her sons (Ch. 25:22-23). Her deception is not to be commended, but her motives were good. This of course, does not excuse her, for it is not right to do evil that good may come. She should have manifested greater faith in the providence of Yahweh.*

**VERSE 5**

**“And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt venison, and to bring it”** — She overheard the conversation. Perhaps she sensed that something important was happening and eavesdropped on purpose. Notice the personal pronoun “his son” instead of “their son.”

**VERSE 6**

**“And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying”** — Notice the contrast in this verse: “her son,” instead of “their son.”

**VERSE 7**

**“Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before Yahweh before my death”** — The meal was to confirm the blessing “before Yahweh,” i.e. before *He who will confirm it*. The words “before Yahweh” are lacking in Isaac’s comment (v. 4), but are supplied by Rebekah.

**VERSE 8**

**“Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee”** — She appropriates Jacob as “her son” as Isaac had referred to Esau as “his son” (v. 1). The household was hopelessly divided on the issue.

**VERSE 9**

**“Go now to the flock”** — The difference in the approach of the two parties is evident. One went to hunt in the field (a

symbol of the world; Matt. 13:38); the other went to the flock. If Esau hunted for deer, which is most likely, he sought for that which could be eaten but not offered in sacrifice (Deut. 14:5). His hunting was only to satisfy the flesh.

**“And fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats”** — These were animals such as could be offered in sacrifice. Perhaps one was specifically used for that purpose, for it is obvious that two would not be needed to satisfy the hunger of Isaac. Both were slain, for Jacob was covered with their skins (v. 16).

**“And I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth”** — Rebekah evidently adjudged that in his sickness Isaac could not discern between venison and goats’ meat: between natural and spiritual food (1 Cor. 2:14).

**VERSE 10**

**“And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death”** — It seemed to all the family that Isaac was on the point of death. Obviously this was a test of their faith, as to how they would react under such trial.

**Jacob’s Deception — Vv. 11-25**

*Jacob’s greatest fault was his timidity. It leads him into a pathway of deceit. Dominated by his mother, in awe of his father (Vv. 12-13), and fearful of his brother (Vv. 42-46), his timidity, his weakness of the flesh, causes him to resort to duplicity and cunning to obtain that which Yahweh had reserved for him and which he would have ultimately received in any case.*

**VERSE 11**

**“And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man”** — See Ch. 25:25.

**“And I am a smooth man”** — Jacob was in need of a covering, and recognised it! Esau had a natural hairy covering which typified a veneer of self-righteousness. Nakedness is a symbol of sin (Rev. 16:15).

**VERSE 12**

**“My father peradventure will feel**



me" — Isaac's sickness had brought some affliction to his eyes, so he was almost blind (v. 1).

**"And I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing"** — "I shall be revealed for what I am". Jacob recognised his need of a covering without which he would be seen to be demanding that which was his brother's. We also need to seek the covering of Christ to achieve a greater blessing.

#### VERSE 13

**"And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me them"**

— We can admire the intense, self-sacrificing love of Rebekah for her son, even though we regret the means she adopted to obtain the blessing for him. Her deep love is matched by that of Paul for Israel after the flesh: "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:3; see also Exod. 32:32).

#### VERSE 15

**"And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau"** — The Hebrew is *desirable* raiment (see mg). Esau's raiment comprised desirable garments as far as Jacob was concerned, because they were probably the priestly garments of the first-born. They belonged to Esau as the "eldest son." The Hebrew word rendered "raiment" signifies a covering, and is used of the sacred, distinctive robes, as worn by the priests to denote their holy office (See Exod. 28:2,4; Lev. 10:6; 21:10).

**"Which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son"** — This is a significant statement which indicates that the "goodly raiment" comprised no ordinary clothes, but garments for a special purpose and occasion. This raiment had not been left in the charge of Esau's pagan wives, but retained by Rebekah. Jacob was elected by God before birth to receive the blessing (Rom. 9:11), and Rebekah now equips him to enter into the presence of his father to receive it.

#### VERSE 16

**"And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck"** — The goats were not the European kind, but the oriental camel-goat, the wool of which is black, silky and of much finer texture than that of the European goat. Sometimes it is used as a substitute for human hair (Cp. Song. 4:1). Wool of this fine texture was placed on Jacob's hands and the smooth of his neck. "Hands" speak of labour; the "back of the neck" speaks of obstinate rebelliousness. In sinful, mortal man, both need covering! Though Rebekah used wrong methods, she recognised what was needed.

#### VERSE 17

**"And she gave the savoury meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob"** — Figurative of the offering (Eph. 5:2), through which worshippers approach the Father (Ezek. 20:41). Clothed with priestly garments, with his nakedness covered, and bearing an offering in his hands, Jacob came into the presence of his father. In similar manner we approach the presence of Yahweh.

#### VERSE 18

**"And he came unto his father, and said, My father"** — However ignoble was Jacob's method, he was yet entering his father's presence with the genuine and earnest desire to seek a blessing from him.

**"and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son?"** — Jacob failed to successfully imitate the voice of Esau (cp. v. 22), requiring, on his part, further deception. One mistake often leads to others, unless deception is acknowledged and abandoned.

#### VERSE 19

**"And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy firstborn"** — The statements made by Jacob to his father in this and the following verse, are untruths; and yet, beneath the surface, they contained some substance of truth, by which Jacob probably justified his use of them. It was a lie to claim that he was Esau. Yet by elec-

tion (Rom. 9:12) and by agreement with his brother (Gen. 25:33), he was the first-born, and entitled to the blessing. If he had spoken boldly in faith to his father, and pointed out these facts, he may well have obtained the blessing by honorable and open means. But his timidity, and his fear that he might be passed over, got the better of him, and he resorted to a lie.

**“I have done according as thou badest me”** — This was deception, if not outright lie. Jacob had not received any instruction from his father.

**“Arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison”** — The word rendered “venison,” signifies hunting (see note v. 3). Jacob had not gone hunting for the animal that Rebekah had prepared for Isaac.

**“That thy soul may bless me”** — This was the dominating motive of Jacob. The objective was worthy; the means he adopted to obtain it were wrong. His deception and lies sprang from his lack of faith in the ability of God to override the intentions of Isaac.

#### VERSE 20

**“And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son?”** — The question was a suspicious one. Isaac needed reassuring and sought an explanation.

**“And he said, Because Yahweh thy God brought it to me”**—To allay any doubt in the mind of Isaac, Jacob became more enmeshed in a lie, uttering it in the name of God. The statement really means that it was through the providence of God that he was able to supply it. In a way, this was true, because, but for the promise of God to Rebekah, he would not then have appeared before his father. But, at best, it was deception.

#### VERSE 21

**“And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not”** — In his physically weakened state, Isaac was confused. There was something wrong, but he did not know what it was. And now, the very thing which Jacob had suggested to Rebekah as

likely to happen (v. 12), took place.

#### VERSE 22

**“And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said”** — The trembling hands of the sick and confused father felt the hairy covering that Jacob had placed over his skin. Isaac’s weakness was such that his hands were not sensitive, so that the deception went undetected.

**“The voice is Jacob’s voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau”** — The voices of the two brothers were probably so much alike that their father could believe himself mistaken. Unconsciously Isaac uttered a proverb that has been illustrated many times since, when actions do not conform to speech. It is possible for a believer to utter platitudes concerning God and His requirements, and yet act in an inconsistent way thereto. The result is deception and confusion.

#### VERSE 23

**“And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau’s hands: so he blessed him”** — These words are anticipatory (v. 27). At this stage Isaac’s doubts were dissolved, and he decided to carry on with the blessing.

#### VERSE 24

**“And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am”** — This is probably a formal question preparatory to the bestowal of the blessing. To this direct question, Jacob was forced to give a direct lie. The fear of God had been driven from his mind through fear of the flesh. One deception upon another led to this final completely false statement.

#### VERSE 25

**“And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son’s venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank”** — The food was designed as a sort of sacrificial feast preparatory to the bestowal of the blessing. In expressing himself by

saying "that my soul may bless thee," Isaac unconsciously testified that he was moved by natural fleshly considerations. The food made him feel better, put him in an expansive frame of mind, so that he felt ready to bestow the important blessing. In this incident, when the family should have been united in the heights of spiritual experience, and Yahweh and His purpose should have been in all their minds, each one was motivated by fleshly considerations, and the family possibly deteriorated to the lowest point of its spiritual experience. How many ecclesias have found themselves in that position through a little folly! When such an occasion arises, let each one take care and seek for utmost honesty.

#### The Blessing Bestowed — Vv. 26-29

*The patriarchal blessing was completely binding (cp. v.33). It comprised the blessing of God ensuring prosperity; divine justice and protection, with punishment meted out to those who cursed the recipient of it; and the extension of its privileges to those who would be gracious to such. Contrary to the will of Isaac, the blessing was pronounced upon Jacob, whom God had predetermined to that end. This demonstrates that "it is not of him that willeth, but of God that showeth mercy" (Rom. 9:16).*

#### VERSE 26

**"And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son"** — This was the paternal kiss of acceptance and affection (Luke 15:20). It indicated that Isaac was assured that Esau stood before him ready to receive the blessing.

#### VERSE 27

**"And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and said"** — See note v. 15. These were the priestly garments that Jacob had put on. Cp. the antitype Eph. 5:2; Rom. 13:14; Isa. 61:10.

**"See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which Yahweh hath blessed"** — The symbol of the true Israel

of God (Isa. 51:1-3).

#### VERSE 28

**"Therefore"** — The verse, and consequently the blessing, is thus aligned with the priestly raiment of the firstborn that Jacob was wearing. This represents the basis of the blessing. Believers only will be blessed if properly clothed (Rev. 16:15; Isa. 61:10; Gal. 3:26-29).

**"God give thee"** — In this, and the next verse, the *content* of the blessing is outlined. It comprises three main sections: prosperity, power and position. God or *Ha-Elohim, the Elohim* are said to be the channel of that which the previous verse states Yahweh supervises. It is Yahweh Who directs the blessing, but the Elohim who carry it out (Cp. Psa. 103:20; Heb. 1:14). The terms of the blessing have had their application in the past, but their ultimate and complete fulfilment is in the future.

**"Of the dew of heaven"** — The dew of heaven symbolises blessings from above, both materially and spiritually. See Zech. 8:12. Divine truth is likened to dew (Deut. 32:2), and the time will come when Israel's "heavens," or the government of the future Age, will drop down "dew" (Deut. 33:13,28). The Law of Yahweh, and His Word, will be sent into all the earth (Isa. 2:2-4). The blessings Israel are yet to experience are likened unto "dew" (Hos. 14:5).

**"And the fatness of the earth"** — The choicest part of the earth has been reserved for Israel. Compare the use of the term in Gen. 45:18, and consider Moses' description of the Promised Land (Deut. 11:9-12). The land of Israel is yet to flourish as the Garden of Eden (Isa. 51:3).

**"And plenty of corn and wine"** — Plenty of these products suggests ample increase, due to the goodness of Yahweh. Corn and wine speak of the strength (corn) and joy (wine) of life.

#### VERSE 29

**"Let people serve thee"** — This is both a prayer and a prophecy. The literal Hebrew is more direct: *"And will peoples serve thee"* (see *A New Old Testament*).

The word *people* rendered in the singular number in the A.V. is plural, *amim*, in the Hebrew, and is so rendered as "*peoples*" in the RV. Invariably, where this word appears in its plural form in Scripture it relates to Gentile peoples, and not to Israel; though in its singular form, it can relate to either. The prophecy, therefore, speaks of peoples being in subjection to Israel, which will occur when Messiah rules. Zechariah declares: "In those days, it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you" (Zech. 8:23).

**"And nations bow down to thee" —**

In Messiah's times, nations shall pay homage to him, and will respect Israel. The blessing to Jacob is cited in Psa. 72:11 in relation to the coming reign of Christ: "Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him." At that time, the status of "first dominion" will be given to Israel (Mic. 4:8).

**"Be Lord over thy brethren" —**

This aspect of the blessing will be fulfilled by Christ in his supremacy over all mankind (Phil. 2:11), by the Ecclesia over all other systems (Rev. 3:9), and by Israel over the Gentile nations throughout the world (Mic. 4:8).

**"And let thy mother's sons bow down to thee" —**

As Isaac and Rebekah had identified Esau and Jacob respectively as *his* and *her* son (cp. Vv. 5-6), Isaac imagined that he was predicting the submission of Jacob to Esau. But, in fact, the opposite proved to be the case, in accordance with the will of God. Typically, this part of the blessing pointed forward to Christ, who was treated as an alien by his mother's children (though not by those of his Father — see Psa. 69:8; John 7:5), though, subsequently, they were compelled to bow down to him (cp. 1 Cor. 15:7; James 1:1). This also will be the experience of the Ecclesia (Rev. 3:9; Song 1:6). Paul likened Israel after the flesh to his "brethren" (Rom. 9:3), and ultimately, they will be compelled to bow down to the true "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16).

**"Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee" —** Whilst this has a national application to Israel after the flesh (cp. Ezek. 26:1-2), it has particular bearing upon the spiritual Seed (see Gen. 12:3). Moreover, as the blessing extended blessings to those who blessed Jacob, Esau, could have enjoyed them if he accepted the terms of the blessing of Jacob.

**The Deception Discovered — Vv. 30-33**

*No sooner had the blessing been bestowed, and Jacob had departed, than Esau entered the tent with the meat that he had prepared. He did so fully expecting to receive the blessing. Isaac was amazed to hear his voice and knew immediately that he had been tricked. The whole circumstances threw him into a paroxysm of fear and trembling.*

**VERSE 30**

**"And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting" —** He did so full of expectancy, expecting to receive the blessing, believing that he had outwitted his brother.

**VERSE 31**

**"And he also had made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father, and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me" —** Esau had no right to the blessing, having despised his birthright and sold it at a contemptible price (Gen. 25:31-34). Therefore, his action at this moment, was a base attempt to rob his brother of what was his, and defeat the purpose of God. He was attempting to secretly, unlawfully, and feloniously appropriate to himself what he knew belonged to Jacob. If Jacob was guilty of lying, Esau was guilty of an even worse deception.

**VERSE 32**

**"And Isaac his father said unto him,**

**Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy firstborn, Esau?"** — The comedy turns to tragedy as the blind Isaac realises that he has been duped. For the moment, however, he cannot believe the evidence of his ears.

### VERSE 33

**"And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him?"** — The Hebrew *charad* signifies *to shudder with terror*. Why did he do so? Certainly the knowledge that he had been duped may well have angered him, or stirred him to indignation, but the word implies that he was moved by fear. This, doubtless, was caused by a dawning realisation that he would have bestowed the blessing upon the wrong party, and so would have been opposing the purpose of God. The blessing was the most precious possession that he had, and once given, was irrevocable (see Heb. 11:20; Rom. 11:29). The revelation had been given to Rebekah that it was to go to Jacob, but evidently the same knowledge had not been divinely imparted to Isaac. Doubtless Rebekah would have disclosed this revelation to him, but most likely he had set it aside as being an attempt on her part to secure it for her favourite son. Now the realisation that he would have opposed the will of God greatly disturbed the faithful and God-fearing Isaac.

**"Yea, and he shall be blessed"** — Isaac possibly realised that God had overshadowed his intention so that the blessing was conferred upon the more worthy contender for it. As the "gifts of God" are "without repentance (change)" (Rom. 11:29) he realised that the blessing was irrevocable.

### Esau's Complaint and Reward

— Vv. 34-40

*Esau's previous expectancy and excitement now turned to bitter hatred against his brother. He raised a great and exceeding bitter cry, and pleaded with his father to bestow a blessing upon him. But*

*it was too late. His fatal mistake, as Paul shows (Heb. 12:17), was in selling the birthright, and now his efforts to repair that error were too late, for he had never really repented of his earlier folly. The apostle cites the case of Esau's "profanity" as a warning to believers lest any of them should "fall of the grace of God".*

### VERSE 34

**"And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father"** — This was evidently induced by frustrated anger at the way the brother he hated had outwitted him. Paul comments: "Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears" (Heb. 12:16,17). The word "repentance" is *metanoia* and signifies *change of mind*. Esau did not manifest any godly sorrow for his past conduct or attitude of mind, but rather, by tears and pleading, sought to change Isaac's mind. But such was impossible, for the blessing having been given, it would be fulfilled by Yahweh, not by Isaac. It was now out of his province to bestow it upon another, or to change it in any way.

**"Bless me, even me also, O my father"** — He now learned, at long last, the value of the spiritual things he had previously despised.

### VERSE 35

**"And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing"** — Jacob had obtained what could have been Esau's. But, in fact, it was not Esau's blessing at all, nor, for that matter, was it Isaac's to give. It belonged to Yahweh who had overshadowed the events in that troubled and divided household in accordance with His will.

### VERSE 36

**"And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted**

me these two times" — Jacob signifies *supplanter* as in the margin of the A.V.

"He took away my birthright" — This is untrue. Esau sold it "for one morsel of meat" (Heb. 12:16). That was the value he then placed upon it.

"And, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing" — Again this is untrue. It was not Esau's blessing but Jacob's, for, from the beginning, God had declared that he should receive it (Gen. 25:23).

"And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?" — The question reveals that Esau had no conception of the spiritual character of the blessing. He did not realise that it was a divine blessing, and came from God, not from Isaac.

#### VERSE 37

"And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?" — Power and provisions were given unto Jacob, and servitude reserved for Esau. All the pleading possible could not alter the blessing. It was too late for Esau. He had dissipated his life and now had to take the consequences.

#### VERSE 38

"And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept" — Paul cites this as an example of the weeping of those at the judgment seat who, like Esau, have frittered away their lives (Heb. 12:17). At this moment of crisis, Esau professed a passionate longing for the blessing, which, previously, he had treated with contempt. As Esau wept, so there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 8:12) at the judgment seat, when the foolish lament their lost opportunities.

#### VERSE 39

"And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of

the dew of heaven from above" — It was impossible for Isaac to offer this to Esau because it was part of the blessing given to Jacob. The literal Hebrew has "*from the fatness of the earth shall be thy dwelling*" etc. The R.S.V. renders: "*Away from the fatness of the earth... and away from the dew of heaven on high...*" The fatness of the earth, and the dew of heaven, can be applied figuratively for spiritual benefits (cp. Deut. 33:28). Esau, as typical of the profane man of the flesh (Heb. 12:16), and unilluminated Gentiles, lived by the sword, and not by the spirit (cp. Rom. 8:5; Gal. 6:8). The physical condition of his dwelling place illustrated this, for he ultimately occupied the harsh, dry, desert region of Edom and Mt. Seir, illustrative of the wilderness of life (cp. Deut. 2:5; Mal. 1:3), developing into a warlike, quarrelsome people used throughout Scripture as typical of the flesh in political manifestation.

#### VERSE 40

"By thy sword shalt thou live" — This is also typical of the Gentile man of flesh, in contrast to the man of the spirit.

"And shalt serve thy brother" — Ultimately this will prove true, as we observe from the blessing bestowed upon Jacob.

"When thou shalt have the dominion" — Edom obtained the dominion when the people of Israel departed from their God. Thus during the times of the Gentiles, the dominion has been with Edom, or fleshly power.

"And it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck" — A yoked animal is restrained. The term indicates that Esau would wander at will once the yoke was removed. That has been the case during the times of the Gentiles as the flesh has taken hold, and Gentilism has extended its influence on all sides.

#### Jacob Flees From Esau's Hatred

— Vv. 41-46

*Tension in the tents of Isaac increased as the result of Jacob's deception of his father. Esau viewed him with murderous*

*hatred, openly boasting that he would destroy him on the death of his father. The ever-watchful Rebekah took heed of Esau's attitude, and sought to circumvent it. She urged Jacob to temporarily withdraw from the encampment of Isaac, and seek refuge with her brother in Haran.*

**VERSE 41**

**"And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him"** — However disappointed and remorseful he may have been, Esau was not penitent. He hated Jacob because of the blessing, as men of the flesh hate those who are dominated by the promises of God. Abel (Gen. 4:5), Joseph (Gen. 37:4), Elijah (1 Kings 19:2), and Christ (John 15:25) were all hated by their contemporaries. The Lord warned his disciples that they could expect the hatred of the world (Matt. 10:17-29; Mark 13:9-13; Luke 12:2-9, 51-53; John 15:18-20; 17:14), for the world stands in relation to saints, where Esau stood in relation to Jacob.

**"And Esau said in his heart"** — Esau was the man of flesh. His name is also Edom, or Adam, and he types the old Man (Rom. 6:6). Being unilluminated by the Word, from their hearts "proceed evil thoughts" (Mark 7:21), for they are governed only by the "thinking of the flesh" (Rom. 8:5).

**"The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob"** — Esau's hatred caused him to look forward to the death of his father that he might enact his vengeance upon Jacob. His love for his father was but a surface love, for he was dominated by the flesh. He fulfilled the observation of Psa. 37:12-13:

*"The wicked plotteth against the just  
And gnasheth upon him with his teeth.  
Yahweh shall laugh at them;  
For He seeth that his day is coming."*

Esau's smouldering hatred of Jacob later became typical of the general attitude of the nation. Obadiah declared: "For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever" (v. 10).

**VERSE 42**

**"And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah"** — Thus the thoughts of Esau's heart became the expression of his lips. He openly boasted of his intentions towards Jacob, and this ugly boast was repeated to Rebekah.

**"And she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him"** — Once again she takes the initiative, always ready to advance the cause of Jacob, always on the lookout for anything that might impede his interests.

**"Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee"** — She warned Jacob to be on his guard. She was afraid that the passionate feelings of Esau the hunter might get the better of him before the death of Isaac. David, as prophetic of Christ, experienced similar opposition. Psalm 64:4-5 records his words:

*"They encourage themselves in an  
evil matter:*

*They commune of laying snares  
privily;*

*They say, Who shall see them?"*

**VERSE 43**

**"Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran"** — Rebekah recognised the urgency of the matter. Her words are in the imperative mood as in Genesis 12:1, and therefore can be literally expressed as "Flee for thyself."

**VERSE 44**

**"And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away"** — She knew Esau as a man of sudden emotional moods; whilst anger took possession of him he was capable of the most violent actions, but it soon subsided. She envisioned Jacob's trip to last but a short time, and little realised that she would never again see her favourite son in that life. The word "fury" is *chemah*, from a root signifying *to be warm*, implying the heated temper of Esau.

**VERSE 45**

**"Until thy brother's anger turn away from thee"** — The Hebrew word

for "anger" is 'aph', the nose. It is from a root signifying to *breathe hard*, indicating inward warmth manifested by hard, quick breathing. But Rebekah knew the fickle nature of her son Esau, and realised that his anger would simmer down.

**"And he forget that which thou hast done to him"** — Something would occur to draw his attention to other matters, and cause him to forget.

**"Then I will send, and fetch thee from thence"** — This was her intention, and doubtless Jacob waited many long and weary years for the call to come back home. But she never lived to see her son again. She probably died before Isaac, and possibly shortly after Jacob left home. Thus mankind proposes, but God disposes. Or, as the Proverb has it: "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of Yahweh, that shall stand" (Prov. 19:21). James teaches: "Ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (James 4:14-15).

**"Why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?"** — Rebekah was afraid that if Jacob remained, she would lose both sons: one (Jacob) by murder; and the other (Esau) by judicial execution. She had a love for both her sons, though her choice was with Jacob, for upon him, even before birth, God had pronounced His

preference.

#### VERSE 46

**"And Rebekah said to Isaac"** — Her immediate problem was how to justify Jacob's journey to Haran. Esau must not be led to suppose that evasive action was being taken in order to thwart his intention to kill Jacob, or he might act even before his father's death.

**"I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth"** — Esau's marriages had been a cause of concern to both his parents (Gen. 26:35; 28:8).

**"If Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?"** — Her concern was deeper in regard to Jacob than in regard to Esau, and now, because the family blessing had been conferred upon Jacob, Isaac shared this concern. In such circumstances, a wise marriage is most important. A wife must be obtained who is congenial to the principles of the blessing and of the Abrahamic covenant. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," commanded Paul (2 Cor. 6:14), and the patriarchs followed out that principle. It was such a marriage, as Rebekah now feared, that brought tragedy in its train just prior to the Flood (Gen. 6:1-5). Now that the blessing had been confirmed upon Jacob, it was imperative that he follow out its requirements, in accordance to the will of Yahweh.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

### THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JACOB (Chapters 28:1-36:43)

*Our analysis of the Book of Genesis, shows that the latter section of the Book, from Chapters 12 to 50, recorded patriarchal history surrounding four outstanding individuals.*

1. Abraham — Representing a Divine Call.
2. Isaac — Representing a Divine Birth.
3. Jacob — Representing a Divine Care.



#### 4. *Joseph — Representing a Divine Elevation.*

*These four men typically set forth the four steps to salvation: first, a call; then, a birth; afterwards, guidance; finally, elevation.*

### ***The Parable of The Life and Times of Jacob***

*The life and times of Jacob, independent of the influence of Isaac and Rebekah, are recorded between Chapters 28 to 36. Jacob is revealed as the man whom God remade. His character was purified by the adverse circumstances of his life, as is invariably the case with godly men. Therefore, writes Paul, God is not ashamed to be surnamed the God of Jacob (Heb. 11:16). Whereas, typically, Isaac represents the seed of Promise, Jacob represents both individuals who are called to the Promise and whose lives are necessarily reshaped to conform to God's requirements, and, also that nation (Israel after the flesh) which is the selected channel of Yahweh's purpose. Notice how his life's experiences foreshadowed those of the nation of Israel. Hosea (Ch. 12:12), referred to Jacob's flight into Syria as typical of the nation in dispersion and the state of extremity to which it would be brought.*

*1. His destiny was proclaimed before his birth (Gen. 25:20-23) — so also was that of Israel.*

*2. The contrast between him and his brother was clearly defined (Gen. 25:24-34) — so also is that between Israel and the Gentiles.*

*3. He deceived his father and was driven from the land (Gen. 27) — so also did Israel.*

*4. Nevertheless God proclaimed His intention to restore him there again (Gen. 28) — so He has in regard to Israel.*

*5. He attempted to become assimilated among the Gentiles (Gen. 29) — so also has Israel.*

*6. He prospered among the Gentiles (Gen. 30) — so also did Israel after the flesh.*

*7. He experienced growing hostility from Gentiles (Gen. 31) — so also has Israel.*

*8. He returned to the land in fear, after wrestling with the angel (Gen. 32) — Israel still wrestles with Providence.*

*9. He and his brother were reconciled in the land (Gen. 33) — this shall yet take place between Israel and the Gentiles.*

*10. He worshipped at the altar of Shechem (Gen. 33) — typical of Israel's ultimate conversion to Christ.*

*The section in Genesis, devoted specifically to the Life and Times of Jacob (Chapters 28:1-36:43), can be divided conveniently into three parts:*

1. *Jacob's Family Life in Haran — Ch. 28:1–30:43.*
2. *Jacob's Return to the Land of Promise — Ch. 31:1–33:20.*
3. *Jacob as a Pilgrim in the Land — Ch. 34:1–36:43.*

*Then follows Jacob in Egypt, but the narrative merges into The Life and Times of Joseph (See Analysis).*

#### **Isaac Blesses Jacob — vv. 1-5**

*Isaac's eyes had been opened to the divine choice of Jacob, and now he fully endorses it by words of advice and blessing. Previously he had been both physically and spiritually dim of sight (Ch. 27:1).*

#### **VERSE 1**

**“And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him”** — Isaac now takes the initiative in blessing Jacob. His eyes had been opened to the divine will in that regard, and “by faith” he “blessed Jacob” (Heb. 11:20).

**“And charged him”** — Divine blessing invariably brings added responsibility. When a person is called by God, there is a need that his character conform thereto; he comes more directly under divine law.

**“And said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan”** — Divine choice demands separation (2 Cor. 6:17-18). See notes on marriage in previous chapter. In Scripture, Canaanites are related to spiritual perversion. See notes Gen. 12:6; Zech. 14:21.

#### **VERSE 2**

**“Arise, go to Padan-aram”** — The name signifies *Plateau of the Citadel*, the district of Mesopotamia, the large plain surrounded by mountains, in which the

town of Haran is situated.

**“To the house of Bethuel thy mother's father”** — See note Gen. 24:15.

**“And take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother”** — See note Gen. 24:29. Jacob was instructed to seek a wife of his own kin, as Isaac had done, for such would be more amenable to instruction in the things of God.

#### **VERSE 3**

**“And God Almighty”** — God Almighty, or *El Shaddai*, was the name by which Yahweh was particularly known by the patriarchs (Exod. 6:3). See notes on Gen. 17:1.

**“Bless thee”** — The blessing of God derived from His grace or favour. The people of God are blessed in Christ (Eph. 1:3), who provides the channel through which the divine favour reaches to man in spite of sin. God's greatest blessing, His most wonderful favour, is the position of privilege to which we are called in Christ.

**“And make thee fruitful”** — The divine favour is the basis of fruit which ripens to the glory of Yahweh, for “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace” etc. (Gal. 5:22-23). As this is the fruit of the Spirit, and Yahweh is the Author of the Spirit-Word, so “it is God which worketh”

## **Jacob at Bethel**

Genesis 28 records the experience of Jacob at Bethel when, tired and despondent, he learned of Yahweh's loving-kindness and care in the bestowal of the blessing. It was at Bethel that Lot had made his fatal choice, and had left Abram and the promises for the allurements of Sodom. Now circumstances had forced Jacob to reverse the migration of Abram, and leave the land, via Bethel.

in those who are called "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). Such, however, must co-operate with God, by making themselves pliable to the influence of His Word.

**"Multiply thee"** — Children are "an heritage of Yahweh" (Psa. 127:3) whether natural or spiritual.

**"That thou mayest be a multitude of people"** — The word "multitude" is a translation of *qahal*, the Hebrew equivalent of *ecclesia*. As such, it signifies a called out, or separated people, an "ecclesia of people". The true ecclesia is built upon the Abrahamic covenant of promise (Eph. 2:12; Rev. 7:4). Jacob was the type of such.

#### VERSE 4

**"And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee"** — The answer to this prayer came on the night at Bethel when the blessing of Abraham was bestowed upon Jacob.

**"That thou mayest inherit the land"** — Jacob never received the land in his lifetime, and died in the land of Egypt. To receive the blessing, therefore, he must be brought again from the dead.

**"Wherein thou art a stranger"** — The margin renders "*the land of thy sojourning*". Paul comments: "Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11:12-13). Notice the progression of development in their spiritual characters. They (1) *saw*; (2) *were persuaded*; (3) *embraced*; (4) *and confessed* the things of their faith. They were not merely strangers, they were also pilgrims. A stranger is an alien in a country, and can be aimless in his attitude; but a pilgrim has an objective, he knows where he is going. The faithful always consider themselves as but sojourners, whatever their present social and political status. For example, David, though king in

Israel, confessed: "We are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding" (1 Chron. 29:15). Therefore, even though the kingdom was established under his hand, and he dwelt in Jerusalem, David realised that his present state was but transitional to that designed of Yahweh to be ultimately manifested on earth. The Rechabites, in the midst of Israel, ever kept that principle plainly before those of the people who cared to heed it. See Jer. 35:6-7. We need to remember that here "we have no continuing city" though we "seek one to come" (Heb. 11:16).

**"Which God gave unto Abraham"** — But Abraham never received it; Stephen being witness (Acts 7:5). How can the use of the past tense be justified? Paul comments: "God quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were" (Rom. 4:17).

**"And Isaac sent away Jacob"** — He departed with Isaac's blessing.

**"And he went to Padan-aram"** — This is anticipatory, closing off this section of the narrative. The details of the journey then follow. Commenting upon this statement, Hosea claims that Jacob "fled into the country of Syria" (Hos. 12:12). Jacob was moved to do so by fear of Esau.

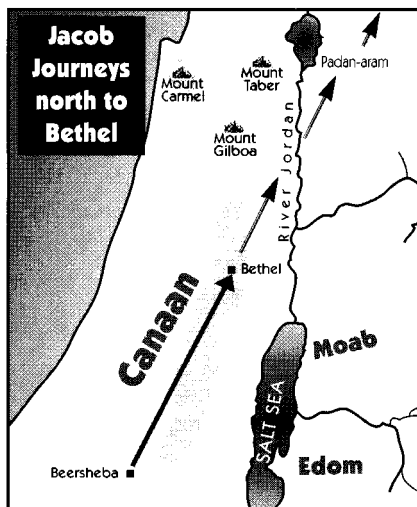
**"Unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother"** — Jacob's name is now placed first! The spiritual birthright is recognised as having been conferred upon him.

#### Esau Marries a Daughter of Ishmael — vv. 6-9

*Recognising that the blessing conferred upon Jacob was endorsed by Isaac, and concluding that this had to do with his unfortunate marriages, Esau attempts a half-hearted reform, without comprehending that the fault was in himself as much as in his marriages. His reform is governed by self-interest rather than a recognition of evil, and designed to sway his father in favour of himself rather than to please God (Heb. 12:16-17).*

## VERSE 6

“When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padan-aram, to take him a wife from



thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan” — He witnessed this in anger and envy (Gen. 27:41), and with a desire to turn the tables on Jacob. His reform was motivated only by self-interest, and not by a recognition of what is right in the sight of God.

## VERSE 7

“And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padan-aram” — The example of Jacob began to influence Esau as he witnessed the benefits that his brother obtained by so doing. Obedience in saints can have that effect upon others. It frequently provides an effective testimony to the world about (cp. 1 Pet. 3:15; 1 Tim. 4:12).

## VERSE 8

“And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father” — Adversity or opposition made the fleshly Esau more observant of others. Nevertheless, his aim was to please his father rather than God.

## VERSE 9

“Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had” — He went to the family of Abraham hoping that such an action would bring him into favor with his father. It was not because he desired to acknowledge the divine principle in marriage.

“Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham’s son” — Her name signifies sickness, but, according to the margin it was changed to Bashemath, or fragrance.

“The sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife” — See note at Gen. 25:13.

## The Vision at Bethel — vv. 10-15

This was a place of destiny to the patriarchs. It was adjacent to Bethel that Lot left Abram for the plain of Sodom, and here, also, that the angel invited Abram to look north, south, east and west at the promised inheritance (Gen. 13). Now, as Jacob began to reverse the pilgrimage of Abram, he paused at Luz, as Bethel was originally named. As he did so, the sun went down, and the darkness of night gathered around. He found no refuge at Luz, for with the oncoming of night, the gates were closed, and he was shut out from the city. Tired, despondent, lonely, fearful of his brother Esau, Jacob found himself on the stony slopes of what was later named Bethel. The ground was



Abundant stones at the village of Bethel are still seen in the area, not unlike those Jacob set up in this city for his pillow.

*strewn with wide sheets of limestone rock as it is today. On this hard couch he lay down to rest, and it could have been that in the visions of the night, the rough stones scattered around (as they are to this day) seemed to form themselves into a staircase reaching unto heaven: a stairway of unhewn stones!*

#### VERSE 10

**“And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran”** — Beersheba signifies the *Well of the Covenant*, and Haran signifies *Enlightenment*. He set off towards the latter place, a distance of about 300 miles.

#### VERSE 11

**“And he lighted upon a certain place”** — Bethel is about 70 miles from Beersheba; hence he had come a considerable distance. He was tired, lonely, despondent, and there he lay down to sleep. The “certain place” whence all will ultimately rest is the grave. Israel after the flesh likewise has its national grave (Ezek. 37).

**“And tarried there all night”** — Weary with long travel, the solitary wanderer laid him down upon the bare ground. On the north, west, and east, the view was shut in by grey, rounded hilltops, which overshadowed the place. To the south, the heights and valleys reached in a long succession to Mount Moriah, and, what was later called Jerusalem.

He “tarried there all night”. This speaks of the grave, and thus typifies the destiny of all. It also foreshadowed the state of Israel as a nation, in exile, finding itself in a political grave (Ezek. 37) during the night of Gentile times, when “the sun went down” (see Amos 8:9; John 9:4-5).

**“Because the sun was set”** — This foreshadowed the condition of Israel after the flesh when divine favour was withdrawn because of the nation’s folly. Micah declared: “Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them” (Mic. 3:6).

**“And he took of the stones of that place and put them for his pillows”** —

This formed his pillow for the night: he rested on it, and so it became as *Ebenezer*, the *Stone of help* (1 Sam. 7:12). Next day that stone was used as a memorial pillar (v. 18).

**“And he lay down in that place to sleep”** — Before doing so he doubtless looked about him. The slope of the hill close to him formed a staircase of white limestone which, in the night, seemed to stretch up to heaven. He then turned to God in prayer, beseeching His help in the despondent, distressful condition in which he found himself (Gen. 35:3), and then, with his mind relaxed through this divine communion, he closed his eyes in sleep.

#### VERSE 12

**“And he dreamed”** — This he later recognised, was God’s answer to his prayer (see Gen. 35:3).

**“And behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached heaven”** —

The curious “staircase” appearance of the hill of Bethel took shape in his dream. The word in Hebrew signifies a *stairway* rather than a ladder. Rotherham renders the phrase: “a stairway planted earthwards...” On this, *Elpis Israel* (p. 270-271) comments: “Now the interval of time between the giving of the promise and the fulfilment of it was represented to Jacob by a ladder of extraordinary length, one end of which stood at Bethel, and the other end against the vault of heaven. Here were two points of contact, the land of Judah and heaven; and the connecting medium, the ladder between them. This was a most expressive symbol, as will be perceived by considering the uses to which a ladder is applied. It is a contrivance to connect *distant points*, by which one at the lower end may reach a desired altitude. It is, then, a connecting medium between points of distance. Now if, instead of distant *localities*, distant *epochs* be substituted, *the ages and generations* which connect them will sustain a similar relation to the epochs as a ladder to the ground on which it rests, and the point of elevation against which it leans. The ladder, then, in Jacob’s vision

was representative of his seed in their generations and appointed times. One end of it was in his loins: the other, in the Lord Jesus when he should sit upon his throne, reigning over the land upon which Jacob was asleep”.

The Lord Jesus identified himself with this ladder (John 1:51). He is the way of ascent to the heavenly places above (Col. 3:1-2). No man comes to the Father but by him (John 14:6). He stands as the apex of faith (Phil. 3:14).

**“And behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it”** — Again *Elpis Israel* comments: “Upon this ladder of ages and generations, with Jacob at the bottom and his seed, the Shiloh, at the top, ‘the angels of God were seen ascending and descending’. This represented to him that the affairs of his posterity, natural and spiritual, in all their relations with the world, would be superintended by the Elohim, who would pass to and fro between earth and heaven, in the performance of their work. Hence, the apostle styles them, ‘All ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation’ (Heb. 1:14). Israel and the nations are under their viceregency till the Lord Jesus comes to assume the sovereignty of the world. When he appears in his kingdom, the land of Israel especially will be no longer subjected to their superintendence...” (p. 271).

The work of the angels in supervising the affairs of the saints, as symbolically moving up and down the staircase of Yahweh’s purpose, will cease, for, as the apostle remarks: “For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak” (Heb. 2:5).

The staircase, therefore, represented the ages and generations of the called; whilst the angels moving up and down it, symbolised the Elohistic supervision of the times and the individuals associated with the divine purpose.

### VERSE 13

**“And, behold”** — The ejaculation, *behold*, always denotes an expression of surprise, designed to draw attention to what follows.

**“Yahweh stood above it”** — In his explanation of the vision, Bro. Thomas stated that the end reached up to the Lord Jesus. Here the name *Yahweh* is expressed, a name that has been placed upon the Lord Jesus (Phil. 2:9), and which is promised to all those who overcome (Rev. 3:12). Yahweh was seen at the top of the staircase, because it is to that point of eminence to which all saints are invited. They are “in hope of the glory of God” (Rom. 5:2), in possession of “great and precious promises,” by which they might become “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4). Yahweh calls upon them to ascend the angel-supervised stairway that will lead them to glory. Even now they have reached “the heavenlies in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 1:3; 2:6) in anticipation of the time when access to the political heavens on earth in the re-established Kingdom of God, will be opened to them (Rev. 4:1).

**“And said, I am Yahweh Elohim of Abraham thy father”** — This is the covenant name of Deity, so that the voice from heaven prefaced His Bethel blessing with reference to the Abrahamic Covenant that is the foundation of the promised inheritance.

**“And the Elohim of Isaac,”** — The Elohim, or angels, were the medium of divine manifestation and care unto Isaac; they had supervised and guided his life, as Jacob very well knew.

**“The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed”** — The promise related to the land upon which he rested, and which he was about to leave as a fugitive. Jacob never possessed the land, for he died an exile in Egypt. The promise thus involves a resurrection from the dead to an earthly inheritance. Commenting upon this portion of the blessing, *Elpis Israel* states: “That he (Jacob) should have a seed, or descendant, in whom all nations should be blessed; and, that Jacob and his seed should have possession of Palestine and Syria *together* — that is, at one and the same time” (p. 270).

### VERSE 14

**“And thy seed shall be as the dust of**

**the earth**” — The promise embraced both a singular seed (the Lord Jesus Christ) and a multitudinous seed. See notes on the same promise made to Abraham (Gen. 13:16). This was a promise of assurance to the lonely, unmarried Jacob, fleeing as a fugitive from the wrath of his brother.

**“And thou shalt spread abroad to the west, east, north, and south”** — This was not fulfilled in the dispersion of Israel which was the result of punishment not of blessing, but in the spread of the Gospel among Jew and Gentile in all parts of the world by the preaching of the Apostles, and, ultimately, by the extension of Christ’s reign over all nations to be incorporated into the one Empire he will establish (Dan. 2:44; Mic. 4:7-8; Isa. 2:2-4). The Lord may have been citing this passage when he taught: “They shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God” (cp. Matt. 8:11; with Luke 13:29). All believers, whether Jew or Gentile, are the spiritual seed of Jacob, as they are of Abraham (Gal. 3:29).

In addition to individual believers, the nations as such, will likewise converge upon the land from all points of the compass. See Isa. 49:12; Zech. 14:16.

**“And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed”** — See notes on Gen. 12:3.

#### VERSE 15

**“And, behold, I am with thee”** — A similar blessing was pronounced upon Isaac (Gen. 26:24). The assurance of God’s presence is a tremendous privilege. It provides comfort in distress, help in time of need, and the certainty of ultimate victory unto life eternal in the Kingdom of God. The assurance of the Divine presence is given to all who embrace the covenants of promise. In Romans 8:31-39, Paul outlines what this means, prefacing his remarks by the statement: “If God be for us, who can be against us?” Many can oppose us, but their opposition will not prevail. The life of Jacob reveals that. He had many a distressful moment, was often conscious of powerful enemies ranged

against him, but God brought him successfully through all these vicissitudes of life (see Gen. 48:15-16).

**“And will keep thee in all places whither thou goest”** — The first section of this part of the promise gave assurance of the divine presence; this portion promises preservation. Jacob feared the wrath of his brother; he faced the unknown; he was lonely and full of foreboding, but he had the assurance that God would be with him wherever he might wander, and under whatsoever circumstances he might find himself. The same promise is made to all those who seek God in truth. Isaiah declares of such: “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of Yahweh, and their righteousness is of Me, saith Yahweh” (Isa. 54:17). In measure, the same assurance rests upon the nation of Israel which Jacob also typed. Isaiah declared: “But now thus saith Yahweh that created thee, O Jacob ... When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee” (Isa. 43:1-2).

**“And will bring thee again into this land”** — This forms the basis of all the prophecies relating to the restoration of the Jewish people. In the narrative, Jacob types both the nation of Israel as well as the covenant people of all nations. Jacob now had an assured hope for the future.

**“For I will not leave thee, until”** — The assurance of this promise is constantly reiterated in Scripture to descendants of Jacob (See Deut. 31:6,8; Josh. 1:5; 1 Kings 8:57; 1 Chron. 28:20), and is the heritage of those who embrace the covenant of promise made to Jacob. Hence Paul comments: “He (God) hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Heb. 13:5-6). Yahweh thus promised Jacob that He would never leave him. He would never abandon him to his

enemies or to circumstances. He could assure himself of the overshadowing care of Yahweh at all times. Even if weakness or sin temporarily overcame him, he was in the hands of a God Who was well able to deal with such things. Yet, in spite of this assurance, the narrative of Jacob's life frequently reveals him in adversity, challenged by enemies, and succumbing to weakness. But, invariably, though he may be found in fear, with his faith weak, his forebodings are always groundless. Is not that the experience of most sons of God? Do not we perceive in Jacob a type of ourselves?

**"I have done that which I have spoken to thee of"** — And what was that? To restore him to the land; cause his influence to spread abroad in all directions; bless all nations through the seed that he would produce; inherit the land forever in company with that seed; develop a spiritual progeny as the dust of the earth. Faith reveals that what God has promised "He (is) able also to perform" (Rom. 4:21).

But inherent in all that God promised Jacob, there was something even greater than the physical aspect of restoration. Jacob had to be made *worthy* of such an inheritance; he had to be changed in outlook and character. The adverse circumstances that he would experience, all of which were God-controlled, would accomplish that, as they do also in our lives. Recognising this, Paul wrote that he "gloried in tribulations... knowing" what their purpose was designed to develop in him (Rom. 5:2-5). Jacob was the man whom God remade, and in that, he becomes the type of all those whom He will change, through the power of His Word, for the Kingdom to which He will bring them.

#### **Jacob's Response and Vow — vv. 16-22**

*Deeply impressed with the vision and message of the night, Jacob awakens with profound awe at the theophany he has received. In gratitude to God Who promised so much to him, he vows to render back a greater measure of dedication, obedience, and response.*

#### **VERSE 16**

**"And Jacob awaked out of his sleep,**

**and he said"** — From the high state of exaltation to which the vision must have elevated him, he awoke to the realisation of the every-day problems of life that beset him. How often that is the case with us all, after an experience of exaltation in worship.

**"Surely Yahweh is in this place; and I knew it not"** — He recognised the dream as a theophany, constituting Bethel as a place appropriate for altar-building and worship (Exod. 20:24). In adding, "I knew it not," he showed that he was taken by surprise at the dramatic and glorious revelation.

#### **VERSE 17**

**"And he was afraid, and said"** — He had just awakened out of sleep; figuratively, from the death state like Daniel in a similar experience (Dan. 10:9-11).

**"How dreadful is this place"** — How awe-inspiring is it! How full of solemn import.

**"This is none other but the house of God"** — It comprised the house of God (*Elohim*) because of the *Elohim* associated with it, and in conjunction with himself. As such, it pointed forward to the house of living stones, or the *Elohim* of the future, the saints in glory (Rev. 3:12; 1 Pet. 2:5). *Eureka* Vol. 1, p. 391 comments:

"When he (Jacob) awoke in a typical resurrection, he exclaimed, 'Verily, Yahweh is in this place, and I knew not;' and he was afraid, and said, 'How awful is this place! This is nothing else but a house of *Elohim*, and this a gate of the heavens!' Hence, that this idea might be perpetuated, he said, 'Yahweh shall be to me for *Elohim*, and this stone which I have set for a pillar shall be a *House of Elohim*'.

"Jacob's stone pillar, then, was typical of a *House of Elohim* to be set up after he awakes from his sleep of centuries. When he awakes, he will find himself in an awful time and place, the gate of heaven opened, and the house of *Elohim* in manifestation, but he, nevertheless, without dismay. What he saw in vision he will then see in fact — 'Heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man' (John 1:51).



"But there is a sense in which Jacob's pillar of the stone exists as a house of Elohim even now, and in intimate connection with the house he will see when he awakes from his present know-nothing state. Paul presents to us this sense in the saying, that 'a House of Deity is an ecclesia of living Deity, a Pillar and material habitation (*hedraioma*, from *hedra*, a habitation of gods) of the truth' (1 Tim. 3:15). This pillar and habitation is 'built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Anointed being chief-corner' (Eph. 2:20). As a monumental pillar, the inscription upon it is 'the exceeding great and precious promises' believed by each saint, or 'living stone,' of which the pillar is composed — 'promises' concerning the kingdom and name made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as narrated by Moses..."

**"And this is the gate of heaven"** — The ecclesia constitutes the access to heaven. Not the heaven above, however, but the political heavens of the future age. Saints are already in the "heavenlies" in Christ (Eph. 1:3; 2:6), and are destined to occupy the political "heavens" of the future. Thus, John in Patmos, saw "a door opened in heaven," and heard the invitation to "Come up hither" (Rev. 4:1). For explanation of this "heaven" and its "door," see *Eureka* vol. 2, pp. 18-23.

#### VERSE 18

**"And Jacob rose up early in the morning"** — Pointing to a new beginning (Mal. 4:1-2). It is the best time of the day for prayer and communion with Yahweh. Abraham used to rise early in the morning for that purpose (Gen. 19:27; 22:3); Joshua made a habit of so doing (Josh. 3:1; 6:12,15; 7:16; 8:10). Above all, the Lord rose early to pray (Mark 1:35). One writer has commented: "The Lord knew the value of the morning hours. He rose while the world was still. He saw when the light spread abroad from the east with fresh tokens of his Father's presence, and he joined with all creation in praising the presence of God everywhere. Let us, too, think of God before the world gains possession of our thoughts."

**"And took the stone that he had put**

**for his pillows"** — The stone he had previously rested upon was now to be used in service to God.

**"And set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it"** — The pillar resting upon the earth and pointing towards heaven could represent the stairway of the night's vision, and the oil anointing it, the manifestation of Deity through the Word. The pillar was a monument of memorial representing the Truth that had been proclaimed that evening, and its present manifestation is found in the ecclesia (1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 2:20). See *Eureka* vol. 1, pp. 391-395. A house is made up of many stones, as a family is built up of many sons.

The pouring of oil upon the stone, represented anointing with spirit. The pillars of the early ecclesia (Gal. 2:8), were anointed by the spirit at Pentecost; and this resulted in the proclamation of the Truth by which others were similarly anointed with the Spirit-Word (1 John 2:27).

#### VERSE 19

**"And he called the name of that place Beth-el"** — The name signifies: *House of El* (or *God, Power*).

**"But the name of that city was called Luz at the first"** — The word *Luz* signifies *Nut-tree*, and relates probably to the Almond. The Hebrews called the Almond the *Awakening Tree*, it being the first to blossom in the Spring, and therefore it became symbolic of resurrection. It was appropriate that Bethel should originally have been called *Luz*, for it was there that Jacob figuratively awoke from a state of death to the reality of the Abrahamic promise as it related to himself.

Though the Hebrew for *Almond* is *shaqed* and not *Luz*, the association of ideas would be similar.

#### VERSE 20

**"And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go"** — In speaking thus, Jacob did not use the language of uncertainty or of bargaining, but of reciprocity: "If God is going to do this for me, I will do that ..." He proclaims a vow,

the dedication of a man of faith to God. He manifests a complete and utter dependence upon God. He can do nothing without God, and recognises his need of God's overshadowing care in his daily walk.

**"And will give me bread to eat" —** This is man's basic need. Notice that Jacob does not crave affluence, though he did attain unto great wealth. He prayed: "Give me each day my daily bread". There is a need both for material and spiritual bread (John 6:50), and God will provide both to those who seek Him (Matt. 6:31-34).

**"And raiment to put on" —** This is man's second basic need, both materially and spiritually. God provides not only the bread of life to educate us, but also clothing to hide the nakedness of sin (Isa. 61:10; Gal. 3:27; 2 Cor. 5:3; Rev. 3:18; 16:15). In this portion of his vow, therefore, Jacob asked that God should overshadow his life, guide him from day to day, provide him with the basic requirements of life.

#### VERSE 21

**"So that I come again to my father's house in peace" —** Everything converged upon this objective. He desired to return to his father's house to inherit the divine blessing, and all that he asked of God was designed that he might receive it. Thus divine care, guidance and the needs of life were but means to an end: that being the promised inheritance.

**"Then shall Yahweh be my God" —** But Jacob already worshipped God, so what did he mean? We do not believe that Jacob was bargaining with God, declaring that if God did this or that for him, he would select Him as an object of worship instead of say, Baal. Such an attitude would be quite incongruous to a man who had already risked much in order to obtain the divine inheritance, and who is divinely described as a "perfect" or spiritually mature man (see notes on Gen. 25:27), and thus a worshipper of God.

What then does the statement mean? If we take the A.V. as it stands, it could signify in the terms of his vow, a greater determination on the part of Jacob to fulfil

the requirements of true worship. These involve obeying Yahweh's voice, and keeping His commandments (see Gen. 26:5). It is said of the sons of Eli, that they "knew not Yahweh" even though they were priests ministering in the Tabernacle (1 Sam. 2:12). Yahweh was not their God, even though, academically, they knew all about Him. Therefore, in the light of this explanation, Jacob's statement could well have been a declaration that he would increase his efforts to return to God a greater measure of obedience, and a more devotional service.

The R.V. margin, however, gives an alternative rendition, making it part of Jacob's request to God. The prayer would then read: "If God will be with me, and will keep me ... and Yahweh will be my God, then this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee". According to this rendition, Jacob appealed to Yahweh to manifest Himself as his God, and not that he would make choice of Him conditionally upon Him bestowing blessings.

Either explanation above dispenses with the objectionable suggestion that Jacob bargained with God as the verse is usually interpreted.

#### VERSE 22

**"And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house" —** The stone was a pillar, or a memorial, of something yet to be manifested; the foundation of that which was yet to come. Jacob subsequently returned to this place to build there an altar of worship (Gen. 35:1,15). The altar of Bethel (as with all other similar altars) points forward to the Lord Jesus as the altar for the Ecclesia (Heb. 13:10), and the foundation stone of the House of God. All will be united around that altar in the Age to come. Even Israel after the flesh, reformed, remade like Jacob, will return to the Land to gather around that Christ-altar (Rom. 11:26). In fact, the altar in Jerusalem, typical of Christ himself, will be the rallying point for all mankind in the Age to come (Isa. 2:3).

**"And of all that Thou shalt give me**

**I will surely give the tenth unto Thee"**

— In making this vow, he demonstrated that he was moved by the example of his grandfather Abraham, who had acted similarly (Gen. 14:20). Some, hypocritically claim that Jacob should have offered everything to God. How could he have done so? He was dependent upon God for the basic needs of life. Can we render back to Yahweh anything comparable to that which He bestows upon us? By no means. We can only offer a token of it in humble recognition of the Giver of every good and perfect gift (Cp. Psa. 50:7-15), upon Whom we are dependent for every need.

Actually, a "tenth" is a token of the whole. The word in its Hebrew significance has that meaning, so that in spiritual numerics, ten points to completeness, perfection. The principle can be recognised in the use of decimal currency in modern times. Jacob recognised that all came from God, and in giving back a *tenth* he would give practical expression to this fact. Later, the principle that he voluntarily introduced, was incorporated in the Law (Lev. 27:30; Num. 18:21,24).

Let us be like Jacob, and do voluntarily and in love what the Law compulsorily demanded.

**CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE****JACOB IN HARAN**

*When Jacob left Beersheba, he walked out into a strange world alone. Behind him was an aging father, and a doting mother whom he would never see again in life. Behind him also was a bitter and angry brother, who lacked any sense of spiritual values, and sought only to murder him. He arrived at Luz tired and despondent, with the city gates closed against him.*

*He left a different man, with renewed purpose in life, and determination to carry it out. He burst upon the quiet shepherd-community of Haran with dash and vigor. He knew why he had come, and God placed in his way, the wife he should marry. She was willing, but her father, Laban, was not. Laban's dealings with Jacob were to prove most disconcerting, especially on Jacob's wedding day. The deceiver of Isaac learns what it is to be deceived.*

**Jacob At The Well of Haran — vv. 1-8**

*Arriving at the Land of the People of the East, Jacob, like Eliezer before him (cp. Gen. 24:11) makes his way to the Well of Haran. He there meets Rachel, and renders her a service in watering her sheep.*

**VERSE 1**

**"Then Jacob went on his journey"**

— The Hebrew is very expressive. As rendered in the margin, it is "*Jacob lifted up his feet*". This not only suggests, that

"he went on his way," but that he did so full of zeal and enthusiasm, with renewed purpose in mind. The day before, tired and despondent, he had *dragged his feet*, but now he lifted them up and resolutely marched forward in the assurance that God was with him, being invigorated by the blessing received.

**"And came into the land of the people of the east"** — This is the area of Babylonia (Num. 23:7), today called Mesopotamia. Later, in the time of

Gideon, the people of this area invaded Israel in company with the Midianites (Judges 6:3).

#### VERSE 2

**“And he looked, and behold a well in the field”** — Jacob was seeking a bride, and followed the same procedure as did Eliezer when he was seeking a bride for Isaac. He sought out the most public place for the purpose, as should those who go forth to preach the Gospel; figuratively, the water of life (John 4:14).

**“And lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks”** — Three is the number of completeness. The three flocks of sheep, therefore, could represent humanity in need of the water of life. Mankind is divided into three major groups, known Scripturally as the descendants of Shem, Japheth and Ham. Out of them all, there are groups of people who have manifested thirst for the water of life (Isa. 55:1-2).

**“And a great stone was upon the well’s mouth”** — These words describe the customary procedure. Such a stone would prevent any ill-disposed person destroying the well, or fouling the water. A large stone covered its mouth, requiring the combined efforts of several shepherds to remove it. Thus they waited until all flocks were gathered together, at which time the stone was removed. The great stone over the mouth of the well of life was the curse of sin, emphasised by the Mosaic Law. When that was removed, through forgiveness in Christ Jesus, the water of the well was made available to all.

#### VERSE 3

**“And thither were all the flocks gathered; and they rolled the stone from the well’s mouth, and watered the sheep, and put the stone again upon the well’s mouth in his place”** — The latter part of v. 2 and all of v. 3, provide an explanatory parenthesis describing the ordinary procedure. The custom of covering the well with a heavy stone is referred to by Thompson in *The Land And the Book*. He claims to have seen shepherds

gathered at wells for that purpose, and when the stone had been removed, and the men had ended their work of watering their flocks, the women afterwards did the same for theirs.

#### VERSE 4

**“And Jacob said unto them, My brethren, whence be ye?”** — The well was evidently some distance from Haran, and was a rendezvous of shepherds from various places.

**“And they said, Of Haran are we”** — Jacob would hear this statement with pleasure, accepting it as a token of divine providence in his affairs. Haran signifies *roads, enlightenment, or crossroads*. Jacob had come to the place of decision, where he would receive further enlightenment as to God’s purpose with him.

#### VERSE 5

**“And he said unto them, Know ye Laban the son of Nahor?”** — Laban was actually the grandson of Nahor, but there is no word in Hebrew to designate that relationship. For reference to Nahor, see our notes on Gen. 11:27.

**“And they said, We know him”** — This conversation would be intimation to Jacob of divine guidance. See Gen. 28:20.

#### VERSE 6

**“And he said unto them, Is he well?”** — Literally, as in the margin, *“Is there peace to him?”* The enquiry relates not merely to physical health, but to circumstances of life as well. The shepherds answered the question in the affirmative.

**“And they said, He is well; and, behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep”** — “Rachel” signifies *Ewe* (Gesenius), from a root meaning *to journey*, hence a good traveller. Destiny began to mould the lives of Jacob and Rachel as she moved slowly towards the well at the head of her flock.

#### VERSE 7

**“And he said, Lo, it is yet high day”** — As a skilful shepherd himself, Jacob viewed with wonder the slack methods of the local shepherds. They were wasting time and ignoring the needs of the flocks

in their charge. Much of the day still remained, and yet the sheep were all gathered together at the mouth of the well, whilst the shepherds lay about. Jacob could not understand such lax procedure. They should water the flock, and take them to pasture.

**“Neither is it time that the cattle should be gathered together”** — That is, to shut them up for the night. The word for “cattle” is *migne*, and signifies livestock generally, whether sheep, goats or cattle.

**“Water ye the sheep and go and feed them”** — Or, Why don't you water the sheep, and lead them away to be fed? As a shepherd, Jacob was concerned at the apparently lazy attitude of these shepherds. It represented so much waste of time to him. The vigor with which Jacob continued on his journey after the vision of Bethel had not left him.

#### VERSE 8

**“And they said, We cannot, until all the flocks be gathered together, and till they roll the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep”** — This was not because of any physical difficulty, for Jacob was able to do so on his own, but evidently because of some local law either imposed or agreed upon. The restrictions of the Mosaic law had to be removed before the Israel flock could be refreshed by the living water of the well. It is a remarkable type of the work of Christ in relation to the Gospel, as he explained to the Samaritan woman by Jacob's well (John 4)!

#### Jacob Meets Rachel and Laban — vv. 9-14

*Jacob's attention is now directed to Rachel, and for him it was love at first sight. His love for her was deep, true, and undying. It becomes one of the most beautiful points of his character. It bursts into life full-grown; it never wavers, never lessens; it outlives her, to manifest itself, in added affection, for her two sons. Jacob was now a mature man. In normal chronological reckoning, it is thought that he was 77 years of age when he left his father for this journey to Haran (see Chronikon Hebraikon), but when we come to consid-*

*er Gen. 31:38, we will supply reasons for suggesting that he was 57 years of age at this time. In those times of greater longevity, that age would be considered comparatively young.*

#### VERSE 9

**“And while he yet spake with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep: for she kept them”** — Literally, “*she was a shepherdess*”. Her occupation was congenial to that of Jacob's. Like Rebekah before her, Rachel was typical of the bride of Christ.

#### VERSE 10

**“And it came to pass when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban”** — Jacob had been sent on this journey specifically to obtain a bride “of the daughters of Laban” (Gen. 28:2); he had been promised divine guidance in his quest (Ch. 28:15), and now he had evidence that God was with him as He had promised to be. He considered all the circumstances, and recognised in them a guiding principle in his life.

**“His mother's brother”** — Notice that this statement occurs three times in this verse; the threefold emphasis suggesting that Jacob recognised the divine providence in his life, leading him to his bride. He therefore viewed Rachel with more than passing interest.

**“And the sheep of Laban his mother's brother”** — The well-kept sheep were indicative of Rachel's skill and industry, as well as her humility. She had brethren, but the care of her father's sheep was her particular concern (v. 9).

**“That Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother”** — Stimulated by the realisation that God was with him, Jacob lost his previous timidity, and becoming charged with strength, he boldly asserted himself, rolling away the stone, and providing water for Rachel's flock before the other shepherds had opportunity to water their's. Cp. note v. 2.

#### VERSE 11

**“And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lift-**

**ed up his voice, and wept** — Moved by the deepest emotion at the successful completion of his difficult and lonely journey, he addressed himself to her with kisses of affection and tears of joy. Though the narrative does not specifically say so, he evidently first revealed to her his relationship, so that she took no offence at the warmth of his greeting.

#### VERSE 12

**“And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father’s brother, and that he was Rebekah’s son”** — He evidently explained this before warmly greeting her as a described in the previous verse. The term *brother* is used generally to describe a close relationship, even as Lot is called Abraham’s brother, though, in fact, he was his nephew (Gen. 14:14,16).

**“And she ran and told her father”** — She was doubtless surprised at the warmth of Jacob’s greeting, but, evidently, agreeably surprised! Both seemed to be instinctively drawn towards the other. The story of Jacob and Rachel is among the most beautiful of the love stories of the Bible.

#### VERSE 13

**“And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister’s son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house”** — There was warm hospitality and deep affection, manifested by Laban towards his sister’s son (see also Ch. 24:20,30). What a pity that this delightful attitude was destroyed by misunderstanding developed out of covetousness.

**“And he told Laban all these things”** — The message he had brought from his mother, the purpose of his journey, and so forth.

#### VERSE 14

**“And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh”** — Acknowledging that Jacob was a blood relation; that he had satisfactorily proved himself to be the son of Rebekah.

**“And he abode with him the space of a month”** — During which time Laban

came to recognise the value of Jacob as a shepherd, and Jacob’s love for Rachel increased.

#### Jacob Serves Laban for Rachel

— vv. 15-20

*Laban having fulfilled the duties of hospitality by accommodating Jacob for a month, suggests that the relationship be placed upon a business footing. Jacob desires Rachel, but having no worldly goods to offer as dowry, since he crossed the Jordan with only his staff and the clothes he wore (Ch. 32:10), he offers to pay for the privilege of marriage by seven years of toil. Laban, always covetous and grasping, readily accepts the terms, and concludes the bargain.*

#### VERSE 15

**“And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldst thou therefore serve me for nought?”** — These words suggest that Jacob was already making himself useful around the place, and that Laban had observed his skill as a shepherd.

**“Tell me, what shall thy wages be?”**

— He suggests that Jacob remain with him permanently, and poses as a generous man in the arrangements.

#### VERSE 16

**“And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel”** — Leah’s name has been explained in many ways: *wearied, dull, stupid, faint from sickness*. She obviously lacked the personality and beauty of her younger sister.

#### VERSE 17

**“Leah was tender eyed”** — She was dull-eyed, in contrast to the sparkling, dark-eyed, vivacious Rachel! In the type, she represents Israel under the Law, dull-eyed to the things of Christ.

**“But Rachel was beautiful and well favoured”** — Literally, she was *“beautiful of form and beautiful of appearance”*. She had both personality and appearance; she was like the bride of Christ in the *Song of Solomon* 4:1-7, the king’s bride in

Psalm 45, or Ruth in comparison with the older Naomi in her typical foreshadowing.

**VERSE 18**

**“And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter”** — The measure of his deep and abiding love was shown by the long years of labour he was prepared to render in order to obtain her. For Jacob had no dowry whereby to obtain a wife. Consider the cost of seven years' labour on today's wages, and we have some conception of Jacob's estimation of the worth of his Rachel.

**VERSE 19**

**“And Laban said, It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man”** — Laban acknowledges that Jacob has all the qualities of an acceptable husband.

**“Abide with me”** — A formal acceptance of the proposition on the part of Laban.

**VERSE 20**

**“And Jacob served seven years for Rachel”** — Under Laban, he worked hard (Gen. 31:40-41). Hosea records: “Jacob fled into the country of Syria, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep” (Hos. 12:12).

**“And they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her”** — These simple but descriptive words fittingly describe the intense love Jacob had for Rachel. Rotherham renders the words, “*they seemed unto him as single days*”. Jacob had such a deep appreciation of his future bride that the price he paid for her seemed small in comparison. In like manner, the Lord endured the cross and despised the shame for the joy set before him (Heb. 12:2) and for the love of his proposed bride of faith (Eph. 5:27,32). In doing so, he provides an example for all those who would follow him. Jacob cheerfully fulfilled his “labour of love” (Heb. 6:10).

**Jacob Deceived Into Marrying Leah**

— vv. 21-25

*The pure self-sacrificing love that*

*Jacob manifested towards Rachel is repaid by the deception of Laban. Jacob learns by bitter experience the disappointment of deception, as his father and his brother had done before him. He learns that God is not mocked; what a man sows he reaps (Gal. 6:7). He had supplanted Esau the elder son, and now is deceived by being given Leah, the elder daughter instead of his beloved Rachel.*

**VERSE 21**

**“And Jacob said unto Laban, Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her”** — He had honestly performed his period of servitude, and now sought his reward.

**VERSE 22**

**“And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast”** — In like manner there will be a wedding feast when Christ is united to his Bride (Rev. 19). Meanwhile, the Passover is likened to such a feast (Luke 12:35-37). In many regards the experiences of Jacob are typical of the future.

**VERSE 23**

**“And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her”** — This was the first act of deception practised by Laban on Jacob, but though it may have been the cruellest, it was not the last. The deception was rendered possible by the fact that the bride was normally conducted into the marriage chamber veiled. Frequently the veils were so long and close as to conceal both the face and the person. Even so, Leah must have played her part in order to marry one who neither sought nor loved her. She must have been attached to Jacob, and so fully entered into the deception in order to gain him. Typically, Leah represents the Mosaic covenant that preceded the Messianic, and which the people were compelled against their will to accept.

**VERSE 24**

**“And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah his maid”** — Zilpah signi-

fies *droppings* as fragrant myrrh.

**“For an handmaid”** — It was customary to do this, as in the case of Rebekah (Ch. 24:61).

#### VERSE 25

**“And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah”** — The word *behold* expresses the surprise and chagrin of Jacob next morning. The narrative draws a veil over the words of indignation that he must have heaped upon Leah when he discovered the deception. Yet he must have realised the compensating justice in the whole matter. He who had deceived his father, is deceived by his father-in-law.

**“He said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?”** — Angrily Jacob berated Laban for his duplicity, but it is obvious that his father-in-law was unimpressed. In fact, he probably treated it as a joke that he shared with others of his kith and kin.

#### Jacob Again Serves Laban For Rachel — Vv. 26-30

*The wily Laban has his excuses ready to explain the reason for his action, and endeavours to temper Jacob's bitter disappointment by an offer to make him doubly his son-in-law in a week's time, on the guarantee that Jacob serve another seven years.*

#### VERSE 26

**“And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn”** — This was doubtless the case, and Laban was legally right. In fact, there is evidence indicating that some such law was operative among certain peoples in ancient times. But this was mere subterfuge on Laban's part. If the law was such as he claimed it to be why did he agree to give Rachel to Jacob in the first instance? And, in any case, having married off Leah, he could have given Rachel to Jacob without any further bargaining on his part. But Laban was not sincere in his approach to the matter; he was covetous and grasping, and perhaps

rejoiced in gaining the advantage of his nephew Jacob.

#### VERSE 27

**“Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years”** — This was evidently a token period. Jacob was permitted to marry Rachel immediately after the wedding festival with Leah (usually a week's duration) was over, on the assurance that he would serve Laban for an additional seven years.

#### VERSE 28

**“And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also”** — At the conclusion of the week, on the basis of a day for a year, Jacob married his beloved Rachel.

#### VERSE 29

**“And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his handmaid to be her maid”** — Her name signifies *Bashful, Modest*. She became the mother of Dan and Naphtali (Gen. 30:3-8; 35:25). Her stepson Reuben afterward lay with her (Gen. 35:22), earning his father's dying reproof (Gen. 49:4).

#### VERSE 30

**“And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah”** — The statement implies that Jacob had an affection for Leah, but a greater one for Rachel. Leah had been forced upon him by law — but he was drawn to Rachel by love. Faith is more lovely than law, though both may be admired.

**“And served with him yet seven other years”** — The implication of the narrative is that these years were served after he had married Rachel; he did not have to serve them first, and marry her afterwards.

#### Birth of Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah (Leah) — Vv. 31-35

*Though the younger Rachel is preferred over the elder Leah, God provides a compensation in that Leah proves more fruitful than her sister. In the antitype,*



*more are drawn to Yahweh by law than by faith, though the latter is more enduring. A pleasing feature of the narrative is Leah's acknowledgment of God's providence, indicating that Jacob had educated both his wives in divine principles.*

**VERSE 31**

**“And when Yahweh saw that Leah was hated”** — The word *hated* is a Hebraism for “*not preferred*” rather than actually *hated* as we understand the term. Jacob, in fact, was fond of Leah (Ch. 49:31). He loved her, though he loved Rachel more (Gen. 29:30). The expression is used again in the same way in Deut. 21:15: “If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated...”; i.e. one preferred above the other. See also Matt. 6:24, and compare Matt. 10:37 with Luke 14:26. To “love” Christ more than father and mother is described as “hating” the latter, whereas true Christian principles would not permit of such an attitude, as we understand the term. Here again, it signifies to love one more than another.

**“He opened her womb”** — This statement illustrates the overshadowing compassion of Yahweh for those who are in need of it. It is quite significant that the divine covenant Name is used in association with such a reference, for what was done, in its typical fulfilment, had relation to the covenant. The law was more prolific in its fruit than is faith, and this is represented typically in the Word. Thus the Abrahamic covenant is likened to a barren woman that ultimately bears children, in comparison with the Law which is described as a fruitful woman of children (Isa. 54:1).

**“But Rachel was barren”** — In the type, Leah represents the covenant of law: the Mosaic covenant; and Rachel, the covenant of Grace: the Abrahamic covenant. Leah was first, Rachel afterwards. Leah first produced children, but Rachel afterwards. “Before faith came”, wrote Paul, “we were kept under the law shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed” (Gal. 3:23). That typically was set forth in the analogy of Leah and Rachel.

**VERSE 32**

**“And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben”** — His name signifies *See, a Son!* It is an expression of joy, and the reason for it is revealed in Leah's subsequent comment.

**“For she said, Surely Yahweh hath looked upon my affliction”** — Leah represented Israel under the Law, and Rachel, Israel under Grace. The former was brought under affliction in Egypt, at the same time as Yahweh recognised the nation as His son, thus: “Israel is My son, even My firstborn” (Exod. 4:22). He called upon Pharaoh to *See a son!* in His people in affliction, and subsequently brought them to political birth. Leah, as representing Israel under Law manifested imperfections: she was not beautiful like her sister, and was “tender eyed” or lacked true vision; whereas Rachel, as representing Israel under grace, excited love. Israel under Law saw in the establishment of the nation the purpose of its call and did not realise that the Son for which it should look was not the son of flesh, but the son of Spirit. Only as Israel under the law was led to Christ could it attain unto the love of her husband (Gal. 3:22-29).

**“Now therefore my husband will love me”** — The “unloved” Leah believed that the birth of Reuben would excite the love of Jacob for her. Unfortunately, Reuben added to Jacob's problems. His early promise was not revealed as he developed. He proved to be unstable and immoral, and so betrayed his father's love for him (Gen. 49:4). Reuben proved to be a son of the flesh, and was supplanted in the benefits of the birthright by Joseph.

Nevertheless, Leah's comment shows that she had come to understand the principles of worship, and this suggests that Jacob had educated her in these vitally important matters.

**VERSE 33**

**“And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Because Yahweh hath heard that I was hated, He hath given me this son also”** — This statement indicates that Leah was alive to the basic requirements of true religion: prayer.

Comprehending that she was not loved by Jacob as was Rachel, she poured out her heart to Yahweh in prayer. After all, she had contributed to Jacob's lack of feeling towards her. She had condoned and contributed to the deception practised by her father, and had endeavoured to supplant Rachel in Jacob's affection. She had imagined that the birth of Reuben would have enabled her to replace Rachel in Jacob's esteem, but that had not eventuated. So she gave herself to prayer, and the result was the birth of Simeon.

**"And she called his name Simeon"**

— His name signifies *Hearing*. In the Greek it is Simon, the name of one of Christ's closest apostles (Matt. 16:16). Typically we must first *see the Son* (Reuben) and then *hear him* (Simeon).

**VERSE 34**

**"And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons"** — In spiritual numerics, three has the signification of divine completeness. It was on the third day that the earth was caused to rise up out of the water, symbolic of that resurrection life which joins us to Christ, and foreshadows the greater resurrection and union to come. Leah must have had some conception of the spiritual significance of the number three because of her comment on the birth of Levi, her third son.

**"Therefore was his name called Levi"** — Levi signifies *to be joined*, or *united together*; and thus speaks of *fellowship*.

**VERSE 35**

**"And she conceived again, and bare a son and said, Now will I praise Yah-**

**weh"** — For that reason, Leah called her fourth son, Judah, which signifies *praise*. However, the praise that Yahweh seeks, is not that external to the flesh, but that which is from the hidden man of the heart. Hence Paul comments: "He is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose *praise* is not of men, but of God" (Rom. 2:29). In that statement, Paul aligns the word *Jew* with *Judah*.

**"Therefore she called his name Judah; and left bearing"** — This statement marks off the first group of sons in a section of their own. Their names are significant. They set forth in order the means of redemption: Reuben — *See a son*; Simeon — *Hear him*; Levi — *Join him*; Judah — *Praise him*. Now Yahweh blessed Leah with these four sons out of compassion for her affliction (cp. Vv. 31,32), even though she had contributed to that condition. The names of the sons typed the purpose of God in the Law. In commissioning Moses, Yahweh declared: "I have surely seen *the affliction* of My people which are in Egypt, and have *heard their cry*" (Exod. 3:7). He became as an husband unto them (Isa. 54:5), hearkened unto their plea because they were hated, became united with them in the Sinaitic covenant, and called for their praise. The Law constituted Israel as Yahweh's son. But more than that: It was a "schoolmaster" to bring the nation "to Christ" (Gal. 3:24). In effect it proclaimed: *See a Son! Hear him! Join him! Praise him!* The unfortunate fact was that Israel failed to see the Son when he was manifested, and so the curse of the law rested, and continues to rest, upon the nation (Gal. 5:3).

## CHAPTER THIRTY

### COMPETITION IN THE HOUSEHOLD OF LABAN

*First there is competition between the two wives of Jacob; and then there is competition between the two shepherds. Continuing*

*barren, Rachel gives her maid to Jacob, and two sons are born. Leah then gives Zilpah to Jacob, and she also bears two sons. Leah then lures her husband from Rachel with the mandrakes found by Reuben and becomes the mother of two more sons. Finally the desperate Rachel bears Joseph. Jacob then seeks to depart, but is detained by Laban. The two shepherds agree on the terms of employ, which are overshadowed by God to the advantage of Jacob.*

**Birth of Dan and Naphtali, sons of Bilhah — vv. 1-8**

*Made desperate by the fruitfulness of Leah, Rachel pleads for children, but continuing barren, she offers Bilhah to Jacob, who bears him two sons.*

**VERSE 1**

**“And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister”** — The state of Rachel in view of Leah’s fruitfulness, becomes similar to that of Sarah towards Hagar. Her earnest desire for children may not be understood by us today; but then it was considered a disgrace to an Israelitish woman, not to bear children. The fundamental basis of true worship was the covenant made in Eden relating to “the seed of the woman,” and it was the ambition of every mother to contribute to that end (1 Tim. 2:15). Thus children were considered as “an heritage from Yahweh” (Psa. 127:3), and Rachel’s lack of such reflected upon her relationship with God. We believe that there is much more to the recording of the experiences of Leah and Rachel in that regard, than merely the record of personal jealousy and mutual striving one against the other. The two wives of the patriarch typically represent the two covenants with which Israel, as a nation, was associated: the Mosaic and the Abrahamic, with their mutually antagonistic principles of law versus grace and faith. The former is more prolific of fruit than the latter, for those under it are compelled to observe its commands. Thus “the barren” is set forth as typical of the Abrahamic covenant of grace and faith (Isa. 54:1-5), and experience has revealed that it is much more dif-

ficult to bear fruit of such than it is when one is commanded by law.

**“And said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die”** — Rachel complained that unless she could bear fruit she was no better than a dead woman! That is true of Israel under grace. She must produce fruit to the glory of Yahweh, or die (see John 15:2, 8,16; Rom. 6:21-22; Gal. 5:22). Nevertheless, at this stage, Rachel asked in the wrong direction. She should have sought the help of Yahweh. She learned that lesson, and subsequently sought the help of God with pleasing results (v. 22). The fruit that we should produce to the glory of the Father, does not come from the compulsion of law, nor through self-will, but through the inworking of Yahweh (see Phil. 2:13; Isa. 43:7; 60:21).

**VERSE 2**

**“And Jacob’s anger was kindled against Rachel”** — He had just cause for his anger, for Rachel’s outburst had wrongfully imputed blame on him. She had to learn the lesson of faith.

**“And he said, Am I in God’s stead, Who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?”** — Jacob directed Rachel to the Source of such blessings (Psa. 127), and she, submissive to his exhortation, heeded the advice (see Gen. 30:6).

**VERSE 3**

**“And she said, Behold my maid Bilhah”** — Her name signifies *Bashful, Modest*. Later, Reuben was guilty of immorality with her.

If we see in her a type of the preaching of the Word by those who acted as hand-

maidens to grace and faith, this defilement foreshadows that which took place as far as the early ecclesias are concerned in relation to the apostasy. This, significantly, developed out of an incestuous union of the fruits of the law and of grace, as set forth in Acts 15:1-3. The Apostles acted as a handmaid to grace. See John 17:20.

**“Go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees”** — She shall have children which I may claim as my own, and nurse them upon my knees, lavishing upon them my love. The statement *“she shall bear upon my knees”* seems to be a reference to an ancient ceremony of adoption. In normal marriage, it was customary to place a newly-born child upon the father’s knees, as indicative of parenthood (Job 3:12), and from this there seems to have developed a form of adoption to which Rachel gave expression. Thus the children of Joseph were intimately embraced by Jacob drawing them between his knees (Gen. 48:10-12), as an act of adoption, identifying them as his own. Again, the children of Machir, who was the son of a concubine (1 Chron. 7:14) are described as being “born upon Joseph’s knees” (Gen. 50:23), or legitimised by him as his descendants.

**“That I may also have children by her”** — The literal Hebrew is, *“I also may be built from her.”* This is made even more significant, by the adverb *also*. It suggests that Rachel was asking for two things: (1) that Bilhah might have children that she could partly claim as her own; (2) that in addition (indicated by the word *also*) she might herself commence to bear through this means. Whether or not Rachel’s latter statement suggests that she might herself commence to bear through Jacob taking Bilhah to wife, modern psychology and experience go to show that the adoption of a child by an apparently barren woman often results in her bearing.

Notice the words that Rachel used, as expressed literally in the Hebrew (see margin of the A.V.). Parenthood was considered by the Hebrews as the building of a house or a household. The Apostle likened the ecclesia to the *“house of God”* (Heb. 3:6), a house of living stones (1 Pet.

2:5). Paul taught: “We are labourers together with God; ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building” (1 Cor. 3:9). Like Bilhah to Rachel, we individually can co-operate in building or in strengthening the house of God, on behalf of the Bride of Christ.

#### VERSE 5

**“And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son”** — Proving conclusively that Jacob was not to blame for the barrenness of Rachel.

#### VERSE 6

**“And Rachel said, God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son”** — The word *diyn* rendered *judged* signifies *to judge as an umpire, or to plead the cause*. Rachel claimed that God had vindicated her in that He had blessed her with a son through Bilhah. Jacob had accused her of neglecting prayer, but, in fact, she saw the birth of Dan as a vindication of her prayers. Therefore she happily told him that “God hath also heard my voice.”

**“Therefore she called his name Dan”** — Dan (signifying *judging*) is from the same Hebrew verb translated *judged*, and therefore implies *vindication or justification*. Notice how in this verse, Rachel proclaimed the purpose of grace: *“God hath judged me”*: sin condemned; *“He hath heard my voice”*: the pleading of prayer; *“He hath given me a son”*: providing the means of vindication. Add to this her statement of v. 8 and the purpose of grace is completed: *“With God’s help I will wrestle and prevail!”*

#### VERSE 8

**“And Rachel said, With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed”** — The literal rendition of the words are as in the margin: *“with wrestlings of God have I wrestled.”* The word *“great”* is the Hebrew word *Elohim*, elsewhere rendered *God*. Rachel had made her problem a matter of prayer, and now recognised a divine blessing in the birth of the two sons whom she could claim as her own. She had submitted

in humility to doing her part in yielding her place to her maid Bilhah, but even so, she acknowledged that she was indebted to God for the blessing of the children. As Rachel thus wrestled for children, so the Bride of Christ has done likewise through the instrumentality of its handmaidens, individual saints; as Rachel wrestled successfully through the help of God, so the faithful must wrestle with sin's flesh (Rom. 7:23), the strength of which is revealed by the Law (Rom. 7:7-11). Rachel's problem had been aggravated by Leah's success, so that in the absence of children she felt herself to be no better than a dead woman (v. 1). Antitypically, the strength of the law, and its curse upon those who could not live up to its requirements, brought a person consciously under the reality of death (Rom. 7:9). Like Rachel they were caused to lament: "Give me children (the fruit of the Spirit, Gal. 5:22), or else I die" (Gen. 30:1). To obtain that fruit, believers have to wrestle against the flesh; and this will only be successful through the aid of God.

**"And she called his name Naphtali"** — This name signifies "to wrestle" and speaks of the continuing struggle Rachel faced in her desire to fulfil her anticipations.

### **Birth of Gad and Asher by Zilpah, Leah's Maid — Vv. 9-13**

*The partial triumph of Rachel aroused the jealousy of Leah, who, having left off bearing, followed her sister's recourse in giving her maid to Jacob. The births of Gad and Asher followed. The appearance of these children added to the complexity of Jacob's household, for what gave happiness to one wife aroused the enmity and jealousy of the other. The antitype is revealed in the preaching of the Gospel that aroused the enmity and hostility of Israel under the law. Paul commented: "Salvation is come unto the Gentiles for to provoke them to jealousy" (Rom. 11:11).*

#### **VERSE 9**

**"When Leah saw that she had left bearing, she took Zilpah her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife"** — If Rachel is to

be adversely criticised for using this expedient to obtain children, how much more should Leah, for already she had twice as many children as Rachel.

#### **VERSE 11**

**"And Leah said, A troop cometh"** — The word "*troop*" is *gad* in Hebrew, and signifies *fortune*, not *troop*. It suggests an expression of triumph, as though Leah exclaimed: "*Good fortune!*" Gad was the name of a Babylonish deity which presided over matters of chance. In Isaiah 65:11, Israel is condemned for "*preparing a table for that troop*", or *Gad*, as the margin indicates. Leah's exclamation, therefore, suggests that she had not lost all her heathen ideas, which is true of Israel after the flesh (cp. Hos. 2:17).

However, by a play upon words, Jacob appears to have given a different slant to the meaning of this son's name. In his blessing upon Gad (Gen. 49:19) he declared: "Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last." In this statement *Gad*, *troop* and *overcome* are all related words, revealing subtle differences. "*Gad*" is as seen above; but the word "*troop*" is not *gad* which is used by Leah in the verse before us, but is *gedud* and signifies *a warlike throng* (see R.V. mg). The word "*overcome*" is the verbal root (*gwud*) from whence the noun *gad* is derived, and signifies *to crowd upon, to press upon, to attack*. From this it would appear that Jacob amended Leah's explanation of the word from *Good Fortune* as expressed by her, to one signifying a company of warriors who, though temporarily overcome, would ultimately prevail.

**"And she called his name Gad"** — Gad signifies *Fortune*, as suggested above, but this meaning of the name was amended by Jacob to signify a company of warriors who though experiencing reverses would ultimately prevail.

#### **VERSE 12**

**"And Zilpah Leah's maid bare Jacob a second son"** — Zilpah's name signifies fragrant *dropping* as of myrrh. Her two sons: Gad, a *company of warriors* (to use Jacob's definition), and Asher,

*blessed*, suggest the combination: *a company of warriors who shall be blessed*. Her name, in conjunction with those of her two sons, suggests *the droppings of myrrh*, the fragrance of true sacrifice under the law (Song 5:5).

### VERSE 13

**“And Leah said, Happy am I” —**

The literal Hebrew is as the margin: *“In my happiness am I”*. She rejoiced in the numerous progeny with which she was blessed in contrast to Rachel.

**“For the daughters will call me blessed: and she called his name Asher” —**

The word *“blessed”* signifies *“happy”* and is frequently used in Scripture. The first Psalm reveals the proper basis for true happiness, or blessedness: walking in the ways of righteousness. Yahweh made mankind for happiness (Deut. 33:24; Psa. 144:15), and everybody craves for this state, desiring to avoid all thoughts of misery. But so perverse is the human heart, that it seeks for happiness where it cannot be found. Happiness can be obtained even now (1 Tim. 4:8), but its full fruits will be tasted in the future age, when the ultimate triumph of the righteous will be openly manifested. Leah saw a condition of happiness, in her prosperous state as far as children were concerned, and in her triumph over Rachel, and so named this son *Asher*. *Blessed*, or *Happy*.

**Birth of Issachar, Zebulun, Dinah (Leah) — Vv. 14-21.**

*Leah experiences a further triumph. Hiring Jacob with mandrakes gathered by Reuben, she becomes the mother of two more sons, and so complete was her triumph that she was confident that thenceforth her husband would dwell with her. The birth of a daughter, Dinah, adds a final touch to her triumph.*

### VERSE 14

**“And Reuben went” —** At this time, a mere child, perhaps six to eight years of age.

**“In the days of wheat harvest” —** Approximately May, i.e. late Spring in Israel.

**“And found mandrakes in the field, and brought them unto his mother Leah” —** The Hebrew *dudaim*, translated *mandrakes* signifies *love plant*, from *dod*, *to boil*, *to love*. They are apples of the mandragora, an herb resembling belladonna, with a root like a carrot, and possessing white and reddish blossoms of a sweet smell. It bears yellow, odoriferous apples which ripen in May and June. These yel-



low berries were highly prized as having magical ability to induce fertility. Reuben took them in all innocence to his mother. See the reference in Song 7:13.

**“Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy son’s mandrakes” —** When Rachel saw the mandrakes, in desperation, she yielded to the temptation to obtain them as a cure of her barrenness. To her it seemed as though God was indifferent to her need, and that prayer did not prevail in her case. In this she made a mistake, but it is an error into which many fall in time of desperate need when, seemingly, prayer does not provide a solution.

### VERSE 15

**“And she said unto her, Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband?” —** Leah accused Rachel of being the cause of the alienation of Jacob’s affections towards her. That was not the case as the record clearly shows that Jacob always had a greater love for Rachel than for Leah. In the narrative, Leah represents the Mosaic covenant, whilst Rachel represents the Abrahamic covenant confirmed

in Christ. A Godly man might exclaim: "O how love I Thy law!" but certainly his love for faith and grace, principles of the Abrahamic covenant, is greater. Love for law should not alienate love for faith and grace.

**"And wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also?"** — Leah's anger shows the value that she set on the mandrakes. Both sisters were moved by the same superstition, as all too often, are those who embrace the covenants of Yahweh.

**"And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee tonight for thy son's mandrakes"** — This sordid bargain did not do credit to either of the women. Though the Law is holy, just, and good; and though the Abrahamic covenant is designed to righteousness, those associated therewith frequently permit the flesh to dominate them. That was the case now with Leah and Rachel.

#### VERSE 16

**"And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me; for surely I have hired thee with my son's mandrakes. And he lay with her that night"** — Leah had the best of the bargain. She was willing to let the mandrakes go if she could have her husband to herself.

#### VERSE 17

**"And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob the fifth son"** — She gave herself to prayer, and by her action revealed to Rachel that "children are an heritage of Yahweh" (Psa. 127:3). The Law illustrated the principle of faith (cp. Rom. 10:6-8), and thus pointed the way to those under grace (Gal. 3:24). It is significant, that the last three children of Leah all point to the future, as the first four sons emphasised the past teaching of the law. The names of the last three children were Issachar: *reward*; Zebulun: *dwelling*; Dinah: *judgment*. The law which has condemned Israel in the past, will, under Christ, provide a basis for the nation's acceptance in the future (Rom.

11:25-27; Mal. 4:6). Thus educated by the Law that shall go forth out of Zion (Isa. 2:3), Israel shall receive its *reward*, and will be caused to  *dwell* with Christ after  *judgment* has purified it.

#### VERSE 18

**"And Leah said, God hath given me my hire"** — The word "*hire*" (*sakar*) forms the latter part of the name she gave her son.

**"Because I have given my maiden to my husband"** — Leah saw the birth of this son as a reward from God for unselfishly giving her maiden to Jacob to wife, the object apparently being, not merely that Zilpah should bear, but her own fertility should be increased thereby. See note on v. 3.

**"And she called his name Issachar"** — This word is compounded of *yesh*, *is*, and *sakar*, *wages*, from a root signifying satisfaction, or compensation for work done. Issachar, therefore, signifies, *there is a reward*. Israel under the law, in common with all mankind, will discover that truth in the age to come (Psa. 58:11).

#### VERSE 20

**"And Leah said, God hath endued me with a good dowry"** — On their marriage, Jacob had brought her no dowry, for he had none to bestow; and since then she had lived in the shadow of her more greatly loved sister. But now, having presented him with six sons, she felt confident that she had replaced Rachel in his affections.

**"Now will my husband dwell with me"** — The Hebrew *zabal*, according to Gesenius, does not merely signify to be in association together, but involves the idea of conjugal intercourse. Leah believed that her success in child-bearing; the number of sons she had born to Jacob, would ensure that he would now dwell with her as he had previously with Rachel.

**"Because I have born him six sons"** — The number of flesh, speaking of natural Israel.

**"And she called his name Zebulun"** — The name signifies *a dwelling, or cohabitation, dwelling with another*. That will be the case of Israel in the age to

come, for the nation will dwell with Christ.

#### VERSE 21

**“And afterwards she bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah”** — Dinah is the feminine form of Dan, and signifies *Judgment*. The names of Leah’s seven children, therefore, proclaim the Gospel message which is inherent in the Law, thus: Reuben: *See a son*; Simeon: *Hear him*; Levi: *Join him*; Judah: *Praise him*; Issachar: *He will reward you*; Zebulun: *By dwelling with you*; Dinah: *After judgment*.

#### Birth of Joseph (Rachel) — Vv. 22-24

*At last Rachel has the inestimable joy of bearing a son to Jacob. The mandrakes fail, but prayer succeeds. God hearkens to her, and opens her womb, and Joseph, the greatest beloved of all Jacob’s sons, is born.*

#### VERSE 22

**“And God remembered Rachel”** —

The fulness of time had come for her to have a son. See Gal. 4:4. Vv. 22-23 emphasise the divine power being exhibited in this incident. It was God, not the will of the flesh, who determined the appropriate time for the manifestations of Rachel’s seed.

**“And God hearkened to her, and opened her womb”** — Rachel had given herself to prayer, and she found that it was effective. At first she had turned in petulance to her husband (v.1), but this had only made him angry, and she had found the help of man to fail. Superstition had proved ineffectual, but faith had prevailed.

#### VERSE 23

**“And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach”** — Great was the joy and delight of Rachel. In the modern world this is difficult to comprehend, but in Israel barrenness was considered a mark of reproach. Compare Hannah’s song of rejoicing recorded in 1 Sam. 2:1-10.

#### VERSE 24

**“And she called his name Joseph;**

**and said”** — This name is the future tense of the verb *yasaph*, signifying *He shall add*. It expressed Rachel’s conviction that she would bear another son besides Joseph. Joseph typed Christ in taking away the reproach of his mother (cp. Gal. 4:26), and of increasing the seed of promise (Isa. 53:10).

**“Yahweh shall add to me another son”** — The covenant name, or, rather, its equivalent (see Exod. 6:3), was used by Rachel in her prophecy. The significance of Joseph’s name (sig: *He shall add*) points forward to that of Benjamin (sig: *Son of the Right Hand*). The former is expressive of the first advent of the Lord, when he provided a sacrifice to take away the reproach of the people; the second points to the future advent, when many shall be added to the Son of His right hand. But how did Rachel know of the coming of this further son? By the same means that we can anticipate the Lord’s future advent: by heeding the revelation of Yahweh. The promise of a further son must have been told her by God; thus the use of the covenant name in this verse.

There is a wonderful lesson conveyed in the names of these children of Jacob in the order of their birth. Reuben: *See a son*; Simeon: *Hear him*; Levi: *Join him*; Judah: *Praise him*; Dan: *He shall judge*; Naphtali: *After wrestling*; Gad: *And a victorious company*; Asher: *Of blessed ones*; Issachar: *Shall receive their reward*; Zebulun: *And shall dwell with him*; Dinah: *For the judgment*; Joseph: *Shall find an increase*; Benjamin: *To the Son of His right hand*.

#### Jacob Bargains For Laban’s Flocks

— Vv. 25-36.

*To Jacob, the birth of Joseph, born to him by the only wife of his choice, seems to set the seal on his sojourn in Mesopotamia. He desires to leave to return to the Land of Promise. Laban however, is reluctant to let him go, for he has benefited greatly through the service rendered by his son-in-law. He suggests that Jacob appoint the wages that he should pay him. Jacob makes a suggestion, which, in the natural course of*



*things, would give him only a small return for his toils, and Laban eagerly accepts it.*

#### VERSE 25

**“It came to pass, when Rachel had born Joseph”** — At what age was Jacob at this time? There is a chronological puzzle associated with the events of Jacob’s life. Jacob was 97 years of age when he left Laban (See *Chronikon Hebraikon* p. 12), and as he told his father-in-law that he had served him twenty years (Gen. 31:41), it is assessed that he was 77 years of age when he left home in search of a wife. At that rate, assuming he worked seven years for Leah, his first son would not have been born before he was 85, and as he served six years for Laban’s cattle (Gen. 31:41), it would mean that all the events recorded in the chapter before us would have taken place within the compass of seven years. This is an impossibility, for Leah had seven children, as well as a period when “she left off bearing” and gave Zilpah to Jacob (Gen. 30:9). What is the solution? When we consider Jacob’s words in Genesis 31:38, we learn that he was forty years with Laban, and not twenty as is generally thought. Therefore, he was fifty-seven when he left Beersheba, and had been with Laban some thirty-three to thirty-four years at this point of time.

There is also a typical significance to the words of this verse. The birth of

Joseph foreshadows the first advent of the Lord; at that time, 1900 years ago, Jewry was desirous of the restoration of the Kingdom (cp. Luke 2:38).

**“That Jacob said unto Laban, Send me away”** — Rebekah had promised Jacob that she would send him word as to when he should return, but, apparently, he had not heard from his mother. Her death is not recorded in Scripture, but she may have died shortly after he left home. Now, after a lapse of some thirty-three years, and in the absence of news from home, he was desirous of returning thither.

#### VERSE 26

**“Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served thee, and let me go: for thou knowest my service which I have done thee”** — Jacob could discern, or could sense, that Laban was reluctant to let him go, and therefore appealed on the grounds of the labour and service he had rendered him.

#### VERSE 27

**“And Laban said, unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes, tarry”** — Note the suave politeness of this man of the flesh. He had benefited greatly from the presence of Jacob who, as a member of the family, had rendered service above that which is normal (cp. Gen. 31:6,38-40), and without wages.



### Bible Chronology From the Birth of Abram to the Exodus

|   | Years | Date    |
|---|-------|---------|
| Abram born .....  |       | BC 2008 |
| Abram enters the land (Gen. 12:4) .....   | 75    | BC 2083 |
| Abram (85) marries Hagar (Gen. 16:3) .....  | 10    | BC 2093 |
| Ishmael born (Gen. 16:16) .....   | 1     | BC 2094 |
| Isaac born (Abram 100, Sarah 90 — Gen. 17:17).....  | 14    | BC 2108 |
| Isaac weaned (?).....   | 5     | BC 2113 |
| Death of Sarah (127 — Gen. 23:1,2) .....  | 32    |         |
| (Abraham 137; Isaac 37).....  |       | BC 2145 |
| Isaac marries Rebekah (40 — Gen. 25:20) .....   | 3     |         |
| (Abraham 140).....  |       | BC 2148 |
| Esau and Jacob born (Gen. 25:26) .....  | 20    |         |
| (Abraham 160; Isaac 60).....  |       | BC 2168 |
| Death of Abraham (Gen. 25:7).....   | 15    | BC 2183 |
| Esau marries (40 — Gen. 26:34).....   | 25    | BC 2208 |
| Jacob leaves home (57 — Gen. 29) .....  | 17    |         |
| (Isaac 117; Ishmael 130) .....  |       | BC 2225 |
| Esau visits Ishmael (Gen. 28:9) .....   | ?     |         |
| This was after Jacob left. As Ishmael died at the age of 137 when Jacob was about 63-64, the latter must have left home before he was 77 as usually computed. |       |         |
| Ishmael dies (137 — Gen. 25:17) .....   | 7     | BC 2232 |
| Jacob with Laban (40 years — Gen. 31:38-41) .....   | 33    |         |
| (Jacob 97; Isaac 151; Joseph 6).....  |       | BC 2265 |
| Joseph hated (17 — Gen. 37:2).....  | 11    |         |
| (Jacob 108; Isaac 168).....   |       | BC 2276 |
| Death of Isaac (180 — Gen. 35:28) .....   | 12    |         |
| (Jacob 120; Joseph 29) .....  |       | BC 2288 |
| Joseph before Pharaoh (30 — Gen. 41:46) .....   | 1     | BC 2289 |
| Years of plenty (7 — Gen. 41:47).....   | 7     | BC 2296 |
| Jacob comes into Egypt (130 — Gen. 45:28) .....   | 2     |         |
| (Joseph — 39) .....   |       | BC 2298 |
| Death of Jacob (147 — Gen. 47:28) .....   | 17    |         |
| (Joseph — 56) .....   |       | BC 2315 |
| Death of Joseph (110 — Gen. 50:26).....   | 54    | BC 2369 |

**Note:**

At the end of two years' famine (Gen. 45:6), Joseph, having appeared before Pharaoh at the age of 30, and having lived through seven years of plenty, would have been 39-40 (Gen. 41:46), whilst Jacob was 130 (Gen. 47:9).

Joseph was thus born when Jacob was 90-91, and this took place just prior to the six years that Jacob served Laban for his cattle (Gen. 30:25). If he had been only 14 years with Laban to that time, it would mean that he had left home to seek a wife when he was about 76-77!

On that computation, assuming he had worked 7 years for Leah, his first son would not have been born before he was 85. At that rate, Judah, the fourth son, could have been born before he was 88, and would have been only 42 when the events of Gen. 38 took place.

A further difficulty arises in regard to the age of Ishmael, for Esau visited him to seek the hand of his daughter in marriage after Jacob had left home, though Ishmael died when Jacob was 63.

If Jacob had no son until he was 85, and if Joseph was born when he was 90, he had 11 sons and Dinah in five years!

The alternative suggestion, which solves all the above problems, is that he left home when he was 57 years of age, and that he was with Laban for forty years, and not twenty.

What then of Jacob's own statement that he was "twenty years" with Laban (Gen. 31:38)? The answer is that Jacob speaks of two periods of twenty years (cp. vv. 38,41). The first period he assisted him as a friend; the other twenty years he served as a covenant servant (cp. the different expressions used: "I have been with thee": v. 38; "I served thee": v. 41). Therefore he was with Laban for forty years, the period of probation.



**“For I have learned by experience that Yahweh hath blessed me for thy sake”** — Laban’s statement is significant. It indicates that he has some conception of the divine covenants of promise to the patriarchs (Gen. 12:3), implying that Jacob had explained them to him. But, with serpent-like philosophy, Laban set out to dissuade Jacob from fulfilling his obligation to God to return to the land of promise. Why should Moses represent Laban as using the covenant name of God seeing that it had not then been revealed? Jacob had evidently explained to him that the God of Bethel, Whom he worshipped, was a Power (*el*) Who would reveal Himself in a seed as promised (Gen. 28:14). This principle of “*He who will be*” (or *Yahweh*) could well be used by Laban to describe the God of Jacob even though the Name had not been then adopted by Deity as such. Thus *El Shaddai*, the God of the patriarchs (Exod. 6:3), could be identified as He who will fulfil the promises, He who will manifest Himself in a seed, and He who will bless all nations. In view of this prophetic promise of future manifestation, the normal Hebrew verb of *hayah* (*will be*) could have been used in the third person, singular number, and with the masculine pronoun to describe God, long before the divine name was given at the bush (Exod. 3:14): a usage that Moses, under divine inspiration in recording these things, most appropriately identified as Yahweh, as in this case. For though the Name of Yahweh had not then been revealed (Exod. 6:3), the principles of the Name were well known from the beginning. In fact, they were incorporated in the Edenic covenant of promise (Gen. 3:15).

#### VERSE 28

**“And he said, Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it”** — This was a proposition that the avaricious and covetous Laban had previously made to Jacob to his great personal advantage (Gen. 29:15). He then had learned that Jacob was so deeply in love with his daughter as to agree to render seven years of hard labour (cp. Ch. 31:40) to win her hand — which, by trickery, the wily Syrian had

been able to extend to fourteen years.

#### VERSE 29

**“And he said unto him, Thou knowest how I have served thee, and how thy cattle was with me”** — Jacob’s labour was a testimony to his integrity, his conscientiousness, and his skill (Gen. 31:6,38-40). He had proved to be “a faithful and wise servant” (Matt. 24:45), fulfilling in that regard, the kind of service advocated by the Word (Eph. 6:5-8; Col. 3:22-25; Tit. 2:9-10), and that, “not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward” such as Laban (1 Pet. 2:15,18).

#### VERSE 30

**“For it was little which thou hadst before I came, and it is now increased unto a multitude”** — Jacob clearly stated the facts to Laban, showing that he had benefited by Jacob’s presence. This is the case with those who help the people of God, for God has promised that He will bless those who so do (Gen. 12:3). The thoughtful Jacob could well see this as a vindication of God’s promise to him (see Gen. 28:15). The word “increased” is literally *broken forth* in Hebrew (see margin), suggesting a sudden and unexpected increase in flocks and herds.

**“And Yahweh hath blessed thee since my coming”** — The literal Hebrew has *at my foot*, rather than *at my coming*. The Berkeley Version renders “Yahweh has blessed you at *my footsteps*”. Jacob honestly and openly explained two factors to Laban. First: that his success was due to Yahweh and not to his personal skill; second: that Yahweh had overshadowed all that he had done to cause it to prosper. This was both an explanation and a warning to Laban. Jacob plainly told his father-in-law that every step he had taken regarding the flocks and herds had prospered, and therefore, whatever he did would continue to prosper. If Laban had considered this fact a little more, he may have hesitated before entering into the subsequent agreement, which would benefit Jacob at the expense of himself, but like most covetous men, he doubtless believed that he would be equal to any such contingency.

**“And now when shall I provide for mine own house also?”** — Jacob was a practical man of faith. He was not blind to his family responsibilities whilst serving God; in fact, he saw the faithful carrying out of such duties as a form of service. This is consistent with the requirements of Yahweh as expressed throughout the Word. Paul sums the matter up: “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel” (1 Tim. 5:8).

#### VERSE 31

**“And he said, What shall I give thee?”** — Laban knew that it was to his advantage to retain the services of Jacob.

**“And Jacob said, Thou shalt not give me any thing; if thou wilt do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep thy flock”** — Jacob would work without wages on certain conditions. Jacob’s answer must have pleased the covetous Laban.

#### VERSE 32

**“I will pass through all thy flock today, removing from thence all the speckled and spotted cattle, and all the brown cattle among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats”** — The term “cattle” is from the Hebrew *seh* and signifies a young animal. The R.V. renders it as *one*: “removing from thence every speckled and spotted *one*”. Since, in the Middle East, sheep are normally white, and goats black, the number of such animals in Laban’s flocks would be few.

**“And of such shall be my hire”** — Laban could hardly believe his ears. Not only would the number of such animals be few, but they were the least esteemed among the flock. Is this a parable of the disciples of the Lord, separated from the world, and described as his “little flock” who were set aside to receive the Kingdom (Luke 12:32) being the least esteemed of mankind (1 Cor. 1:26-29)?

#### VERSE 33

**“So shall my righteousness answer for me in time to come, when it shall**

**come for my hire before thy face: everyone that is speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the sheep, that shall be counted stolen with me”** — In the statement of this verse, Jacob gave Laban fair warning that he expected to profit from the transaction to such an extent that he may be accused of dishonesty. He knew the man he was dealing with, and so stated the matter plainly. The RSV renders “righteousness” as *honesty*.

#### VERSE 34

**“And Laban said, Behold, I would it might be according to thy word”** — Laban enthusiastically agreed with the proposal. He probably rubbed his hands with glee at such an offer. Under normal conditions, Jacob’s chances of increasing his wealth were meagre, but, as we shall see, they were not left to normal conditions.

#### VERSE 35

**“And he removed that day the he goats that were ringstraked and spotted, and all the she goats that were speckled and spotted, and every one that had some white in it, and all the brown among the sheep, and gave them into the hand of his sons”** — Who did this? The grammatical construction of the verse shows that it was Laban! It constituted another act of deception. He did this secretly before Jacob could go through the flocks, and so removed the smallest possible chance of success to his nephew, as he imagined. He sent them far away (v. 36), and so deceived Jacob, as he later complained (Gen. 31:7). Laban, having robbed Jacob of the natural means of increase, forced him to use the stratagem described in v. 37.

#### VERSE 36

**“And he set three days’ journey betwixt himself and Jacob”** — This shows clearly that it was Laban who separated the speckled and ringstraked animals, and not Jacob. Three is the symbol of completeness, so that there was complete severance of these animals from the main flocks which now Jacob tended.

**“And Jacob fed the rest of Laban’s flocks”** — He faithfully kept his side of the bargain, even though Laban had misappropriated the animals he had agreed that Jacob could have.

**Jacob’s Increasing Prosperity**  
— Vv. 37-43

*It is claimed that the methods adopted by Jacob as now described are deceitful, superstitious and unscientific. Though it is acknowledged that the methods Jacob used would not of themselves produce the results recorded, we shall show that his action was typical and God-directed. Later, Jacob acknowledges that he was God-instructed and God-blessed in that which he did and received (Gen. 31:9-13). God overlooked his affairs, so that in spite of the avaricious greed of his father-in-law, Laban’s flock ultimately became attached to that of Jacob. In this there seems to be a foreshadowing of the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, for it is designed to call sinners (the speckled and spotted) to repentance (Matt. 9:13), separating the imperfect and bringing them under the shepherding of men of faith. Even the time-setting of this type was correct for it was after the birth of Joseph, pointing forward to the first advent of the Lord.*

**VERSE 37**

**“And Jacob took him rods of green poplar”** — The word “poplar” is *Libneh* in Hebrew. It is from a common root with the word *Laban* and signifies the *white tree*. The word is used in relation to the deceptive white of leprosy, and the pure white of righteousness. Whereas Laban stood for the former, the preaching of the Gospel draws men to the latter. Frequently, flesh cannot discern the difference between one and the other.

The word *libneh* occurs again in Hos. 4:13, which the

R.V. margin renders as “storax.” Though the Storax is a shrub, it often attains a height of twenty feet. Its leaves are white in appearance on the lower surface, and it bears a wealth of large white blossoms. Thus in its leaves, its blossom and its general appearance, it can be described as the *white tree*. Jacob displayed this before the animals of Laban’s flock, probably typing the call of the Truth to the Gentiles, which is essentially, a call to righteousness, symbolised by the colour of white.

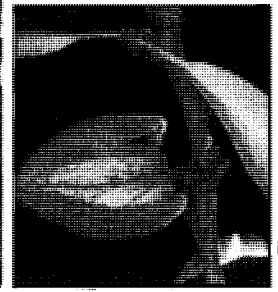
**“And of the hazel”** — The Hebrew word is *Luz*, the *Luz* of Gen. 28:19, the original name of Bethel. The name of this tree, doubtless, would take Jacob’s mind back to Bethel, and the covenant of promise there given him. This, likewise, is a prominent feature of the Gospel when it is paraded before those who are invited to participate therein, and so become one of Christ’s “little flock.”

**“And chesnut tree”** — The Hebrew is *Armon* from *aram* signifying to *make bare*. It is identified as the Plane tree, a tree with a tall and stately trunk, possess-



*Left: The White Poplar owes its name to the whitish-grey bark and to the white woolly lower face of its leaves. Some believe that this is the Libneh tree referred to as the “Green Poplar” of v. 37.*

*Below: The Luz tree translated as the “Hazel” in Gen. 28:19 is considered to be the almond tree.*





Left: *The Plane Tree* (translated as *Chestnut tree* in v. 37) is fairly common in Northern Israel and is especially conspicuous in forests. Generally deciduous the leaves are covered with sharp and readily removable hairs, harmful to the sin and eyes.

ing smooth bark. The Septuagint and R.V. both render as *Plane tree*. A scratch in the bark of this tree will at once reveal a white streak. It often attains a height of 100 feet, with a diameter at its base of from six to ten feet. The periodic peeling of the bark reveals the smooth, white interior trunk. The root word is used in both a good sense and a bad sense for cleverness, craftiness, or prudence.

In the three trees selected, Jacob typically set before the flock the principles of righteousness (poplar), the promise of Luz (hazel), and the need to bare oneself to God (chestnut). The narrative shows that portion of the flock of Laban revealed the influence of this, showing up their imperfections, and also drawing them to the hope of Israel.

**“And pilled white strakes in them”** — The rods were peeled in such a way that streaks of white appeared in them. This was evidently done spirally, so that the rods appeared parti-coloured.

**“And made the white appear which was in the rods”** — A cut down tree is often used to symbolise the cross (1 Pet. 2:24; Deut. 21:23; Exod. 15:25). As Jacob cut down the rods from each tree, and placarded them before the flock of Laban, so Christ was *placarded* or clearly “set before” the Gentiles by those who proclaimed him unto them (Gal. 3:1). And this caused “the white to appear” which was in the rods, or, in the case of the Lord, the righteousness of Yahweh was manifested in flesh.

### VERSE 38

**“And he set the rods which he had pilled before the flocks in the gutters in the watering troughs”** — This is better spelt as *peeled*. The peeling caused their inward character to be revealed.

**“When the flocks came to drink, that they should conceive when they came to drink”** — They saw the rods, drank of the water, and conceived to bring forth fruit. Believers see the righteousness of Christ displayed on the tree, drink deeply of the water of life, and conceive to bring forth fruit to the glory of the Father.

### VERSE 39

**“And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth cattle ringstraked, speckled, and spotted”** — The offspring produced, reflected the influence of the rods. The Truth reveals our imperfections, and induces in us a measure of righteousness.

Actually, though these animals had external imperfections, they were better than Laban’s flocks which did not (cp. v. 41). This, likewise, is the influence of the truth upon those of the world who are drawn to Christ in contrast with those who rest in their own righteousness (Cp. Rom. 10:3).

### VERSE 40

**“And Jacob did separate the lambs”** — He separated from the main body of the flock the speckled lambs procured by the foregoing artifice. The application to the type is obvious. When a “lamb” has been brought to the birth through the water of baptism, there is a need to separate it from the world.

**“Set the faces of the flocks toward the ringstraked, and all the brown in the flock of Laban”** — Thus he made the speckled lambs serve the same purpose as the peeled rods. The attention of the flock was directed towards them as an example to follow! This, likewise, is in accordance with the type.

**“And he put his own flocks by themselves, and put them not unto Laban’s cattle”** — He did this so that the reverse effect would not follow, and the sheep

revert to type, producing offspring of a uniform colour. Complete separation from the world is required of all "lamb" in the flock of God, or, otherwise, they will revert to their previous condition (2 Pet. 2:20-22).

**VERSE 41**

**"And it came to pass, whensoever the stronger cattle did conceive, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods"** — Rotherham renders this: "Whensoever the stronger of the flocks were in heat that Jacob set the rods before the eyes of the flocks, in the channels, that the females might be in heat among the rods." The Hebrew for "stronger" is *mekushor* and signifies *bound together, compact*, and therefore more vigorous. Jacob took care to do this with the early matings, as the rams would select the ewes of their choice; leaving later matings, when the first vigor has assuaged, for Laban's flocks.

**VERSE 42**

**"But when the cattle were feeble, he put them not in"** — Notice that it does not say, "the feeble among the cattle," but when "the cattle were feeble," supporting the comment on v. 41. It seems to imply a late mating with the result of a feebler

lamb. Naturally, the rams would mate with the more vigorous ewes first, and only with the less vigorous ones later. The expression, therefore, seems to imply an early and a late mating. Jacob used his artifice during the earlier matings, but not during the later ones.

**"So the feebler were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's"** — There was nothing unfair in what Jacob did, for he had given due warning to Laban when he was engaged for the work of shepherding (cp. Vv. 29-30). Nor, as a good shepherd, did he put much store on the stratagem he used to bring results; he looked to Yahweh for that (cp. Ch. 31:10-12).

**VERSE 43**

**"And the man increased exceedingly"** — Previously Laban had increased possessions through his shepherding (v. 30). This prosperity was indicative of the Divine blessing.

**"And had much cattle, and maidservants, and menservants"** — As his flocks and herds increased, so he added those to his household who could care for them.

**"And camels, and asses"** — Cp. As Leah and Rachel later observed (Ch. 31:14-16), God had taken from their father, wealth that really belonged to Jacob and his wives.

**CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE****JACOB'S RETURN TO THE LAND OF PROMISE****(Gen. 31:1-33:20)**

*The conditions of Jacob's service having been thus altered, he entered on an entirely new life. Instead of being a hired shepherd, he became a sheep-master. Together with his wives and children, he lived apart from Laban, in his own house, and only occasionally had communication with his uncle and his uncle's sons. Laban soon became dissatisfied with the agreement that he had made with his son-in-law, and insisted on altering its terms. Jacob could have kept him to his bargain, but he submitted, and allowed God to*



*direct the issues of his life. He continued to prosper, and this caused the jealousy and antagonism of Laban and his household. Jacob realised that it was only a matter of time before an open breach would occur, perhaps with tragic results. He felt dissatisfied with his position, and desired to make some change in it. It was under these circumstances, that he once more heard the voice of God speaking directly to him, and distinctly pointing out the course which he was to take. Thus commenced his pilgrimage back to the land; his escape from Laban, his unfounded fear of Esau, his wrestling with the angel, his ultimate arrival at Shechem in peace, and his erection of the altar El-elohe-Israel.*

**Jacob Plans To Leave Laban Secretly**  
— Vv. 1-8.

*Jacob, overhearing Laban's sons secretly accusing him of dishonesty, observes that Laban also believes this. He begins to fear for his life, and, seeking guidance from God, is instructed to return to the Land of Promise. He outlines his problems, stresses God's presence in his life, his personal diligence as a shepherd, the dishonesty of their father, and discloses to them the message he has received from God. His wives agree that their father is unjust. They recall with keen resentment that he had debased them by selling them like animals and then had kept the money which really belonged to them and their children, and willingly concurred with his decision.*

**VERSE 1**

**"And he heard the words of Laban's sons"** — Jacob had now served forty years with Laban (cp. v. 38), and was now in his ninety-seventh year. The conversation he overheard alerted him to the change in Laban's attitude and the rising hostility towards him manifested by all in his father-in-law's household.

**"Saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's"** — This exaggerated statement (Laban still had some possessions, v. 18) accused Jacob of dishonesty.

**"And of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory"** — They conveniently overlooked that Laban's wealth had been received through the ser-

vice of Jacob (Ch. 30:30); and, moreover, that Laban had withheld that which rightly belonged to Leah and Rachel (Ch. 31:16).

**VERSE 2**

**"And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban and, behold, it was not toward him as before"** — He took careful cognizance of Laban, and detected an attitude of increasing resentment towards him. Laban accepted the explanation of his sons as to the failure of schemes, and, overlooking his own dishonesty, manifested increasing impatience towards Jacob. This caused Jacob to fear for his life, so that he sought guidance of God.

**VERSE 3**

**"And Yahweh said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee"** — Evidently Jacob made his problem a matter of prayer, which was answered in the matter described in this verse. He received Divine permission to return, and was given the promise: "I will be with thee."

**VERSE 4**

**"And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock"** — Relationships between Laban and Jacob had become so strained and critical, that Jacob could not trust most of those at the main camp, and therefore requested this family council in the field far from the prying eyes and treacherous ears of any

who might report back to Laban. Whilst Jacob placed implicit trust in God, he realised that he should exercise discretion. It is important that we also do that.

It is significant that Rachel is placed before Leah in the narrative, doubtless because she was the more favored of the two. It is also significant that he called them unto "his flock." Evidently he was no longer caring for Laban's flocks. Perhaps Laban had come to the conclusion that it was more profitable for him to care for them himself!

#### VERSE 5

**"And said unto them, I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before"** — There had been a change in relationships, and Laban's hostility was no longer disguised.

**"But the God of my father hath been with me"** — He rejected any suggestion of dishonesty, such as his wives may have been led to believe from the remarks of their brothers, and gave full credit for his prosperity to God to Whom it was due.

#### VERSE 6

**"And ye know that with all my power I have served your father"** — They knew this, for they realised how hard their husband had to work for their father in order to secure them as his wives; they also knew how their father had cheated him time and again. The word rendered "power", *kowach* signifies *strength* or *vigour*. Jacob had labored hard for Laban desiring his prosperity as well as his own.

#### VERSE 7

**"And your father hath deceived me"** — The Hebrew *hathal* signifies *to cheat* or *to plunder*. It is a harder word than what we use to describe deception.

**"And changed my wages ten times"** — The term signifies to frequently do so, as in Num. 14:22, Job 19:3 and elsewhere. Some of these changes are described in vv. 8,39.

**"But God suffered him not to hurt me"** — Whatever Laban did fell out to Jacob's advantage. Jacob had personal experience

of the overshadowing providence of Yahweh. He gave God full credit for whatever prosperity had come to him.

#### VERSE 8

**"If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages; then all the cattle bare speckled: and if he said thus, The ringstraked shall be thy hire; then bare all the cattle ringstraked"** — By the original contract, Jacob had been promised all the parti-coloured animals (Ch. 30:32), but when these remarkably increased, Laban altered its terms by limiting Jacob's share to the speckled animals. When they suddenly increased, he changed the terms again. Jacob submitted to these changes because he realised that he prospered by the hand of God, and was prepared to allow Him to direct the issues. Being a man of faith, he recognised that whatever Laban did could not affect him if God continued with him.

#### VERSE 9

**"Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me"** — This is Jacob's explanation of his amazing rise in prosperity. He put no confidence in the stratagem he had used (Ch. 30:42), but saw it only as a means to an end. God was with him, and he desired to impress his wives with that fact. He wanted to emphasise the fact that they need not fear the consequences of his proposal to leave Haran.

#### VERSE 10

**"And it came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived, that I lifted up mine eyes, and saw in a dream"** — This is Jacob's explanation of the statement he had already made to his wives, that God had taken away the cattle of Laban and given them to him. His increase in prosperity was the result of miracle, not of the artifice of the peeled rods. He was following Divine guidance in all that he did.

**"And, behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle were ringstraked, speckled, and grisled"** — The word, *grisled* is translated from the Hebrew *baruddim* from a root *barad*, *to scatter*

*hail*, and thus signifies *spotted*. What Jacob saw in a dream was not according to fact; for Laban had removed all such animals from the flock (Gen. 30:35). But God was revealing to him that though Laban had attempted to overreach him by removing such animals from the flock, and though all the animals that remained were outwardly perfect, the rams that begat lambs would be as though they were ringstraked, speckled, and spotted. Jacob recognised that the hand of God was prospering him; and the contrivance of the peeled rods was merely the external witness that what happened was not according to chance, but by divine direction.

#### VERSE 11

**“And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob: And I said, Here am I”** — Jacob was ever conscious of the overshadowing care of this angel, and referred to it towards the end of his life (Gen. 48:16). Angels overshadow the lives of believers now as much as they did in the days of Jacob (cp. Matt. 18:10), acting as a bridge between heaven and earth. The dream that Jacob saw, and the reassuring words of the angel that he heard, brought home to him the reality of the vision of Bethel, with angels ascending and descending the stairway between heaven and earth.

#### VERSE 12

**“And he said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ringstraked, speckled, and grised”** — As we have noted above, they were in fact externally unmarked, but in reality, as far as genetics were concerned, they were so marked.

**“For I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee”** — Thus Jacob explained to his wives that his artifice of the peeled rods was not the cause of his sudden prosperity, but that it came by the hand of God. Jacob had not acted “as a cheat and a rogue” as some claim, but had meekly submitted to the cheating of Laban, and had followed the direction of God in all that he did.

#### VERSE 13

**“I am the God of Bethel”** — This is an important title of God. The word is *El* (or *Ail*) in Hebrew, concerning which, Brother Thomas states in *Phanerosis* (p. 49 Logos edition) “As often as this word *ail* passed before his mind, the idea of POWER, *might, strength*, would stand out in bold relief. ‘It always,’ says Gesenius, ‘presented to the Hebrews the idea of strength and power.’ Nebuchadnezzar is styled in Ezek. 31:11, *Ail Goyim*, the Mighty One of Nations; and in Isaiah 9:6, Messiah is termed *Ail Givbor*, the Mighty Warrior.”

“God of Bethel,” therefore, signifies *Strength of the House of Power*. God became Jacob’s strength; He can become our strength. Jacob was learning the lesson that it is not in one’s own power that things of eternal value are accomplished, but by leaning upon that One Who has promised: “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5). We must allow God to work through us by His Word (Phil. 2:13), and we will be incorporated as elements in the *House of God*, “whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end” (Heb. 3:6). Christ is the channel of that divine strength (Phil. 4:13). It is “made perfect in (physical) weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9), and is adequate for the building up of a character well pleasing unto God (Eph. 3:16), as well as for coping with the fretting anxieties of life (Col. 1:11). Isaiah says: “He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength” (Isa. 40:29-31). Yahweh has promised: “I will strengthen thee; yea I will help thee” (Isa. 41:10). This has enabled some to say: “In Yahweh have I righteousness and strength” (Isa. 45:24). Thus Paul exhorts: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might” (Eph. 6:10).

But though the *Strength of Beth-el* was with Jacob, the patriarch had to endure many trying times, and many sore trials, until he learned the lesson of Bethel— that Yahweh was with him. This reminds us that the adversities, evil circumstances,

oppositions and difficulties we may experience from day to day do not mean that we are abandoned of God, but rather that there is some lesson that He desires us to learn; some aspects of our character that need purifying or developing.

**“Where thou anointedst the pillar”**— See Gen. 28:18. The pillar pointed forward to the main support of the House of God (Bethel), and therefore to Christ, and those in him. Now, by explaining the dream to his wives, Jacob reminded them of the great hope that he had, and which he shared with them.

**“And where thou vowedst a vow unto Me”** — By this vow (Gen. 28:21), Jacob dedicated himself unto Yahweh. The vision of Bethel, therefore, foreshadows the basis of all true conversions. As part of his household, his wives likewise must endorse the vow.

**“Now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred”** — The Gospel is a call to separation and dedication. The time had come for Jacob to return, and for his wives to leave the land of their nativity for the promised inheritance. A similar appeal will one day be made to Israel after the flesh: “Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith Yahweh” (Jer. 3:12).

#### VERSE 14

**“And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father’s house?”** — They recognised that there was no future for them as far as their father was concerned, and that their hope lay only with their husband. So it is with those who would follow the voice of God. Their natural father is the devil, that is: the flesh (John 8:44), the wages of which is death (Rom. 6:23); whereas by following God a person “has fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life” (Rom. 6:22).

#### VERSE 15

**“Are we not counted of him strangers?”** — That is what the world does with its own when they separate themselves to follow the dictates of God. Abraham had already demonstrated this

principle (Heb. 11:14).

**“For he hath sold us”** — Laban had treated them as animals or chattels: he had bargained with Jacob for them as one would for beasts or for goods. His mercenary meanness rankled long in their minds, and had destroyed any love they once had for him. So it is with “our father the devil,” the flesh. As we are brought under the influence of God’s truth, we learn that “it profits nothing,” and we lose any love we may once have had for it.

**“And hath quite devoured also our money”** — He had appropriated to his own use the dowry paid by Jacob. But how much was that? A considerable sum if the weekly wages for fourteen years were added up! On current (1992) wages of approximately \$500 per week (and a master-shepherd of Jacob’s ability would be able to command a significant rate as the state of Laban’s flocks at the conclusion of his son-in-law’s service revealed), the dowry paid by Jacob amounted to \$350,000.

#### VERSE 16

**“For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is our’s, and our children’s”** — In this statement, they recognised the providential care of the God of Jacob, and accepted Jacob’s explanation of his growing prosperity.

**“Now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do”** — Like Rebekah before them, they announced their willingness to follow in the footsteps of Abraham, in a pilgrimage to the land of promise.

#### VERSE 17

**“Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels”** — Having received the agreement of his wives, and fearing the intentions of Laban and his sons, Jacob acted with the greatest alacrity, instantly preparing for his departure.

#### VERSE 18

**“And he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods”** — The Hebrew *nahag*, here rendered “carried” signifies *to pant*

and implies the urgency, haste and fear with which he made his preparations.

**“Which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting”** — Those animals that he had acquired through his service as shepherd to Laban.

**“Which he had gotten in Padan-aram, for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan”** — See note, Gen 25:20.

### Rachel Steals Her Father’s Images — vv. 19-21.

*Jacob shrewdly takes advantage of Laban’s absence when visiting his distant flocks at shearing time, in order to leave Padan-aram for the land of Canaan. Unknown to anyone else, Rachel takes with her certain images which were equivalent to the title-deeds of her father’s property. Verse 19 should be in parenthesis.*

### VERSE 19

**“And Laban went to shear his sheep”** — This sentence should be in parenthesis. It is explanatory of Jacob’s urgent haste and instant action in leaving Haran. He seized the opportunity of Laban’s absence to effect his escape. Rotherham renders the verb in the past tense: “And Laban *had gone* to shear his sheep.”

**“And Rachel had stolen the images that were her father’s”** — Rotherham puts this verb in the present tense: “So Rachel *stole*...” She also grasped the opportunity of her father’s absence to do this. The word “images” is *teraphim*, as rendered in the margin. Apparently these *teraphim* were not so much gods to worship, as tokens of ownership of property. This is borne out by archaeological excavations at the small but important city of Nuzi, about twenty kilometres southwest of modern Kirkuk. They reveal that the possession of household gods, or *teraphim*, implied leadership of the family, and in the case of a married daughter assured her husband the right to the property of her father. Rachel had no legal right to those images, even though she did not steal them for purposes of worship, for as Laban had sons, they alone had the right to their father’s goods. Evidently

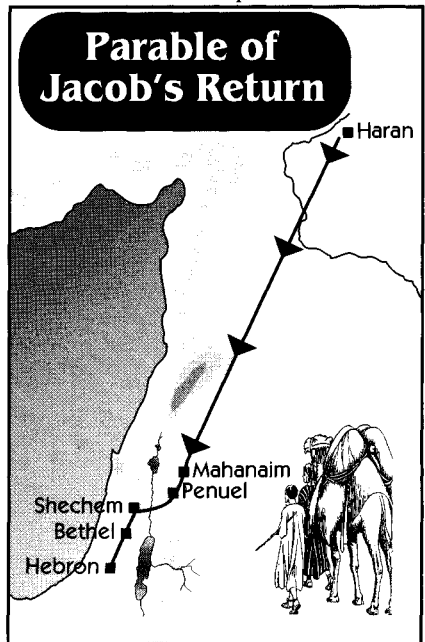
Rachel rankled under a sense of injustice at the way in which her father had made profit out of her marriage to Jacob, and had proceeded to try and over-reach the family ever since. See her comments in v. 16. Possibly Rachel took these *teraphim* as security for the increase obtained by Jacob at the expense of Laban.

### VERSE 20

**“And Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled”** — The literal Hebrew is most expressive: “And Jacob stole the heart of Laban the Aramean.” Thus, as Rachel stole the *Teraphim* of Laban, Jacob stole his heart. To the Hebrew, the heart is the seat of intelligence; Jacob “stole” this inasmuch as he did not disclose his intention of fleeing from Haran.

### VERSE 21

**“So he fled with all that he had”** — This was a considerable company. Not only did he have four wives and twelve children mounted upon camels, but



"menservants," and "maidservants," his household goods, cattle, camels and asses (Gen. 30:43; 31:18), a large flock of sheep and goats, a considerable number of horned cattle, bulls and kine (Gen. 32:15), numerous asses, "milch camels with their colts," furniture, tents (Ch. 31:33); in all a considerable caravan.

**"And he rose up, and passed over the river"** — By *the river* is meant the Euphrates, pre-eminently *the river* of the north.

**"And set his face toward the mount Gilead"** — He moved down south past Damascus to the east of the Sea of Galilee.

### Laban's Pursuit — Vv. 22-24

*Three days later, Laban was apprised of Jacob's action. On returning home, he discovered that the teraphim have been taken. He determines on pursuit. Taking with him some of his tribesmen, he pursues after Jacob, and moving at great speed, overtakes him in the northern part of Gilead. Meanwhile, however, he is warned by God to be careful how he treats Jacob.*

### VERSE 22

**"And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob was fled"** — Laban's flocks were three days' journey from those of Jacob (Gen. 30:36). This suggests that no sooner had Jacob left, than somebody rushed to Laban with the news.

### VERSE 23

**"And he took his brethren with him"** — He gathered together sufficient of his relations, men of his own tribe, to overawe Jacob with his company.

**"And pursued after him seven days' journey; and they overtook him in the mount Gilead"** — From Haran to Gilead is about five hundred kilometres. Riding on camels, Laban might well cover this in seven days; but Jacob with his household and his flocks would take considerably longer. Evidently Laban had delayed before leaving. Possibly he did not decide to do so until he discovered the loss of the teraphim.

### VERSE 24

**"And God came to Laban the Syri-**

**an in a dream by night, and said unto him"** — This was evidently the night before he overtook Jacob as described in the previous verse.

**"Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad"** — If this were the message that Laban received, it would mean that he could not speak at all! But the literal Hebrew is: "from *good to bad*," and evidently signifies in a deceitful manner: pretending to greet him in a friendly fashion, and then proceeding to accuse him; "blessing with his mouth, but cursing inwardly" (cp. Ps. 62:4).

### Laban Rebukes Jacob But Fails To Find The Images — Vv. 25-35.

*The dramatic meeting of Laban and Jacob is skilfully recorded. Varied emotions are subtly revealed and suspense is maintained to the end, with twists of irony flavoring the whole. Though the warning of God prevents the interview from being more stormy than might have been expected, it is still pretty tense. Laban makes an angry assault on Jacob, accusing him of being a thief trafficking in human lives. He accuses him of lacking the common courtesy of permitting him to bid a proper farewell to his daughters and grandchildren; and finally of being a common thief in stealing his gods. Jacob indignantly refutes the accusation of Laban, invites him to search for the gods which his father-in-law does confidently, but in vain.*

### VERSE 25

**"Then Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mount; and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mount of Gilead"** — Tension must have mounted in the camp of Jacob as he saw the approach of Laban; and now that the two encampments were side by side, great fear must have been experienced in that of Jacob.

### VERSE 26

**"And Laban said to Jacob"** — He assumed the pose of an injured, innocent party, overlooking his own failings in the transactions with Jacob.

**"What hast thou done, that thou**

**hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters, as captives taken with the sword?"** — Laban's frustration and anger causes him to use extreme language, and indulge in hyperbole which cannot be justified. In reality, he had sold his daughters as slaves, and they had willingly departed with Jacob, thoroughly disillusioned with their father.

#### VERSE 27

**"Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me; and didst not tell me"** — The literal Hebrew is: "*And hast stolen me*" for which see notes on v. 20.

**"That I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret, and with harp?"** — Laban *might* have done so, but more probably would not have. The tabret, or *toph*, was a hand drum or timbrel, something like a tambourine, or a tom-tom. It was associated with merrymaking (Exod. 15:20), and with dancing. The harp (*kinnor*) was a stringed instrument. Laban pretends that he would have entertained Jacob lavishly in a going-away party. If so, he would have had to alter his normal attitude.

#### VERSE 28

**"And hast not suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters?"** — With a touch of self-pity, Laban portrays himself as a generous grandparent who had been selfishly deprived from displaying affection towards his offspring.

**"Thou hast now done foolishly in so doing"** — The charge of folly is normally associated with wrongdoing, as in 1 Samuel 13:13.

#### VERSE 29

**"It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt: but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad"** — There is a play on words here. The *el* (power) of your hand is contrasted to the *Elohim* of your father. Laban sternly warns Jacob to take heed, as he had the power to have taught him a lesson, and would have done so but for the

warning of God.

#### VERSE 30

**"And now, though thou wouldest needs be gone, because thou sore longest after thy father's house"** — Laban now belittles Jacob as a homesick boy, who must needs go back to his father's house!

**"Yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?"**—The final accusation. Jacob is called a common thief who has stolen the treasured possessions of his benefactor.

#### VERSE 31

**"And Jacob answered and said to Laban"** — He replies with dignity, not attempting to hide anything, but frankly confessing to his motives.

**"Because I was afraid: for I said, Peradventure thou wouldest take by force thy daughters from me"**—Jacob did not attempt to defend himself. He frankly admitted that he was moved by fear and the dread of Laban's irresponsible use of force.

#### VERSE 32

**"With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live: before our brethren discern thou what is thine with me, and take it to thee"** — The accusation of dishonesty stung Jacob, and he impulsively gave Laban permission to search the camp, and confidently promised that the offender would be punished with death.

**"For Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them"** — Otherwise he would have been more cautious in his reply.

#### VERSE 33

**"And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tents, and into the two maidservants' tents; but he found them not. Then went he out of Leah's tent, and entered into Rachel's tent"** — Each had his or her individual establishment. Laban carefully searched each tent to Jacob's growing indignation and resentment.

#### VERSE 34

**"Now Rachel had taken the images"**

— It must have been a very tense and fearful Rachel who listened to the conversation between her father and husband. She would have had many an anxious moment, as the probing, merciless hands of Laban picked and moved over all that was in the tent.

**“And put them in the camel’s furniture, and sat upon them”** — The RSV renders this as “the camel’s saddle.” At Tell Halaf, archaeologists found a stone slab sculptured in relief, dating from about the ninth century B.C., depicting a camel, with a rider sitting on a saddle which looks very much like a square box, fastened on the animal by crosswise girths. Such a saddle would be exactly the kind in which Rachel could readily have hidden the household idols (*Light From The Ancient Past*, p. 67).



*Camel rider from Tell Halaf.*

**“And Laban searched all the tent, but found them not”** — The literal Hebrew is “Laban *felt* in all the tent.” His probing fingers searched every part, but to his annoyance and frustration, he found them not.

#### VERSE 35

**“And she said to her father, Let it not displease my lord”** — Let it not irritate you.

**“That I cannot rise up before thee”** — It was normal for children to rise up before their parents (Lev. 19:32), but this would have been difficult for Rachel seated upon the camel.

**“For the custom of women is upon me”** — Literally, “the way of women.” A reference to menstruation (cp. Gen. 18:11). Under the law, females were then considered as ceremonially unclean, and were set apart (Lev. 15:19). Evidently the same custom prevailed before the law, with the result that Laban could not search the saddle upon which Rachel was seated, without being ceremonially defiled.

**“And he searched, but found not the images”** — He searched everywhere but in vain.

#### Jacob Reproaches Laban For His Harshness — Vv. 36-42.

*Embarrassed at the failure of his search, Laban is silenced before his son-in-law. His anger subsides, whilst Jacob’s confidence increases. He now decries Laban’s attitude as indicative of the selfish, suspicious nature he ever revealed. Moved with righteous anger, Jacob demands the reason of such conduct. Laban has accused Jacob of being a common thief, but let him supply the evidence. On the other hand, Jacob presses Laban with dishonesty, accusing him of deceiving him in his wages, in spite of the diligent and unstinted service rendered by his son-in-law. Only the overshadowing care of God had protected him from such as Laban.*

#### VERSE 36

**“And Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban”** — The Hebrew signifies *to glow, blaze up*. Jacob burned with indignation the more Laban was abashed. The word “chode” is from *ruwb*, *to toss, tear, grapple*, and is expressive of action with the hands or with words of a highly demonstrable kind. He possibly gesticulated as he spoke, his very indignation giving



him added eloquence.

**“And Jacob answered and said to Laban, What is my trespass? What is my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me?”** — It is claimed that “in the Hebrew there is a selection of poetical forms of expression and of rhythmical movement” as the hotly indignant Jacob upbraided his father-in-law with an avalanche of words. This stemmed from his sense of grievance, his realisation of being hopelessly wronged.

### VERSE 37

**“Whereas thou hast searched all my stuff”** — The literal Hebrew is *felt*. “Your prying fingers have dug into all my possessions, have handled all my goods”.

**“What hast thou found of all thy household stuff? set it here before my brethren and thy brethren, that they may judge betwixt us both”** — To the chagrin of the crestfallen Laban, he had nothing to show! One can imagine how the eyes of his kinsmen would turn towards him as they listened to Jacob. They had travelled some five hundred kilometres for this — and still had another five hundred kilometres to return! The term *judge* in this place signifies *to correct, instruct*. The onlookers are invited to be instructed as to the character of either party by what they have witnessed and are about to hear.

### VERSE 38

**“This twenty years have I been with thee”** — Jacob was ninety-seven years of age when he fled from Laban. If he were with his father-in-law only twenty years, the events of his life are compressed in too narrow a compass to be practical, and introduce contradictions.

Consider the following:

At the end of two years' famine (Gen. 45:6) Joseph would have been between 39-40 (Gen. 41:46), and Jacob was 130 (Gen. 47:9).

Joseph was thus born when Jacob was 90-91, and this is dated just prior to the six years that he served Laban for his cattle (Gen. 30:25).

If, to that point of time, he had been only fourteen years with Laban, it would mean that he fled from Esau to seek a wife when he was about 77!

Assuming that he first worked seven years for Leah, his first son would not be born before he was 85; and if Joseph were born when he was 90, he had eleven sons and at least one daughter in five years!

In that case, also, he had children and grandchildren to the number of sixty-six in the short space of forty-five years.

At that rate, Judah, the fourth son could not have been born before he was 88, and would have been about 42 when the events of Genesis 38 took place, or 48, if Jacob married Leah before the completion of the seven years that he worked for Laban to obtain her.

Esau visited Ishmael and married his daughter after Jacob left for Haran at the age of 77, though Ishmael died when Jacob was 63 (Gen. 25:17). Isaac married at 40 (Gen. 25:20). Jacob was born twenty years later (Gen. 25:26). Ishmael, thirteen years older than Isaac died at 137 (Gen. 25:17).

These problems are solved if we can add a further twenty years to Jacob's sojourn with Laban, making his age 57 when he fled from Esau, though still 97 when he left Laban. This would allow for forty years with Laban, the period of probation or trial. And that forty years seem to be provided for in Jacob's conversation with Laban. He makes reference to two periods of “twenty years” each (cp. vv. 38,41). The first twenty years, he was with Laban as a friend: “I have been *with thee*.” The second twenty years, he was there as a covenant servant: “I have been twenty years in thy house; I *served thee*...” The first fourteen years he served Laban for his two daughters; the following twenty years, he was with Laban in his capacity as shepherd; the final six years, he served him for his cattle. The first fourteen years, and the last six years, represented twenty years of servitude; the intervening twenty years he was employed as a shepherd, during which Laban's flocks remarkably increased.

The Hebrew provides some warrant

for this interpretation which also disposes of the difficulties mentioned above. The Hebrew *zeh* (rendered *this*: v. 38, and *thus* v. 41) when used in conjunction one with the other is often used by way of distinction as in Exodus 14:20, there rendered *one* and *other*; Ecc. 6:5-8: *this* and *that*; Job 21:23-25: *one* and *another*. And so here. Jacob could have meant "*this* twenty years have I been with thee" and "*that* twenty years I have been in thy house." The first twenty years he served Laban as a friend. At some personal loss, but in gratitude to his father-in-law, he cared for his flocks (Vv. 38-40), the other twenty years he profited from his labour: first in the acquisition of his wives; and then from Laban's herds.

The Hebrew *zeh li esrim* signifies "this for myself (*li*) twenty years..." In other words, during one twenty years he showed a profit; whilst during the other twenty years he showed a loss. In all, he was in Haran forty years: fourteen for his wives; twenty as a friend and son-in-law; six for the cattle. In all, forty years, a period of probation.

**"Thy ewes and thy she goats have not cast their young"** — He looked after the flock of Laban with the greatest skill.

**"And the rams of thy flock have I not eaten"** — He received no pay for this twenty years of labour, a contrast to the other twenty years when he did receive payment.

### VERSE 39

**"That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it"** — Shepherds were normally required to make good any loss incurred in the flock whilst it was in their care. The exception was when a wild beast attacked the sheep and took one despite the efforts of the shepherd to protect them. In that case, the shepherd brought pieces of the torn animal to demonstrate the cause of death to the owner, and to show that the fault was not with him.

**"Of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night"** — This is expressive of the severe conditions imposed by Laban on Jacob.

### VERSE 40

**"Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night"** — He was parched with thirst in the daytime in the heat of the sun; and bitterly cold by night. Extremes of temperature between day and night are a feature of the inland, and severely felt by shepherds. *The Land And The Book* (Thompson) makes reference to this variation "between blazing sun and biting frost" (p. 364). It was so extreme, he reported, that "there was a sharp frost, and ice appeared on all the little pools about the camp."

Jacob's description of his trials is significant from another viewpoint. It demonstrates that he was not exempt from trial, even though God was with him.

**"And my sleep departed from mine eyes"** — Jacob's words show how conscientious he was in his duties, even though he did not receive adequate payment for them. As the result of his labours, Laban found his herds and riches increased. Jacob had explained this as "Yahweh blessing him" (Ch. 30:30). However, this also entailed hard work. This is something we need always remember in the work of the Truth, or in regard to our personal welfare.

### VERSE 41

**"Thus have I been twenty years in thy house"** — Jacob's use of the Hebrew *zeh* rendered *thus* could be intended as a note of contrast, as indicated in above comments. He now begins to describe his years of servitude.

**"I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle"** — This represents the twenty years that he had worked for Laban as a paid servant.

**"And thou hast changed my wages ten times"** — See notes on Vv. 7-8.

### VERSE 42

**"Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham"** — See this sentiment repeated by the descendants of Jacob (Psa. 124:1-2).

**"And the fear of Isaac, had been with me"** — The word *pachad* suggests

reverential awe, a fear of offending. That was Isaac's attitude towards God. See his immediate reaction when he learned that his preference in bestowing the blessing upon Esau instead of Jacob was opposed to the will of God (Gen. 27:33). See also Psa. 76:11-12. Let us also develop a reverential fear of offending Yahweh.

**"Surely thou hadst sent me away now empty"** — In these words Jacob accused Laban of hypocrisy. If he merely wished to bid his children and grandchildren farewell, why the need of gathering such a large company of associates to pursue Jacob? In view of his obvious intention in so doing, his polite words were merely a cover to his true motives, as Jacob clearly stated.

**"God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight"** — God read the heart of Laban, was cognisant of the sufferings of Jacob, and the unfair treatment he received at the hands of his father-in-law, and so had intervened to prevent him carrying out his true intentions.

### The Covenant Between Jacob And Laban — Vv. 43-55.

*In face of Jacob's spirited defence, Laban has little to say. He can neither justify himself nor condemn Jacob. He is not willing to own himself in a fault, nor to ask Jacob forgiveness and to compensate him, as he ought to have done. Instead, he weakly urges that Jacob's wives and cattle are all his; which is incorrect. He then proposes a covenant of friendship between them, which Jacob readily agrees to, without demanding an apology from Laban. In this Jacob sets a good example. When quarrels happen, we should be willing to cease arguing and establish the bonds of friendship. Better sit down losers than go on in strife.*

#### VERSE 43

**"And Laban answered and said unto Jacob, These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattle are my cattle, and all that thou seest is mine"** — That certainly was true once, but was the case

no longer. Jacob had paid for it all; but the patriarch does not insist upon establishing his right. He realised that Laban was trying to make out a case to save face, and made it easy for him to do so. Laban claimed that he would not attack Jacob, for in doing so he would injure his own flesh and blood. The reason was puerile, but it was all that he could urge in the face of Jacob's complete fidelity.

**"And what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children which they have born?"** — Laban was forced to be apologetic. He dropped his charge of theft (in ignorance that he had been cheated by his daughter, as he had formerly cheated his son-in-law), and now stated that he desired to do something to contribute to their welfare.

#### VERSE 44

**"Now therefore come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou"** — Literally, "Let us *cut* a covenant." A covenant confirmed by sacrifice was completely binding on both parties. Laban requested that Jacob enter into such a binding agreement with him.

**"And let it be for a witness between me and thee"** — The Hebrew word for witness is *ed*. It finds its place in the word *Galeed* referred to subsequently.

#### VERSE 45

**"And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar"** — The word *massebah* "pillar" signifies a *memorial*. It was probably in the form of an obelisk. These were sometimes set up at places noted for special manifestations of divine goodness. See Gen. 28:18; 35:14; Exod. 24:4; Josh. 22:10, 26-28. In this case, Jacob doubtless saw in it a memorial of the *El* of Bethel Who had preserved him, and whose overshadowing care had been manifested in the rebuke that Laban had received.

#### VERSE 46

**"And Jacob said unto his brethren"** — Probably Laban's relations, and so Jacob's brethren by marriage.

**"Gather stones; and they took stones, and made an heap"** — The word

“heap” which appears so frequently in the subsequent verses is *gal* in Hebrew and is from a root, *galal*, signifying to *roll*, or to move in a circle. The name Gilgal is derived from the same root, and was named upon the place which witnessed the *rolling away* of the reproach of Egypt from Israel. Here it probably had a similar meaning, and signified the rolling away of any reproach that previously may have existed between Laban and Jacob.

**“And they did eat there upon the heap”** — Their reconciliation and agreement was confirmed by a sacrifice and a sacrificial meal. This took the form of a peace offering in which both were brought together. See notes on Gen. 15 for the form of sacrifice used to confirm a covenant.

#### VERSE 47

**“And Laban called it Jegarsahadutha”** — This is an Aramaic term signifying *Heap of witness*. Concerning this statement, *The Christadelphian* for 1893 comments: “Laban called the heap of witness Jegarsahadutha, while Jacob called it *Galeed*. Laban is not yet dead. He is still to the front with his high-sounding vocabulary. We must not be afraid of big words, nor must we always assume that he is the wisest man who makes use of them. Such words are often used as ‘bogies’ by which to frighten the timid and unthinking. It is meanings we must look into. Laban, representing today’s scientists, employs vocabulary largely made up of words of the *Jegarsahadutha* type.” Man uses long words to confuse and overawe his fellows; the Truth, though profound, is essentially simple in its expression.

**“But Jacob called it Galeed”** — This word is compounded of *Gal* signifying *circular heap*, and *ed* signifying *witness*. Both words mean the same thing, but one was Gentile and the other Hebrew. The *altar of witness*, for such the heap of stones really was, united both divisions of the human race as one. Christ as our *altar of witness* (Heb. 13:10) does likewise.

Each altar has a significance peculiar to itself. Some were named; others were built at sites of particular importance

under circumstances that pointed forward typically to Christ. All of them dramatised the purpose of Yahweh in some way as bearing upon the sacrificial mission of the Lord Jesus.

In the joint altar of Jacob and Laban, we have the unity of tongues in a common witness, pointing forward to that unity of many languages predicted in Rev. 5:9; 7:9. It is significant that despite Jacob’s forty years sojourn with Laban, he had not forgotten, nor ceased to use, the Hebrew tongue (cp. Zeph. 3:9). It is also significant to note that though both Laban and Jacob descended from one common ancestor, Terah, they spake different languages. Abraham had either retained or reverted to the use of Hebrew, and this was continued by Isaac and Jacob. The use of Hebrew points to the unifying, though unique, language of Truth which will ultimately replace the multitudinous dialects of the nations (Zeph. 3:9).

#### VERSE 48

**“And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day”** — The heap represented the covenant expressed. So the Ecclesia is a witness to the reality of the uniting covenant of the nations, and it is founded upon the *Altar of Ed* or Christ’s witness (see Acts 1:8). That altar unites Jew and Gentile in one common fellowship.

**“Therefore was the name of it called Galeed”** — It was called such, first by Jacob on this occasion, and later by his descendants in commemoration of this event. We read of it later as *Gilead*.

#### VERSE 49

**“And Mizpah”** — Mizpah signifies *A beacon*, or *watchtower*. It afterwards became the site of a town of that name in the district of Gilead (Jud. 10:17; 11:11, 29,34), though doubtless it was originally given this name by Jacob and Laban.

**“For he said”** — Laban said; and his reference to God is significant.

**“Yahweh watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another”** — How can Laban be represent-

ed as using the Divine Name when it had not then been pronounced (Exod. 6:4)? Because, though the Name itself as such had not been pronounced, the principles of the Name were well known. The Edenic covenant (Gen. 3:15), itself, is a declaration that God would manifest Himself in a Son whom He would provide (the seed of the woman), and sons in whom He would be manifested. Abraham, at the altar of *Yahweh Yireh* had been shown that this son would be revealed only through sacrifice.

The name *Yahweh* is a proper noun, the third person singular, of a common Hebrew verb *hayah*, signifying *will be*. As God had already revealed Himself to man as the One Who will be manifested, it would be quite possible for Him to be referred to in that way without using the word as a proper noun, and as the declared Name of the great Increate. Later (Exod. 3:14), He appropriated that Name to Himself as His memorial.

Meanwhile, it is significant that Laban should refer to God in such a way. It suggests that Jacob had not been silent concerning his beliefs, and that, in measure, Laban endorsed their truth.

Laban's subsequent comment is frequently misunderstood. It is generally interpreted to mean that absent friends may safely entrust each other to the protecting care of God. But that is not what the suspicious Laban had in mind. He called upon Yahweh to keep a watch on Jacob to see that he faithfully carried out the terms of the covenant. He wanted Jacob to remember that though he was personally absent, God was not, and would see that he fulfilled the part of his agreement.

It is a statement, therefore, that is expressive of suspicion, and a call to God to see that the terms of the compact are faithfully carried out by both parties. Thus "when you are out of my sight, God will keep an eye on your behaviour; if you insult or injure my daughters, you are still within *His* sight and reach". It is indicative of Jacob's true character, that fear of the divine retribution was evidently the one feature in his nature upon which Laban felt he could work.

### VERSE 50

**"If thou shalt afflict my daughters"** — This clause in the compact was surely puerile. When had Jacob done that? He had faithfully carried out the terms of marriage as far as Leah was concerned; and had such deep love for Rachel that he would protect her from the affliction of her father! Such a clause is indicative of Laban's hypocrisy.

**"Or if thou shalt take other wives beside my daughters"** — Here he assumed something that Jacob had given no indication of doing. But perhaps Laban's thoughts were on the inheritance! Such a marriage would divide the inheritance that otherwise would go exclusively to Laban's grandchildren.

**"No man is with us"** — The R.V. renders this: "Although no man is with us, remember..." There may not be a fellow-witness who might help enforce the covenant.

**"See, God is witness betwixt me and thee"** — He shall testify against you.

### VERSE 51

**"And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold this pillar, which I have cast betwixt me and thee"** — Laban had not set these up. Jacob had erected the pillar (v. 45), and had directed the setting up of the heap or altar (v. 46). However, Farrar points out that "the Arabic version and Samaritan text read *yaritha*, thou hast erected, instead of *yarithi*, I have erected or cast up." However, the word "cast" in its Hebrew form is *arah*, which, according to Dr. Strong, has the figurative significance of *pointing out*, as if by *aiming* the finger. The R.V. renders the statement: "Behold this heap, and behold this pillar, which I have *set* betwixt me and thee." Laban could set the heap and pillar as the limit of the boundary beyond which he would pass, without being responsible for the actual setting up of them. This explanation avoids altering the text of the present Hebrew text.

### VERSE 52

**"This heap be witness, and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over**

**this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm**" — Laban evidently feared the growing power of his son-in-law. By this compact it was agreed that Jacob should forgive and forget all the wrongs he had received, and not remember them against Laban or his family in after-times, but instead, on the basis of forgiveness, he should submit to a covenant of peace. The steps to that covenant were important to note: (1) A revelation from God to Laban, which warned him of the consequence of harming the seed of Abraham; (2) Laban's failure to sustain his accusation against Jacob; (3) A review of how God had been with Jacob in his wanderings. Typically it pointed forward to the future acknowledgment on the part of many endorsing the hope of Israel who were previously antagonistic to it.

#### VERSE 53

**"The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor"** — Nahor, with Abraham, had been moved by the voice of God to leave Ur for Haran, and thus could be said to share a common worship with him. Of course, Abraham's understanding of God and His revelation was greatly enhanced after he had entered the land of promise.

**"The God of their father"** — This would be the God of Terah, and the remarks above would apply equally to the father of the two brothers. Joshua's comment upon the family worship suggests that originally all three worshipped other gods, but having received the call, they obeyed the dictates of the true God, though Abraham went further in his worship than did the others (cp. Josh. 24:2-3). However, it is claimed that several manuscripts have *abichem*, "your father", instead of *abihem*, "their father" as in v. 29.

**"Judge betwixt us"** — Though the Hebrew has *shaphat* in its plural form implying a multiplicity of agents acting as judges, and issuing sentences of punishment or otherwise, the Septuagint, Syriac and Samaritan versions have it in the singular. The term "God" is *elohim* in the plural, but when attached to a verb in the

singular, as it frequently is, it denotes a multiplicity of agents through whom one (even Yahweh) manifests Himself. When a plural verb is used, as here, it implies many working to accomplish whatever the verb describes. Thus if the Hebrew text is accepted, the *Elohim* of this verse relate to those angels whom Jacob saw ascending and descending the stairway into heaven. Laban made reference to the angels judging the actions of Jacob, and himself.

**"And Jacob sware by the fear of his father Isaac"** — Such an oath would signify the most scrupulous observance. See note v. 42.

#### VERSE 54

**"Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount"** — The heap of stones which formed an altar, became the table of Yahweh, around which all were united in covenant-fellowship (cp. Mal. 1:7).

**"And called his brethren to eat bread: and they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mount"** — The sacrificial meal was the integral part of the ancient ritual of confirming a covenant. See notes on Gen. 15:10.

#### VERSE 55

**And early in the morning Laban rose up** — This dawning of a new day, also constituted the commencement of new relationships between Jacob and Laban. Around the altar, on the basis of the covenant, and the sacrificial victim provided with it, reconciliation had been effected. So it will be between the followers of the Lord and unbelievers in the age to come. The dawning of the millennial day (Mal. 4), will see the Truth revealed in its fulness, and men united as never before present themselves at the altar, the Lord Jesus Christ, who then will be as the *Altar of Witness* to all mankind.

**"And kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them"** — He bid farewell to Leah, Rachel and their children. He did not kiss Jacob as he had at their first meeting (Gen. 29:13); but this is understandable! Their association would be somewhat strained!

**"And Laban departed, and returned**

**unto his place**” — He returned crestfallen, having failed in every department of his intentions. On the other hand, Jacob had received tangible evidence of the value of the covenant made at Bethel: “I am with thee, and will keep thee in all

places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of” (Gen. 28:15). This heritage of Jacob’s can become our’s (Heb. 13:5-6).

## CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

### JACOB RENAMED ISRAEL

*The divine transaction marks this chapter as one of the most significant in the Book of Genesis. Through distress, fear and darkness, Jacob wrestled his way to a new dawn, a new status, and a new revelation. The chapter highlights tremendous contrasts: the messengers of God (v. 1) are contrasted with the messengers of Jacob (v. 3); the encouragement of the angels is contrasted with the ominous report from Jacob’s spies (v. 6); the hoped for appeasement of Esau at the cost of an expensive gift, is contrasted with the freely bestowed blessing of the angel (vv. 20, 28); the anxiety that Esau might accept “his face” in peace (v. 20) is matched with seeing the “faces of El” in peace (v. 30); the prevailing over Esau is foreshadowed by the prevailing with the angel; and the darkness of the night of wrestling, ends in the blaze of a new dawn, and the revelation of a new name for the Supplanter.*

#### Jacob’s Vision At Mahanaim—Vv. 1-2

*The hostility that Jacob experienced from Laban made him more sensitive to the help extended him of God. Now, with the crisis passed, a new fear develops. What of Esau? Will forty years’ absence have succeeded in wiping out the anger he once felt for Jacob? In fear of his profane brother, Jacob’s timidity again asserts itself, but the assurance of divine protection is again granted him at Mahanaim.*

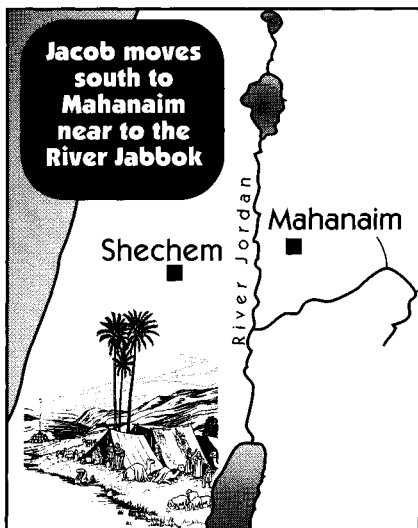
#### VERSE 1

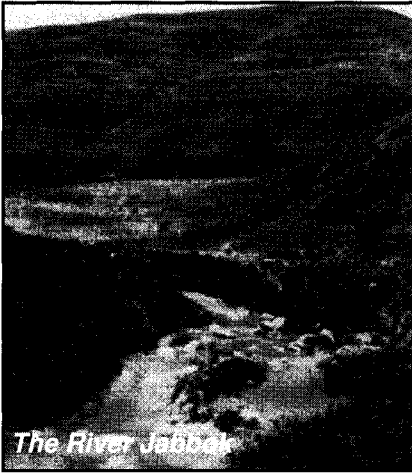
“**And Jacob went on his way**” — He descended south-east of the river Jordan, towards Jabbok.

“**And the angels of God met him**” — Literally *messengers of Elohim*. They appeared unto him to encourage him.

#### VERSE 2

“**And when Jacob saw them, he said,**





**This is God’s host”** — The Hebrew *Elohim Makhaneh* signifies *camp of Elohim*. It is a military term, a cognate word to that rendered *encampeth*: “The angel of Yahweh encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them” (Psa. 34:7). The presence of this divine army provided encouragement for Jacob, as the realisation that the angels “as ministering spirits,” still “minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Heb. 1:14), provides comfort and help for the oppressed today. Jacob’s “bands” (vv. 7,10), are likewise called *Mahanoth, bands or camps*.

**“He called the name of that place Mahanaim”** — Mahanaim signifies *two bands or camps*. The two camps comprised the heavenly host, and Jacob’s bands. In this way, the God of Bethel revealed Himself to Jacob in his hour of need. It reminds us, that the army of Yahweh on earth, in its fight of faith, and under pressure, can rely upon the help of the heavenly army. Mahanaim is situated north of the Jabbok. The name was afterward given to the town established in the neighbourhood. It was on the boundary of Gad and Manasseh, and was a city of the Levites. Here Ishbosheth reigned and was assassinated (2 Sam. 2:8,12; 4:5-8). Some years after, David repaired to Mahanaim, and was entertained by Barzillai (2 Sam. 17:24, 27; 1 Kings 2:8). It has not been positively identified.

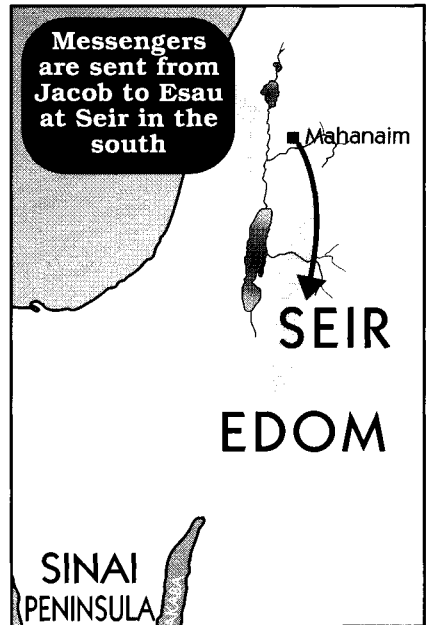
**Jacob’s Message To Esau — Vv. 3-5.**

*Jacob realised that he must now deal with Esau, whom he had so grievously deceived previously, and who, as far as he knew, still harbored hatred against him. His fear is goaded by his sense of guilt. He is willing to seek peace by establishing a new basis for it. To that end he sends messengers towards the country of Esau, with a message designed to placate Esau.*

**VERSE 3**

**“And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother”** — These messengers (or *angels*, same word in Hebrew: *malak*) are set in contrast to those whom Yahweh sent to Jacob (v. 1).

**“Unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom”** — Seir signifies *rough, bristling or hairy* (Gesenius). Evidently Esau had recently conquered this tract of territory, deep to the south of where Jacob then was, though it afterwards became the headquarters of the Edomites (Deut.2:4). For the time being, however, Esau had not completely withdrawn from Canaan (Gen. 36:5-8).





## VERSE 4

**“And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now”** — Jacob’s natural timidity asserted itself in the composition of the message that he dictated to be sent to Esau. He describes Esau as his *lord* whilst calling himself Esau’s *servant*. Perhaps Jacob desired to intimate to Esau that he did not intend to assert that precedence which the blessing conferred upon him; though these are expressions of common courtesy in the East under such conditions.

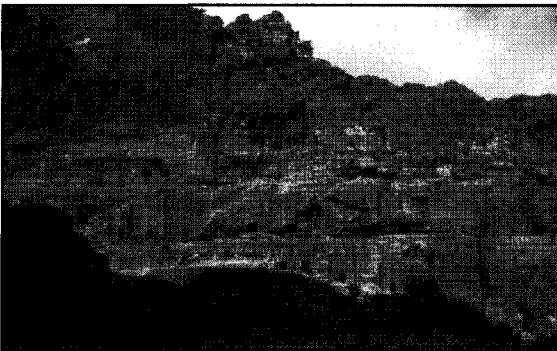
## VERSE 5

**“And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants and, womenservants”** — This was perhaps a tactful way of advising Esau that he stood in no further need of wealth from either Isaac or Esau.

**“And I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight”** — Jacob realised that he did wrong previously in deceiving Isaac, and now desired to make amends. He desired *grace* from his brother: the forgiveness of anything that he had done amiss.

**Jacob’s Fear Of Esau — Vv. 6-8.**

*The messengers return with the ominous news that they had met Esau but were not entrusted with any definite reply. All that they report is that Esau is on his way to meet Jacob with a body of four hundred followers. This adds to Jacob’s fear and distress.*



## VERSE 6

**“And the messengers returned to Jacob saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him”** — It must have been towards the end of the day that the messengers returned, for it was not until the morrow that Esau met up with Jacob (Ch. 33:1).

## VERSE 7

**“Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed”** — The Hebrew word translated distressed signifies to *be narrow* or *confined*. He could see no way to turn, no way of escape. Despite the reassurance he had received from the manifestation of the heavenly army some time previously (for it would take him some time to move his flocks from Gilead to Mahanaim), his natural timidity got the best of him, and he began to fear greatly.

**“And he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands”** — He acted judiciously and in faith. He divided his company and possessions into two bands or camps (*Mahanoth*: cp. v. 2), so that in the event of an hostile attack, some might escape. Then he gave himself to prayer.

## VERSE 8

**“And said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape”** — There is no want of faith in Jacob’s action, but a careful assessment of the situation, and application of his own intelligence to it. He did not put trust in his own ingenuity merely, but also had recourse to prayer. Like Nehemiah, he was a man of prayer and action (Neh. 4:9).

**Jacob’s Prayer For Help — Vv. 9-12**

*Recognising that his real help was in God, Jacob gives himself to prayer. It is a prayer of great beauty, and when compared with that which was offered at Bethel (Gen 28:20-22), demonstrates the extent to which his spiritual percep-*

tions had advanced. He offers a prayer of humility, simplicity, frankness, and forthrightness based upon the covenants of promise. It consists of an invocation (v. 9), thanksgiving (v. 10), petition (v. 11), and an appeal based upon Divine faithfulness (v. 12).

#### VERSE 9

**“And Jacob said”** — He was afraid, but he prayed. It is human to be afraid, it is spiritual to pray. In that, he was like the Psalmist who declared: “What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee” (Psa. 56:3). Let us remember these words in time of fear.

**“O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac”** — Jacob begins his prayer by placing his faith in the God Who made promises to Abraham and Isaac, and Who had blessed him for their sake.

**“Yahweh”** — The covenant name of God. Jacob did not know the name of God, as he revealed later to the angel (v. 29); therefore he did not use it on this occasion. But he doubtless made reference to God as He Whose purpose is yet to be manifested — the basic meaning of Yahweh. Jacob’s reference to the covenant principle was doubtless to remind God that if Esau prevailed, the covenant could not be fulfilled. Of course, it is not necessary to remind God of that, except to show one’s identification with and hope in the promise. It therefore was an expression of Jacob’s confidence in God.

**“Which saidst unto me, Return, unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee”** — Jacob’s prayer recalls that it was obedience to the Divine will that had brought him into the present predicament. He reminds God of the promise made to him.

#### VERSE 10

**“I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies,”** — This is an expression of great humility and thanksgiving. The very timidity of Jacob, which had led him into error, also caused him to humble himself before God, and to express his appreciation of the great benefits he had received from His hand. As he prayed unto God in

that moment of great need, his mind could revert to the amazing circumstances of his life, and recall how that God had directed the issues of it in spite of his own weakness. The profound humility of his words demonstrate the extent to which he had developed in spiritual acumen. The word “mercies” *chesedim* signifies God’s lovingkindnesses to man, rather than His forgiveness; it relates to acts of Divine favour, including the privileged position of being able to commune with God in prayer.

**“And of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant”** — The word *emeth* signifies *faithfulness* rather than truth as a mere doctrine. All that God had promised He had accomplished, and Jacob knew that he could rely upon Him with every confidence. See note at Gen. 24:27 for the significance of both *mercies* and *truth*. One of the titles of Yahweh is *The God of truth* (or *Amen*, a related word to the *emeth* of the verse before us: Isa. 65:16). The Lord Jesus is the manifestation of this quality of the Father, and of him it is written: “He abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself” (2 Tim. 2:13).

**“For with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands”** — “I had nothing, but am now wealthy”. Jacob saw in his great increase a token of God’s favour and faithfulness.

#### VERSE 11

**“Deliver me, I pray Thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau”** — Jacob knew that God must deliver him in order to accomplish His promise and fulfil His covenant. However, to pray for something that he knew it was the purpose of God to grant, did not evince lack of faith, any more than it does when we, today, pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Such a prayer is expressive of our dependence upon God to bring it about, and illustrates that we view the problem from His standpoint. At the same time, Jacob did not know whether it was in the purpose of God that he should be taken captive by Esau, and endure further restraint such as he had experienced under Laban for forty years. He feared for those in his

care and sought the Divine guidance and help in his need. Jacob's request in regard to Esau is very descriptive. He asked protection from "the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau." First he was Esau's brother; there was an affinity between them. But that brother was Esau, the man of flesh, the profane man unmoved by spiritual virtues or hopes, nor governed by Godly principles. The flesh affinity of Jacob to Esau did not blind him to his spiritual shortcomings. We need to recognise the flesh in that light, and seek the Divine help to escape its influence: "Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16).

**"For I fear him"** — This was a healthy fear; we need always to be on our guard against the flesh, particularly when it is closely related to us, and natural affection would tend to blind our eyes to its real state.

**"Lest he come and smite me"** — Sin's flesh can gain dominion over us unless we seek the help of God (Rom. 6:14).

**"And the mother with the children"** — And so destroy the fruit of a faithful man's life. The Hebrew is very expressive. It is literally *the mother upon the children*. It pictures the mother crouching over the children in an endeavour to protect them from the hand of the killer.

#### VERSE 12

**"And Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude"**— See Gen. 28:13-15. Jacob recalled the covenant as the basis of his prayer. He pleaded deliverance from Esau on the grounds that the fulfilment of the covenant would be impossible if his brother succeeded against him.

#### Jacob's Precautions — Vv. 13-23.

*Jacob's precautions were twofold. Firstly, he divided his followers and his flocks and herds into two separate bodies, placing a certain distance between them, so that they could only be attacked one at a time, calculating that while one was*

*attacked in this way the other might retreat and make its escape. Secondly, he selected from the animals in his possession a goodly number, 580 in all, and sent them in a long procession of drove after drove on the line of route by which Esau was expected to come, as a present to Esau. Those in charge were carefully instructed in how to present their portion of the gift to him. Finally, he conducted all his family over the brook Jabbok.*

#### VERSE 13

**"And he lodged there that same night; and took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother"**

— Jacob not only prayed, but also did what he could on his own account. It is necessary that we do so on all occasions. God will not do for us what we can do for ourselves, but He will bless our activities if we give ourselves faithfully to them. Nehemiah gave a good example in that regard. He was active, vigilant and prayerful in his labour towards God: "We made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them" (Neh. 4:9). Yahweh listened to his faithful prayer, and blessed his faithful actions. Jacob, also, having made his prayer to God, having placed his confidence in He Who keepeth covenant and mercy with His servants, now did what he could to extricate himself from his trial. He selected a present. The word is *minchah*, and is frequently used in Scripture for a sacrificial offering (Gen. 4:4,5), as well as for a gift to conciliate (Judges 3:15, 17,18; 2 Kings 8:8).

#### VERSE 14

**"Two hundred she goats, and twenty he goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams"** — There were 580 animals in all, an indication of the great affluence of Jacob gained at the expense of Laban. No wonder the latter became jealous and envious of his son-in-law. Now, in the face of Esau's possible attack, Jacob changed his strategy. Instead of merely dividing his family and possessions into two groups, and leaving it with the foremost one to

**THE HOUSEHOLD AT HARAN****LABAN: THE CUNNING BARGAIN HUNTER**

Any accusation of deceit that may be urged against Jacob, can be levelled with greater force against his uncle Laban. But whereas, in the case of Jacob it was motivated by a desire to obtain the Divine blessing, in that of Laban it was motivated by covetousness. Nevertheless, Laban was religiously inclined, as is shown by his reception of Abraham's servant when he came seeking a bride for Isaac, though even then, the record implies that he was impressed with external evidence of gain rather than inward qualities of worth (Gen. 24:29-30). He did show respect for God in his negotiations with Jacob (Gen. 31:29).

Laban was grasping and unreliable, constantly changing the wages of Jacob if he thought it would be to his advantage to do so (Gen. 31:7-8); cunningly removing the sheep and goats he had agreed to pay Jacob as his reward before the latter had opportunity of inspecting the flock (Gen. 30:35).

In his transactions, Laban gave an external appearance of kindness, but it was often the cloak to his hidden feelings (Gen. 31:24). He shrewdly took advantage of Jacob's ignorance of local laws and customs in order to marry off Leah; and did his best to exploit his daughter and Jacob to his own advantage. Ironically, he finally lost his daughters, his best shepherd, his grandchildren, and most of his flocks.

Ultimately, Laban entered into a covenant of peace with Jacob, after which he faded off the scene. He had an external piety, but no inward conviction. He seems typical of apostate Christianity. His name signifies *white*, but it is a whiteness that is used in Scripture both for purity or for the sign of leprosy. In Laban's case, though men may view him as righteous, it was but a cover for his real character.

**LEAH AND RACHEL AS TYPES**

The narrative concerning Leah and Rachel obviously is both literal and typical. As types, they seem to represent Israel after the flesh and after the spirit.

*Leah* seems to represent Israel under the law. She was "tender-eyed" (Gen. 29:17), suggesting that she lacked the vision of faith. The names of her seven children in their various meanings spell out the national hope of Israel, upon which the Law was based.

*Rachel* seems to represent Israel of the spirit. Her two sons are both types of Christ, the seed of promise, and in their births seem to foreshadow the two advents of the Lord. Rachel earnestly desired their coming, and prayed constantly for them to be born. At the appearance of her first son, who turned aside her reproach, she instantly predicted the coming of the second son (Gen. 30:22-24).

Her name signifies *Ewe lamb*, a name of endearment; the feminine counterpart of the Lamb of God — the Bride of Christ.

take the brunt of any attack (v. 8), three groups were selected as emissaries of peace (v. 19) before Esau came upon the first of the main groups. Such a munificent gift would prove the truth of his claim that he had ample material possessions and would not encroach upon those of Esau, and at the same time this would delay Esau, in the hope that his anger would wane.

The gift also had a spiritual value. It demonstrated how that the blessing of God had rested upon Jacob in practical matters, and in that way, exhorted his profane brother to "taste and see that Yahweh is good" for "blessed is the man that trusteth in Him" (Psa. 34:8).

#### VERSE 16

**"And he delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by themselves; and said unto his servants"** — His servants were carefully instructed in their duties.

**"Pass over before me"** — He carefully inspected all that was done, leaving

nothing to chance. So should we act in the things of the Truth.

**"And put a space betwixt drove and drove"** — The word "space" is *revach* similar to *ruach*, and signifies to *breathe freely*. He put a "breathing space" between each group; that is, space to revive if one is attacked.

#### VERSE 17

**"And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau my brother meeteth thee, and asketh thee, saying, Whose art thou? and whither goest thou? and whose are these before thee?"** — Jacob anticipated the curiosity of Esau, and the many questions he would be disposed to ask. This is indicative of the careful preparations that he made on this occasion. He left nothing to chance. He gave himself to prayer, but also diligently thought out what was best to be done and did what he could as a basis upon which the Divine blessing could rest.

#### VERSE 18

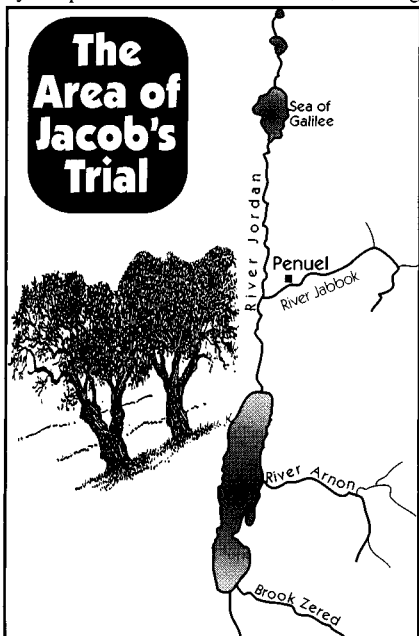
**"Then thou shalt say, They be thy servant Jacob's; it is a present unto my lord Esau: and, behold, also he is behind us"** — This would not merely delay Esau in his approach to Jacob, but would suggest that Jacob was moving forward in confidence to meet him.

#### VERSE 19

**"And so commanded he the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, On this manner shall ye speak unto Esau, when ye find him"** — The repetition of three large droves of animals to be given as a present, would surely impress Esau with the affluence of Jacob, and demonstrate that he had no need to fear that his brother might require him to share the wealth of Isaac, or acquire that obtained already by himself. In short, it demonstrated that Jacob genuinely wanted peace, and was prepared to pay handsomely for it.

#### VERSE 20

**"And say ye moreover, Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us"** — Carefully



Jacob went over the whole matter again, so that there would be no slip-up. Cp. v. 18.

**“For he said”** — This comment is added by Moses as historian in disclosing the motive behind Jacob’s action: “He said to himself ....”

**“I will appease him with the present that goeth before me”** — The Hebrew is *kaphar paneh*, “I will cover his face” or change his appearance. I will blot out past failings on my part, so that he will not see them, and the anger expressed on his face will disappear (Prov. 16:14).

**“And afterward I will see his face”** — He will look upon me in friendliness.

**“Peradventure he will accept of me”** — “Accept” is *nacah*, to lift in Hebrew. The phrase is literally rendered, “he will lift up my face”. With such a princely present, and in view of the fact that Jacob had been driven from home, Esau could well conclude that he had gained the greatest benefit from the contest over the birthright, for, unlike Jacob, the future meant nothing to him. The reference to the face of Esau should be contrasted with those of the angels later in the chapter.

#### VERSE 21

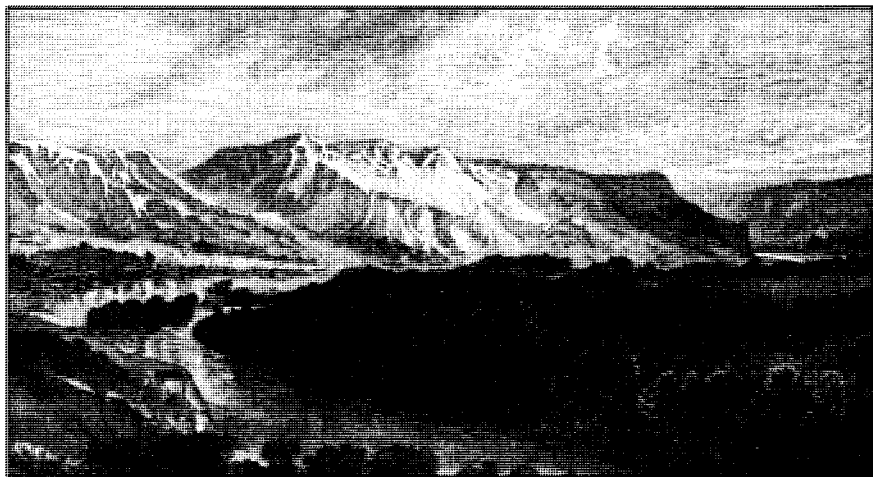
**“So went the present over before him: and himself lodged that night in**

**the company”** — The present was despatched over the brook Jabbok, whilst Jacob with his family remained for most of the night on its northern side. It was toward evening when the attendants left with the present.

#### VERSE 22

**“And he rose up that night”** — Some time before daybreak (cp. v. 24).

**“And took his two wives, and his two womenservants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok”** — He conducted them over the ford of Jabbok. Jabbok, according to some, is derived from *bakak*, to pour forth or empty, but by others, it is derived from *abak*, to wrestle or struggle, the verb of v. 24. It is identified with the Wady Zerka, or Blue River, situated about halfway between the Sea of Galilee and the Sea of Salt. Thus, like the altar erected between Bethel and Ai (Gen. 13:3), this significant place of prayer and wrestling, where Jacob received a new revelation and a new name indicative of his status before Yahweh, is strategically placed halfway between the Sea of Life and the Sea of Death. On the other side of this wady, Jacob met Esau and reconciliation was effected; then Jacob turned west, to pass over the river Jordan, to make his way in peace to



Artist's impression of the River Jordan

Shechem (the *Burden Bearer*) where he worshipped at the altar he built and named *El-elohe-Israel*.

The typical significance of the wrestling of Jacob, and the site where it took place, is of the highest importance. We see foreshadowed therein the striving of every true son of God to attain unto the blessing; as well as the striving of the natural seed of Jacob in its wrestling with God.

The wadi Jabbok cuts its tortuous way from the hills of Moab to the river Jordan. The scenery is wild, barren, arid, and centuries of erosion have cut a deep and harsh wadi which winds in and out of the valleys, wrestling its way to the Jordan below. Though its headwaters rise on the edge of Moab, only about eighteen miles (29kms) east of the Jordan, it so twists about, that its whole course measures some sixty miles (96.5kms).

### VERSE 23

**“He took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had”**— He conducted them over, but returned himself to the northern bank. The word “brook” is *nachal*, signifying to *inherit, to divide*. It is translated *the stream* in the R.V. and describes a valley along which a brook runs, or a winter torrent.

### Jacob’s Contest With The Angel

— Vv. 24-32.

*Very early in the morning, a great while before day, Jacob conducts his wives and children over the brook Jabbok, but desiring to be in private, that he might commune with God and spread his cares and fears before Him, he remains behind. At that moment, when he is on his own, beset with fears and forebodings, and encompassed with darkness, he is accosted by a man who is identified with God. Jacob lays hold upon him, seeking help, but the man endeavours to break his hold. Together they wrestle until the breaking of the dawn. In desperation, as he realises that he is wrestling with an angel, Jacob refuses to desist until he receives a blessing. His request is granted; his name is changed to Israel. But he still suffers the result of the contest: a dislocated hip*

*which causes him to limp. A thousand years later, Hosea made reference to this incident, and gave it a typical application to Israel after the flesh.*

### VERSE 24

**“And Jacob was left alone”** — He doubtless remained on the other side of Jabbok alone for the purpose of private meditation and prayer, to spread his cares and his forebodings of the coming day before God, and to again beseech His help. In citing this incident (Hos. 12:2-4), Hosea exhorts Judah to show similar initiative and determination. Jacob aimed by very force to extract a blessing from the angel, and Christ taught that only by force, determination and zeal will one gain the Kingdom of God (Matt. 11:13).

**“And there wrestled a man with him”** — The word for man is *ish*. In general, it implies a higher form of man than the usual word *adam*, which inevitably defines a descendant of Adam. But this was no descendant of Adam; he was a representative of the *Elohim*, and therefore is given the title of *God* (v. 30). Hosea calls him an angel: “He (Jacob) had power over the angel, and prevailed” (Hos. 12:4). Jacob wrestled with this “man.” The verb “wrestled” is *abak*. As a root it means dust, and implies that in the great night of prayer and conflict, the two wrestled so hard that a cloud of dust arose around them as the struggle went on. By some, the word Jabbok is derived from the same root, and, therefore, signifies “to wrestle”.

**“Until the breaking of the day”** — Or, literally, *the appearing of the morning*. Typically it points forward to the millennial dawn (Mal. 4:2), that “morning without clouds” to which David made reference (2 Sam. 23:4).

Every saint who attains the kingdom must wrestle at the brook Jabbok before he will receive the blessing; the nation of Israel is in the process of doing so. See how this incident foreshadows the future of Israel (whether according to the spirit or the flesh). The following principles emerge: (1) After wrestling a blessing is received; (2) The antagonism between the brothers is solved; (3) Jacob finds peace at

Shechem (the *Burden Bearer*) which he reaches through *Succoth*.

### VERSE 25

**“And when he saw that he prevailed not against him”** — If “the man” were “an angel” why could he not prevail against Jacob? Is flesh stronger than spirit? Remember, too, Jacob was an old man of ninety-seven years of age! Hosea describes how Jacob wrestled (Hos. 12:4). He did not merely grapple with the angel, refusing to release his hold, but “he wept and made supplication.” Prayers and tears were part of his weapons. It was not only a physical, but a spiritual wrestling, by the vigorous action of faith and of strong desire. Jacob succeeded because he refused to give ground. The discouragement of the wrestling did not shake his faith nor silence his prayer. Hosea declares: “By his strength” he had power with God (Hos. 12:3). But the R.V. changes this to: “in his manhood,” and the change is significant. His manhood suggests growth to maturity. In full maturity of mind and faith, in the face of personal danger, Jacob sought the divine blessing. Physically the angel was more than a match for a dozen Jacob’s, and he could have destroyed the elderly patriarch instantly, but to do so would have defeated the covenant that Yahweh had entered into with Jacob. He had promised: “I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of” (Gen. 28:15). In full confidence of that promise, Jacob held on to the angel, and refused to relax his grip; and because of the promise and the covenant, the angel was powerless to harm him. So it is with all such wrestlings with God. In spite of personal weakness, in spite of many failings, if we still cling to God, we will struggle through to the ultimate blessing. The wrestling was difficult and tiring, much dust was cast up as the patriarch struggled to maintain his hold upon the angel, but the very contest assisted in developing his spiritual maturity. The experience of life well testifies to the saying: “There are those who would

like to think that the crisis of a spiritual life is reached at a very early stage of development, and that once passed there are no more grounds for apprehension or fear or care or caution. The story of the wrestling of Jacob teaches a very different lesson. First comes the vision of the ladder — the dream of glory, the sense of divine protection and security. And then, long afterwards — after many years of service and prayer and worship and endeavour, when Jacob is getting on in years, at the end of much experience and patient trust — there comes the struggle, all alone in the darkness, the struggle that wastes and draws the strength of Jacob, the struggle in which the nature and character of the man are finally declared, and proved and sealed for ever.”

So long as Jacob’s mind was centred upon the covenant and the hope, the angel found it impossible to break his hold. So it is with the trials of life, many of which are God-induced. In all the striving and struggling and wrestling with God which they entail, let us never relax our hold upon Yahweh, let us keep ever in mind the covenant that binds us to God, and the hope of our calling that reveals that these experiences are but the means to an end. Then in the long run, all the weary wrestling will reveal its fruits of blessing.

Meanwhile, as far as Jacob was concerned, the wrestling with the angel dramatised and illustrated the lesson of his life. In all its tortuous circumstances, God was wrestling with Jacob, in order to change him to Israel. That, also, comprises the significance of our trials in life.

**“He touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob’s thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him”** — Literally *the socket of his hip*. The action of the angel demonstrated that physically Jacob was no match for him, and he could easily have broken his hold. However, bound by the terms of the covenant, this would be impossible so long as Jacob maintained his hold on the angel. Jacob maintained his hold, and continued wrestling, even though the dislocated joint made it much more painful, and he had to limp.



## VERSE 26

**“And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh”** — The time for wrestling was at an end; Jacob would have to rejoin his family on the other side of Jabbok. Weakened and in pain through his dislocated thigh he still clung hold of the angel, thus demonstrating his determination and his faith.

**“And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me”** — Jacob looked beyond the pain and discomfort of the wrestling. He recognised its purpose and refused to relax his hold upon the angel until he had secured the blessing. We are reminded of Paul’s words: “We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh...” (Rom. 5:3). Paul had attained unto a state of spiritual maturity that enabled him to see the purpose of God in the tribulations he endured; he recognised them as an essential means of character-building for the kingdom. Though his trials entailed much wrestling, much pain and discomfort, they were lessened by his understanding of the result so that he could say: “I glory in tribulations.”

## VERSE 27

**“And he said unto him, What is thy name?”** — The two aspects of the wrestling now combine to effect the blessing. The angel wrestled with Jacob to change his character; Jacob wrestled with the angel to secure the blessing. When the angel requested: “Let me go, for the day breaketh,” he recognised that a great change had been effected in the character of Jacob, and that the patriarch could look forward to the coming day with confidence. But Jacob desired more than that; he wanted a blessing. As a basis for that, the angel asked the question now before us. The name of a person was indicative of his personality, character and purpose.

**“And he said, Jacob”** — Jacob signifies *Supplanter*. It was a fitting caption for Jacob to that point of time. He had contended with Esau in the womb, he had contended with him for the blessing, he had contended with Laban for his wives and his possessions. Later he was to contend with the inhabitants of the land of

promise, and again with his own sons because of their jealousy of Joseph. Yet in all this wrestling he prevailed, though it was through much anxiety and pain such as would cause him to limp. Throughout his life, *El Shaddai* had been with him to protect him: the angel of Yahweh’s presence was always there to help him; yet it was only through much trial, and hard wrestling, that he succeeded. Does it not illustrate the exhortation “It is through much tribulation that we shall enter the Kingdom of God?”

## VERSE 28

**“And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel”** — In spite of this angelic statement, the patriarch is still “called Jacob” (Ch. 33:1,10,17,18 etc.). Perhaps we should supply the ellipsis: “Thy name shall be called no more *exclusively* Jacob.” The subsequent chapters reveal that the two names were interchanged. Evidently the name was now bestowed provisionally. Confirmation of it was given later at Bethel (Gen. 35:10), but the full manifestation of it awaits the resurrection, and the establishment of the Kingdom of God. After the declaration at Bethel, Jacob is more frequently described as Israel, indicating a further progression in his character.

The name “Jacob” is hereafter used of his times of suffering and affliction; whereas “Israel” is more usually associated with his great destiny.

**“Israel”** — This is the first occurrence of this important and significant name. The most common meaning given to it is that which appears in the margin: *A prince of God*. However, it is not the only meaning, and it is obvious that the angel saw more in it than such a simple title.

The name is actually *Yisrael*, and the marginal meaning is derived from *sar* “a prince,” and *el*, “God” or “Power.” Hence, *A Prince with El*.

Some, however, derive it from *sarar*, *to prevail in striving* and *El*, and thus see in it, *A striver with God, and for God against man*. It is significant that the angel gave it this meaning in his explanation of the name.

Others again, find it compounded of *Ish* (the *aleph* in this word being dropped), *raah*, "he saw," and *El*, "God," and hence *The man who saw God*. This, it appears, was Jacob's definition. See v. 30.

The angel's definition anticipates "the time of Jacob's trouble," from which the nation will emerge to serve Yahweh in truth (Jer. 30:4-24), and attain to its destined greatness as a royal nation under the authority of the coming Prince (Jer. 30:21).

Jacob's definition anticipates the future when the manifestation of *El* in the Lord Jesus Christ will be seen and recognised by the nation (Zech. 12:10), and through his saving grace, it will be redeemed (Rom. 11:26).

Gather the various meanings together, and the name *Yisrael* is seen to signify: The man (*Ish*) who is a victorious Striver with God, and a conqueror of man (*enosh*), will see God and reign as Prince with *El*.

**"For as a prince hast thou power with God"** — The phrase "as a prince hast thou power," is but one word in Hebrew, *sarah*, signifying to *prevail with power as a prince*. The R.V. alters to: "Thou hast striven with God..." Rotherham's rendition is similar.

**"And with men"** — Here the word "men" is *enoshim*. It defines man as physically or morally weak or depraved, as exemplified in the profane man, Esau. For all his display of physical strength, he was but *enosh*, weak and mortal. The Psalmist uses this word in his statement: "Put them in fear, O Yahweh, that the nations may know themselves to be but men" (*enoshim*). This has been rendered: "Give them a teacher, O Yahweh, that they may know themselves to be but men" (Psa. 9:20). The Psalm is Messianic and points forward to what the future will reveal. In that day it will be clearly seen that *Yisrael* has prevailed over *Enosh*, the man of flesh.

**"And hast prevailed"** — The sense of the passage seems to signify: "He who strives with God and prevails will certainly prevail with men." Seeing that the angel, with all his power, could not prevail against Jacob, why should he fear Esau?

The R.V. margin gives it this emphasis by quoting from the Septuagint and Vulgate versions: "Thou hast had power with God, and thou shalt prevail against men." This is the heritage of Jacob.

Consider the state of the nation as a whole. It has wrestled with God in refuting His teaching and rejecting His Son; yet man has not prevailed against it, because of the covenant made with Abraham (Ezek. 36:21). If Jewry can successfully contest the issue with God without being destroyed as a nation, will flesh prevail over it? By no means.

## VERSE 29

**"And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me. I pray Thee, Thy name"** — The name of a person captions his character and purpose. Jacob desired to know more of both, as they relate to God, and therefore asked this question. Yahweh has pleasure in those who "speak to one another" and "think upon His Name" (Mal. 3:16), but He views with abhorrence those "who think to cause My people to forget My Name" (Jer. 23:27). The Name of God is the name of the family of God (Acts 15:14), the Name into which we are baptised.

**"And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after My name?"** — The time had not come for the proclamation of the Name, and therefore, at that stage, it was not disclosed. The circumstances for its revelation and meaning occurred in Egypt later on. If he had been at all in doubt, this answer of the angel would have shown Jacob that the "man" with whom he wrestled was an angelic manifestation of God.

**"And he blessed him there"** — This blessing would endorse the divine purpose in Jacob. He need not fear the future, for *El Shaddai* would be with him. The blessing gave Jacob new heart and outlook. He went forward with renewed conviction, with his mind stirred through the encounter with the angel and his encouraging words, and rejoicing in the new status that the name "Israel" gave him. All this would have the effect of driving fear of Esau from his thoughts.

## VERSE 30

**“And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel”** — This word is given in the margin as *The face of God*. However, it is compounded of *panah*, to turn, and, by implication, to face. Literally Peniel signifies *My turning to El, or face to face with El (God)*. The wrestling at Jabbok, and the subsequent revelation and new name, marked a turning point, a great change in the attitude of Jacob. He found it possible to turn and look into the face of God, represented by the angel.

**“For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved”** — In the Hebrew this is in the plural: “faces to faces”, whilst God is *Elohim*. How can the plural apply when there was only one angel wrestling with one man? Because both angel and man were representative. The angel represented the *Elohim* as a whole; those angels Jacob had seen in the vision of Bethel ascending and descending the stairway linking heaven and earth. In them Jacob saw the multitudinous “faces of El” or power, whilst in Jacob the angel saw the nation that would develop from him. In the future, national Israel will see the multitudinous Christ as *faces of power*, whilst the redeemed (the “one man” of Dan. 10) will look upon a plurality of faces in the restored nation of Israel over which it shall rule. In *Eureka (Logos Edition)* vol. 1, p. 94, appears this comment:

“And Jacob called the name of the place (where he wrestled) *Peni-ail*, ‘Faces of Power,’ ‘for,’ said he, ‘I have seen *Elohim* faces to faces, and my life is preserved...’ ‘Here was the most high Ail in multitudinous manifestation...’

Normally, to look upon the face of an angel was fraught with danger (Exod. 24:11; 33:20; Jud. 6:22,13:22), but Jacob had done so unharmed. “My life is preserved,” he exclaimed. The word signifies *saved*, and is used in Isaiah 49:6 in conjunction with the work of redemption for Israel, to be effected by Christ in the age to come. Hence, the narrative before us, is to be interpreted typically as well as historically. Jacob was enacting what will take place in the future. The faces of the *Elohim* again will be openly manifested in

the earth at the time of judgment. Chief among the *Elohim* will be the Lord Jesus, and joyful will those people be who will be able to look at him face to face and find their lives preserved. John wrote: “We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).

## VERSE 31

**“And as he passed over Penuel”** — There is a slight difference in the spelling of the word here: a *vav* replaces the *yod* in Peniel. It introduces a change in the meaning of the word: a contrast *yet*; thus: face to face *yet* God (did not consume). It seems that Jacob called the place Peniel, but his descendants used Penuel (cp. Jud. 8:8, 9, 17).

**“The sun rose upon him”** — Indicative of a new beginning, a new relationship, a new confidence; and typically pointing to the new day yet to dawn (Mal. 4:2).

**“And he halted upon his thigh”** — The struggle had left its mark on Jacob, yet he emerged from it redeemed and transformed. So it has ever been with those who have successfully gone through such wrestling with God. Jacob “halted” or limped. Under normal circumstances a limping man would be no match for a marching warrior like Esau, but Jacob put no confidence in himself, but in God. He had come to realise that God’s strength is made perfect in weakness; and he would renew that lesson time and again.

To halt or limp figuratively is to be conscious of personal weakness and of sin. Israel after the flesh is in that state, and is so described in the Word. “In that day, saith Yahweh, will I assemble her that *halteth*, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted; and I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast off a strong nation; and Yahweh shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever” (Mic. 4:6-7). “Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee; and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out, and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame” (Zeph. 3:19). The experiences of

Jacob at the brook Jabbok typify those that natural Israel will yet experience.

#### VERSE 32

**“Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh”** — The R.V. renders this: “the sinew of the hip.” The Jewish version: “The sinew of the thigh-vein.” This relates to the sciatic nerve. With other arteries and tendons, this sinew must be removed from slaughtered

animals, before that portion can be ritually prepared for Jewish consumption.

**“Unto this day”** — Unto the day of Moses, the historian. It still remains the case with Jews in the preparation of Kosher meat.

**“Because he touched the hollow of Jacob’s thigh in the sinew that shrank”** — The Jews claim that “this precept is a constant reminder of the Divine Providence to Israel as exemplified in the experience of the Patriarch.”

## CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

### RECONCILIATION WITH ESAU

*It is the purpose of God to bless all nations through Christ, the seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16). That means that ultimately there must be reconciliation between those at present who are antagonistic to God, and those who seek to obey Him. This can only come by the former recognising the status of the latter, and submitting to it. In that typical sense Jacob and Esau must be reconciled as foreshadowed in this chapter. However, the events herein narrated, also foreshadow the restoration of natural Israel and the termination of the age-old controversy between Jew and Gentile. In Jacob returning from Haran, the Jewish people are pictured returning to the land in fear; in the reconciliation between Jacob and Esau there is foreshadowed the future reconciliation that will take place between Jew and Gentile; and in the establishment of worship in peace around the altar of Shechem, there is typified the future conversion of Israel after the flesh to the truth in Christ Jesus.*

#### **Jacob And Esau Reconciled — Vv. 1-11.**

*The meeting of the two brothers is an anti-climax after all the tension and fear that preceded it. In view of the angelic revelation and on the approach of Esau, Jacob re-arranges his family. He places his secondary wives with their children in front, next to them Leah with her children, last of all his most dearly beloved Rachel and young Joseph. Then, he himself, goes before them all, and as his brother approaches, he bows himself to the ground seven times. At this act of extreme humility, Esau runs forward to affectionately greet*

*his brother, and reconciliation is effected after Esau acknowledges Jacob’s right to the birthright and blessing.*

#### VERSE 1

**“And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men”**— Esau’s intentions were still obscure. If he merely wished to greet his brother, there was no need for the accompaniment of four hundred warriors. Moreover, he did not bring with him the present of cattle, camels, and asses, which Jacob had sent on in advance

to propitiate him — he had not as yet accepted it (cp. v. 11); so that it remained uncertain whether he approached as friend or foe.

**“And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids”** — He was unsure of Esau, but no longer dominated by fear. Nevertheless, Jacob took precautions in case of an attack.

**“And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost”** — This is the familiar order in which he loved and valued his wives and apparently the order into which the general encampment was divided. The camp on Gilead displayed a similar division (Gen. 31:31,33).

### VERSE 3

**“And he passed over before them”** — He took the lead as shepherd. It was the place of danger in the event of an attack.

**“And bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother”** — This was an act of humility, as Israel after the flesh will one day be humbled before all humanity (Ezek. 39:21-29). He did not bow down seven times in the one place, but as he advanced to meet Esau. He would move forward a distance, then bow; move forward again, and bow, and so on, seven times. This was not done in obsequious servility and timidity, but with personal humility in a desire to conciliate.

**“And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept”** — Esau was a man of fleshly emotions, and unpredictable turns of temper, always governed by feelings brought into play by the flesh. At one time he is about to murder Jacob — the next time he is kissing him. On the other hand, Jacob is more balanced in his emotions, more governed by the will of God in any emergency. Therefore we must not be deluded by the appearance of charity and goodwill on the part of Esau, because they were not always characteristic of him. He left home with four hundred warriors; he ends by kissing Jacob. What

brought about the change? Circumstances, with perhaps the munificent gift of Jacob playing an important part. Who controlled the circumstances? God did. In the unexpected attitude of Esau, Jacob had an answer to the prayers he had so eloquently and urgently sent heavenwards. Jacob learned once again, that “when a man’s ways please Yahweh. He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him” (Prov. 16:7). It is quite obvious from the subsequent verses of this chapter, that Jacob placed little confidence in Esau’s affectionate greeting (v. 14). He was familiar with Esau’s changing affections and unpredictable temper.

### VERSE 5

**“And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children”** — The expression *lifted up his eyes* denotes surprise.

**“And said, Who are those with thee?”** — Literally *to thee*.

**“And he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant”** — Jacob takes the opportunity of impressing upon his profane brother that the blessings he had received were from God.

### VERSE 6

**“Then the handmaidens came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves”** — They and their children are presented to Esau as a witness to the power and goodness of God.

### VERSE 7

**“And Leah also with her children came near, and bowed themselves: and after came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves”** — The very order in which the various members of the family were presented emphasise the increasing goodness of God, until the climax is reached in Joseph and Rachel.

### VERSE 8

**“And he said, What meanest thou by all this drove which I met?”** — The word *drove* is *mahaneh*, *camp*. He is referring to the large present sent him (Ch. 32:13-21)

**“And he said, These are to find**

grace in the sight of my lord” — They were designed to secure forgiveness for any failing in the past.

#### VERSE 9

“**And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself**” — The word for “enough” is *rab* and signifies *abundance*. Esau implies that he has lost nothing in material possessions through Jacob obtaining the birthright and family blessing.

#### VERSE 10

“**And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand**” — This was designed to test the genuineness of Esau’s appearance of friendship. If he accepted the present, he was obligated to overlook any past failings on the part of Jacob.

“**For therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me**”— He would know that Esau was genuine in his affection, and would view the act of friendship as providential. He secretly bore in mind the encounter at Peniel and saw its fruits in the changed attitude of Esau.

#### VERSE 11

“**Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee**” — The R.V. renders “blessing” as *gift*. By it Jacob blessed Esau.

“**Because God hath dealt graciously with me**” — Jacob’s present affluence was indicative of the Divine blessing on his life, the Divine interest in his welfare and the Divine endorsement of the birthright and blessing secured by him.

“**And because I have enough**” — Literally, I have *all*. The word *kol* signifies *all*, from *Kalal*, *complete*. What does Jacob mean, for, in fact, he did not have everything? He meant that God had not only blessed him with material wealth, but also with the *complete* possession. In this, Jacob seems to refer to the most important and complete possession of all: the family birthright and blessing. This was his greatest privilege, and because he possessed it, he was more than ready to share material

things with his brother. Both Jacob and Esau were men of affluence at that stage, but in addition, Jacob possessed the assurance of a future hope. This is the complete blessing, the “all” of his desire. Thus Jacob, tactfully, but firmly, made reference to the birthright and blessing he had secured earlier, and which, in fact, Esau had sold to him. It was a courageous thing for him to do, because it could excite the anger of Esau at the head of his four hundred warriors. Why did he do so, and so risk the antagonism of the unpredictable Esau? Because, if Esau accepted the gift in the light of such a statement, it would constitute his endorsement of the birthright and blessing bestowed upon his brother. And such endorsement was necessary before true reconciliation was possible. So it will be antitypically when the world comes to endorse the status of privilege enjoyed by the saints, and when Gentiles accept the status of “first dominion” to be granted to natural Israel in the Age to come (Mic. 4:8).

“**And he urged him, and he took it**” — In doing so, Esau virtually acknowledged Jacob’s right to the birthright and blessing, and so endorsed the terms of complete reconciliation. It will be only on the basis of Jewry’s recognition of the privileged position of the saints, and Gentile endorsement of the privileged status of the nation of Israel, that they will be incorporated into the Kingdom in the Age to come (Zech. 12:10; 8:23; Ezek. 37:28).

#### Jacob’s Distrust Of Esau — Vv. 12-16

*Esau proposes that Jacob journey back with him to Seir, but Jacob excuses himself on the grounds that the state of his family, and the condition of his flocks and herds require that he travel slowly. He suggests that he will visit Esau in Seir some time in the future, and refuses the assistance of a guard of warriors that is offered him, placing his trust in God. Thus the two brothers go their own ways.*

#### VERSE 12

“**And he said, Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee**” — Esau proposes that he lead the way for Jacob back to Seir.

## VERSE 13

**“And he said unto him, My lord knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are with me”**—The R.V. renders “with young” as *give suck*. The condition of Jacob’s flocks and herds was such that he could only move along slowly.

**“And if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die”** — Jacob was solicitous for the welfare of his flocks and herds. As a hunter Esau was indifferent to the comfort of animals.

## VERSE 14

**“Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and I will lead on softly”** — “I will move along slowly as is necessary”.

**“According as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure”** — The literal Hebrew is: “According to the feet of the property and according to the feet of the children.” His progress was limited to the pace at which the young lambs and children could travel. They could not match the marching warriors, and would lag far behind.

**“Until I come unto my lord unto Seir”** — Apparently Jacob intended to visit Seir, but was diverted from so doing. At that time Esau had not taken up permanent residence there (Gen. 36:6), and perhaps it was this that dissuaded Jacob from attempting to make Seir at that time.

## VERSE 15

**“And Esau said, Let me now leave with thee some of the folk that are with me”** — The obvious intention was to act as a guard. At that time, Esau had not fully occupied Seir, and it could have been that travel was dangerous. Perhaps this was what finally dissuaded Jacob from proceeding there at that time.

**“And he said, What needeth it?”** — Literally: *Why then?* There is no need.

**“Let me find grace in the sight of my lord”** — Grant me the favour of permitting me to come along at my own pace.

## VERSE 16

**“So Esau returned that day on his**

**way unto Seir”** — Where he had begun to settle.

**Jacob’s Altar At Shechem — Vv. 17-20**

*Esau having departed, and Jacob being free to go where he pleased, he turns westward into the Jordan valley and beyond to Shechem. At this most important site in the history of the patriarchs, he purchases a field, sets up his abode there, and builds an altar as a centre of worship.*

## VERSE 17

**“And Jacob journeyed to Succoth”**

— He was almost exactly halfway between the Sea of Galilee and the Salt Sea, between two spots that figuratively represent life and death. In that regard, he was like Abram and Lot between Bethel and Ai (Gen. 13:3), and from this point he moved westward to build an altar and establish his worship in the Land. Succoth later became a city of Gad, and incurred the anger of Gideon when its inhabitants failed to assist him in his pursuit of the enemy (Jud. 8:15-16). The site has not been identified with certainty.

**“And built him an house”** — He made a secure dwelling place. The tension he had been under and the exhausting circumstances of his journey, demanded a measure of rest.

**“And made booths for his cattle”** — The word for “booths” is *sukboth*, and signifies huts, a more permanent form of shelter than the previous nomadic existence. The same word is translated as *tabernacles*. When Israel came out of Egypt, they made booths at a place that they also called Succoth (Exod. 13:20), and later this was incorporated into the *Festival of Tabernacles* (Lev. 23:43). *The Festival of Tabernacles* was a time of great rejoicing in Israel, and foreshadowed the millennium (Rev. 7:9-12). That is the type before us in this narrative of Jacob’s life.

**“Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth”** — Succoth is the Hebrew word translated *booths*, and *tabernacles*.

## VERSE 18

**“And Jacob came to Shalem”** — How long Jacob remained at Succoth we

are not told. But in due time he removed from Succoth, across the Jordan, on to Shechem. Shalem does not identify a city, but a state of being. The word signifies *peace* or *safety*. The R.V. renders: "Jacob came in peace to the city of Shechem." The tension, fears and forebodings that he experienced in his journeying from Haran to Succoth were at an end; and in peace with God and man he made his way to Shechem in the very heart of the Land of Promise. So it will be with the restoration of Israel both of the flesh and of the spirit. The agonising striving of the present will give place to a glorious peace at the presence of the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6).

**"A city of Shechem"** — Jacob came to the city of Shechem. The word signifies *Burden-Bearer*, and as a city of refuge, types Christ, our burden-bearer. See this discussed and the site described in our notes on Genesis 14:6. It was here that Abram first received the promise in the Land, and here, too, where he built his first altar in the land (Gen. 12:7). Thus Jacob had re-enacted the journey of his

forefather Abraham: a journey of faith, and came, at last, to the Burden-bearer, typically unto Christ.

**"Which is in the land of Canaan"** — See note Gen. 12:6.

**"When he came from Padan-aram"** — He thus had followed in the footsteps of Abraham (cp. Gen. 28:2).

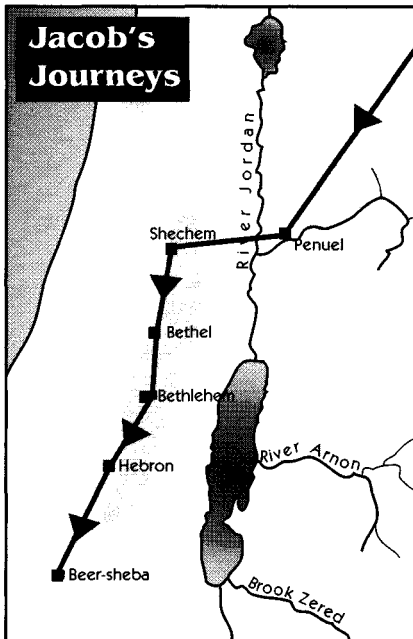
**"And pitched his tent before the city"** — In remaining outside the city, he maintained his separateness from the Canaanites.

#### VERSE 19

**"And he bought a parcel of a field"** — The parcel of a field purchased by Jacob apparently comprised the site of Abram's encampment when he first entered the land. Stephen referred to "a sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor of Sychem" (Acts 7:16). Though nothing is recorded of this transaction in the O.T., it evidently did take place, and now that Jacob arrived at the same place, he took steps to repossess this plat of ground, which later, according to Stephen, became the burial-ground of some of his sons. This is suggested by the use of the verb in this place. The word "bought" in the statement before us, is from *qanah*, and, according to Gesenius, signifies to *acquire* by purchase or redemption. The word is rendered *recover* in Isa. 11:11, "recover the remnant," and *redeem* in Neh. 5:8, "We have redeemed our brethren," and therefore can refer to the repossession of something — in this case, the family inheritance at Shechem, originally purchased by Abraham. Subsequently, Jacob had to defend his right to this piece of land (Gen. 48:22), though, again, nothing is recorded of the circumstances. These facts reconcile Genesis with Stephen's account of Abraham's purchase.

**"At the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father"** — Hamor signifies *an ass*, from a root meaning to *boil, ferment*, and referring to high-spirit-ness.

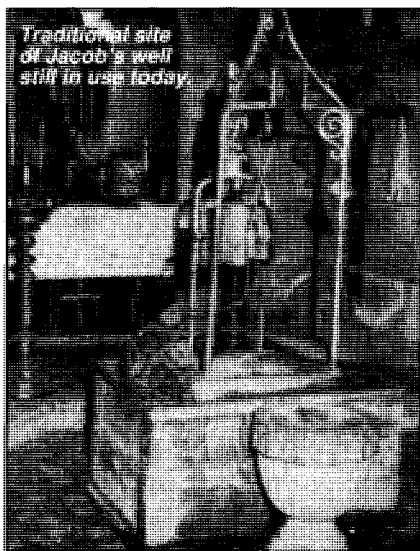
**"For an hundred pieces of money"** — For "pieces of money," the Hebrew has one word: *Kesitah*. Philologists are uncer-





tain as to what this word signifies. The Septuagint translators render the word as *lambs*, and the margin of the A. V. does likewise. Others, however, such as Gesenius, link it with the word *kasat*, to weigh, and believe that it was a certain weight of metal now unknown. Accordingly, Joshua 24:32, where the same transaction is recorded, renders the word "pieces of silver." Some suggest that both ideas should be combined, and that the earliest pieces of money were stamped with a lamb, as appropriate to a rural people. For example, A.P. Stanley writes: "The very pieces of money with which he buys the land are not merely weighed, as in the bargain with Ephron — they are stamped with the earliest mark of coinage, the figures of the lambs of the flocks."

This linking together of silver money and lambs is remarkably appropriate. For silver is the metal of redemption (Exod. 30:13; Lev. 5:15), and the lamb is the animal of redemption. It is significant that Jacob should redeem this piece of land, which became the symbol of his inheritance, with money which points forward so completely to the means of redemption by which he will obtain his eternal inheritance.



Traditional site  
of Jacob's well  
still in use today.

In this secluded field, under the shadow of Gerizim and Ebal (the mounts of Blessing and of Cursing), and in sight of Shechem, the Burden-bearer, Jacob maintained his separate existence. He arranged it so that he was completely independent of the Canaanites. Probably, in order to guard against the chance of disputes as had arisen between his father and Abimelech during a time of drought, he dug himself a capacious well deep into the limestone rock, which exists near Nablous, the ancient Shechem, to the present day (cp. John 4:5-6). It was at this spot that the true Burden-bearer sought rest and refreshment from the woman of Samaria. The width of the bore is nine feet (2.74m), and its depth about one hundred feet (30.48m). For Jacob to sink such a shaft involved an undertaking demanding great skill, much labour, and considerable time. The water of the well is still used to this day; and the writer has had the great privilege of drinking of it. The "piece of field," the silver-lamb purchase money, and the well of living water, used by Christ as a contrast to his own life-giving Truth, points to the typical significance of this stopping-place of Jacob.

## VERSE 20

"And he erected there an altar" — For the significance of altars thus built, see notes on Gen. 12:7.

"And called it El-elohe Israel" — The name signifies *The Strength of the Powerful Ones of Israel*, and being associated with the altar, it represented this in sacrificial manifestation. The altar symbolised Christ (Heb. 13:10). All who make personal contact with that altar are constituted holy (Exod. 29:37) and they comprise the Powerful Ones of the Name. Their Strength is *El* manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" (2 Cor. 5:19), and he became the channel of divine strength to all those who put their trust in him (Phil. 4:13). The manifestation of divine strength in a believer's life entails the sacrifice of self — hence the association of this name with an altar.

In *Phanerosis*, p. 122, the comment is

made: "The Altar of Burnt-Offering figured the Messiah's Body in sacrificial manifestation. The idea of an altar of sacrifice representing a personal and divine plurality is frequent in Scripture. Thus, Jacob erected an altar at Shechem, in the land of Canaan, and called it *Ail-Elohai Yisraail*, that is, The "*Strength of the Mighty Ones of Israel*." Again (p. 50-51): "Now the altar erected by Jacob was typical of those referred to in the title he bestowed upon it. When the Spirit descended upon the Apostles, and shone through them, holding forth the word of life confirmed by power, there were many other *Elohim* in Israel. They were full of power, and therefore full of *El*, as Jesus promised they would be, saying, 'Ye shall receive power of the Holy Spirit coming upon you' (Acts 1:8); and when Jacob poured *oil* upon the pillarstone of Bethel,

he represented this anointing of the *Elohim of Israel* with *El*. The marginal reading of the title of Jacob's Altar expresses nothing of this. 'God, God of Israel' is an unmeaning phrase: rendered after the Saxon version of 'God,' it is 'Good, Good of Israel'! But with the promises before us, we interpret the Altar as typical of the *Power of the Powerful Ones of Israel in sacrificial manifestation*".

As Jacob made his way to Shechem (the Burden-Bearer) and built his altar for worship, so ultimately all his sons, both of the flesh and spirit will make their way to the antitypical Burden-Bearer, the Christ altar. There, around that altar (Heb. 13:10), in the age to come, they will be united as one; and there the powerful ones of Israel (the glorified elect) will acknowledge that their Strength is, and has been, the *El* of Israel in sacrificial manifestation.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

### JACOB AS A PILGRIM IN THE LAND

(Genesis 34:1–36:43)

*This painful story begins a series which centres on the qualifications of Jacob's children as worthy bearers of the covenant promises and responsibilities. It commences with the shameful defilement of Dinah, the violent treachery of Simon and Levi, the death of Rachel in childbirth and the wickedness of Reuben. This section of Genesis goes on to record the death of Isaac, and the generations of Esau and the Edomites. Thus it records the experiences of Jacob as a pilgrim in the land, faced with problems, and surrounded by enemies.*

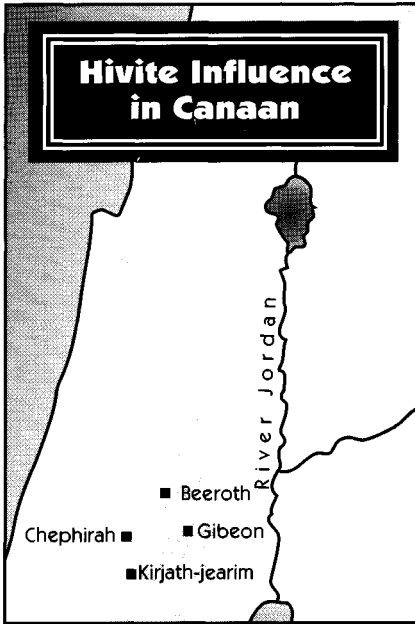
#### Dinah is defiled — Vv. 1-6

*Jacob's children were growing up. The problems of childhood increased with the coming of adolescence — as they do in every family. At Shechem the younger sons, excluding Joseph, reach the age of virility; and even Dinah, the youngest of all his children but Joseph (Gen. 30:21-25), arrived at the threshold of womanhood. Dinah would have been only a young teenager at the time the tragic events of this chapter took place.*

#### VERSE 1

**"And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob"** — Dinah is the feminine form of *Dan* and therefore signifies *Judgment*. She would have been a young teenager, as Jacob had spent some years at Shechem before this incident took place.

**"Went out to see the daughters of the land"** — The very seclusion adopted by Jacob excited her curiosity. Probably hovering between girlhood and woman-



hood, and a prey to all the curiosity and vague desires which beset young maidens at such a time, weary perhaps of her solitary life as the only girl in the family, and observing other young girls, probably going or returning from the fountains with pitchers on their shoulders, she desired the company of her own sex. Though it may have been an innocent act, it did constitute a seeking of the friendship of the world (James 4:4), and in doing so, she imitated the action of Lot, rather than that of Abraham or her father. Parents need to guard against this natural action of inexperience, and independence and provide some compensation for the separation the Truth requires. See the exhortation of 1 Tim. 3:12; Titus 2:5.

## VERSE 2

**“And when Shechem the son of Hamor”**— Shechem signifies *Between the shoulders*, and hence the *Burden-bearer*. Hamor signifies *Ass* from *chamar* to *boil, ferment, glow*, and thus implies *high-spiritedness*. Shechem acted in accordance with his name. As son of (Heb. *filled with*)

Hamor, his *high-spiritedness* got him into trouble. Nevertheless, he was prepared to honourably shoulder the responsibility attached to his irresponsible action.

**“The Hivite, prince of the country”** — The Hivites constituted a powerful nation in ancient times. The word signifies *life-giving, living-place, village* (Strong). The Hivites were among the nations that, later, Moses was commanded to destroy because of their ungodly ways (Deut. 7:1). Their main settlement seems to have been in the north under the shadow of Lebanon (Josh. 11:3; Jud. 3:3; 2 Sam. 24:7), but Hamor, apparently, had moved south to Shechem. The story of this chapter shows the Hivites to have been warmhearted, impulsive, over-confident (v.23), over-trustful (v.21), gullible, greedy of gain, given to trade and to the multiplication of flocks and herds rather than to engaging in war. The absence of any attempt of revenge following the treacherous massacre of Simeon and Levi argues for the unwarlike nature of their character; as does also the ease with which Abimelech took the city later (Jud. 9:22-49). The Hivites were diplomats rather than warriors, and gained by strategy and cunning what others sought by warfare. The name of their god: *Baal-Berith* or *Lord of the Covenant*, confirms this impression of their unwarlike character. The Hivite form of administration seems to have been highly democratic. From the reference to the elders and the people in Josh. 9:11, it would appear that the latter exercised considerable voice in national affairs. So Hamor and Shechem reasoned and “*conmuned with the men of their city*” (Gen. 34:20-24), but did not attempt to dictate or command.

In the days of Joshua, Hivites occupied the four cities of Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath-Jearim which made a league with Joshua (Ch. 9:17). In tricking Israel into entering into covenant with them, the Hivites of Joshua’s day unconsciously avenged the treachery of Jacob’s son in tricking the men of Shechem into being circumcised as recorded in this chapter. Thus the cunning by which the sons of Jacob deceived the Shechemites

on this occasion, was matched by the cunning of the Hivites keeping Joshua to the terms of the covenant into which he had entered when the Israelites occupied the land.

**“Saw her, he took her”** — The terms of this statement suggest that he forcibly assaulted her, and afterwards returned her to his house Cp. v. 26.

**“And lay with her, and defiled her”** — He had intercourse with her, and in so doing he humbled her. The word “defiled” is *anah* in Hebrew and signifies to *humble*. This is the only place where it is rendered *defiled*. The terms of the narrative suggest that she was forced against her will to this humiliating experience.

### VERSE 3

**“And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel”** — Shechem discovered a genuine affection for Dinah, so much so, that he “longed” for her to be his wife (v.8). He doubtless now repented of his action in seducing her. The word “damsel” is *na'ar* and signifies an adolescent, actually of either sex; thus a young person.

**“And spake kindly unto the damsel”** — Literally, *he spake to her heart*. She was evidently distraught at what had taken place, and he tried to comfort her. He began to woo her with words, trying to gain her affection, and reconcile her to her disgrace; probably by disclosing to her his determination to secure her hand in marriage.

### VERSE 4

**“And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife”** — This was the normal custom of the day.

### VERSE 5

**“And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter”** — In this verse, the word “defiled” in Hebrew is different to that in v. 2. It is the Hebrew *tame* and signifies to *render unclean*. How Jacob learned of this we are not told. Dinah was still retained in the house of Shechem (v. 26), so it may have been from

some of her companions.

**“Now his sons were with his cattle in the field”** — They had taken the animals to graze some distance from Jacob’s encampment, and so were absent when this occurred.

**“And Jacob held his peace until they were come”** — His timidity again asserted itself, causing him to refrain from any approach until his sons were with him.

### VERSE 6

**“And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him”** — Jacob remaining silent about the matter, Dinah still absent in the home of Shechem, the initiative was taken by the diplomatic Hamor.

### Shechem Is Offered Peace On Conditions — Vv. 7-19

*This most unsatisfactory state of affairs, caused through the idle curiosity of Dinah, and lack of supervision on the part of her parents, is further aggravated by the scheming deception of some of Jacob’s sons. And so the circumstances become even more tragic.*

### VERSE 7

**“And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard it”** — Evidently Jacob sent a message to his sons, calling them home for a family consultation. This caused them to return from out of the field where they were grazing the herds.

**“And the men were grieved, and they were very wroth”** — They returned furious at the disgrace upon the family name. The word *atsab* translated “grieved” in the hiphil tense signifies to *become pained with anger, to grieve themselves, to toil with pain*. They deeply felt the disgrace; and the more they pondered the circumstances, the greater their agony.

**“Because he had wrought folly in Israel in lying with Jacob’s daughter”** — This expression is significant. It aligns folly, or unreason, with sin; and therefore holiness with the highest form of knowledge. Since Yahweh views sin as the height of unreason (Psa. 74:22; Jer. 17:11), and holiness as the sublimest act of reason

or wisdom (Psa. 111:10; Prov. 1:4,7), the term *folly* merges into the idea of wickedness of a shameful character (1 Sam. 25:25; 2 Sam. 13:12).

This is the first time that the expression "wrought folly in Israel" is used. However, it afterwards was used as a national expression to describe acts of stupidity which reflected adversely upon the character which Israel should have manifested as a separated and covenanted people. Thus harlotry is folly (Deut. 22:21); Achan's covetousness was folly (Josh. 7:15); the Gibeathites manifested folly (Jud. 19:23; 20:6, 10); Amnon committed folly against Tamar (2 Sam. 13:12). In Hebrew, "folly" is *nebalah*, signifying *wickedness*, and is derived from the root *nabal*, meaning *stupid, wicked*.

**"Which thing ought not to be done"** — Folly of all kinds should be avoided, and not merely that which is sexually immoral.

#### VERSE 8

**"And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter"** — It was no passing infatuation with Shechem, but a deep-seated affection for young Dinah. He doubtless regretted his impetuosity, and desired to make reparation. Above all, he could not bear the thought of being parted from her, and desired honourable marriage.

**"I pray you give her him to wife"** — This appears an honourable suggestion, but in the eyes of Yahweh it added sin to sin. Later, Israel as a nation, was strictly warned against giving its daughters in marriage to the Hivites (Deut. 7:1-4).

#### VERSE 9

**"And make ye marriages with us, and give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you"** — Hamor spake with all good intentions, but he spake as a man of the world. It is what the world offers; nor can it understand the scruples of believers in refusing such unions, and remaining separate (Deut. 7:3; 2 Cor. 6:14).

#### VERSE 10

**"And ye shall dwell with us"** — The worst possible suggestion to a people separated unto God.

**"And the land shall be before you"** — You will share it equally with us. Hamor, of course, did not realise that it was at Shechem that the land had been promised to Abraham as a possession (Gen. 12:7).

**"Dwell and trade ye therein, and get you possessions therein"** — This seductive appeal was in the best traditions of the world. It invited Jacob to leave his God-appointed status as a pilgrim, and become a Hivite. At the same time, Hamor presented to his people the advantages of accepting Jacob into the tribe (v. 23). The world constantly tries to break down the wall of separation between it and the believer, and it offers as inducement for so doing, the material advantages that it imagines it has in its power to give.

Hamor's offer contained three features, which were later answered by three propositions from the sons of Jacob (v. 16).

#### VERSE 11

**"And Shechem said unto her father and unto her brethren, Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me I will give"** — He pleaded for favour, and promised restitution. Probably Hamor's suggestion had been received in silence by Jacob and his sons. Certainly, the Hivites would have been able to sense the disapproval in the attitude of the Hebrews.

#### VERSE 12

**"Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife"** — The dowry was the price paid for a bride to her parents; the gift was what was given as a present to the bride. Shechem invites the Hebrews to name their price to both parents and bride, and he would pay it.

#### VERSE 13

**"And the sons of Jacob answered**

**Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully** — They evidently did this without the knowledge of their father, for Jacob is not mentioned, and, obviously disagreed with the action taken. Perhaps they withdrew from the conference to consider the matter, and then returned to give their verdict. The latter was given in the absence of Jacob.

**“And said, (because he had defiled Dinah their sister)”** — These words in parenthesis should so appear in the text. The words are supplied to explain why they spake deceitfully.

#### VERSE 14

**“And they said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that were a reproach unto us”** — There was no doubt in the minds of Jacob’s sons, that marriage with the alien was unscriptural. They described it as a *reproach, a disgrace or a shame*. Thus the ground upon which they declined the marriage was good; the proposal they made subsequently cannot be defended on any claims of humanity or religion. It made politics of the truth; so completely evil was it, that Jacob recalled it with horror on his deathbed (Gen. 49:6-7).

#### VERSE 15

**“But in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised”** — The proposal was sinful. They had no right to offer God’s covenant sign to a heathen people who were in ignorance of the Truth. It was abominable for them to use it as a means of duplicity and violence. It is tantamount to offering baptism to a person not sufficiently educated in the Word, merely because he desires marriage with one in the faith. Unfortunately, in that manner, the sin of Jacob’s sons is sometimes repeated today.

#### VERSE 16

**“Then we will give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people”** — The

sons of Jacob made three propositions to match the three offered by Hamor (v. 10). They were (1) intermarriage: “give our daughters”; (2) association: “we will dwell with you;” (3) assimilation: “we will become one people.”

#### VERSE 17

**“But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then we will take our daughter, and we will be gone”** — They were not prepared to bargain further.

#### VERSE 18

**“And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamor’s son”** — They were delighted that some terms were given them; not at the prospect of submitting to circumcision.

#### VERSE 19

**“And the young man deferred not to do the thing”** — Shechem brooked no delay in accepting the conditions and inducing the men of the city to do likewise.

**“Because he had delight in Jacob’s daughter”** — He had discovered a genuine affection for her.

**“And he was more honourable than all the house of his father”** — The R.V. renders: “he was honourable above all the house of his father.” He was probably the firstborn of Hamor, and therefore held in higher esteem than his other sons. This statement emphasises the great honour he was prepared to pay Dinah.

#### Shechem Agrees To The Conditions

— Vv. 20-24

*Hamor and Shechem accept the innocent-sounding proposition of Jacob’s sons, without realising its lethal overtones. They carry it back to the people of the city, with arguments that convinced their fellow-citizens of the advantages of intermarriage and trade that would follow their acceptance of it. The men submitted to circumcision, an operation which incapacitated them for several days.*

#### VERSE 20

**“And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and**

communed with the men of their city, saying” — They had to convince them of the advantages of adopting the Hebrew rite of circumcision, with the pain that the operation induces.

#### VERSE 21

**“These men are peaceable with us”**

— The first inducement was a political one. Perhaps the men of Shechem had viewed with concern the large tribe on the outskirts of their city. Certainly, the unwarlike Hivites would prefer a diplomatic victory, rather than a test of arms. Perhaps they reasoned that one or the other was the alternative, and selected this as the lesser of the two evils.

**“Therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, it is large enough for them”** —

The second inducement was based on profit through trading: an argument that would appeal to the mercenary-minded Hivites.

**“Let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters”** — The third inducement was personal: marriage with the attractive strangers in their midst. How many “daughters” did Jacob have? We only know of one, but there may have been others, or this may have been just a general comment, in anticipation of daughters to come.

However, there is a site just above the Sea of Galilee, where the upper Jordan moves down to empty its waters into it, that from very ancient times has been called *Gesher Benot Ya'acov* (The Bridge of the Daughters of Jacob). This is a very ancient crossing-place. Indeed, it is claimed that Jacob's daughters forded the river here, hence the name given to it. However, no guide is able to provide the names of any alleged daughters of Jacob apart from Dinah. This is not unusual as far as Scripture is concerned, because the names of daughters are not generally recorded, unless they played some significant part in the narrative.

#### VERSE 22

**“Only herein will the men consent**

**unto us for to dwell with us, to be one people”**—With diplomatic skill, Hamor dwelt on the advantages of association with the children of Israel. They were threefold: politics, profit, and personal considerations. He briefly made mention of the painful condition (submitting to circumcision), and then quickly and smoothly, moved on to reaffirm the advantages.

**“If every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised”** — The significance of the rite was not explained; and in the absence of any such understanding, circumcision became merely concision (Phil. 3:2), a mere mutilation, by which pain and inconvenience are suffered to no purpose.

#### VERSE 23

**“Shall not their cattle and their substance and every beast of their's be our's?”** —

The painful condition having been briefly stated, Hamor swiftly moved on to describe the material benefits that would accrue therefrom. He appealed to their cupidity, realising that this would constitute for them a telling argument.

**“Only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us”** — Though Hamor was chief, he evidently ruled the city on democratic principles, and thus appealed for the co-operation of each one.

#### VERSE 24

**“And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all”** —

Evidently Shechem added his words of appeal to those of his father; and the people, motivated by greed, accepted the proposition. The Hebrew word for hearkened, *shama* signifies to *hear intelligently* with the object of endorsing and applying what has been said.

**“That went out of the gate of his city”**—A Hebraism which, in this case implies all the men of war; all who could independently move on their own account.

**“And every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city”** — They submitted to the painful operation which incapacitated them for some days.

**Simeon and Levi's Treachery**

— Vv. 25-29

*The Shechemites, suspecting nothing, agree to the terms imposed on them, and the rite is performed. On the third day, however, when the pain and fever resulting from the operation is at its height, Simeon and Levi, two of Dinah's own brothers, who had connived to execute a terrible vengeance, proceeded to do so (v. 13, Ch. 49:5-6). With sword in hand, they "slew all the males." Then taking their sister with them, but leaving the spoil of the town untouched, they leave. This terrible deed is committed without the knowledge of Jacob. The other brothers, however, then enter the devastated city, despoil it, and taking captive all who remain alive, return to their own place.*

**VERSE 25**

**"And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob,"** — It is said that the effect of the operation is particularly felt on the third day.

**"Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword"** — As Dinah's full brothers, they felt the disgrace more than did the others. Unknown to Jacob (Gen. 49:5-7), but perhaps known to some of the other brethren (cp. v.27), they took counsel together, and determined upon a terrible and treacherous vengeance.

**"And came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males"** — Seeing that all the men were incapacitated, there was little real courage in these two men coming "boldly" upon the city. Moreover, they probably had other retainers with them to support them in their action. Their act of vengeance, was an act of treachery (cp. Vv. 15-16), and, therefore, is inexcusable. But in extenuation thereof it must be urged that Dinah was retained a prisoner in the house of Shechem, without any hope of release apart from violence; and, further, having incorporated the covenant sign in their flesh, the men of the city had brought themselves under the shadow of judicial condemnation. Nevertheless, Simeon and Levi should have discussed the matter with Jacob their father. Perhaps they

feared the natural timidity of Jacob, and were irritated at what they considered his lack of action. But, surely, the one who had wrestled with the angel, and had submitted to the guidance of God in the past, and did not fear to defend his right to the piece of land that he occupied close to Shechem (Gen. 48:22), had sufficient faith and courage to commune with God in regard to the problem now before him. Be that as it may, the two brothers took the law into their own hands (as their descendants did in the days of the Lord: see Notes Gen. 49:5-7) with disastrous effect.

**VERSE 26**

**"And they slew Hamor"** — There was judicial justice in what they did, but not in the treacherous way they went about it. Hamor had tried to use the sin of his son to his own advantage hoping to obtain riches by this means.

**"And Shechem his son with the edge of the sword"** — By forcibly defiling one of the covenant people, he deserved death; in retaining her in his house, he made it obvious that he would only give up Dinah by force.

**"And took Dinah out of Shechem's house"** — This was the sole objective of their attack, and if it had not been accompanied by the most blatant form of deception, it could be applauded as an act of courage and high principle. But their secret counsel, the lying deception by which they brought the men of the city into their power, their ungodly use of the covenant sign to wreak their vengeance, and deliver their sister, are indefensible. Even the wholesale slaughter in which they engaged could have been avoided.

**"And went out"** — Their mission accomplished, they left, leaving behind them a mourning city, with its spoil untouched.

**VERSE 27**

**"The sons of Jacob"** — These are not enumerated. Leah had six sons in addition to her daughter Dinah, and it may have been other full brothers who now converged on the city. Whoever they were, they evidently knew of the intentions of Simeon and Levi, and whilst not joining in



their attack, were prepared to profit by their action.

**“Came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister”** — As in v.5, the word “defiled” signifies *to render unclean*.

#### VERSE 28

**“They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field”** — They removed all their possessions.

#### VERSE 29

**“And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house”** — They completely sacked the city, although it must have been an extremely small one in those days.

#### Jacob’s Reproof — Vv. 30-31

*Deeply shocked, Jacob rebukes Simeon and Levi for their crime. Furthermore, knowing what reaction his family can expect from the Canaanites in the land, he recognises that the foolish and treacherous action of his two sons has placed the future of himself and his descendants in jeopardy. Simeon and Levi, however, remain unrepentant and seek to justify their action.*

#### VERSE 30

**“And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites”** — He did not deny that the action of Shechem merited punishment, but he condemned Simeon and Levi for the brutal and unscrupulous methods they adopted in carrying it out.

**“And I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house”** — God had promised to protect Jacob wheresoever he went, but the patriarch realised that he must not tempt God. He recognised that the position of privilege brings added responsibility; and that one cannot presume upon the former whilst ignoring the latter. He evidently made the problem a

matter of prayer, with the result that the arm of God was extended to help (Ch. 35:5).

#### VERSE 31

**“And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?”** — The word “harlot” is *zanah*, and signifies one who is well fed and wanton; one who prostitutes herself for hire. Of course, the answer to the question, is No! The folly of young Dinah, had brought disgrace to the family, and the fierce indignation of her two brothers was fully justified. But they should not have allowed this to blind them to other considerations and responsibilities. Her action did not justify the lying, treachery and murder in which they had indulged. They had condemned Shechem for betraying Dinah, but they had betrayed God; they had accused the Hivites of unfaithfulness, but they had been unfaithful to their solemn word; they had condemned the guilt of Dinah and Shechem, but they had been guilty of sin in permitting the covenant-sign to be the means of gratifying their personal anger, and so bringing the Truth itself into contempt. Jacob never forgot their action, and recalled it on his death-bed with horror (Gen. 49:5-7). As we shall see at that place, it was typical of the treachery, sin and violence of which the nation was guilty in crucifying the Lord.

In the sad circumstances recorded in this chapter, which were brought about by the irresponsible folly of young Dinah, there does appear a clearly defined type to which Jacob makes reference in Gen. 49:5-7. The treacherous council of Simeon and Levi brought about the murderous death of Shechem, the Burden-Bearer, and resulted in Jacob being brought into ill favour with the surrounding nations (Gen. 34:30, 35:5). This was exactly the case following the crucifixion of the Lord (our Burden-Bearer), which is described as murder (Acts 7:52). The murder of Shechem, therefore, foreshadowed the crucifixion of flesh. No doubt Jacob had intended to exact retribution and deliver Dinah, but his two sons took the matter into their own hands, and by treachery and violence accomplished that which he

would have attempted in another way. Their treachery and murder brought judgment upon themselves and the tribes as a

whole (cp. Gen. 49:5-7, and see Acts 2:23), as was also the case in regard to the crucifixion of the Lord.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

### TRAGEDY ON THE WAY TO HEBRON

*This chapter continues the pilgrimage of Jacob. However, there is a significant difference. In the incident at Shechem, Jacob was largely in the background, though he was seriously embarrassed by all that took place. Perhaps he had allowed his family too much liberty. In this chapter there is a change. He assumes a dominant role, and hearkening to the voice of God, moves south to Bethel to renew the covenant once again. This required special preparations on the part of all with him. From Bethel the tribe moves on to Bethlehem. It proves to be a journey marked by sadness. The aged Deborah dies; the beloved Rachel also passes to her rest after giving birth to Benjamin; Reuben demonstrates that he is unfit for the position of firstborn; and Esau and Jacob meet once more at Hebron. Finally the life of Isaac comes to an end.*

#### Jacob Is Sent By God To Bethel

— Vv. 1-5

*Acting under divine guidance, Jacob prepares his family, and the members of his household for a meeting with God. He leaves Shechem for Bethel, about thirty miles distant. Despite Jacob's fears, no one pursues or attacks him, for the terror of God is upon all the cities en route.*

#### VERSE 1

**"And God said unto Jacob"** — Probably in answer to prayer. Most likely Jacob had taken his problem to God in that way, and the answer now came.

**"Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee"** — He was directed to seek shelter in Bethel, the *House of El*. The journey, therefore, was for the purpose of worship at the altar Jacob was instructed to build there; and by the use of the title *El* (God), he is reminded of the Source of strength. Bethel, of course, signifies House of El (Strength).

**"When thou fleddest from the face**

**of Esau thy brother"** — Bethel provided comfort and strength then, and would do so again at a time when Jacob feared the consequences of his sons' foolish action.

#### VERSE 2

**"Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him"** — His household included servants who had attached themselves to Jacob when he left Haran or since; and "all that were with him" included those whom his sons had forcibly acquired from Shechem (cp. Gen. 34:29). These, doubtless, still clung to their pagan worship. There was a need for all to make proper preparation to meet with God.

**"Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments"** — This was in preparation for engaging in worship at Bethel, the *house of God* (cp. 1 Tim. 3:15). True worship requires: (1) Repudiation of false teaching (*put away strange gods*); (2) Cleansing of the Word (*be clean*); John 15:3; (3) A cover for sin (*change your*

garments); (4) Activity in service (*arise and go*). The Hebrew *nekar*, rendered "strange," signifies *foreign*. The phrase can literally be rendered: "the gods of the stranger." As we have seen, a number of those *strangers* who would have had their gods with them, had only recently been forcibly taken from Shechem (Gen. 34:29).

### VERSE 3

**"And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar"** — The purpose of the journey was religious, to renew the covenant with the God (*El*) of Bethel.

**"Unto God, Who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went"** — We learn, for the first time, that Jacob had made his distress at leaving home the subject of prayer; and that he had recognised in the vision of Bethel, an answer to it. These words also reveal that Jacob constantly discerned the guiding hand of *El* in all the circumstances of his life.

### VERSE 4

**"And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears"** — The earrings were ornaments of religious or talismanic value, such as are referred to in Hosea 2:13.

**"And Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem"** — This statement would appear quite trivial apart from the remarkable typical significance of the action of Jacob. The word "oak" is *'elah* and signifies *strength*. It was the name given to an oak or terebinth tree; and, at that time, there was a most significant oak growing at Shechem. It is translated in Genesis 12:6 as the *plain of Moreh*. But the word "plain" should be rendered "oak," and the phrase signifies *The Strength of the Teacher* (see our notes on Gen. 12:6). This Oak or Terebinth, therefore points to Christ, our Strength (Phil. 4:13). As Jacob buried the sinful trinkets of his followers under this oak, so the believer, in baptism, buries his sins (Rom. 6:4).

Consider the significance of the spot where this was done. It was not only the place where the Burden-bearer (Shechem) had been put to death, but the place where Abram heard the promise for the first time in the land (Gen. 12:6). Even the history of the place is in accordance with the type. It later became the site of the Sanctuary where Joshua erected his memorial pillar (Josh. 24:23-27), where the tribes were gathered. However, apostasy caused this place to become known as *The Oak of the Sorcerers*, for "the plain (Heb. *oak*) of the pillar" of Judges 9:6, is described as "the plain (or *oak*) of Meonenim" or *sorcerers* in Judges 9:37.

What a remarkable type! It points forward to the Lord Jesus, a living sacrifice of Strength (the oak) who can effectively cover sin as here was done by Jacob, but whose efficacy to do so was harmed by whose efficacious sorcerers (a term scripturally used for false religion: Rev. 21:8) introducing truth-destroying apostasy. Meanwhile, under the oak by Shechem, the *Burden-bearer*, Jacob hid away the sin of the people with him.

### VERSE 5

**"And they journeyed"**—The cavalcade left the field of Shechem, and moved south along the winding valley hemmed in by towering mountains, that leads to the hilly terrain of Bethel. Jacob was at the head of a numerous company of people, surely causing the patriarch to ponder the ways of Providence. He had left Bethel a lonely fugitive — he returned to it having grown into a large company of people.

**"And the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob"** — For some reason, the inhabitants of the land hesitated to attack Jacob and his company. Perhaps it was at this time that he effectively defended his inheritance against the attack of the warlike Amorites (Gen. 48:22), so that others feared to molest him. Whatever reason they gave for their reluctance to attack, it was only a half-truth. In fact, a supernatural dread settled upon the people of the land which was induced by angelic super-

vision (see Psa. 34:7). The Psalmist sums it up as follows:

*And He confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law,  
And to Israel for an everlasting covenant;  
Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan,  
The lot of your inheritance:  
When they were but a few men in number;  
Yea, very few, and strangers in it.  
When they went from one nation to another,  
From one kingdom to another people;  
He suffered no man to do them wrong;  
Yea, He reproved kings for their sakes;  
Saying, Touch not Mine anointed,  
And do My prophets no harm  
(Psa 105:10-15).*

### Death of Deborah, Rebekah's Nurse

#### — Vv. 6-8

*Jacob arrives at Bethel, and recalling the circumstances of his previous visit to this place, he builds an altar and worships God. But whilst he sojourns there, Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, dies at a very old age. Jacob was now at least one hundred years of age; his mother had been married twenty years before he was born (Gen. 25:20,26); and must have been about 140 years of age if still alive. Her nurse would have been even older. It is most unlikely that Deborah had made her way to far-distant Padan-aram at her age, and therefore she must have met up with Jacob at either Shechem or Bethel. Most likely she made her way to Jacob on the death of Rebekah, so that Jacob never again saw his mother who loved him so deeply. In the death of Deborah, he mourned the snapping of this sole contact with the mother he loved so much.*

#### VERSE 6

**"So Jacob came to Luz"** — This was the original name of the town. See notes at Gen. 28:19.

**"Which is in the land of Canaan"** — The narrative emphasises Jacob's status as pilgrim.

**"That is, Bethel, he and all the peo-**

**ple that were with him"** — Jacob could well contrast his condition now with that of his previous visit to this site. Then he was a lonely fugitive; now he was the head of a large company of people, with numerous flocks and herds. He could see in this contrast a token of the fulfilment of the divine covenant.

#### VERSE 7

**"And he built there an altar"** — For the significance of altars, see comments on Gen. 8:20; 12:6.

**"And called the place El-beth-el"** — The name *El-beth-el* signifies *The Strength of the house of El*. Jacob, obviously, would identify this Strong One with the promised Redeemer, the Seed of the Woman, who would bruise the serpent power on the head (Gen. 3:15).

Today we acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as that Strong One (Phil. 4:13). He is also identified with the altar (Heb. 13:10). The name given him at birth: *Immanuel*, or *God with us*, proclaims that he is the Strength of the House of El. Jacob had exhibited that strength despite his obvious weakness; in fact, in him, "God's strength was made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9).

Hosea comments: "He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God; yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us; even Yahweh God of hosts" (Hos. 12:3-5). What a profound statement. Not only is the angel identified with *Yahweh Elohim Sabaoth*, but he is represented as speaking with the descendants of Jacob, as well as with the patriarch himself: this is indicated in the narrative by the use of the plural pronoun "us".

**"Because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother"** — The word rendered "appeared" in this verse is *galah*. It signifies *to make naked, to disclose, reveal, or uncover*. In the context of this verse, it signifies "to appear, as if by the removal of a veil" (Gesenius); to make manifest things previously hidden. It is a different word from

that rendered "appeared" in v.9 of this chapter. It implies that at Bethel, Jacob had a further revelation: God disclosed his intentions to him, in a manner He had not done so previously.

#### VERSE 8

**"But Deborah Rebekah's nurse died"** — See comments at the beginning of this section. Deborah signifies *Bee*, which doubtless is an index of her character. She was noted for her busy activity on the behalf of others. She had nourished Rebekah as a baby, and accompanied her when she left Haran for Isaac in the Land (Gen. 24:59).

**"And she was buried beneath Beth-el"** — She was buried not beneath the village, but a little south of Bethel.

**"Under an oak"** — The Hebrew *'elown*, (cp. v. 4) "oak," signifies *strength*. The oak under which Deborah was buried is compared in this chapter with the oak under which were hidden the pagan gods found among the company of Jacob (v.4). At Shechem, the *Burden-bearer*, sins were hidden; here, in proximity to the *House of El*, the faithful sleep in anticipation of the resurrection (1 Thess. 4:14).

What a remarkable type. At their induction into Christ, the *Burden-bearer*, the sins of believers are covered away; in him at the close of a faithful life of service to others, saints sleep awaiting the resurrection.

**"And the name of it was called Allon-bachuth"** — The name signifies *The oak of weeping*, indicative of the sorrow and mourning at the death of a faithful and useful member of the community.

#### Isaac Blessed By God — Vv. 9-15

*Again the angel of God appears unto Jacob, this time to confirm the promise made to him previously at Bethel.*

#### VERSE 9

**"And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram, and blessed him"** — The word "appear-ed" is *ra'ah*; and signifies *to see* both literally or figuratively; either personally or by vision.

#### VERSE 10

**"And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob; Thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel"** — This is a confirmation of that promised by the angel in Ch. 32:28 (see notes). It implies that God endorsed his action since leaving Shechem.

#### VERSE 11

**"And God said unto him, I am God Almighty"** — The name is *El Shaddai*. It is the name by which Yahweh made Himself known to Abram when He changed his name to Abraham. See notes, Gen. 17:1. This name reveals that He can be both Nourisher and Destroyer.

**"Be fruitful and multiply"** — As children are "an heritage of Yahweh, and the fruit of the womb is His reward" (Psa. 127), the promise of a numerous progeny comprised a divine blessing of great importance. Jacob, previously, had been promised a numerous seed (Gen. 28:3), and his large family was a token fulfilment of it. It is now repeated as if to show that his present family was not the end of the matter, and to the promise is added a clause that revealed that his family would develop into a nation.

**"A nation and a company of nations shall be of thee"** — A similar blessing was promised Abraham (Gen. 17:5,6,16), and later, Joseph (Gen. 49:22). It proclaimed that Israel would develop into a nation of tribes, as in fact it did. In accordance with the promise, Ephraim too, became a "company of nations" or of tribes, for after the division of the nation, it became the title of the northern kingdom (Ezek. 37:16; Jer. 31:9,18,20; Hos. 4:17; 5:3; Zech. 9:13; 10:7). Commenting upon the experiences of Jacob at this time *Elpis Israel* (p. 274) states: "When he arrived at Bethel, he built the altar as God had told him. And God said to him there, 'I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins: and the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee will I give it, and to thy Seed after thee will I give the land'" (Gen.

35:12). In this renewal of the promise the additional idea was revealed to Jacob, that the nation constituted of his descendants, would contain a plurality of nations — that is, be a *national association of tribes*. He was to inherit the land with them, and with the Seed, or Christ, this blessing at Bethel reminded him that he would rise from the dead with Abraham, and inherit the land for ever with his Seed.

**“And kings shall come out of thy loins”** — This happened through the line of David, and will do so in the future through those to whom have been given the “sure mercies of David” (Isa. 55:3). They will “live and reign with Christ a thousand years” (Rev. 20:4), constituting the true “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16).

#### VERSE 12

**“And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac”** — See Gen. 13:14-15 for a description of the land. Abraham and Isaac received this only in promise (Heb. 11:13, 39-40), and are yet to inherit it.

**“To thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land”** — Jacob did not receive it in his lifetime, for shortly after, he went down into Egypt and there died. The promise therefore, takes in the future, and as the comment from *Elpis Israel* above states, the promise comprised a guarantee that Jacob would be raised to inherit it with the Seed, even the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### VERSE 13

**“And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him”** — The angel’s mission having been completed, he left Jacob in Bethel.

#### VERSE 14

**“And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him”** — Evidently the pillar that Jacob had set up previously had fallen down, or had been removed. See Gen. 28:18, and notes there regarding the significance of the pillar.

**“Even a pillar of stone”** — Unhewn stone, representing human nature shaped by a Divine hand, was used for the building of an altar as well as a pillar (Exod. 20:25).

**“And he poured a drink offering thereon”** — Under the Law, a drink offering comprised about one third of a gallon of wine. Wine is representative of a new life, brought about by treading underfoot ripened grapes, and allowing the juice to ferment. When wine is poured out in a drink offering, it represents a new life given in total dedication unto Yahweh. Since the pillar represented Christ, the drink offering symbolised his life as a sacrifice.

**“And he poured oil thereon”** — See note on Gen. 28:18.

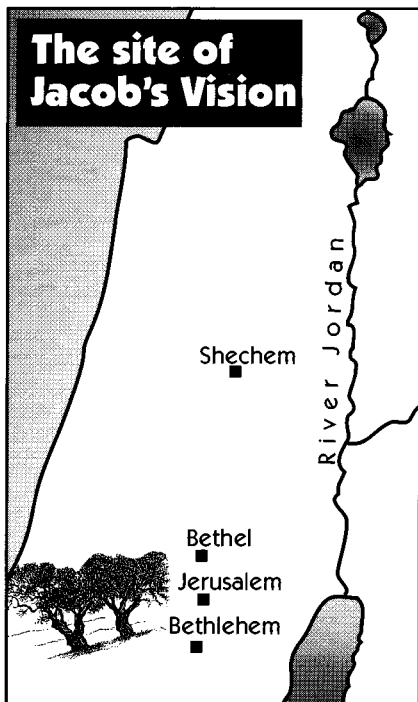
#### VERSE 15

**“And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Bethel”** — As we have previously noted, the name signifies *House of El* (or *Strength*). The name is representative of the Ecclesia.

#### Birth of Benjamin: Death of Rachel

— Vv. 16-20

*Jacob journeys from Bethel towards*



*Bethlehem. Here further tragedy strikes at him. Rachel, his fondly cherished wife, the light of his eyes, dies in giving birth to Benjamin. Smitten with grief, Jacob consigns the body of his best-loved wife to the earth, and sets up a pillar as a memorial to her. The pathetic incident also foreshadows the sufferings associated with the Lord Jesus Christ.*

**VERSE 16**

**“And they journeyed from Beth-el”** — They moved south, through the hilly territory of what subsequently became known as Judah, past the city of Salem where Melchizedek had presided over the festival enjoyed by Abram after the slaughter of the kings, and onwards towards Bethlehem.

**“And there was but a little way to come to Ephrath”** — Ephrath signifies *fruitful*. It was adjacent to Bethlehem, and about fifteen miles (24kms) from Bethel. It was appropriate that Rachel should be travailing in birth as the cavalcade moved towards Ephrath, the *place of fruitfulness*. It is also significant that Benjamin should be the only son to be born in the land, and that he should have been born close to where, later, the Lord was brought to the birth (Mic. 5:2), for in this narrative Benjamin becomes a type of Christ.

**“And Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour”** — In this, Rachel typed the nation at the birth of its king, the Lord Jesus Christ. As she was in pain to bring forth, so was the nation at the first advent of the Lord. It was oppressed by Rome, and anxious to be delivered therefrom. It looked for the advent of the Messiah to free it from the yoke of bondage. But when he came, the nation saw him as Benoni, a *Son of Sorrow*. At his birth, the slaughter of the innocents of Bethlehem, at the instigation of Herod, underlined the political anguish of the nation at the time (cp. Matt. 2:18): suffering that culminated in political death at the hands of Rome in A.D. 70. But those sufferings were as the birthpangs of a new era of grace brought about by the manifestation of the Lord Jesus as “Son of God with power; according to the spirit of holiness, by the resur-

rection of the dead” (Rom. 1:4).

**VERSE 17**

**“And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also”** — The midwife endeavoured to comfort her with words of assurance; but in vain.

**VERSE 18**

**“And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing”** — This verse is eagerly seized upon by believers in the immortality of the soul to teach that the soul as such leaves the body at death. But the word “soul” is *nephesh*, and is rendered *life* over one hundred times in the A.V., e.g. Gen. 9:4, 32:30; Lev. 17:11; Deut. 12:23). Rachel’s *life* was departing, or ebbing away.

**“*(For she died)*”**—This is a pathetic comment on Rachel in childbirth. She had pleaded for children on the grounds that if she did not have any she would be as good as dead (Gen. 30:1), and now, in giving birth to her second child, she died. Rachel is used as a type of the nation (Jer. 31:15-16). On this occasion, she enacted the agony of the nation when it was brought to political extinction at the first advent of the Lord Jesus (cp. Matt. 2:18). The Lord likened the increasing trouble brought upon Judah, as “the beginning of sorrows” (Matt. 24:7-9), an expression used of a woman in travail.

**“That she called his name Ben-oni”** — The name signifies *Son of my sorrow*. As such, he typed the Lord Jesus as a man of *sorrows and acquainted with grief*, such as Isaiah 53 portrays him.

**“But his father called him Benjamin”** — He was no *Son of Sorrow* to Jacob, but rather, the *Son of the Right Hand*, as the name Benjamin means. Though the Lord Jesus was “a man of sorrow” to the nation, he was not so to the Father. Yahweh elevated him to the *Son of the Right Hand* in heaven (Psa. 110:5). The tragic incident at Ephrath, therefore, typed the greater tragedy of the nation at the birth of the Lord Jesus. It also foreshadowed his changed status when he was

brought from the dead and ascended to heaven. In his death, resurrection and elevation, the Lord Jesus passed through the process of *Son of Sorrow* to *Son of the Right Hand* (cp. Psa. 118:15-16; Matt. 22:44; Acts 2:33-34; 7:55, Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3,13; 8:1; 10:12; 1 Pet. 3:22).

### VERSE 19

**"And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem"** — Bethlehem signifies *The House Of Bread*. It became the birthplace of Jesus, the antitypical Benjamin, or *Son of the Right Hand*. After the allotment of the country to the tribes in the days of Joshua, the territory of the Benjamites was extended by a long strip far into the south to include the sepulchre of their beloved ancestress (1 Sam. 10:2).

### VERSE 20

**"And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day"** — From this we learn that the pillar was standing hundreds of years after Jacob erected it over the grave of his beloved wife. In 1 Sam. 10:2 it is referred to as "Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin" so that it was still standing in the days of Saul and David. As we have seen previously (see comment on Gen. 28:18), such a pillar was a memorial of the covenant that God had just made with Jacob, and which had included the members of his family, developed into a nation. Now Rachel was a symbol of the nation (Jer. 31:15), and the pillar was a monument of memorial that both she and the nation will live again. She died as a pilgrim, never seeing the realisation of her hope; but she is to live again, to witness the glory of her son, and the antitypical Joseph (cp. Gen. 37:10). The words of Jeremiah 31:16-17 can apply to Rachel both personally as well as typically: "Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith Yahweh; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is *hope in thine end* (the words are directed to Rachel — see v.15), saith

Yahweh; that thy children shall come again to their own border."

The details of Rachel's death are carefully recorded, not merely because of the great and lasting love that Jacob had for her, but because of the typical foreshadowing that is revealed by these details.

### Wickedness of Reuben: Summary of Jacob's Family — Vv. 21-26

*Jacob moves south towards the "tower of Edar." Here Reuben commits a crime of the most terrible character. This firstborn son of Jacob, his natural successor in the headship of the tribe, becomes guilty of the heinous sin of incest. Jacob's grief and anger are great, though at this point in the narrative a veil is thrown over the circumstances. Later, however, it is recorded that it cost Reuben his birthright (Gen. 49:4). In this account, Reuben is a type of Israel after the flesh, which lost the birthright to the true Israel of God (Gal. 6:16).*

### VERSE 21

**"And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar"** — The exact site of Migdal Edar, the *Watch-tower of the Flock* is unknown, but, obviously, it was adjacent to Bethlehem. Much later when the Lord Jesus was born at the same place, there were "in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, *keeping watch over their flock by night*" (Luke 2:8). The shepherds were disturbed in their vigil by the appearance of an angel proclaiming the birth of the Lord, and again, at the presence of a company of angels, singing of its significance. This incident gives point to the statement of Micah 4:8, predicting the royal destiny of Jerusalem, as the result of the appearance of Israel's future king: "And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem." Here, *tower of the flock* is *Migdal Edar* as in the verse before us. It is quite significant, therefore, that after the birth of Benjamin, Jacob should encamp with his shepherds, at the very spot where some hundreds of years later,



encamped shepherds would listen to the song of the angels proclaiming the birth of the antitypical Benjamin.

#### VERSE 22

**“And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land”** — In the portion of land mentioned in the previous verse.

**“That Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father’s concubine”** — Reuben was Jacob’s firstborn son of Leah. His name means *See, A Son!* and as such he is representative of Israel after the flesh. Bilhah was Rachel’s maid. Reuben’s frightful crime is only matched by that of Israel after the flesh in entering into illicit association with Rome, to crucify the Lord Jesus. By his crime, Reuben lost his position of firstborn, the rights of which were bestowed upon younger sons. In line with the type, Israel after the flesh also lost the privileged status of firstborn when it was abandoned of God in A.D. 70. It was given to the Israel of God (Luke 12:32).

**“And Israel heard it”** — In the Hebrew there is no further comment, merely a break in the verse, leaving it to the imagination to consider the enormity of such an action. The shame, sorrow, indignation and horror of Israel at the shocking incident could not be expressed in words, and was better left unstated. Because of his action at this time, Reuben was deposed from his privileged status of firstborn (see notes Gen. 49:4).

**“Now the sons of Jacob were twelve”** — The names of the twelve sons of Jacob form a sentence, conveying an important message. Throughout the Scriptures they are set forth in various orders, changing the message of the names as this is done. For example, the order of names is different in the passage before us to that given in Genesis 49. Here they are enumerated under the heading of the various mothers.

#### VERSE 23

**“The sons of Leah; Reuben, Jacob’s firstborn, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun”** — The names of Leah’s sons provide the following message: *See a son* (Reuben), *hear*

*him* (Simeon), *join him* (Levi), *praise him* (Judah), *he will reward* (Issachar), *with a dwelling* (Zebulun).

#### VERSE 24

**“The sons of Rachel; Joseph, and Benjamin”** — The message of salvation continues with the meaning of Rachel’s sons: *There will be increase* (Joseph) *to the Son of the right hand* (Benjamin).

#### VERSE 25

**“And the sons of Bilhah, Rachel’s handmaid; Dan, and Naphtali”** — Continue the message: *At the judgment* (Dan), *after wrestling* (Naphtali).

#### VERSE 26

**“And the sons of Zilpah, Leah’s handmaid; Gad, and Asher”** — *For the company* (Gad) *of the blessed* (Asher). The exact significance of each of the names is set forth in our comments on the chapters dealing with their births (Chps. 29,30). Here we have paraphrased them into a sentence.

**“These are the sons of Jacob, which were born to him in Padan-aram”** — Actually Benjamin (v. 24) was born in the land of Canaan, but reference is made to Padan-aram to indicate that Jacob’s wanderings were not yet over. Moreover, though Benjamin was born in the Land, his mother was from Padan-aram and therefore her son is accounted as having come from there.

#### Death Of Isaac — Vv. 27-29

*Jacob moves on to Hebron where he takes up residence with Isaac. Hebron signifies “fellowship,” and here old wounds are healed. Shortly afterwards Isaac died, and the two brothers, Esau and Jacob, are again united in peace at the burial of their father.*

#### VERSE 27

**“And Jacob came unto Isaac his father”** — Jacob left Laban at the age of 97 years, when Isaac was 151 years of age, and Joseph was 6. Joseph was 17 when his brothers openly manifested their

dislike of him (Gen. 37:2), which means that Jacob would have been 108 years of age at that time, and Isaac 168 which was twelve years before his death (see v. 28).

**“Unto Mamre”** — Mamre signifies *strength or power*. See notes at Gen. 13:18.

**“Unto the city of Arbah”** — Arbah signifies *four*. So Jacob came in strength to *the city of the four*. In Rev. 21:16, spiritual Jerusalem is described as a city that lieth “foursquare.”

**“Which is Hebron”** — Hebron signifies *union or fellowship*. This minute description of the stopping place of Jacob is not without point. It seems to indicate a development in his spiritual status. Consider the type set forth from this viewpoint: The wandering from Shechem (the *Burden-bearer*) to Bethel (the *House of El*), is accompanied by sin and sorrow (Vv. 4,22), leading to the *City of the Four*, with which is associated *strength and fellowship*. During these wanderings, one is born who was first viewed as the *Son of Sorrow* (Isa. 53:3), but whose name was changed into *Son of the Right Hand*.

Later on, the nation of Israel was constituted the Kingdom of God, and was itself divided into four: a division anticipated by the fourfold listing of the sons of Jacob in this chapter.

**“Where Abraham and Isaac sojourned”** — Though pilgrims in the land they sojourned at Hebron, enjoying fellowship with God.

#### VERSE 28

**“And the days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years”** — This important statement helps us to place the events of this section of Genesis in proper chronological sequence. Isaac married Rebekah at the age of 40 (Gen. 25:20), Jacob was born when Isaac was 60 (Gen. 25:26); Jacob left Laban at the age of 97, when Joseph was 6 (Gen. 30:25-31:41); Isaac was then 157; Joseph aroused the antagonism of his brothers when he was 17 (Gen. 37:2) when Isaac was 168; Isaac died at the age of 180, which

would have been the year before Joseph appeared before Pharaoh at the age of 30 (Gen. 41:46). Thus, chronologically, the events of the following chapters should be placed before the death of Isaac. It is stated here, in order to complete this section, headed by Moses as: *The Generations of Isaac* (Gen. 25:19). Thus the next chapter commences a new section: *The Generations of Esau*.

#### VERSE 29

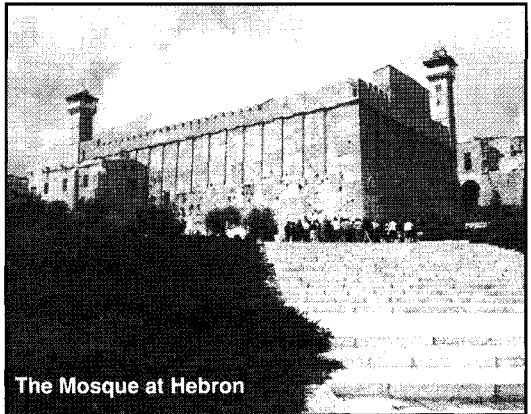
**“And Isaac gave up the ghost”** — The Hebrew *gava'* here rendered *ghost*, signifies *to breathe out, thus to expire*. The same word is rendered *die* in Gen. 6:17; Num. 17:12; Job. 27:5; 29:18; Psa. 88:15; 104:29 etc., *dead* in Num. 20:29, and *perish* in Josh. 22:20; Job 34:15. The expression is translated by Rotherham as “Isaac *breathed his last*”. In Job 3:11; 10:17-18, it is used to describe death.

**“And died”** — He expired and died.

**“And was gathered unto his people”** — This is a Hebrew idiom for burial. It is applied to Abraham whose fathers were idolators. See note Gen. 15:15.

**“Being old and full of days”** — He had lived a long and very full life containing experiences which were God-directed, developing him into a man of faith.

**“And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him”** — The death of their father united them again, and they buried him in the cave of Machpelah (Gen. 49:29-33).



The Mosque at Hebron

## CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

### THE GENERATIONS OF ESAU

#### *The Development of the Man of Sin* (Chapter 36:1-8)

*This chapter commences the tenth subdivision of the book of Genesis, inscribed as "The Generations of Esau, who is Edom". The previous subsection (Gen. 25:19–35:29) is entitled: "The Generations of Isaac" and narrates the development of the seed of promise. Alongside this, there is also the manifestation of the Man of Sin, of which Esau was a type, and which is now described.*

*Whilst Isaac lived a life of pilgrimage, and Jacob was a wanderer in a strange land, Esau established his power, wealth and status as by conquest, he extended his influence and secured his comfort.*

*Throughout the prophets, Esau and Edom type the power of the flesh in political manifestation. There is no future for such; it ultimately must give way to Christ's rule. Therefore, though for the time, "Esau" typically considered, may grow in might and influence, his power is limited to "Gentile times." True Israelites should not be dazzled by the power and wealth that accrues to men of flesh in the meantime. The typical parable presented in this section of the Scriptures is an encouragement to all "lovers of Zion".*

#### **Esau's Wives And Family — Vv. 1-5**

*Esau's family rapidly increases. However, his descendants drift further and further from the ways of God; recalling that his (Esau's) marriages were "a grief of mind unto Isaac and Rebekah" (Gen. 26:35).*

#### **VERSE 1**

**"Now these are the generations of Esau"** — Esau is the profane man, the man of flesh (see note Gen. 25:27); and typically foreshadows the political power of the flesh. Mighty in power, splendid in riches, glorious in pageantry and position, such are destined to be supplanted by that which faith anticipates.

**"Who is Edom"** — Edom signifies *Red*, being the colour of sin. It is similar in

meaning to Adam indicating that the flesh is in control. Typically Edom represents the flesh in political manifestation (see Obad. 15-16).

#### **VERSE 2**

**"Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan"** — We have already seen that his marital relationships were "a grief of mind" to his Godly parents. That did not concern Esau unduly; he was governed by fleshly considerations.

**"Adah"** — The name signifies *Ornament, Beauty*. She is also called *Basemath* (Gen. 36:34), for it was a frequent custom for girls to change their names at marriage.

**"The daughter of Elon the Hittite"** — See note Gen. 26:34.

**“Aholibamah”** — Her name signifies *Tent of the High Place*. Evidently she was a replacement for Judith (Gen. 26:34), who had either died or remained childless.

**“The daughter of Anah”** — His name signifies *Answering*.

**“The daughter of Zibeon”** — The Septuagint and Samaritan texts have *son* instead of “daughter.” This conforms with v. 24 which describes Zibeon as the father of Anah. Zibeon signifies *multicolored*.

**“The Hivite”** — In v. 20 he is described as a Horite. Evidently, “Hivite” designates the nation, or tribe, of which he was a member, whilst Horite describes the district where he lived.

### VERSE 3

**“And Bashemath Ishmael’s daughter”** — Her name signifies *Fragrance*. In Gen. 28:9 she is called Mahalath, but it was quite common for people to have more than one name.

**“Sister of Nebajoth”** — See note Gen. 25:13. His name signifies *Husbandry* or *High Places*.

### VERSE 4

**“And Adah bare to Esau Eliphaz”** — Eliphaz signifies *The Strength of El*. This was the name of one of Job’s friends who is frequently identified with this firstborn son of Esau. That being so he retained the influence of Isaac (Job 2:11).

**“And Bashemath bare Reuel”** — Reuel signifies *The Friend of God; (El)*. This was also the name of Moses’ father-in-law (Exod. 2:18).

### VERSE 5

**“And Aholibamah bare Jeush”** — Dr. Strong gives the meaning of his name as *Hasty*, others give it as *Collector*.

**“And Jaalam”** — His name is given as meaning *Occult*.

**“And Korah”** — His name signifies *Baldness*.

**“These are the sons of Esau, which were born in the land of Canaan”** — The names given to Esau’s sons at first honour God, though there is deterioration in the last two. This suggests that Esau was religiously inclined, but *gradually* the

flesh asserted itself.

### Esau Conquers Mount Seir

#### —Vv. 6-8

*The return of Jacob to the land established him as acknowledged head of the tribe, for the Divine blessing together with the status of firstborn, had been granted to him. At their previous meeting Esau had been compelled to acknowledge this (see Gen 33:9-11), and now, with Jacob at Hebron having large flocks and herds to pasture, it was obligatory upon Esau to leave him in possession of the territory that had been granted Jacob in promise. It is typical of what will be required of typical Esau in the future.*

### VERSE 6

**“And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the persons of his house”** — “Persons” is *nepheshoth* elsewhere rendered *souls*, and so translated in the R.V. Certainly, these were not immortal souls!

**“And his cattle and all his beasts, and all his substance, which he had got in the land of Canaan; and went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob”** — Evidently this took place on the return of Jacob, and is in accordance with the terms of their earlier reconciliation. On that occasion (see Gen. 33:9-11 and our notes thereupon), Jacob insisted upon Esau recognising his right to the blessing, and hence to the inheritance of the Land of Promise. Esau now carried out the terms of the agreement by withdrawing from the area. He went east, as Ishmael had done before him, from the presence of Isaac (Gen. 25:6), and in doing so partly fulfilled the prophetic “blessing” recorded in Gen. 27:38-40. His action anticipated the withdrawal of Gentiles from the Land of Promise in the Age to come.

### VERSE 7

**“For their riches were more than that they might dwell together”** — Thus there was a repetition of the incident between Abraham and Lot (Gen. 13:6).

**“And the land wherein they were strangers could not bear them because**

**of their cattle**” — This suggests that as nomads they were pasturing in the same district. Evidently both brothers lived adjacent to Hebron, where also Isaac was living at the time.

#### VERSE 8

**“Thus dwelt Esau in mount Seir”**—

When Jacob met Esau on his way to the land of Canaan, he sent messengers to his brother Esau in Seir (see note Gen. 32:3).

The verse before us, however, suggests that though Esau had conquered “the land of Seir,” he had not then completely withdrawn from Canaan. The large flocks and herds of his brother, together with his numerous family, now induced him to do so, and so fulfil his agreement.

**“Esau is Edom”** — Edom signifies *red*. Prophetically and typically the nation represents the flesh in political manifestation (Obadiah).

## THE GENERATIONS OF ESAU THE FATHER OF THE EDMITES IN MOUNT SEIR THE EXTENSION OF THE MAN OF SIN

(Chapter 36:9–Chapter 37:1)

*This section comprises the eleventh subdivision of the book of Genesis. The things enumerated provide a development of the previous section, and narrate the political power, stability and glory of the sons of Esau. They are shown to be well organised, united and strong at a time when Jacob remained “dwelling in tents” (Heb. 11:9), and his children wandered disorganised, in weakness, and sometimes antagonistic. The Edomites grew in numbers (vv. 9-11), assumed high sounding titles (vv. 15-19), conquered the territory of neighbouring nations (vv. 20-30), exercised sovereignty (vv. 31-39), and extended their dominion by conquest (vv. 39-43).*

*In the narrative before us, therefore, an amazing contrast is shown between the two sons of Isaac, that has an important lesson to tell when the typical significance of this section of Genesis is appreciated. Israel, as a pilgrim in the land, dwelling in the temporary abode of a tent, is contrasted with the political sophistication and seeming permanent power of Edom. The type is fulfilled during Gentile times, in the state of Israel (both natural and spiritual) dwelling as “strangers and pilgrims” in the land, in comparison with that of the Flesh, in political power and national glory. The seeming permanence of the latter is but an illusion, and it will be “Israel” who will finally triumph, as the history of both nations shows when they are seen as types.*

*A gradual decline is discernible in the posterity of Esau. At*

*first, when he dwelt at Hebron in the presence of his father, Esau seemed moved by religious convictions. He names his sons Eliphaz (Strength of El), and Reuel (Friend of El). But a measure of decline is obvious (v. 5), indicated by the naming of successive sons: Jeush (Hasty), Jaalam (Occult), Korah (Baldness). The naming of the sons of Eliphaz (vv. 11-12), suggests an extension of the power of the flesh: Teman (South); Omar (Eloquent); Zepho (Watchtower); Gatam (Their Touch); Kenaz (Hunting), Amalek (Warrior). Alternating success is suggested by the naming of the sons of Reuel (v. 13): Nahath (Declining), Zerah (Rising), Shammah (Wasting), Mizzan (Fear). The emergence of Dukes (v. 29) reveals growing power and settled organisation. The elevation of kings (v. 31) suggests growth of dignity. The increase of territory (vv. 40-43) implies extension by conquest.*

*Thus, whilst Israel remained a stranger and a pilgrim, the political development of "Esau which is Edom" was rapid and extensive. From the viewpoint of the flesh, it would appear that Edom would overshadow and outlast Israel, but the record revealed that faith would triumph at the last (cp. Gen. 25:32; 27:28-29, 39-40). This contrast is not merely implied but clearly stated in the narrative (v. 31). Thus the warlike names and exploits of the kings of Edom, as the martial prowess of the nation developed (vv. 32-38), are contrasted with the final statement that "Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan" (Ch. 37:1).*

*The repetition of names in this chapter could make uninteresting reading for some, and yet, when the contrast between Israel and Edom is compared, a tremendous exhortation emerges. Israel (both of the flesh and spirit) was taught thereby not to be concerned when the flesh gains the ascendancy in Gentile attainments, for faith must triumph at the end.*

#### **Esau's Sons — Vv. 9-14**

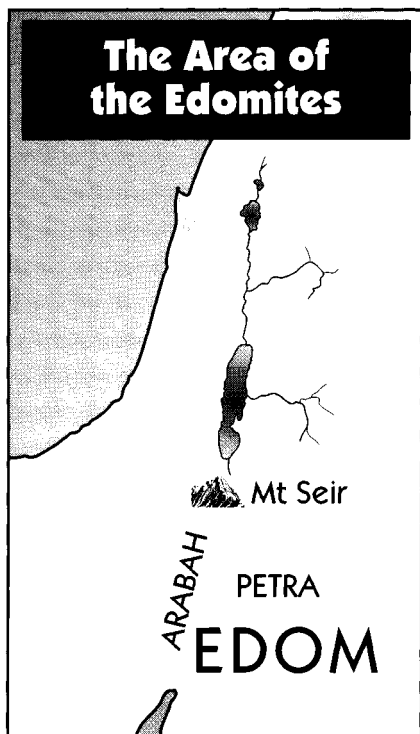
*The names of Esau's posterity illustrate the growing power of his tribe.*

#### **VERSE 9**

**"And these are the generations of Esau"**— For the significance of the term *generations* see note on Gen. 2:4. For the meaning of Esau, and the type represented

by him, see notes on Gen. 25:23-28.

**"The father of the Edomites in Mount Seir"**— As he is their father, they are an extension of the type represented by him. His character is reflected in them. In the Hebrew, the singular number is given: *the father of Edom*. For the significance of Seir see comment on Gen. 32:3. Mount Seir is the range of mountains running



southward from the Dead Sea, east of the valley of Arabah, to the Elanitic Gulf. Petra is a wellknown land-mark of the area, and became a strongpoint of Edomite power.

#### VERSE 10

**“These are the names of Esau’s sons; Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, Reuel the son of Bashemath the wife of Esau”** — Eliphaz (*Strength of El*) and Reuel (*Friend of El*), the names of Esau’s eldest sons reflect the influence of his father, and are names honoring God. Eliphaz is identified by many with the Eliphaz of Job 2:11 who came from an area dominated by Edomites.

#### VERSE 11

**“And the sons of Eliphaz”**—The names of these sons reflect a spiritual decline, though an increase in power and prestige.

**“Were Teman”** — His name signifies *South*, or *Right* (as a point of direction). As a district, Teman became famous for wisdom (Jer. 49:7). It is described in Job as the home of Eliphaz (Job 2:11). In the future, it will witness the manifestation of the Lord in glory (Isa. 21:14; Hab. 3:3).

**“Omar”** — His name signifies *Talkative*, or *Eloquent*.

**“Zepho”** — Signifies *Watchtower*. His name is given as Zephi in I Chron. 1:36.

**“And Gatam”** — According to Gesenius Gatam signifies *Their touch*, others give it as *Dried up*.

**“And Kenaz”**— Signifies *Hunting*.

#### VERSE 12

**“And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz Esau’s son”**— Her name signifies *Restraint*.

**“And she bare to Eliphaz Amalek”** — Gesenius gives the meaning of Amalek as *Labouring*; others give it as *Warrior*. The Amalekites as a nation existed before the birth of this Amalek (Gen. 14:7), though he evidently manifested their warlike and hostile character.

#### VERSE 13

**“And these are the sons of Reuel”** — Cp. verse 4.

**“Nahath”** — Signifies *Going down*, *Declining*, (Ges).

**“And Zerah”** — Signifies *Rising*.

**“Shammah”** — Signifies *Wasting*.

**“And Mizzah: these were the sons of Bashemath Esau’s wife”** — Sig. *Trepidation*.

#### VERSE 14

**“And these are the sons of Aholibamah, the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon, Esau’s wife; and she bare to Esau, Jeush, and Jaalam and Korah”** — These details have already been given in verse 5. They are repeated here to incorporate all the sons in the genealogy.

#### The Dukes Of Esau’s Sons — Vv. 15-19

*As Esau’s descendants increased in number, they also increased in status.*

*Whereas the sons of Jacob remained shepherds, the prominent among Esau's sons assumed the title of "Dukes."*

#### VERSE 15

**"These were dukes of the sons of Esau"**—The word "dukes" is *Alluphim* in Hebrew, and is derived from *alph* (Strong), signifying to *associate with*, hence to *range under as chief*. Others see it as the plural of *Aleph* the first letter of the alphabet, and therefore as a title of the first or chief of a company. Young gives it as *a leader, head of a thousand*. The word *aleph* can signify *chief, head, thousand or family*. The word is rendered *governor* in Zech. 9:7; 12:5. Whatever rendering is used, the idea of power and authority is suggested.

**"The sons of Eliphaz the firstborn son of Esau; duke Teman, duke Omar, duke Zepho, duke Kenaz"**—The sons of Eliphaz (v. 11), now assume authority over others.

#### VERSE 16

**"Duke Korah, duke Gatam, and duke Amalek: these are the dukes that came of Eliphaz in the land of Edom"**—The dukes listed in vv. 15-16 are all listed earlier as sons of Eliphaz. The exception is "duke Korah," who though

given here as a "son of Eliphaz the firstborn," is listed in v. 5 as a son of Esau by Aholibamah. Some, including Kennicott, claim that this is a copyist's error. However, Korah could have been the name of both a brother and a grandson of prominence of Eliphaz, and as such, listed among the dukes. These verses (Vv. 15-17) list grandsons of Esau who rose to prominence, whereas v. 18 lists the sons of Esau. In view of the suggestion above, there is no need to look for a copyist's error.

**"These were the sons of Adah"**—The Hebrew *benim* does service for grandsons as well as sons, providing room for Korah among the "sons of Adah."

#### VERSE 17

**"And these are the sons of Reuel Esau's son; duke Nahath, duke Zerah, duke Shammah, duke Mizzah: these are the dukes that came of Reuel in the land of Edom; these are the sons of Basemath Esau's wife"**—This verse shows that those listed in v. 13 developed into dukes.

#### VERSE 18

**"And these are the sons of Aholibamah Esau's wife; duke Jeush, duke Jaalam, duke Korah; these were the dukes that came of Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, Esau's wife"**—See v. 14.

#### VERSE 19

**"These are the sons of Esau, who is Edom, and these are their dukes"**—This verse describes a development of power and influence: Esau becomes a nation (Edom), and his sons become dukes.

#### The Sons And Dukes Of Seir The Horite —Vv. 20-30

*Esau infiltrated into Seir, first by marriage, then by war. Aholibamah, his wife was a descendant of Seir (Vv. 2,24). Subsequently he occupied the land by conquest (v 6; Gen. 33:14; Deut. 2:12), and incorporated the Horites into the powerful nation with Dukes of their own, indicative*

*The "Treasury" at Petra; site of the ancient city inhabited by the Horites (cave dwellers), in the area of Edom. It later became the capital of the Edomite Empire.*





of their organisation. That Esau should conquer such a nation illustrated his growing power and warlike ability.

**VERSE 20**

**"These are the sons of Seir"**—Seir signifies *Rugged, Rough*. He occupied the territory east of the Arabah, with headquarters at Mt. Seir, or Petra. He was the grandfather of Hori, the ancestor of the Horites (1 Chron. 1:38). The term *sons* often does duty for *descendants* (cp. Josh. 7:1,18).

**"The Horite, who inhabited the land"**—The term Horite, from *chor, a cave*, signifies a race of troglodytes. The Horites were the original occupants of the land (Gen. 14:6), and dwelt in caves. The mountains of Edom abound with sandstone and limestone caves. The rock-hewn city of Petra, which later became the capital of Edom, was one of the great strongholds in ancient times. The temples and houses cut in the sides of the mountains surrounding Petra still exist, and though they do not date back to the times of Esau, they do show that the traditional method of cutting buildings out of the rock with great patience and skill was retained. Petra is described elsewhere as "the strong city" (Psa. 60:8-12), and is there used as a type of Babylon the Great (Rev. 16:19).

**"Lotan"** — Signifies *Wrapping up* (Ges.).

**"And Shobal"** — Signifies *Flowing*.

**"And Zibeon, and Anah"** — See Note v. 2. This Anah was uncle to the Anah of v. 25.

**VERSE 21**

**"And Dishon"** — Signifies *Gazelle*.

**"And Ezer"** — Signifies *Treasure*.

**"And Dishan: these are the dukes of the Horites, the children of Seir in the land of Edom"** — Sig. *Gazelle*.

**VERSE 22**

**"And the children of Lotan"**—In Hebrew, the same word is used for "children" as for "sons" in v. 20. Perhaps the A.V. rendered it as children because of the reference to a daughter in this verse.

**"Were Hori"** — Signifies *Cavern*. This is the name of the tribe.

**"And Hemam"** — Signifies *Destruction*.

**"And Lotan's sister was Timna"** — Timna whose name signifies *Restraint*, became the concubine of Eliphaz, Esau's firstborn son (v. 12). So there was intermarriage between the Edomites and the Horites, prior to the former dominating the latter by conquest.

**VERSE 23**

**"And the children of Shobal were these; Alvan"** — Signifies *Unjust*.

**"And Manahath"** — Signifies *Rest*.

**"And Ebal"** — Signifies *Stripped of leaves*.

**"Shepho"** — Signifies *Nakedness*.

**"And Onam"** — Signifies *Strong*.

**VERSE 24**

**"And these are the children of Zibeon"** — Since Esau's wife Aholibamah was the daughter of Anah, the son of Zibeon (cp. v. 2) here is further evidence of the infiltration of the Edomites by marriage. Now we learn that Aholibamah was from a family of high-ranking Hivites or Horites.

**"Both Ajah"**—Signifies *Screamer*.

**"And Anah"**—Signifies *Answering*. He was father-in-law to Esau.

**"This was that Anah that found the mules in the wilderness"**—The Hebrew *eth hayemim* is never translated "mules" except here. The ordinary word for "mules" is *pered*. What, in fact, did Anah find in the wilderness as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father?

The R.V. follows Jerome in translating it as "hot springs," and the verse then implies that having discovered these, he lay claim to them. But *yemim* is never translated "springs" or "waters" elsewhere in the Bible. The word should probably be rendered *Emim*. W. Saulez states: "The word *Emim*, translated 'mules' in the one version, 'hot springs' in the other, is the proper name of a people whom Anah encountered, and the passage should be

rendered, 'This was that Anah who encountered the *Emim* in the wilderness'. Reference to the *Emim* is made in Gen. 14:5. They were a powerful people dwelling just north of the Horites, and, if the rendition above is accepted, Anah, as he tended the grazing of his father's animals, came upon some of them, and defeated them in battle, thus acquiring possession of territory previously dominated by them. Whatever Anah discovered and lay claim to, whether it be hot springs or the *Emim*, he became famous because of it. The verse implies fleshly fame and power on the part of Anah whose daughter married the ambitious and power-seeking Esau.

**"As he fed the asses of Zibeon his father"**—This, apparently inconsequential statement, is not so trivial as may be imagined. The possession of asses conferred status on rulers in ancient times, and became a symbol of rank (Jud. 5:10; 10:4; 12:14; 2 Sam. 16:1-4; 1 Kings 1:33,38). Thus, when the Lord rode towards Jerusalem upon the colt of an ass, the people recognised the status implied, and applauded him accordingly (Matt. 21:8-9). This verse therefore implies that Anah, whose daughter married Esau, came of a family of rulers, and in addition established his own personal claim to fame. The marriage of Esau into a family of such repute is a contrast to that of his brother Jacob — who married for love.

#### VERSE 25

**"And the children of Anah were these; Dishon"** — Signifies *Gazelle* — noted for its beauty and fleetness of foot.

**"And Aholibamah the daughter of Anah"** — cp. v. 2.

#### VERSE 26

**"And these are the children of Dishon; Hemdan"** — Signifies *Pleasant*. His name is given as Amram in 1 Chron. 1:41.

**"And Eshban"** — Signifies *Reason, Understanding*. The same as Heshbon.

**"And Ithran"** — The same as Jethro, signifying *The Superior or Excellent One*.

**"And Cheran"** — Signifies *Harp*.

#### VERSE 27

**"The children of Ezer are these: Bilhan"** — Sig. *Modest*.

**"And Zaavan"** — Signifies *Disturbed*

**"And Akan"** — Signifies *Twisting*.

#### VERSE 28

**"The children of Dishan are these: Uz"** — Signifies *Sandy*. Job is described as a man of the land of Uz. (Job 1:1).

**"And Aran"** — Signifies *Wild goat*.

#### VERSE 29

**"These are the dukes that came of the Horites; duke Lotan, duke Shobal, duke Zibeon, duke Anah"** — The use of the title shows that the Horites were a nation of power and organisation. Seven dukes are listed, implying the completeness of the political development of the tribes.

#### The Kings And Dukes Of Edom — Vv. 31-43

*Now follows a list of kings, implying further development of power and organisation. From a single individual Esau grew to a family, a tribe, a dukedom, and finally a kingdom illustrating the growing might and organisation of Esau the profane man of flesh, in comparison with that of Israel. We see the Gentile antitype today. Whereas "Jacob" (whether of the flesh or spirit) is largely disorganised and in weakness, Gentile might is impressive and powerful. But this is just for a moment. As Israel ultimately came to the ascendancy, and Edom fell into decline, so it shall be when the Kingdom of God supplants Gentile power. That is the lesson of this section of Genesis. How important and significant are these apparently "dry" and uninteresting records of the Bible, when viewed in their typical import! History, archaeology and prophecy all testify to the power of Edom, in comparison to that of Israel. But today Edom is only a shadow across the pages of ancient history, whilst Israel remains and is growing in influence. It will do so even more completely under Messiah.*

#### VERSE 31

**"And these are the kings that**

**reigned in the land of Edom**” — Edom, *red*, always stands for the flesh in political manifestation. Though powerful at the present there is no future in it, as Obadiah predicts (Obad. 15-16). The Gogian confederacy (Ezek. 38) will comprise the latter-day manifestation of this power to be overthrown by the King of Israel.

**“Before there reigned any king over the children of Israel”** — It is sometimes urged that Moses could not have written these words, because they presuppose a king in Israel, and the first king was Saul. But kings had been promised to Israel (Gen. 35:11), as dominion had been predicted for Edom (Gen. 27:40), and the fulfilment of the latter prophecy provided a guarantee that the other would be fulfilled. Meanwhile, the dukes and kings in Edom evidently existed contemporaneously (Exod. 15:15; Num. 20:14). The names of the kings listed imply the strength and ruthlessness of Edom’s power.

#### VERSE 32

**“And Bela”** — Signifies *To make away, to devour at a gulp*.

**“The Son of Beor”** — Signifies *Burning like a lamp*.

**“Reigned in Edom”** — This indicates that the political organisation of the nation was greatly established whilst the children of Israel still wandered disorganised as pilgrims in the land.

**“And the name of his city”** — Like Cain before him, in “whose way he walked” (Jude 11), he built a city to establish his influence and name (Gen. 4:17).

**“Was Dinhabah”** — Signifies *A place of plunder*. It is suggestive of Babylon the Great (Cp. Rev. 18:10-17).

#### VERSE 33

**“And Belah died”** — Again a repetition of the theme-song of the destiny of flesh. See note Gen. 5. All the strivings and ambitions of man are brought to nought in death — except those based on faith.

**“And Jobab the son of Zerah”** — Zobab signifies *Shouter*. Zerah was a duke, introduced in v. 17.

**“Of Bozrah reigned in his stead”** — Bozrah signifies *Fortress*. It became a

symbol of strength and is referred to in relation to the future in Isa. 63. The Lord Jesus Christ, as king over Israel, will destroy the fortress of Edom, even Babylon the Great.

Bozrah was situated in Arabia Deserta, east of the Arabah. It was later occupied by Moab; was given by Moses to Reuben, but ultimately reverted to Edom.

#### VERSE 34

**“And Jobab died, and Husham of the land of Temani reigned in his stead”** — Husham signifies *Haste*, or *Speed*. Teman was a son of Eliphaz, firstborn of Esau, who evidently gave his name to a portion of territory occupied by him.

#### VERSE 35

**“And Husham died, and Hadad the son of Bedad”** — Hadad signifies *Shouting for joy*, i.e. as a conqueror. Bedad signifies *Separation*.

**“Who smote Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his stead”** — Midian was a son of Abraham by Keturah who was sent away to the east by Abraham (Gen. 25:6). His name means *Strife*, and the Midianites appear as warlike nomads. They had evidently conquered Moab, but, in turn, were conquered by Edom, indicative of the warlike ability of the latter.

**“And the name of his city was Avith”** — Avith means *Ruin* from a root, *avah* signifying to *do evil*. Compare note v.32.

#### VERSE 36

**“And Hadad died, and Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his stead”** — Samlah signifies *Covering*, and Masrekah signifies *Vineyard*.

#### VERSE 37

**“And Samlah died, and Saul of Rehoboth by the river reigned in his stead”** — Saul signifies *Asked* or *Appointed*. Rehoboth signifies *Wide spaces*, implying a large city. It is the name of a city founded by Asshur (Gen. 10:11), which was adjacent to the river Euphrates, and thus answers to the description of this verse. This would imply

that the Edomites, at one stage of their development, ruled in Assyria, though the name Rehoboth has been given to other places (cp. Gen. 26:22). The verses before us certainly describe the power of the Edomites. A further point of significance is that the nation was ruled from various centres. How like Gentile power! Over the centuries the flesh (Edom) has reigned from various centres, such as Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, France, Britain, Russia and so forth. Each from his own centre.

**VERSE 38**

**“And Saul died, and Baal-hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his stead”** — These names signify, *The Lord of Benignity*, son of *The mouse!*

**VERSE 39**

**“And Baal-hanan the son of Achbor died, Hadar reigned in his stead; and the name of his city was Pau; and his wife’s name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab”** — The name of this king is also given as Hadad, which was the name of a god Hadadezer, “*Adad, Hadal* was an ancient Mesopotamian Diety, god of the storm thunder, identified with Aramean, weather god *Rimmon*” (Unger, p. 437) (2 Sam. 8:3). Hadad signifies *glory, pride*. The death of this king is not recorded, suggesting that he was living when Moses wrote Genesis. By contrast his death is recorded in the parallel genealogical line in 1 Chron. 1 (see v. 51).

**VERSE 40**

**“And these are the names of the dukes that came of Esau, according to their families, after their places, by their names”** — The “dukes” whose names follow, evidently lived contemporaneously with, and under Hadad, executing delegated authority over the Edomite empire. Their names are not given, only the districts over which they ruled. Therefore, the title would better be rendered as *Duke of ....*

**“Duke Timnah”** — Timna was concubine to Eliphaz, and gave birth to Amalek (v. 12). It could be that the territo-

ry of Amalek was named after his mother.

**“Duke Alvah”** — Alvah is referred to in v. 23; the location of the territory over which he ruled is unknown.

**“Duke Jetheth”** — Gesenius gives the meaning of his name as *Nail*. His identity and the place over which he exercised authority are both unknown.

**VERSE 41**

**“Duke Aholibamah”** — Aholibamah was one of the wives of Esau (v. 2). Possibly the territory over which her son exercised authority was given her name.

**“Duke Elah”** — According to some this name should be rendered *Elath*, and is identified with modern Elat. Elah signifies *strength*, and if the identification with Elat is accepted, it shows that Edomite territory extended to the Gulf of Aqaba.

**“Duke Pinon”** — His name signifies *Dark*, and we are in the dark concerning his identity, or the locality over which he ruled.

**VERSE 42**

**“Duke Kenaz”** — See v. 11. He evidently developed into a tribe, over which he exercised authority.

**“Duke Teman”** — Teman gave his name to territory which thus formed an area of the Edomite empire. The men of Teman were noted for their wisdom, prudence, and counsel (Jer. 49:7).

**“Duke Mibzar”** — His name signifies *Fortress*. Nothing more is known of him than that he established an Edomite tribe.

**VERSE 43**

**“Duke Magdiel”** — His name signifies *Prince of God*. Nothing further is known of him.

**“Duke Iram”** — His name signifies *Citizen*. Nothing more is known of him. Like the flesh he had his moment of triumph and passed into obscurity.

**“These be the dukes of Edom, according to their habitations in the land of their possession”** — The descendants of Esau thus extended their rule over the adjacent territory. These profane men

of the flesh illustrated the words of Psalm 49:11,

*“Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever,*

*And their dwelling places to all generations;*

*They call their lands after their own names. Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not:*

*He is like the beasts that perish.”*

All that remains of these men and the power they wielded, are the brief notices in the Word of God.

**“He is Esau the father of the Edomites”** — Esau the profane man of the flesh, thus extended his authority, built up his political organisation, and established his power. His descendants were also known for their wisdom and sagacity (Obad. 8; Jer. 49:7). The flesh has ever been noted for political power and fleshly wisdom. In fact, Paul taught “the world by wisdom knew not God” (1 Cor. 1:21). In every way Esau and his descendants represent the flesh.

## CHAPTER 37

### VERSE 1

**“And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan”**—This completes the section of Genesis, headed: *The Generations of Esau the Father of the Edomites* (Gen. 36:9). The statement of this verse comprises an epilogue to the section by way of contrast. Though the birthright and the promise were conferred upon Jacob, he remained as a stranger in the land promised to him, whilst Esau his brother, the profane man of the flesh, who types Gentile political power, conquered in warfare, established himself as a citizen in power. This contrast between the two brothers, together with Jacob’s isolation, and his dwelling at Hebron, the place of *Fellowship*, foreshadowed the condition of all sons of God in contrast to their worldly brethren: strangers and pilgrims in the land, surrounded by enemies, awaiting the Kingdom.

## THE GENERATIONS OF JACOB THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISRAEL

### Chapter 37:2–50:26

*This is the twelfth division of the Book of Genesis, and the eleventh of the “Generations” into which it is divided (see Introduction pp. 14-18). It commences with the title: “These are the generations of Jacob,” and proceeds to show how that God overshadowed his life for good, so that out of all the toil and suffering he was called upon to endure, his character was gradually moulded in accordance with the divine will.*

*Our Introduction shows that the Book of Genesis can be divided into two parts: the former (chapters 1-11) recording Primeval History; and the latter (chapters 12-50) recording Patriarchal History. The first section records four main events: the Creation; the Fall; the Flood; the Confusing of Tongues. The latter is mainly concerned with four outstanding individuals: Abraham, representing a Divine call; Isaac representing a*

*Divine birth; Jacob, representing Divine care; Joseph, representing Divine elevation. The experiences of these four men typically set forth the four steps to salvation.*

*The section before us, therefore, deals mainly with Joseph. As Jacob was the man whom God remade; Joseph is the man whom God remembered. The narrative of his trials and triumphs is one of the most popular stories of the Old Testament. It is more than that. It is a parable of Yahweh's plan of redemption. Brother Thomas makes this point in "Elpis Israel," and concludes: "In these little incidents we read, not only Joseph's exaltation, but the treatment Christ would afterwards receive from the sons of Joseph's brethren and his subsequent exaltation to reign over them, when Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and his family shall bow down before him to the earth. Jesus gave an evil report of his brethren, who saw that he was beloved of God; he troubled them with his parables and reproofs; and they envied him and hated him for his words. The fate of Joseph awaited him; for as the eleven conspired against Joseph to kill him, and actually sold him to the Ishmaelites of Midian for twenty pieces of silver, so was the Lord Jesus sold for thirty, and subjected to a violent death by the rulers, thinking thereby to falsify his words, and extinguish his pretensions to lordship over them" (Elpis Israel, p. 275).*

*It is the typical significance of Joseph's life that alone warrants it being presented in such detail in the Book of Genesis, and this fact argues the divine inspiration of the Bible. Joseph's experiences obviously foreshadow those of the Lord Jesus Christ. We can give enthusiastic assent to that because we have the life of the Lord before us for comparison. But Moses did not. Then how was he able to select for record the incidents in the life of Joseph that foreshadow those of the Lord Jesus? Only by Divine inspiration and guidance. In "The Oracles of God," Brother John Carter writes:*

*"It must be noticed that the history has features other than the mere narration of events. Take, for example, the book of Genesis. The plan of the book takes us through a series of selections to the 'generations of Jacob' (37:2), from which point, with the exception of one chapter, the history consists of the story of Joseph. Reuben was the eldest; Judah was the head of*

*the royal tribe. What governed the selection of Joseph as the subject of this last section of the book of Genesis? An answer is to be found in the fact that Joseph alone of Jacob's sons was a type of Christ. It is to him all divine history leads. And it is in the blessing of Joseph that mention is made of the divine paternity of the Messiah (Gen. 49:24).... But this history is thus seen to be written with Messiah in view, a view that involves a knowledge of things in the future as well as things in the past. Humanly written history could not present such features. Only God, Who knows the end from the beginning, could produce such a history. There is clearly an ultimate purpose in the history beyond the mere record of events. That purpose is known only to God and its fulfilment is due to His control. The selection of events to be recorded, and the emphasis given to each event requires divine guidance if such a purpose is to be indicated. The Old Testament history is found to be full of meaning as a record leading forward to Jesus Christ; the narration of some events has no meaning apart from him."*

*The story of Joseph, therefore, is both a literal narration of facts, and a typical foreshadowing of the life of the Messiah. It is very detailed and complete in that regard. Even in death, Joseph foreshadowed the Messiah, for it became incumbent upon the children of Israel to carry with them his coffin containing his lifeless body (Gen. 50:26; Exod. 13:19; Josh. 24:32). Thus they bore the tokens of the death and ultimate resurrection of Joseph. In this they foreshadowed the responsibility of believers to celebrate the death and resurrection of the Lord "till he come."*

*Accordingly Joseph's experiences should be studied (1) as a literal, historical narrative; (2) as an exhortation showing that righteousness will ultimately triumph though meanwhile it may be beset by many trials; (3) as a parabolic foreshadowing of the life of the Messiah. Beloved of his father; hated by his brothers; sold into captivity; ignored by Gentiles until they were forced to hearken to him; elevated as Prime Minister over Egypt; saviour of his brethren who were compelled to bow before him in subjection — all are incidents of deep interest that satisfy justice. But more than that: they admirably foreshadow the past tragedy and future triumph of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

# JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT

## Chapter 37:2-36

*Jacob's deep and abiding love for Rachel was reflected in the favored position of his affections that he gave to her firstborn son. However this, in turn, called forth the jealousy and resentment of his other sons. Their dislike for Joseph was further aggravated by parabolic dreams that he had, and which he related to his brethren and his father. It grew into bitter hatred, and when opportunity afforded, they sold him into slavery. To cover their action, they dipped his cloak in blood, and presented it to his father. Jacob, who once deceived his father by wearing his brother's cloak, now, in turn, was similarly deceived by his sons. Fearing the worst, he mourned Joseph as one dead.*

### Joseph Loved Of His Father — Vv. 2-4

*Eleven years have passed since Jacob left Laban. In Hebron he settles down to a peaceful, rural life, whilst his sons range far and wide over the land, grazing their flocks and herds. As is natural, Jacob reveals a preference for Joseph, the first-born of his beloved Rachel, and this arouses the jealous antagonism of his other sons.*

### VERSE 2

**“These are the generations of Jacob”** — For the significance of this term, see our comments on Gen. 2:4.

**“Joseph, being seventeen years old”** — As Jacob had left Laban when Joseph was about six, this means that he had been about eleven years in the land. See note Gen. 35:28.

**“Was feeding the flock with his brethren”** — The literal Hebrew is *was shepherding*. Therefore, Joseph was a shepherd, typing the “good shepherd” of John 10.

**“And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah”** — Their names were Dan and Napthali.

**“And with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives”** — Gad and Asher. The status of their mothers would make it likely that they would be the least satisfactory

morally of all the brothers.

**“And Joseph brought unto his father their evil report”** — Joseph is often condemned for this, as manifesting a tale-bearing disposition. But such a conclusion does not necessarily follow. He could have reprimanded his brethren regarding their conduct, and finding this to be without avail, have taken the matter up with their father, for their own good. In that regard, he typed the Lord Jesus (cp. John 3:19-20).

### VERSE 3

**“Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children”** — In fulfilment of the type, Yahweh described Jesus as His “beloved son in whom He was well pleased” (Matt. 3:17).

**“Because he was the son of his old age”** — Joseph was not much younger than some of the others, and certainly older than Benjamin, so at first sight this statement appears to be contradictory. But, in fact, the Hebrew has “a son” not “the son.” The phrase shows that Joseph was a greater comfort to his father in his old age, than were the other sons of Jacob. After the death of Rachel, Joseph probably helped his father more, and communed with him on more intimate terms, than did the other children of the patriarch. He



thereby became a mediator between the father and his other sons. Later, when Jacob believed that Joseph was dead, Benjamin was elevated to this position (cp. Gen. 44:20).

**“And he made him a coat of many colours”** — The Hebrew is *ketonet passim*, and there is some dispute as to how it should be translated. The word *ketonet*, is derived from *katha* signifying *to cover*, and it means *coat* or *garment*. It is used of sacrificial garments (Gen. 3:21), priestly coats (Exod. 28:4,39,40; 29:5 etc.), and of the special raiment given to Esau which indicated his original status of privilege (Gen. 27:15). *Passim* rendered “many colours” is from *pacac* signifying *extremity* or *ends*. Strong relates it to the *palm* of the hands or the *sole* of the feet, and sees, as the plural form (as in the verse before us), reference to “a long sleeved tunic” (the margin of the A.V. has *pieces*). The term, therefore, does not of itself indicate “many colours,” but rather a distinctive robe. It is used elsewhere to designate a robe of royalty (2 Sam. 13:18). Reuben’s crime had shown that he was unworthy of the position of firstborn, and was deposed in favour of Joseph (1 Chron. 5:1-2). The distinctive garment that Jacob prepared for his son became the insignia of his office among the other brethren. It was a priestly garment, that completely covered the flesh, and so testified to the character and standing of Joseph in the sight of his father. Jesus, likewise, wore a distinctive gown, which typified his standing in the sight of the Father (cp. John 19:23-34).

#### VERSE 4

**“And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren”** — Similar words could be applied to Jesus. Cp. Matt. 3:17; Col. 1:13.

**“They hated him”** — See John 15:25 for the application to the Lord. Jacob experienced in his divided family a similar reaction as Esau had shown towards him (Gen. 27:41). On his death bed he commented upon this reaction of the brethren towards Joseph (See Gen. 49:23). It must have deeply concerned him.

**“And could not speak peaceably unto him”** — Literally: “they could not speak for *peace* (union, to be at one) unto him”. They could not extend *shalom* to him, for they were not *at one* with him.

#### Joseph’s Dreams — Vv. 5-11

*Joseph is favoured with dreams that obviously foretell the divine purpose with him and his family. He describes them to his brethren and father; but whereas the former indignantly repudiate their obvious significance, Jacob ponders them in his heart; recognising in them some mysterious message of hope and encouragement.*

#### VERSE 5

**“And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren”** — As with the Lord Jesus, he received a revelation from God which he proceeded to preach to those nearest and dearest to him. Cp. John 7:17; 8:28,38; 12:50.

**“And they hated him yet the more”** — This was also the reaction of the Jews towards Jesus (John 8:59).

#### VERSE 6

**“And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed”** — This verse explains the circumstances which incited the hate of the brethren for the Lord.

#### VERSE 7

**“For behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright”** — This clearly implied pre-eminence.

**“And, behold, your sheaves stood round about”** — The R.V. renders “your sheaves *came* round about.” The Hebrew verb is in the imperfect tense, implying that the action continued, thus: “your sheaves were moving around and making obeisance.” It suggests a movement of the brethren towards Joseph, which, ultimately proved to be the case as far as he and they were concerned, and will yet prove to be so, as far as the Lord Jesus and the people of Israel are concerned (Zech. 12:10)

**“And made obeisance to my sheaf”** — Their sheaves not only made their way

to that of Joseph's, but continued to move about it, bowing low as they did so. See Gen. 43:26; 44:14 for the fulfilment of this in regard to Joseph; and Col. 1:18 for an expression of the "pre-eminence" of the Lord over all others both now and in the future.

#### VERSE 8

**"And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us?"** — They instantly discerned the significance of the dream, and indignantly repudiated the idea that they would tolerate him reigning over them. Ultimately, circumstances forced them to do that which they then indignantly rejected. So it will prove as far as the Lord Jesus and the nation of Israel are concerned. He whom the people rejected saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14), and repudiated saying, "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15), will ultimately be acknowledged as their king.

**"Or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?"** — Indicative of the sheaves making obeisance to his sheaf.

**"They hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words"** — For the same reason there was an increasing dislike for Jesus on the part of the Jews. Cp. John 10:32-33.

#### VERSE 9

**"And he dreamed yet another dream"** — The second dream did not vary much from the first. Why then two dreams? When the first dream had been told the brethren, they had responded with a question: "Shalt thou indeed reign over us?" To that question they would have returned a decisive, No! and there the matter would have ended. Therefore the second dream was given to show the certainty of the fulfilment — the doubling of a matter by God indicates absolute fulfilment (Gen. 41:32).

**"And told it his brethren and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more"** — Joseph has been harshly criticised for his alleged arrogance, conceit, or tactlessness in rushing to his half-brothers to tell them of his dreams. But surely they were given to Joseph for that purpose, and if

only the brethren had hearkened to the message, they would have avoided the tragedy of their rejection of Joseph and would have derived hope for the future. It is the responsibility of those who love the Truth to proclaim it to others, whether they hear or whether they forbear. Having received the revelation from God, it was Joseph's bounden duty to carry it to those involved therein.

**"And, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me"** — This revealed that his father, his mother (whom the family had buried at Ephrath) and his brethren would pay him homage, recognising him as ruler!

#### VERSE 10

**"And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him"** — The Hebrew *Ga'ar* signifies *to chide*. Jacob did this to Joseph because he could not understand the meaning of the dream. He recognised that the sun symbolised him, the moon represented Rachel, and the eleven stars his other sons. But Rachel was dead! How could she bow down to Joseph? It teaches that for the prophecy to be fulfilled, Rachel must be resurrected, and the family to be gathered together in the future.

**"And he said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed?"** — Jacob was sobered by the revelation, and pondered the matter deeply.

**"Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?"** — Jacob quickly identified the various parties represented in the dream, but questioned how it would be fulfilled. For Joseph's mother to "come" and bow before him pointed to the day of resurrection in which he believed. But why bow before Joseph? Later, Jacob was given a revelation that enabled him to see that Joseph was a type of the Messiah who should come (cp. Gen. 49:22-26), and who would bring about the completion of this prophecy.

#### VERSE 11

**"And his brethren envied him"** — As, later, the Jews were full of envy for

Christ (Mark 15:10). It is noteworthy that Stephen (Acts 7:9), in speaking of the brethren, particularly mentions their envy, and the sale of Joseph (vv. 27-28). The narrative mentions ten outstanding sins: (1) general evils (v. 2); (2) hatred and malice (vv.4-8); (3) envy and jealousy (v. 11); (4) murderous scheming (vv.18-22); (5) mockery and ridicule (v. 19); (6) stripping Joseph of his priestly garment (v. 23); (7) heartless cruelty (v. 24); (8) lack of pity and mercy (v. 25); (9) consigning Joseph to slavery (vv. 27-28); (10) deceiving and lying to Jacob (vv. 31-35).

**“But his father observed the saying”** — He pondered the saying, and took more careful heed of Joseph in consequence. He recognised that God had a purpose with his greatly beloved son, though, at that stage, he did not properly understand what it was. It is significant, that in relation to Jesus, “his mother kept all these sayings in her heart” (Luke 2:51). Like Jacob before her, she was deeply interested in the sayings of her remarkable son; she could see the hand of God in his development, and desired further enlightenment concerning the divine purpose in him.

#### **Joseph Seeks His Brethren At Shechem — Vv. 12-14**

*The ten brethren leave Hebron to resume their pastoral labours in central Palestine, leaving “the dreamer,” as they call Joseph, with their father. Desiring to learn of their welfare, Jacob sends his favourite and most trusted son to bring him tidings.*

#### **VERSE 12**

**“And his brethren went to feed their father’s flock in Shechem”** — This indicates how widely they roamed throughout the land. Shechem is about 96kms (60 miles) from Hebron.

#### **VERSE 13**

**“And Israel said unto Joseph”** — The use of “Israel” in place of “Jacob,” is indicative of the patriarch’s new standing in the sight of God. The change of name becomes much more frequent from now on.

**“Do not thy brethren feed the flock**

**in Shechem? Come, and I will send thee unto them”** — In the parable of the husbandman, the Lord represented the Father as saying: “I will send My beloved son: it may be that they will reverence him when they see him” (Luke 20:13).

**“And he said to him, Here am I”** — Similar words to those prophetically used of Christ. See Heb. 10:7.

#### **VERSE 14**

**“And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren”** — The literal Hebrew is: “See the peace of thy brethren”. Peter explained this as being the mission of the Lord Jesus to his brethren: “God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ” (Acts 10:36). The Lord himself lamented concerning Jerusalem: “If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!” (Luke 19:42).

**“And well with the flocks; and bring me word again”** — As the Good Shepherd, the Lord sought the welfare of the flocks of Yahweh (John 10:16).

**“So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem”** — Cp. with Mark 12:6. From Hebron to Shechem is a distance of about 96kms (60 miles).

#### **Joseph Finds Them At Dothan**

#### **— Vv. 15-17**

*Failing to find his brethren at Shechem, and learning that they had removed to Dothan, some twenty-seven to thirty two kilometres (seventeen to twenty miles) further north, Joseph at once sets off in pursuit, and finds them there.*

#### **VERSE 15**

**“And a certain man found him”** — The adjective *certain* should be eliminated. The Hebrew has: “a man found him”.

**“And, behold, he was wandering in the field”** — Joseph was seen to be obviously searching for some thing or person, as the Lord was when “he came unto his own, and his own received him not” (John 1:11). Parabolically, the “field” represents the world (see Matt. 13:38). The Lord was

as a wanderer therein with no permanent dwelling place (Luke 9:58).

**“And the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou?”** — The public ministry of the Lord aroused curiosity as to his mission (see John 3:1-2).

#### VERSE 16

**“He said, I seek my brethren”** — See the antitype (John 1:11, Luke 19:10; Matt. 12:48-50).

**“Tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks”** — Lit. “Where they are *shepherding* their flock.” Christ sought for shepherds of the sheep, but they were conspicuous by their absence. There is a need for ecclesial shepherds to maintain their flocks on behalf of the Owner-Shepherd, so that none are lost or stray (1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4).

#### VERSE 17

**“And the man said, They are departed hence”** — Joseph’s brethren had left the shelter of Shechem (the *Burden Bearer*), as Jewry, in the days of the Lord, had left the shelter of their Burden-bearer.

**“For I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan”** — Dothan signifies *Two wells*. Evidently Joseph’s brethren had left Shechem for Dothan, seeking water, but when they arrived there, the wells were dry (v. 24). How like the Jews in the days of the Lord! They had forsaken Yahweh, the Fountain of living water (Jer. 17:13), and had turned to “cisterns that can hold no water” (Jer. 2:13). See the appropriate comments of Amos 8:11-13, as to the drought-stricken condition of Israel, and the wanderings of the nation in search of water.

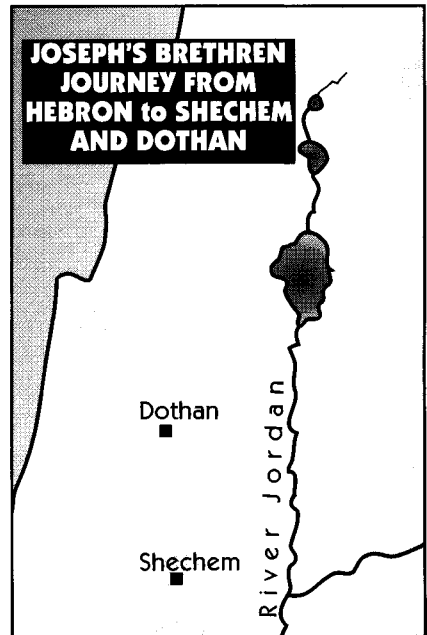
**“And Joseph went after his brethren”** — As the Lord likewise sought for his true brethren, even though they had temporarily forsaken God.

**“And found them in Dothan”** — They expected to find ample water there, but found the pits were dry. One of the two wells found there now has the name of *Jubb Yusuf* — the pit of Joseph. It was, and still is, the practice of shepherds to dig such pits to capture rain water. They might be some 3.05 metres (ten feet) in depth. The road winds its way from Shechem

(modern Nablus) around Samaria, and northwards to the Pass of Megiddo, through the valley of Dothan. This was an ancient caravan route, and the normal one for entrance into the land from the north. The ancient tell (mound) marks the site of the one-time city, and just beneath it is an oblong plain, providing the best pasture in the country. A *tell* is an archeological term, describing an artificial hill, the soil of which covers the ruins of a one-time city.

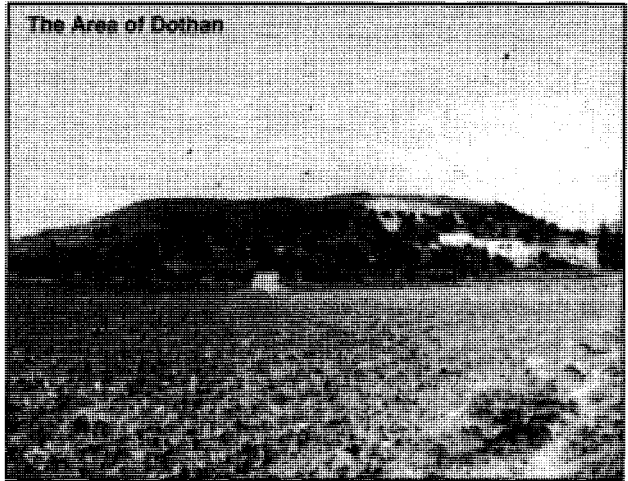
#### Joseph Is Cast Into A Pit — Vv. 18-22

*As Joseph makes his way along the valley of Dothan, he is seen by his brethren who recognise him by the distinguishing coat he wears (v. 23). The very sight of him is now distasteful to them. Their hatred flares into murderous intent, and they determine to rid themselves of him and his troublous dreams. Reuben, however, disagrees with their plans, and talks them into imprisoning Joseph in a pit, intending to later release him therefrom.*



## VERSE 18

**“And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them”** — Doubtless they were grazing their flocks on the slopes that rise above the plain of Dothan and were therefore at a sufficient elevation to observe the lonely figure of Joseph approaching. They evidently recognised him by his distinctive clothing — as the Lord was recognised as “a man come from God” because of his character and deeds (John 3:2).



**“They conspired against him to slay him”** — It is to such terrible depths of infamy that jealousy and hatred drive men. How important that we should avoid such if we would serve God acceptably. The Jews did the same to the Lord (Mark 12:7; Matt. 27:1; John 11:51).

## VERSE 19

**“And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh”** — Literally “this *master of dreams* cometh.” They mocked at his claims, rejecting the obvious significance of the dreams in ridicule and disbelief. Jesus, likewise, was mocked by the Jews (Matt. 27:29), though in their wickedness, they gave unconscious witness to his claim to be King.

## VERSE 20

**“Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit”** — They encouraged one another in their “evil work” as was predicted of the enemies of the Lord (Psa. 64:5).

**“And we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him”** — This is exactly what Jewry says of the crucifixion of the Lord, for the sole responsibility of such was and is placed upon Rome, the fourth beast of Daniel’s prophecy (Dan. 7:7).

**“And we shall see what will become of his dreams”** — They discerned their significance and were incensed at the pre-eminence allotted to Joseph. They believed that the death of Joseph would rid them alike of the object of their hate, and the troublesome implication of his prophetic dreams. Cp. Mark 15:32.

## VERSE 21

**“And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands”** — The incident of gross immorality, recorded in Gen. 35:22 reveals that Reuben was no more spiritually-minded than his brethren. In his attempt to save Joseph he was motivated by selfish consideration rather than thoughts for his brother. Reuben was a man of the flesh, but as natural firstborn, he was responsible to his father for the safety of his brethren. Notice his concern when he returned to find that Joseph was sold into slavery (Vv. 29-30). Reuben was in disgrace already with his father (cp. Gen. 35:22), and his failure to protect Joseph would add to it. Who does Reuben represent in the type? Obviously Pontius Pilate, that man of flesh, into whose charge the good conduct of Jewry had been given. He tried to save Jesus from the mad hatred of the Jews, but failed to do so.

**“And said, Let us not kill him”** — Antitype: Luke 23:16, 22; John 19:12.

## VERSE 22

**“And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him”** — In the antitype, Pilate said “I will chastise him, and release him” (Luke 23:16). In both cases, there were attempts to palliate the hate-crazed Jews with a measure of punishment against the objects of their antipathy, in attempts to secure the release of the ones they had delivered unto death.

**“That he might rid him out of their hands,”** — That, also, was Pilate’s objective (see John 19:12).

**“To deliver him to his father again”** — Reuben already was in disgrace with Jacob, and was anxious to prevent his relations with him deteriorating further. In the case of Pilate, it is significant and in accordance with the type, that it was when the Jews declared that the Lord lay claim to being “the Son of God” that he sought the more strenuously to deliver him (see Matt. 27:19; John 19:7-12).

## Joseph Is Sold To Ishmaelites

— vv. 23-28

*Foiled in their attempt to put Joseph to death, the brethren sell him to the Ishmaelites who carry him to Egypt. The antitype is fulfilled in that the Lord was brought again from the dead, and preached on among the Gentiles.*

## VERSE 23

**“And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren”** — For the antitype see John 1:11.

**“That they stript Joseph out of his coat”** — By doing so they witnessed that they refused to acknowledge his status among them as appointed by their father, and therefore set aside their father’s will. It is significant that the Lord also wore a special garment that apparently covered his flesh as did that worn by Joseph. See Matt. 27:29; John 19:23-24; Rev. 1:13.

**“His coat of many colours that was on him”** — See note Gen. 37:3. The Hebrew implies that it was a long-sleeved garment that reached to the hands and the feet. See Rev. 1:13.

## VERSE 24

**“And they took him, and cast him into a pit”** — See the same expression used in the Messianic Psalm: Psa. 40:2.

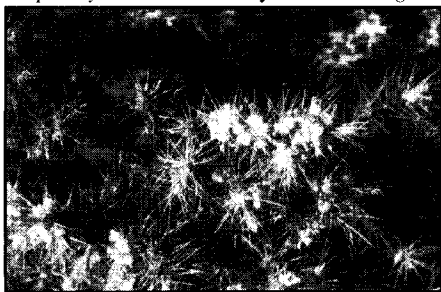
**“And the pit was empty, there was no water in it”** — The very same expression is used for the grave (see Zech. 9:11). Joseph was cast alive into the pit, whilst of the Lord it is said that he “saw no corruption” (Acts 2:31). The grave could not hold the Lord (Acts 2:24), and so he rose after three days.

## VERSE 25

**“And they sat down to eat bread”** — They were quite impervious and unheeding of his piteous appeals (see Gen. 42:21). So, also, the Jews of Christ’s day were unheeding of his sufferings. It is significant that almost the same words are used of their reaction to him (Matt. 27:36).

**“And they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead with their camels”** — They were seated by the pit discussing their next move, conspiring how best to get rid of Joseph, when their attention was diverted to a caravan of Ishmaelites approaching from the north, along the route that passed through the plain of Dothan. It led to the coastal road that ultimately made its way to Egypt.

**“Bearing spicery and balm and myrrh”** — The ancient world enjoyed an extensive trade in spices, rivalling the modern perfume and cosmetic industry. The Hebrew *nekoth*, here translated *spicery*, is identified by some with *gum*



*The Tragacanth Gum (the myrrh of v. 25) was widely known in ancient times for medicines industry and the manufacture of confections.*

*tragacanth*. (See *All The Plants Of The Bible* by W. Walker). Others regard it as a general term defining aromatics, and assorted substances for perfume. Balm was produced in Gilead (Jer. 46:11; 51:8), and was an ointment noted for its healing qualities (Jer. 8:22). The substance is the gum of *Balsamodendron Gileadense* which grows in southern Arabia, though it no longer grows in Gilead. The myrrh of this verse, and of Gen. 43:11 is translated from *lot*, a different Hebrew word that used elsewhere for myrrh. It should be rendered *ladanum* as in the margin of the R.V. This is a gummy exudation from *Cistus villosus*, a plant that grows in great abundance throughout the Holy Land.

**“Going to carry it down to Egypt”**

— These aromatics were greatly treasured in Egypt, being used for perfume, medicine, and embalming. Later Jacob sent some of these products down into Egypt as a present to the Prime Minister (Gen. 43:11).

**VERSE 26**

**“And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?”** — Judah now takes the lead, and suggests that the brethren make a profit out of their betrayal of Joseph. This is quite significant, for his part in the type was fulfilled by his namesake Judas! The story of Joseph, therefore, discloses the very name of the one who betrayed Jesus, and if the Apostles had studied this Scripture with understanding, they would not needed to have asked: “Is it I?” Judas sought personal profit from his service to Christ (cp. John 12:5-7), and agreed to sell him to his enemies “in the absence of the multitude,” in effect agreeing to “conceal his blood” (Luke 22:6).

**VERSE 27**

**“Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites”** —

Ishmael is representative of Israel after the flesh (Gal. 4:23) and it was to such that Judas sold his Lord (John 11:50; Luke 22:5).

**“And let not our hand be upon him”**

— Judah urged that they cover their illegal action with a cloak of legality. See also the hypocritical scrupulosity of the Jews in avoiding the ceremonial defilement of the Law whilst delivering up Jesus to death (John 18:28).

**“For he is our brother and our flesh”** — This was the relationship of Christ to the Jews (Rom. 9:5), but it carried no weight with them.

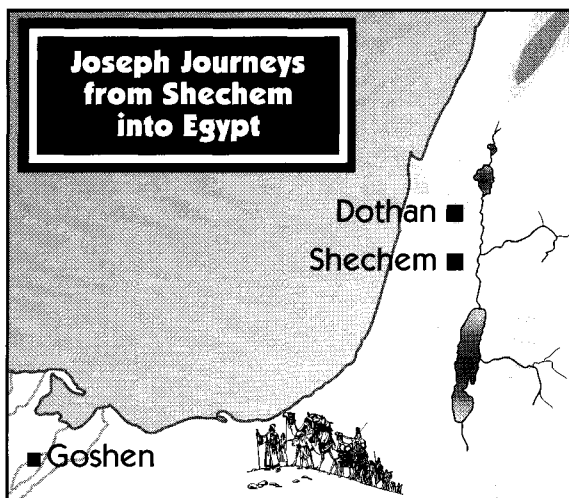
**“And his brethren were content”** —

The Hebrew says *hearkened* (see marg). They listened to their brother rather than to their God; as did the Jews with the betrayal of Christ.

**VERSE 28**

**“Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen”** — The cavalcade comprised Ishmaelites who dwelt in Midian (cp. Jud. 8:3, 5, 24). Both the Ishmaelites and Midianites were descendants of Abraham; the former by Hagar, the latter by Keturah (Gen. 25:2).

**“And they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit”** — The brethren did this, in order to present him to the



merchant Ishmaelites.

**“And sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver”** — This was the price afterwards fixed for the redemption of a boy between the age of five and twenty (Lev. 27:5), and therefore was appropriate to the age of Joseph. The Lord was sold for thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave gored by an ox, and this likewise, was appropriate to him as Yahweh’s servant (cp. Zech. 11:12; Exod. 21:32).

**“And they brought Joseph into Egypt”** — After Jewry rejected the Truth in Christ Jesus, the Apostles proclaimed it unto Gentiles (Acts 13:46). In that way the antitypical Joseph was “brought into Egypt.”

#### **Jacob’s Grief — Vv. 29-35**

*Being absent when the sale of Joseph is made, and intending to secretly release him, Reuben is shocked to find, on his return, that his brother is no longer in the pit. Concerned lest he be held accountable for his disappearance, he expresses his grief to the others, but they ignore him. To cover their deed, they slay a kid of the goats, and dip the coat of Joseph in the blood. This is conveyed to Jacob by their servants, and on receiving the news the patriarch is overwhelmed with grief. His children rise up to comfort him, but in vain. He declares that his sorrow is such as to bring him mourning to the grave.*

#### **VERSE 29**

**“And Reuben returned unto the pit”** — He was not present during the conspiracy voiced by Judah.

**“And, behold, Joseph was not in the pit”** — “Behold” is an exclamation of surprise. In the antitype the same wonderment was expressed at the resurrection of the Lord.

**“And he rent his clothes”** — He was concerned at the consequences of Joseph’s absence, knowing that he would be held responsible for his safe-keeping. The same applied in the antitype to Pilate who realised he could be called into account for the crucifixion of the Lord.

#### **VERSE 30**

**“And he returned unto his brethren, and said”** — Evidently the sale had been carried out in Reuben’s absence. Then, when the brethren had moved on, he returned to the pit to release Joseph, only to find him gone.

**“The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?”** — As eldest among the brethren, Reuben realised that he would be held accountable for the crime against his brother.

#### **VERSE 31**

**“And they took Joseph’s coat”** — One crime led to another. Their envy had led them to sell their brother to Gentiles; now they tried to cover this up by deception.

**“And killed a kid of the goats”** — This action was designed as a cover for their sin. In fulfilment of the type, the Jewish people who had consigned the Lord to the pit of death, continued to seek a cover for their sin in the formalism of the law and its sacrifices.

**“And dipped the coat in the blood”** — Thus they added deception to their envy, hatred and murderous intent.

#### **VERSE 32**

**“And they sent the coat of many colours, and they brought it to their father; and said”** — It appears that the coat was sent by servants to Jacob, and later his children came to comfort him (v. 35).

**“This have we found: know now whether it be thy son’s coat or no”** — The servants presented the coat to Jacob as though it had been accidentally found in the field. Thus the patriarch was deceived by the coat, as he once had deceived his father by his brother’s raiment.

#### **VERSE 33**

**“And he knew it, and said, It is my son’s coat”** — The servants did not say that Joseph had been torn by beasts; that was the conclusion that Jacob reached as he viewed the blood-stained garment. Reuben did not disillusion his father, but



rather joined with the others in deceiving him.

**“An evil beast hath devoured him”** — The Lord, also, was devoured by “evil beasts” of Jewry (see Psa. 22:20-21).

**“Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces”** — The sons permitted their father to live in grief, due to their deception.

#### VERSE 34

**“And Jacob rent his clothes”**— A symbolic act indicating that his innermost feelings were open for all to see.

**“And put sackcloth upon his loins”** — Indicative of mourning, the rough cloth reminding him of his sorrow.

**“And mourned for his son many days”** — The father mourned for his son, as Yahweh, likewise, was moved at the sufferings of His Son (cp. Isa. 63:9; John 16:32).

#### VERSE 35

**“And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him”**—The deceived Jacob, having been shown the bloodstained coat by the servants, conveyed the sad news of the supposed death of Joseph to the rest of his family, who gathered around him to comfort him. The record makes reference to only one daughter of Jacob, but he could have had others, or the statement relates to his daughters-in-law. How the sons could go through such hypocrisy, and see their father so bitterly grieved *many days*. (v. 34) is hard to comprehend; but sin and guilt ever seek to hide themselves, whereas the pretence of innocency, designed to shield envy, hatred and wickedness, will assert itself to the very last.

**“But he refused to be comforted; and he said”** — Jacob’s love for his son was such that the hollow words of comfort that his hypocritical sons offered, had little meaning for him, and therefore his grief remained. Joseph’s brethren, in rising up to comfort their father, revealed as much sincerity as did the Jews, who after arranging for the crucifixion of the Lord, endeavoured to placate Yahweh by their continued Temple formalism, after He had

expressed His feelings at the crucifixion of His Son by the earthquake, the torn veil, the darkened sun, and the opened graves (Matt. 27:51-52).

**“For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning”** — This is the first occurrence in the Bible of the word *sheol* (translated *grave*, *pit*, and *hell*) and therefore is a good place to summarise the meaning of the word. What did Jacob mean by this statement? Firstly, it is obvious that he believed that Joseph was dead, and not that he was in a state of conscious existence elsewhere; otherwise he would have rejoiced at the prospect of being reunited with him. Secondly, the word *unto* is translated from the Hebrew preposition *'el* which can denote either motion towards an object (as in the A.V.), or something in regard to it (as in the Syriac version). The Syriac renders the statement: “I will go down into the grave *on account of* my son mourning.” This rendition is obviously correct (see Gesenius), and signifies that Jacob expressed the conviction that his troubles would bring him quickly to the grave. The word *sheol*, translated “grave”, according to Strong, is derived from a root *sha'al* signifying *to request, to ask, to summons all*. Gesenius, however, derives it from a root signifying *to go down, to sink*. Both are significant. The former shows how insatiable is the grave, for it beckons all to its cold embrace; the latter defines it as a pit, a place of concealment. The word is translated “pit” in Num. 16:30, 33; Job 17:16; “grave” in Gen. 37:35, 42:38; 44:29, 31; 1 Sam. 2:6; 1 Kings 2:6, 9; Job 7:9; 14:13; 17:13; 21:13; 24:19; Psa. 6:5; 30:3; 31:17; 49:14, 15; 88:3; 89:48; 141:7; Prov. 1:12; 30:16; Ecc. 9:10; Song 8:6; Isa. 14:11; 38:10; 38:18; Ezek. 31:15; Hos. 13:14; and frequently “hell”.

From Scriptural references we learn that in *sheol* there are found the foundations of mountains (Deut. 32:22); that it can be dug into (Amos 9:2); that Korah, Dathan and Abiram went into it alive (Num. 16:30, 33); that in it the body corrupts and is consumed by worms (Job 17:13-14; Psa. 16:10; 49:14); that there is found therein no knowledge, praise nor

giving of thanks (Psa. 6:5; Ecc. 9:10; Isa. 38:10,11); that it is synonymous with the pit, death, and corruption (Psa. 16:10; 89:48, Prov. 1:12; 7:27; Ezek. 31:16; Hos 13:14).

All this reveals that the definition of *sheol*, or *hell*, as a place of disembodied souls, is completely unscriptural; and that the word signifies the grave, as correctly translated in this place.

**“Thus his father wept for him”** — Jacob was deceived by the blood of the kid on the coat of Joseph; as he had deceived his father by the skins of kids upon his arms (Gen. 27:16).

**Joseph is Sold To Potiphar — v. 36.**

*The Ishmaelites from Midian complete their journey into Egypt, and Joseph is sold in the slave-market to Potiphar.*

**VERSE 36**

**“And the Midianites sold him into Egypt”** — In the antitype, Christ’s work was extended so as to become a light to the Gentiles (Isa. 49:6).

**“Unto Potiphar”** — See Note Gen. 39:1.

**“An officer of Pharaoh’s”** — The word in the Hebrew signifies a *eunuch*, such as were used as ministers of state. It is translated *chamberlain* 13 times and *eunuch* 17 times. This may explain the unfaithfulness of Potiphar’s wife (Ch. 39:10-13). In the East many eunuchs had wives but they bore no children.

**“And captain of the guard”** — The Hebrew, signifies *captain of the slaughterers*. He was the chief officer of the executioners, and keeper of the State prison (see Gen. 39:20).

## CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

### BIRTH OF PHAREZ:

### PREDECESSOR OF THE LORD

*Why was this story, so crude in its details, recorded in Holy Writ? It appears as a harsh intrusion into the account of Joseph. We pass for a moment out of an environment of faith, goodness and purity, into one of lust, evil and intrigue. It is not even in proper chronological sequence, for much of the story occurred before those events recorded in the previous chapter. Nevertheless, its inclusion comprises a proof of the impartiality of Inspiration; and its appearance, in this place, is obviously divinely selected to emphasise a most important principle. The facts, considered in themselves, reflect no credit to Judah, but reveal why he was disqualified to be the fourth-generation leader among the sons of Jacob, after Reuben, Simeon and Levi had demonstrated their incompetence for the position. At the same time, it was revealed to Jacob, that ultimately the royal dignity would be vested in the Lion of Judah (Gen. 49:10); but the incidents of this chapter show that this would be done on a basis of divine selection and foreknowledge, not on personal merit as far as the tribe was concerned, nor*

*upon the flesh.*

*The chapter will be considered from three aspects. Firstly, as narrative; secondly, as exhortation; thirdly, as typical foreshadowing.*

*(1) As narrative, it reveals the circumstances leading to the birth of Pharez, the predecessor of the Lord, showing how he was "touched with the feeling of our infirmity."*

*(2) As exhortation, it sets forth the acute moral temptations which living among the Canaanites brought into the lives of Jacob's sons, and offers a partial explanation for the move into Egypt. If the integrity of the covenant people was to be preserved, they must, for a time, until properly constituted as a nation under God-given laws, be removed from the corrupting influence of Canaan's religious and social life. It is obvious from the record of first Dinah, then Reuben, and now Judah, that the members were exposed to Canaanitish influences from which they had to be guarded. By manipulation of famine, Yahweh drew His people into an area where separation was forced upon them (Gen. 46:34); the design being to save lives (Gen. 50:20).*

*(3) As a prophetic foreshadowing of the divine purpose, the chapter narrates how that Judah married a Canaanitish woman whose influence was manifested in his sons. Er, his firstborn, the token of the strength of the tribe, was married to the righteous Tamar, representative of the covenant of faith, but evidently was impotent to consummate the marriage, so as to produce fruit to the preservation of the name. On his judicial death, because of perversion, she was given in marriage to the second son, but though competent to do so, he refused to produce fruit to his deceased brother, though he was prepared to indulge his lust in the opportunity afforded him. He, too, was given over to death. The third son (more righteous than the other two) was held back from Tamar by Judah, who, in doing so, denied her right, so she was not able to bear fruit to the glory of God. She disguised herself, and Judah, ignorant of her true identity (as the nation later became blinded to the true significance of the covenant of faith), treated her as an harlot, gratifying the lust of the flesh at her expense, whilst manifesting no real responsibility towards her. He left with her his tokens of authority and support, which she retained in order to establish her integrity. Tamar gave birth to twins: Pharez and Zarah, representative of the law and of grace. The latter, though*

*partly manifested first, was thrust aside by Pharez, who was thus born first. In fulfilment of the type, faith first appeared in the covenant made to Abraham, but was superseded by the Law, until the true Seed appeared (Gal. 4:17, 23).*

*In the type, Tamar represents the Abrahamic covenant in relation to Judah, the appointed royal tribe. It emphasises the lesson that the flesh profits nothing, and that the appointment was by divine foreknowledge and selection, and not by personal merit. As in the types presented by Sarah, Rachel and Rebekah, it reveals that the covenant of faith, though by contrast barren and unproductive for a time, will ultimately produce abundantly to the glory of Yahweh (cp. Isaiah 54:1), so that of antitypical Tamar it will be said: "Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed; neither be thou confounded, for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more" (Isa. 54:4).*

#### **Judah Begets Er, Onan And Shelah**

— vv. 1-5

*Judah marries a Canaanitish woman, and begets three sons.*

#### **VERSE 1**

**"It came to pass at that time"** — At what time? The setting of the chapter would suggest after Joseph had been taken down into Egypt, but that could not have been so for the following reason: Joseph was 6 when Jacob came into Canaan (Gen. 30:31; 31:41), 17 when he was sold into Egypt (Gen. 37:2,25), 30 when he stood before Pharaoh (Gen. 41:46), and 39 when he was joined by Jacob (Gen. 46:5). This provides for only 22 years between the time that Joseph was sold into Egypt, to when Judah arrived there with two grandsons, the children of Pharez (Gen. 46:12), an insufficient period for all the events of this chapter to have happened. By eliminating the comma (not included in the Hebrew), the statement reads: "It came to pass at the time that Judah went down from his brethren," thus indicating some earlier period, possibly shortly after Jacob arrived at Shechem. Why are these events narrated at this place? Because of divine foreknowledge as manifested in the type.

It is appropriate that, in the midst of the life-history of the typical Christ (Joseph), the circumstances of the line through which the real Seed should come would be maintained. The record shows that it was not through personal merit of the tribe, but through divine selection, that the Lion of Judah would be revealed, to claim the privileged position conferred upon Joseph at that time. The type reveals that in spite of wickedness, and evil, and tragedy, the true Seed would ultimately be manifested.

**"That Judah went down from his brethren"** — This is an indication of deterioration comparable to Dinah's action (Gen. 34:1). Adullam and Timnath (v. 12) are in the area of Judah, the former not far from Hebron where Isaac was living at the time (Gen. 35:27-28). Perhaps Judah's original intention was to visit his grandfather.

**"And turned in"** — The Hebrew *natah* signifies to stretch, incline, or pitch. His inclinations were drawn to Hirah, and he pitched his tent close by to cultivate his acquaintance. This inclination towards forbidden associates later became characteristic of the tribe (2 Chron. 36:14).

**"To a certain Adullamite"** — The

adjective suggests a man of prominence. Adullam signifies *Enclosure*. It was a town in the Hebron valley, a royal city (Josh. 12:15), the site of the cave where later David hid from Saul (1 Sam. 22:1-2).

**“Whose name was Hirah”** — Hirah signifies *Splendour*, perhaps indicative of his status. Judah moving among the great men of the land continued his downward course. In this he anticipated the action of the nation which, likewise, was attracted to the great among the Gentiles and courted their kings, nobles and priests.

#### VERSE 2

**“And Judah saw there”** — As in the first sin (Gen. 3:6), the lust of the eyes took possession of Judah (1 John 2:16).

**“A daughter of a certain Canaanite”** — Again the adjective suggests prominence. The Canaanites were enemies of the Truth (see note on Gen. 13:7), but the lust of the flesh blinded Judah to that fact. Later, the nation followed the same path (see Psa. 106:34).

**“Whose name was Shuah”** — His name means *Affluence*. He evidently was rich in this world's goods. In times of affluence, spiritual values become blurred (Rev. 3:16). Shuah was the name of Judah's father-in-law, not that of his wife. See v. 12.

**“And he took her, and went in unto her”** — Judah thus repeated the sin of Esau which had been “a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah” (Gen. 26:34-35) and against which Abraham had solemnly warned (Gen. 24:3). He thus became yoked with an unbeliever, anticipating the apostasy of the nation (e.g. Isa. 30:1-3). The lust of the flesh possessed Judah.

#### VERSE 3

**“And she conceived, and bare a son; and he called his name Er”** — Er signifies *Watchful*, and in the type is suggestive of the lust of the eyes (1 John 2:16). Judah's first two sons who died could be representative of the nation, after civil war in the days of Rehoboam divided the monarchy into two parts.

#### VERSE 4

**“And she conceived again, and bare a son; and she called his name Onan”** — Onan signifies *Strong*, and is suggestive of the pride of life.

#### VERSE 5

**“And she yet again conceived, and bare a son; and called his name Shelah”** — Shelah signifies *Request, Petition, Prayer*. Apparently Judah withdrew him from the polluting Canaanitish environment. He was not involved in the tragedy that overcame the other two sons, and ultimately begat children who rose to prominence in the nation. In the story before us, he is like the remnant who returned to re-establish the nation after the political deaths that brought to an end the northern and southern kingdoms at the hands of the Assyrians and Babylonians.

**“And he was at Chezib, when she bare him”** — Chezib signifies *Falsified, Deceitful*. It is identified with Chozeba (1 Chron. 4:22), which was given to the sons of Shelah at the time of the partitioning of the land, and also with Achzib, *a lie*, referred to in Josh. 15:44; Mic. 1:14. In the latter place it is used to describe the attitude of kings of Israel: “the houses of Achzib (sig. *a lie, deceitful*) shall be a lie (Heb. *achzab*) to the kings of Israel.” Micah was describing the confidence that these kings placed in Assyrian support, which would prove *deceitful* in the end; foreshadowed in the experiences of Judah in the chapter before us.

#### Er Marries Tamar — v. 6

*Er, arriving at marriageable age, Judah selects Tamar as a wife for him, perhaps to save him from the same mistake as he, himself, had made.*

#### VERSE 6

**“And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name was Tamar”** — In the narrative of this chapter, Tamar appears more righteous than any of the other characters (cp. v. 26). Her name signifies *Palm tree*, which is elsewhere used as a symbol of the righteous (Psa. 92:12). Her nationality is not given, but her name

is Semitic, suggesting that she could have been of Abrahamic descent. In the type she appears to represent the Abrahamic covenant. She gives birth to twin sons, the circumstances of which point forward to Law and Grace (vv. 28-30).

### Judicial Deaths Of Er And Onan

— Vv. 7-10.

*In marriage Er reveals his Canaanitish proclivities, and divine judgment and justice strikes him down. Onan is then given to Tamar, but manifesting a like wickedness, suffers a like fate.*

#### VERSE 7

**“And Er, Judah’s firstborn, was wicked in the sight of Yahweh”** — The nature of his wickedness is not specifically stated, but the context of the verse strongly suggests some form of moral perversion. The Hebrew word is *ra’*, and in that language, comprises Er’s name in reverse. The same expression is used to describe the abandoned wickedness of the men of Sodom (Gen. 13 :13, see note), and whilst the term is used for all forms of depravity, it could have been that the particular evil of which Er was guilty, was that for which the Sodomites were notorious. Because of this evil proclivity, Er, possibly, did not consummate the marriage with Tamar. He despised the code of divine law that was in existence even then (Gen. 26:5). Like Israel, the northern kingdom which after the division was cut off from the Temple, his perversion made it impossible for him to produce fruit to the glory of the Father. In regard to the type, see Hosea 12:1-2 where Ephraim (styled the firstborn: Jer. 31:9), Judah (representative of the southern kingdoms), and Jacob (the nation as a whole) are described in terms analogous to the suggested typology of the chapter before us.

**“And Yahweh slew him”** — The divine judgment and justice struck him down as, later, it brought the northern Kingdom to political death (see Hosea 6:4-5; 13:1.

#### VERSE 8

**“And Judah said unto Onan, Go in**

**unto thy brother’s wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother”** — The Hebrew word for *marry* in this place is not the normal one used. It is *yagam* and signifies *to marry a brother’s widow*. The R.V. renders it in that way: *to perform the duty of an husband’s brother unto her*. See the same expression used, and the law explained in Deut. 25:5. Evidently the law of the levirate marriage was in existence in patriarchal times. This word is not derived from *Levi* as is often thought, but from the Latin *levir* signifying *husband’s brother*. It was the duty of the *next of kin*, as Redeemer, to marry the widow of his deceased brother if he died childless, and raise up seed to his brother: the object being that no house should perish in Israel. Faithful Boaz did this, foreshadowing the work of Christ in so doing. It is the duty and privilege of the believer, who is entrusted with the seed of the Word (1 Pet. 1:23), to raise seed to Christ his elder brother who died childless (cp. Isa. 53:8, 10). The political death of the northern kingdom (Ephraim is called the firstborn) was followed by added appeals to the southern kingdom to produce fruit to the glory of Yahweh, or it, too, would perish (see Hos. 6:4-7; 2 Chron. 36:15-17).

#### VERSE 9

**“And Onan knew that the seed should not be his”** — Onan did not want the responsibility of raising up seed to his brother, and so establish the house of the firstborn, for it would have been to the disadvantage of his own inheritance and house. He determined, therefore, to avoid the duty of the Redeemer.

**“And it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother’s wife”** — According to the Hebraist Ewald, the Hebrew implies that he did this not once, but several times: “whenever he went in.” Onan was prepared to enjoy sexual intercourse with Tamar, but was not prepared to consummate it so as to raise up seed to his brother. He revoltingly treated her as though she were a common harlot. Judah as a nation, though possessing the Temple, treated the Abrahamic Covenant in a similar manner.

**“That he spilled it on the ground”**

— Literally this is “he destroyed it to the ground.” As the fruit of the union would not be to his personal glory, to the building up of his power, he wasted his life and strength (cp. the meaning of his name), whilst enjoying the immediate pleasure such action gave him.

**“Lest that he should give seed to his brother”** — His manner of carrying out his responsibilities in regard to the levirate marriage, was a complete negation of the purpose of God, and the spirit of the Truth. It was particularly insulting to Tamar.

#### VERSE 10

**“And the thing which he did displeased Yahweh”** — The word “displeased” is from *ra-beayin*. It is compounded of *ayin*, eye and *ra’a*, to break in pieces, good for nothing, bad, etc. From the former we learn that what Onan did in secret was known and seen of God; from the latter we learn that it was particularly displeasing, being a sin against the covenant and redemptive provisions of God, as well as being grossly insulting to Tamar. In the sight of God, Onan’s action was particularly bad, for it *broke in pieces* the law of redemption that He had established. Onan gave every appearance of fulfilling the will of God, but hidden from the eyes of others, he did not fulfil his obligations.

In passing, we might observe, that because of the motives that dictated Onan’s action (v. 9) and inasmuch as this incident has specific reference to a levirate marriage and its significance, God’s displeasure towards Onan should not be used as an argument against modern family planning (cp. 1 Cor. 7:3-5). At the same time, young people should bear in mind that the purpose of marriage is to produce a family, and that the first words spoken by God to man was the commandment: “Be fruitful”. The real joy of marriage is found in the fruit of the union, despite the problems and trials that family life inevitably brings, or the sacrifices that it demands (cp. Psa. 127).

**“Wherefore He slew him also”** — God’s displeasure again was manifested in the tragedy that overtook the family of Judah.

#### Judah Promises Shelah To Tamar

— v. 11

*Claiming that his third son is too young to fulfil the obligations of the family redeemer, Judah asks Tamar to wait in her father’s house until he is fully grown.*

#### VERSE 11

**“Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter in law, Remain a widow at thy father’s house”** — It was normal for a widow to return to the house of her father (Lev. 22:13).

**“Till Shelah my son be grown”** — Judah was prepared to acknowledge the letter of the law, whilst searching around for some way to evade it. This, also, was the attitude adopted by the leaders of Judah.

**“For he said, Lest peradventure he die also, as his brethren did”** — Judah blamed Tamar for the death of his sons, and determined to avoid a third tragedy in the family. Many blame their alleged adherence to the covenant of promise, and the sacrifices that it imposes on them, as responsible for the problems they experience in life, instead of recognising that frequently they bring these upon themselves by their own folly. That was the case with Judah’s sons. They died because they denied Tamar her right, even as the twofold division of the nation was brought to political death because both set aside their responsibilities to the Abrahamic covenant. The remnant alone was saved for a future inheritance, answering to Shelah in the type. The time seems to have a latter-day application as well, for Zechariah declared that “Two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein” to suitably respond to the call of Yahweh (Zech. 13:8-9).

**“And Tamar went and dwelt in her father’s house”** — He is unnamed, but probably was of Abrahamic descent. See note v. 6. He evidently lived close to Timnath (v. 14), which is located on the border of Judah’s territory, about two miles west of Beth-shemesh. Its name signifies *an allotted portion*, thus *an inheritance*. For a time Tamar, representative of the covenant of promise, is found among the Gentiles,

in an allotted portion. This, too, was the state of the remnant that remained after the political death of the nation. In dispersion they carried the Abrahamic covenant back into the house of their fathers (see Josh. 24:2).

**Tamar's Stratagem To Win Her Husband — Vv. 12-23.**

*Judah's wife dies without any further children. Shelah grows up, but is not given to Tamar, who realises that her hopes of obtaining a husband of the covenant people will be dashed unless she forces Judah to honour his obligation. She disguises herself, and is mistaken by Judah for a harlot. He promises payment for her services, and leaves a pledge as a guarantee for this, but when his friend seeks for her in order to redeem it she cannot be found.*

**VERSE 12**

**“And in process of time the daughter of Shuah Judah's wife died”** — The hand of God is seen in these events. It is openly apparent in the deaths of Er and Onan; less conspicuous in the death of Judah's wife; unnoticed in the trivial incident of Judah's going up to his sheep shearers, yet in all these circumstances working out His purpose. The significance of all this could not be properly understood until fifteen hundred years later with the birth of Christ, and the proclamation of the Gospel in his name, for God was clearing the way for the birth of Pharez and Zarah, and through Pharez for the coming of the Lord.

In the same way today, God works out His purpose in the lives of those called to the Gospel. The Judgment Seat will reveal the truth of Yahweh's declaration: “I have not done without cause all that I have done” (Ezek. 14:23). The recording in Genesis of these minor events that had such tremendous consequences hundreds of years later, is a clear indication of Inspiration.

**“And Judah was comforted”** — He ceased to mourn, and resumed normal life.

**“And went up unto his sheepshearers to Timnath”** — This trivial incident was overshadowed by God to provide

Tamar with her opportunity.

**“He and his friend Hirah the Adulamite”** — Judah's name is linked with that of Hirah in a way that does him no credit. See James 4:4.

**VERSE 13**

**“And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold thy father in law goeth up to Timnath to shear his sheep”** — Tamar intended to hold Judah to his promise, but realised by now that he was attempting to evade it. She was not anxious for marriage in general, but desired a particular marriage: one linked with the hope of Israel. If she merely desired marriage, she doubtless could have been satisfied by marrying a Gentile. Instead, she patiently awaited the redemption of the promise.

**VERSE 14**

**“And she put her widow's garments off from her”** — To prevent detection by Judah.

**“And covered her with a vail”** — To conceal her features, after the fashion of a harlot (v. 15; Job 24:15).

**“And wrapped herself”** — Probably with a large mantle.

**“And sat in an open place”** — The A.V. margin renders: *in the door of eyes* or of *Enajim*. The former suggests a public and open place where all could see her; the latter would identify the place with Enam, mentioned in Josh. 15:34, as being adjacent to Timnath. The R.V. renders: *sat in the gate of Enaim*.

**“Which is by the way to Timnath”** — The town of Enam was adjacent to Timnath. See Josh. 15:34. Judah would have to pass that way.

**“For she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife”** — We are not told what Tamar hoped to accomplish by her action. It could have been that she merely intended to impress upon Judah that he was driving her to this extremity by his action in withholding Shelah, and denying her rights, and then leaving the issue to be divinely directed as God willed. However, when Judah made the advance that he did, she



complied. Nothing more is revealed concerning Shelah and Tamar. Judah accomplished all that was required under the levirate law. However, it could have been that subsequently Tamar was given to Shelah to wife. The record reveals that Shelah married for it refers to his descendants, the Shelanites (Num. 26:20), as becoming prominent in Judah, noted for their skill and industry (1 Chron. 4:21-23).

#### VERSE 15

**“When Judah saw her, he thought her to be an harlot; because she had covered her face”** — The Hebrew word for “harlot” is *zonah*, and signifies one that is wanton. An entirely different Hebrew word is used by Hirah when he enquired as to the whereabouts of Tamar (vv. 21-22). Judah, as an Israelite, recognised harlotry for what it is; Hirah as a Canaanite camouflaged it with a religious title.

#### VERSE 16

**“And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Let me come in unto thee; (for he knew not that she was his daughter in law)”** — Though Judah, whose wife was dead, was prepared to satisfy his cravings by committing adultery or fornication, he would have shrunk from the sin of incest.

**“And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me?”** — Tamar seized the opportunity that presented itself to her. Her conduct is not to be attributed to lust, or inordinate desire for offspring, but rather an attempt to secure her right to a place among the ancestresses of the patriarchal family. It seems quite evident that she had been educated regarding the family hopes based upon the divine promises made to Jacob, and that she had earnestly embraced these principles. Therefore she was not prepared to be set aside from her right. She probably also knew that Judah misinterpreted the cause of the judgment that had fallen upon his two sons. Later, Judah acknowledged that she was more righteous than he (v. 26).

#### VERSE 17

**“And he said, I will send thee a kid from the flock”** — By such means, Judah sought to pay for the sin he had committed. It suggests the attitude of the nation which sought justification by the works of the Law.

**“And she said, Wilt thou give me a pledge, till thou send it?”** — In the Hebrew this is presented in the form of a statement *If thou wilt give me a pledge.*

#### VERSE 18

**“And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet”** — The signet, or seal, was the token of identification and authority. It was either worn on the finger, or suspended round the neck by a *pathiyl* or cord.

**“And thy bracelets”** — The R.V. renders this as thy *cord* (Heb. *pathiyl*). The *pathiyl* was a cord or chain by which the signet was attached to the person, thus establishing the identity of the owner of the signet or seal.

**“And thy staff that is in thine hand”** — His support.

**“And he gave it her”** — He delivered up to her the tokens of his authority, identity and support. Typically, Judah here represented the nation which treated the covenant of promise as a man would a harlot — a thing of personal convenience and fleshly satisfaction; and in doing so lost its authority, true identity and real support.

**“And came in unto her, and she conceived by him”** — How a man could enter into such intimate relationships with a maid, and yet remain ignorant of her identity is surprising. Obviously, Tamar kept the veil on her face. How typical of the nation! It was brought into intimate relationship with the covenant of promise without properly comprehending the significance of it. The nation was blind to its true import (Rom. 11:7-8; 2 Cor. 3:12-18).

#### VERSE 19

**“And she arose, and went away, and laid by her vail from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood”** — She resumed her previous way of life.

## VERSE 20

**“And Judah sent the kid by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive his pledge from the woman’s hand; but he found her not”** — Hirah’s failure to find Tamar concerned Judah deeply. The harlot (as he imagined Tamar to be) was acting out of character with her profession. He expected her to be anxious to obtain the agreed payment.

## VERSE 21

**“Then he asked the men of that place, saying, Where is the harlot”** — A different word for *harlot* is used by Hirah than that used by Judah in v. 15. There the word is *zonah*, and signifies *one who sells herself for money*. Here the word is *kedeshah* and signifies *a separated or sacred person*. It was the term given to a temple prostitute, which was a feature of the evil Canaanitish worship at the time.

**“Was openly by the wayside”** — See note v. 14, and compare the margin. The statement can be rendered: *that was in Enaim*.

**“And they said, There was no harlot in this place”** — Again the word in Hebrew is *kedeshah*. The woman, whom Hirah took to be a sacred person, was to Judah, a harlot. So with the religious world in the past and present. An apostate church system is described as “the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth” (Rev. 17:5), but to the world its officials are sacred persons. Jeremiah indicted Judah for committing “adultery with stones and with stocks” (Jer. 3:9), or for engaging in false worship.

## VERSE 22

**“And he returned to Judah, and said, I cannot find her; and also the men of the place said, that there was no harlot in this place”** — Again the word is *kedeshah*, rendered *devotee* by Rotherham.

## VERSE 23

**“And Judah said, Let her take it to her, lest we be shamed”**—The Berkeley Bible renders: “Let her keep them for herself, we do not want to be ridiculed. I sent the kid and you failed to find her.” Judah

was concerned lest he be held up to contempt — not in regard to the act he had committed, but by the raillery of others who would mock him for being tricked out of his possessions.

**“Behold I sent this kid, and thou hast not found her”** — As though to say: “I have done all that is necessary in the case”. So Judah wiped the incident from his mind.

## Judah Vindicates Tamar’s Action

— Vv. 24-26

*Three months after this incident the rumour comes to Judah that Tamar is with child. This infuriates him, and he demands that she be put to death. Brought out for execution, however, Tamar requests the privilege of identifying the man responsible. Judah is shown the tokens of his own identity and is compelled to recognise that Tamar is more righteous than he.*

## VERSE 24

**“And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot; and also, behold, she is with child by whoredom”** — As a widow, Tamar had the right to marry; but so long as she remained a widow, she had obligations to Judah’s remaining son. Though it became obvious that she was with child, she had remained strictly silent as to the identity of the father.

**“And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt”** — This was the punishment that the Law set down for the wife of a priest who proved unfaithful (Lev. 21:9). Thus the principle was recognised and practised before its incorporation into the Mosaic law. Tamar was the wife of Judah’s firstborn, and one of the privileges of such was to act as priest on behalf of the family. Such a penalty possibly was preceded by public stoning (cp. Deut. 22:20-24).

## VERSE 25

**“When she was brought forth”** — To heighten the drama, she maintained her silence unto the crucial point of execution.

**“She sent to her father in law, say-**

ing, By the man, whose these are, am I with child” — To his amazement, Judah saw again the missing tokens, and instantly comprehended the purpose behind Tamar’s action.

“And she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff” — Evidently, Judah was struck dumb at the sight of the evidence, causing Tamar to again demand that he identify them.

**VERSE 26**

“And Judah acknowledged them, and said, She hath been more righteous than I” — The Hebrew term *tsedaqah* signifies to be in the right, or to have a just cause. In the terms of the levirate marriage law, Tamar was in the right. She had obtained a child by the man who was responsible for seeing to it that a relative of her husband be given to her as a substitute husband. Judah was publicly shown to be derelict in his duty of giving Shelah to Tamar, as well as being the man responsible for making pregnant the woman he had condemned to death. Tamar’s desire to have children by a levirate marriage was motivated by the promise to Abraham in relation to the Seed that should come; and this was remarkably fulfilled in her case.

“Because that I gave her not to Shelah my son” — Judah publicly acknowledged that he had been derelict in his duty in this regard.

“And he knew her again no more” — Whether or not she married Shelah subsequently is not revealed; though, as we

commented in v. 14, Shelah did marry and have children.

**Tamar Gives Birth To Pharez And Zarah — Vv. 27-30**

*Tamar gives birth to twin sons, the circumstances of which foreshadow the divine purpose.*

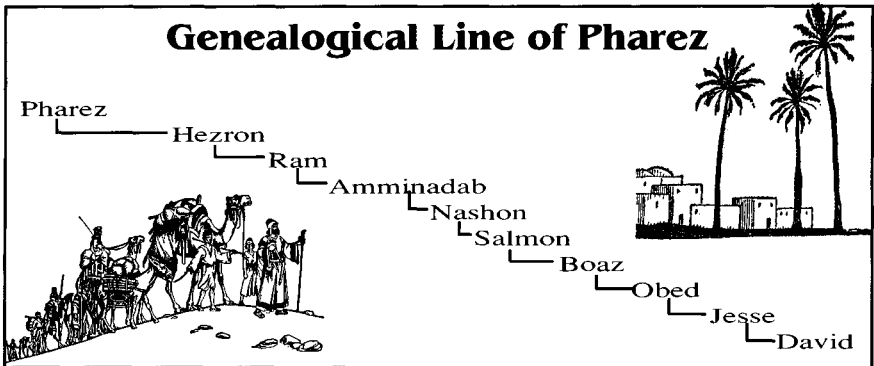
**VERSE 27**

“And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins were in her womb” — See also the case of Rebekah (Ch. 25:24).

**VERSE 28**

“And it came to pass, when she travailed, that the one put out his hand” — The hand of the second son was revealed before the birth of the first. A remarkable type is presented in the birth of Tamar’s twin sons, pointing forward to the two covenants of God: the Abrahamic covenant of faith; and the Mosaic covenant of law. The “hand” of the one was revealed before the other was brought to the birth, though the fulness of the former was not revealed until afterwards. Paul, in Galatians 3:17 shows that whilst the covenant of faith made its appearance before the law, its fulness was not revealed until later. “Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed .... But after that faith is come we are no longer under a schoolmaster” (Gal. 3:23-25). We might say that “the hand” of the covenant of

**Genealogical Line of Pharez**



faith was seen from the beginning, (Gen. 3:15), but its fulness was not revealed until the Seed was born. So, in the type before us, Pharez represents Law, and Zarah represents Grace.

**“And the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first”** — The words *scarlet thread* are from the Hebrew *shaniya* elsewhere translated *crimson*, and used frequently for the colour used in the Tabernacle to symbolise sacrifice and redemption. The scarlet thread, like the scarlet cord let down from the window of Rahab’s home (Josh. 2:18) which saved first the spies (v. 15), and afterwards her household, became typical of the Atonement. So, also, in the verse before us. The “hand” of the Abrahamic covenant first appeared, but the full birth occurred afterwards. Paul taught: “Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers” (Rom. 15:8).

#### VERSE 29

**“And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that, behold, his brother came out: and she said, How hast thou broken forth? this breach be upon thee”** — The words of the midwife suggest that Pharez had violently pushed Zarah aside that he might be first brought to the birth. The latter part of her statement in Hebrew, *aleycha perets, for thyself a breach*, can be paraphrased: “Thou shalt bear the name of the *breach* that thou hast made.”

**“Therefore his name was called Pharez”** — Pharez, or Perez, signifies *A breach*. But for the breach that he made, Zarah would have been born first, but Pharez temporarily pushed him aside. What a significant birth, and how it points forward typically to the purpose of God! Though the covenant of Faith first made its appearance, and extended a hand to help those who came under its influence, it was temporarily pushed aside by the covenant of Law, which made obvious the breach by convicting men of sin. From Pharez came David (Ruth 4:18-22), and ultimately the Lord Jesus (Matt. 1:3). How does that fit the type if Pharez is aligned

with the Law? Perfectly, for Paul taught: “When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Gal. 4:4-5). Again: “Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1:3-4). The Lord “magnified the Law and made it honourable” by rendering complete obedience to all that it required. But he also came under its curse, that he might redeem mankind from its death-dealing power (Gal. 3:13). In doing so, he led them from Pharez (*A Breach*) to Zarah (*Sunrise*).

#### VERSE 30

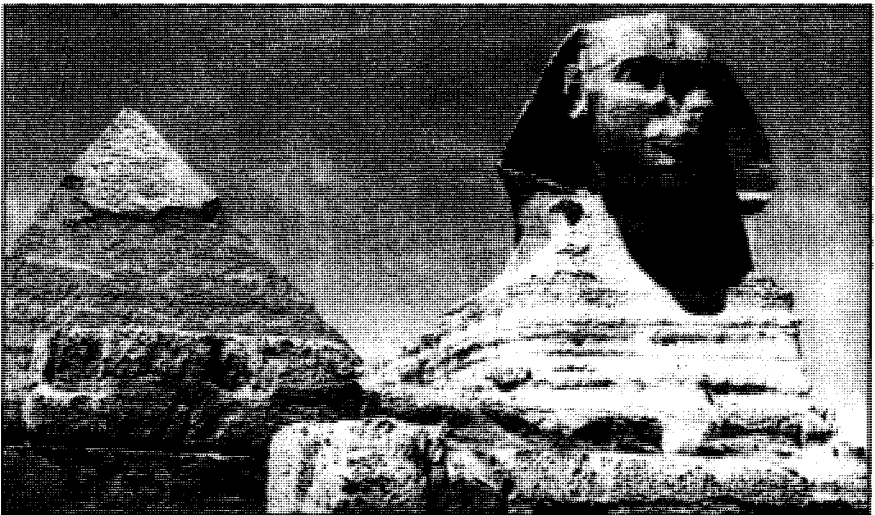
**“And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand”** — This was the token of redemption through atonement.

**“And his name was called Zarah”** — Zarah signifies *Sunrise*, suggested by the crimson thread on his hand. The Law with its curses and sanctions, unaccompanied by the power of faith, came as a breach in the redemptive purpose revealed to Abraham, but the covenant of grace confirmed by the Lord, was as the breaking forth of light. Consider the wonderful words of Zacharias in regard to the impending birth of the Lord, culminating in the statement: “The dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace” (Luke 1:68-79); the comment of John: “That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world;” and the blessing pronounced upon the marriage of Boaz and Ruth: “Let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, *of the seed which Yahweh shall give thee* of this young woman” (Ruth 4:12). That seed anticipated the true Seed, which, as the Sun of righteousness (Mal. 4:2), healed the breach that had been caused by the Law, making possible the covenant of Grace.

## JOSEPH'S ELEVATION IN EGYPT

### Chapters 39:1–41:57

*The narrative of Genesis again reverts to the story of Joseph, and records the incidents leading to his elevation to power in Egypt. His reactions to the troubles and trials of life to which he was subjected, were remarkably different from those manifested by his brethren when they were faced with difficulties. They were governed by fleshly feelings of jealousy, anger, and hatred which erupted in murder (Gen. 34:25), in incest (Gen. 35:22), in conspiracy and treachery (Gen. 37:31-33), in callous deception of their father (Gen. 37:32-35), and in immorality (Gen. 38). In contrast, Joseph revealed outstanding moral strength, so that he never gave way to bitterness, self-pity, nor despair. Strengthened by faith, he manifested outstanding courage, and high moral resolve. This sustained him in the most difficult of situations, and the most depressing of trials. Though he experienced ill-treatment in spite of the outstanding service he rendered others, God was with him, and ultimately brought him forth from the prison cell into which he had been placed, to rule as Prime Minister over the greatest nation on earth at that time.*



## CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

## JOSEPH IN PRISON

*Joseph's outstanding qualities are noticed by his Egyptian master who entrusts him with the care of his household. His fine appearance attracts the attention of his master's wife, who endeavours to draw him into an immoral association with her. Joseph repulses her, in consequence of which she levels a false accusation against him, and he is thrust into prison. But even there, God prospers him.*

**Joseph Made Overseer in Potiphar's House — vv. 1-6**

*Joseph renders outstanding service to his Egyptian master, and is given a position of trust in his household.*

**VERSE 1**

**"And Joseph was brought down to Egypt"** — In the type, this is fulfilled inasmuch as Christ was "preached unto the Gentiles" (1 Tim. 3:16).

**"And Potiphar"** — Walter Budge, the Egyptologist, gives his name as Pedephre, signifying *The Gift of the Ra*, Ra being the name of the Sun-god, one of the principal deities of Egypt. Others give his name as meaning *Servant of the Sun*.

**"An officer of Pharaoh"** — See note Gen. 37:36. The Hebrew word for officer is *cariyc*, which, in its strict meaning signifies *eunuch*. This title, perhaps, suggests the cause of the amorous advances of his wife. The title "Pharaoh" is said to signify, *The child of the sun*. The worship of the sun was very prominent in Egypt (Gen. 41:45), and the form of rule was a theocracy. Pharaoh was the son of the god; and Potiphar his servant.

**"Captain of the guard"** — See note, Chapter 37:36.

**"An Egyptian"** — The emphasis given to Potiphar's nationality is significant. It is generally acknowledged that the reigning dynasty of the time was Semitic, it being the period of the Hyksos rule, and that such did not normally employ Egyptians in positions of eminence. Potiphar was an exception. The various Egyptian

titles given throughout this chapter are in accordance with those found on the inscriptions, so that it is acknowledged that the story of Joseph has an authentic Egyptian background. Egyptological discoveries fully confirm that when Moses has occasion to mention the titles of Egyptian officials "he employs the correct title in use, and exactly as it was used at the period referred to, and, where there is no Hebrew equivalent, he simply adopts the Egyptian word and transliterates it into Hebrew" (Garrow Duncan in *New Light on Hebrew Origins*). For example, the titles of *chief of the butlers* and *chief of the bakers* are those of palace officials mentioned in Egyptian documents. When Potiphar made Joseph "overseer of his house" the title employed in the narrative is a direct translation of the official position in the houses of Egyptian nobility as found frequently in the inscriptions: *mer-pa mer en peri-t* signifying *Superintendent of the household*.

**"Bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither"** — So, in accordance with the type, the Lord "took upon him the form of a servant" (Phil. 2:7), and became "a servant of rulers" (Isa. 49:6-7).

**VERSE 2**

**"And Yahweh was with Joseph"** — Stephen makes mention of how "God was with him" (Acts 7:9), though the Patriarchs had sold him through envy; thus suggesting that in their own history, the Jewish leaders of Christ's day had a fore-

shadowing of their very attitude towards the Lord.

**“And he was a prosperous man”** — Literally; *he was a man prosperous*. That is, what he did prospered; not that he personally did so. The antitype: In the initial preaching of the truth among Gentiles, there was outstanding success; the influence of Christ was found throughout the Roman empire.

**“And he was in the house of his master the Egyptian”** — Potiphar early recognised the outstanding ability of Joseph, and observed how that his work was prosperous. Therefore, he appointed him over his affairs, instead of sending him out in the field to labour with the other slaves.

#### VERSE 3

**“And his master saw that Yahweh was with him”** — Even in adversity, Yahweh was with Joseph; as He also was with the Lord (John 16:32).

**“And that Yahweh made all that he did to prosper in his hand”** — Potiphar did not know Yahweh by name, of course, but Moses, who wrote the account, used the name where appropriate. Potiphar saw that marvellous success attended all that Joseph did.

#### VERSE 4

**“And Joseph found grace in his sight”** — Joseph received many favours at the hand of his master. See the application to Christ (Luke 2:52).

**“And he served him”** — He waited on Potiphar in a personal capacity.

**“And he made him overseer over his house”** — See note on v. 1 above.

**“And all that he had he put into his hand”** — The prosperity of Potiphar thus became subject to the servant he had acquired. In the antitype, the prosperity of Gentiles is subject to Christ, the servant of Yahweh to whom all power has been given (Matt. 28:18).

#### VERSE 5

**“And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that Yahweh blessed the Egyptian’s house**

**for Joseph’s sake”** — When we place our affairs into the hands of the antitypical Joseph, we will be similarly blessed (Eph. 1:3). Among other blessings, we will receive forgiveness of sins “for Christ’s sake” (Eph. 4:32).

**“And the blessing of Yahweh was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field”** — Joseph’s supervision must have extended to the field as well as to the affairs of the household, so that the other slaves were under his hand. In the antitype, the “house” represents the Ecclesia (Heb. 3:6); and the “field” the area of preaching (Matt. 13:37-38).

#### VERSE 6

**“And he left all that he had in Joseph’s hand”** — In the antitype, Christ has been given all power (Matt. 28:18), and supervises as Son over the house of God, administering it as his own (Heb. 3:4-6 see John 5:22, 27; John 17:10).

**“And he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat”** — Everything was given into the charge of Joseph, in whom Potiphar placed implicit trust. The only exception was in regard to the food Potiphar ate, the reason being that “the Egyptians might not eat with the Hebrews” (Gen. 43:32).

**“And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured”** — The Hebrew *yepha'ih toar weepha'ih mara'ih* signifies *beautiful in countenance*. Joseph’s character was reflected in his personal appearance, and anticipated the magnetic personality of the Lord in glory (cp. Song 5:9-16). Joseph was a young man of fine, upstanding, attractive appearance, and in his good looks, evidently took after Rachel his mother (Gen. 29:17). His attractive personality became a snare in Potiphar’s house, and is mentioned at this point because it sets the stage for the incident that follows.

#### Joseph’s Integrity In The Face Of Temptation — Vv. 7-12.

*Potiphar’s wife is attracted to the young, attractive Hebrew. Perhaps neglected by her husband, lacking moral standards, and finding other men alto-*

*gether too attractive, she sets out to satisfy her lust at his expense. Joseph resists the invitation, but she insists, and at an appropriate moment endeavours to compel him to embrace her, laying hold of his garment to do so. Joseph extricates himself and flees from the house.*

#### VERSE 7

**“And it came to pass after these things”** — This would be some time after Joseph was established in Potiphar’s house. He was 17 years of age when the rift occurred between him and his brethren (Gen. 37:2), and 30 when he stood before Pharaoh (Gen. 41:46) after waiting two years for the chief butler to fulfil his promise (Gen. 41:1). This leaves about 10 years to be shared as a slave in Potiphar’s service, and as a prisoner in gaol.

**“That his master’s wife cast her eyes upon Joseph”** — His manly, attractive appearance appealed to her, and probably neglected by her husband (see note v. 1), found her feelings aroused towards Joseph. In the type she represents Jezebel of the Apocalypse: first a seducer of the multitudinous Christ (Rev. 2:20), then their accuser and bitter opponent (Rev. 13:15-17; 18:20).

**“And she said, Lie with me”** — It is hardly likely that the invitation would have come as abruptly as it is narrated in this verse. Potiphar’s wife, no doubt, would first have ingratiated herself in Joseph’s eyes by many little acts of consideration and favors that she would extend towards him. Then, as she imagined she had caught him in the web of her devising, she would make the improper suggestion recorded in this verse. She acted the part of the immoral woman of Prov. 2:16-19. See the antitype in Jezebel seducing the multitudinous Christ among the Gentiles (Rev. 2:20).

#### VERSE 8

**“But he refused, and said unto his master’s wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand”** — The word *wotteth* is old Anglo-Saxon *witan* signifying *to know*. He does not know what is in the house; he

trusts me implicitly. Joseph had been given a position of trust as far as the house of Potiphar was concerned, which included Potiphar’s wife, and he would not betray it under any consideration. Joseph’s character stands out as one of the purest in all history. He allowed no temptation to affect his high morality, no calamity to shake his implicit faith in God, no adversity to depress him, and no power or position to make him proud and pompous. In his father’s house he possibly had been pampered and petted, in slavery he was wantonly and falsely accused. In the palace as ruler of what was then the greatest kingdom on earth, he was always the same truthful, pure, just, merciful, kind and God-fearing man. He saw a Divine providence even in his trials (Gen. 45:5), so that thoughts of revenge against his brethren never entered his head (Gen 5:18-21). In all this, he foreshadowed Christ. The position that he held in Potiphar’s house, anticipated that of the Lord in that there were given “all things into his hand” (John 3:35).

#### VERSE 9

**“There is none greater in this house than I”** — See the similar authority exercised by the Lord (Heb. 3:6).

**“Neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife”** — See John 3:34-35, for the authority Christ exercised. Joseph would not betray the trust that his master had placed in him.

**“How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”** — Above all else he would not act as his master’s wife improperly suggested because to do so would be to “sin against God.”

#### VERSE 10

**“And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day”** — Her passion became an obsession, and she was determined to have her way with Joseph. He was subjected to constant temptation, as day after day, she continued to tease and invite him, possibly endeavouring to incite him by her permissive appearance. As we contemplate the tension that must have



built up in that home in consequence of her mad lust, "consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (Heb. 12:3). In a very remarkable way the type foreshadowed the antitype. The Lord was constantly subjected to temptation by the lewd wife of Yahweh (Isa. 54:4-5 cp. Luke 4:2).

**"That he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her"** — Improper suggestions were made to him, but he did not respond. He avoided her when possible, and fled from her when it was impossible (cp. Prov. 2:16; 5:3; 6:25-26; 7:5, 13; 22:14).

#### VERSE 11

**"And it came to pass about this time"** — The Hebrew *yown* signifies *day-time*. Rotherham renders it *on a certain day*.

**"That Joseph went into the house to do his business"** — To attend to his normal duties.

**"And there was none of the men of the house there within"** — There was no one in the house except Joseph and his master's wife. This provided her with an opportunity that previously Joseph had been able to avoid.

#### VERSE 12

**"And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me"** — She again appealed to him, and when he refused, she became insistent, and grabbing his garment, endeavoured to pull him towards her. This is the second time that Joseph's garments had brought him into trouble; first, the coat of many pieces had aroused the antagonism of his brethren; and now the gown he wore, and which, doubtless, comprised the badge of his position as head slave, became the means by which this woman brought him into a compromising position. The seducing wife of Potiphar would strip Joseph of his robe, as the enemies of the Lord would rob him of his status and character. The multitudinous Christ wears a special garment (Gal. 3:27) which the world would strip from him, as it attempts to seduce him. What Potiphar's wife did to Joseph, the world attempts to

do to many of Joseph's brethren today. Let them manifest the same integrity as he, and refuse to succumb to the attractive appeal of worldliness.

**"And he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out"** — It was rather injudicious of him to leave his garment behind, but quite right for him to flee under such conditions. See 2 Tim. 2:22.

#### Joseph is Falsely Accused of Attempted Adultery — Vv. 13-18

*Repulsed by Joseph, her infatuation turns to anger, and using his garment as evidence, she accuses him of improper advances.*

#### VERSE 13

**"And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth"** — It was very indiscreet for Joseph to leave his garment behind, but he probably never imagined the depths of infamy to which she would sink. However, her passion, on being frustrated, turned to hatred and malice. She had no true love for Joseph, but was motivated only by infatuation (see also 2 Sam. 13:14-15).

#### VERSE 14

**"That she called unto the men of her house"** — They had temporarily left the house (v. 11).

**"And spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us"** — The terms of her comment reveal the contempt and dislike she had for her husband, perhaps because of his condition (cp. v. 1). In addition, she took full advantage of race prejudice, by dubbing Joseph as Hebrew. How like the anti-Semitic attitude of the world today!

**"He came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice"** — Perhaps she was somewhat concerned lest the appearance of Joseph without his garment might cause questions to be asked to her embarrassment, and therefore decided to forestall any attempt on his part to incriminate her.

**VERSE 15**

**“And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out”** — The woman proved to be a most convincing liar.

**VERSE 16**

**“And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home”** — We may imagine how carefully she would prepare for the coming of Potiphar; and how she would compose her face to tell her story, appealing before him tearful and distraught!

**VERSE 17**

**“And she spake unto him according to these words, saying”** — She repeated to him the story she had so carefully and successfully rehearsed before others.

**“The Hebrew servant, which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me”** — Notice the subtle emphasis of her story. First she again takes advantage of racial prejudice: the *Hebrew*; secondly, she blames her husband: “*thou brought unto us*;” thirdly, she blames Joseph. Her speech is similar to that of Adam when he desired to avoid responsibility: “The woman whom Thou gavest me” (Gen. 3:12). The word “mock” is *tsachaq* and signifies *to laugh, or be wanton*. In Genesis 26:8 it is rendered sport, and therefore refers to familiar intercourse. She falsely accused Joseph of lewd conduct, and was able to supply such evidence, and tell her story with such indignation, as to be believed.

What could Joseph say in repudiation? There was the garment; there was evidence of injured innocence on the part of Potiphar’s wife. The story had to be believed. So with accusations laid against the Lord by the Jews, or against his brethren by Gentiles. Jesus “endured the contradiction of sinners against himself” (Heb. 12:3), and Paul exhorts that we follow his example.

**VERSE 18**

**“And it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his gar-**

**ment with me, and fled out”** — If he doubted the evidence, let him call the other servants and enquire whether she had sought their help!

**Joseph Is Imprisoned — Vv. 19-20**

*In view of this charge, Joseph is put in prison. What trials he had to endure. “He is suddenly plunged into a lower deep than ever. He is not only in a strange land, but disgraced, and in a position debarring hope — not only a slave, but a branded slave; not only a prisoner, but a prisoner under circumstances that shut off all prospect of possible release” (Ways of Providence).*

**VERSE 19**

**“And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled”** — Though Potiphar was angry, he did not order that Joseph be put to death, as would normally have been the case. Why? Was it that he was not wholly convinced of his wife’s innocence in the matter? Or had Joseph’s good service so commended him to his master that he exercised unwonted leniency? Either one may have been the motive.

**VERSE 20**

**“And Joseph’s master took him, and put him into prison”** — He was not only imprisoned, but also fettered at first (Ps. 105:18). In type, he again enacts the death of Christ; this time, at the hand of Gentiles. In *The Ways Of Providence*, (pp. 66,62) Bro. Roberts comments: “In the first moments of his incarceration, Joseph must have been in a dreadful state of mind. We know what came after, which makes it difficult for us to realise the darkness of his situation. Joseph did not know what was coming after. He only knew the dreadfulness of his position — a prisoner and an outcast, unjustly banished from his country in the first instance, and now the victim of a false accusation. He had said, ‘How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?’ and this was the consequence. Had such an one as Job’s wife

been near, she would have had capital occasion for her foolish speech: 'Dost thou still hold fast thine integrity? Curse God and die'. Joseph had to be fitted for exaltation and the exercise of power, and therefore Joseph had to suffer for Joseph's own good and for the bringing about of a great result to the whole house of Israel." Commenting upon Joseph's state Stephen declared: "But God was with him" (Acts 7:9). God can be with us in the most distressing of circumstances; and it is profitable for us, under such conditions, to realise this.

**"A place where the king's prisoners were bound"** — Again the type faithfully represents the antitype. Christ likewise, was bound by the Jewish authorities and brought before the Governor. The Jews accused him of sedition, and he was put to death by Pilate as an enemy against the State.

**"And he was there in the prison"** — Prison is used figuratively of the grave. See Ps. 142:7; Zech. 9:11.

### **God Prospers Joseph In Prison** — Vv. 21-23

*God was with Joseph, even in prison, as He was with the Lord Jesus, even in the grave (Acts 2:27). Through the loving-kindness of the Father, Joseph enjoyed the favours of the gaoler, and was placed in charge of the administration of the prison. Yahweh was with Joseph, even in his most bitter trials, and brought good out of his suffering. We, too, can experience the same.*

#### **VERSE 21**

**"But Yahweh was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy"** — Joseph's experiences not only foreshadow those of the Lord, but become a pattern for all who walk in the same ways. As God greatly mitigated the sufferings of Joseph, so He "lessens the troubles of His children after they have suffered awhile, that they may be established, strengthened, settled (1 Pet. 5:10). He does not let their troubles press to their destruction. He afflicts with an object, and when the object is accomplished, the affliction is eased" (*Ways of*

*Providence* p. 67). This is due to His "mercy." The Hebrew *chesed* signifies *lovingkindness*, not *mercy* (see A.V. mg.). Yahweh's lovingkindness may be manifested in mercy (ie. the forgiveness of sins), but is not limited by it. The word implies the overshadowing care of Yahweh for His children; His deep interest in their welfare.

**"And gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison"** — Here is another foreshadowing of the Lord who "increased in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52). The word "prison" is *bayith sohar* in Hebrew, and signifies *House that is Round*, or the *Round House*. This may have been the Tower of Heliopolis!

#### **VERSE 22**

**"And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison"** — A further foreshadowing of the work of the Lord. Cp. Luke 4:18; Rom. 4:25.

**"And whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it"**—He was placed in charge, and commanded the prisoners what should be done. Christ must become the motivating power of those bound by sin and death, if they desire to be released therefrom. See Eph. 3:17; Col. 2:6-7

#### **VERSE 23**

**"The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand"**—Similar authority has been given to the Lord Jesus Christ by the Father in heaven. See John 5:22-27.

**"Because Yahweh was with him, and that which he did, Yahweh made it to prosper"**—Yahweh was with Joseph because Joseph, in his tribulation, drew near to Him (see James 4:8; Heb. 13:5-6). Though Joseph did not understand the purpose of his sufferings, he never lost faith in God. Most likely, in the darkness of the prison, he called to mind the dreams he had received, and realised that in some way there must come an alleviation of his state. He exercised patience, and waited for God to move. "If men will but commit themselves to Him in *well-doing*, He will guide their steps and frame their way for

comfort and well-being. It is where they leave Him out of account and follow their own devices for their own purposes that He may leave them to be snared in their own way. Joseph was not of this class. He feared God and was afraid of sin, and God

was protecting him in the midst of evil, and slowly guiding his paths to exaltation and honour" (*Ways of Providence* p. 67). Meanwhile, the keeper of the prison found that he could trust Joseph and that under his hand, the prison functioned efficiently.

## CHAPTER FORTY

### JOSEPH: INTERPRETER OF DREAMS

*The arrival of two new prisoners in the Round House of Heliopolis was nothing unusual. But these were no ordinary prisoners. They were high officials in the service of Pharaoh. More than that, they were to be the channel by which Joseph was to obtain his release from prison and elevation to power. Joseph, of course, did not understand that at the time, but treated them with characteristic kindness and consideration: an attitude on his part that was to be productive of much good.*

#### Pharaoh's Butler And Baker Imprisoned — Vv. 1-4

*Being a servant of an absolute dictator was a somewhat precarious position. Two of Pharaoh's high officials offend him, and are flung into prison.*

#### VERSE 1

"And it came to pass after these things" — That is, after Joseph had been shown favour, being granted privileges in the prison.

"That the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt" — The word butler is *mashqeh*, and signifies *cup-bearer* from a root word signifying *to drink*. This was a position of great honour in ancient courts. Nehemiah was cup-bearer to the king (Neh. 1:11), and therefore one upon whom the monarch placed great trust. He not only served the king, but protected him from the fear of assassination by poisoning. The baker was the officer who prepared the king's food, and one upon whom the king placed similar confidence. The word "offended" is *chata*, the normal word for "sin," from a root signifying *to miss the mark*. In what way they sinned

against the king is not revealed. Some believe that they attempted to poison him, but surely if that were the case, they would have been put to death instantly. As the baker subsequently was hanged, but the cup-bearer restored to his position, perhaps the king suffered acute indigestion!

#### VERSE 2

"And Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers" — The circumstances of this chapter type those of the Lord in his death. There were two malefactors crucified with him, one of whom, however, escaped the fate of the other by the intercession of the Lord. See Luke 23:32. There are also two classes to be present with the Lord at the Judgment Seat (Dan. 12:2; 2 Cor. 5:9-10): the accepted and the rejected. The word for "officers" is the plural form of that in Ch. 39:1.

#### VERSE 3

"And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard" — See note Chapter 37:36.

"Into the prison, the place where

**Joseph was bound**” — See Psa. 105:18. His feet were “hurt with fetters.” When first flung into prison he probably was fettered all day long, but with the alleviation of his lot, they may have been only put on at night, giving him complete freedom of movement during the day. See v. 6.

#### VERSE 4

**“And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them”** — They were placed “in ward,” in custody, whilst their fate was being decided. Meanwhile, being high officials of state, they were given preferential treatment, and placed in the charge of Joseph. To Joseph, these circumstances were commonplace, and he was in ignorance of the fact that God was moving on his behalf. Similarly, seeming unimportant circumstances in our lives can be the result of the hand of Yahweh in our affairs. Therefore, let us “commit our ways unto Him.” Who knows the purpose behind some apparently minor incident of life?

**“And he served them”** — Joseph served them in prison. Christ served humanity in the prison-cell he occupied in death, for he inherited the consequences of Adam’s sin that some might be delivered therefrom. “I am among you as he that serveth,” he told the Apostles (Luke 22:27), and he aligned such service with his death (Matt. 20:28).

**“And they continued a season in ward”** — They continued in custody whilst their fate was considered by Pharaoh.

#### Joseph Interprets Their Dreams

##### — Vv. 5-19

*One night each of the new prisoners have a dream which puzzles and depresses him. The dreams are told to Joseph, and with the help of God, he interprets them: the cupbearer is promised restoration; the baker, condemnation. Thus like Christ, Joseph becomes “a savour; of life unto life and of death unto death” (2 Cor. 2:15-16).*

#### VERSE 5

**“And they dreamed a dream both of them”** — The remarkable circumstances

of the two dreams are outlined to show that they were not coincidental, but divinely induced, as Joseph instantly realised. It was this that caused him to offer, with God’s help, to interpret the dreams (v. 8).

This was the first of five remarkable incidents noted in this verse.

**“Each man his dream in one night”** — This was the second remarkable circumstance, indicating divine influence. They both happened the same night.

**“Each man according to the interpretation of his dream”** — The third remarkable detail: the dreams were very similar.

**“The butler and the baker of the king of Egypt”** — The fourth feature: two similar appointments of high honour in the land.

**“Which were bound in the prison”** — This fifth feature suggests that the circumstances of the imprisonment were divinely ordained. In the reciting of the various details relating to the dreams of these two high officials, one can imagine how the alert mind of Joseph would discern the hand of God in them, and instantly seize the opportunity to further alleviate his own condition. With rising excitement, he would recognise the ways of Providence in the matter.

#### VERSE 6

**“And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they were sad”** — There is type upon type in the story of Joseph. It is significant and appropriate to the story and type, that two malefactors should be crucified with the Lord, one of whom was promised ultimate release from death, and the other who was not. It is also appropriate that there will be two classes at the Judgment Seat of Christ who will be in the same position and condition as those two prisoners of Pharaoh. Joseph came to them “in the morning,” as the Lord will return at the beginning of a new day for his people (Mal. 4:1-2). Joseph found his companions “sad,” and that, too, will be the state of those brought before the Judgment Seat, for *za’ laph* signifies *to boil up, to be agitated*. The two prisoners were deeply con-

cerned and agitated over the dreams they experienced. They compared them, and found amazing similarities which indicated that they were divinely directed. There will be similar agitation at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

#### VERSE 7

**“And he asked Pharaoh’s officers that were with him in the ward of his lord’s house saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly today?”** — The word “sadly” is from *ra*, and signifies *evil, afflicted*. The concern that each felt was reflected in his countenance; each felt worried and depressed. Rotherham renders: “Why are your faces troubled today?”

#### VERSE 8

**“And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it”** — They recognised that their two dreams were closely related, and therefore described them as *a dream*. The amazing similarity of the two dreams made them realise that God was behind them. In Egypt, as the monuments show, dreams were regarded as extremely significant.

**“And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God?”** — Joseph did not forget God in his trials, and lost no opportunity to speak about Him. He must have frequently meditated upon the significance of the dreams he had received from God, and pondered the promise that one day his brothers must bow before him. In this, “the word of Yahweh tried him” (Ps. 105:19).

**“Tell me them, I pray you”** — It was not out of idle curiosity that Joseph requested this but with a consciousness of his divine calling as prophet.

#### VERSE 9

**“And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me”** — The vine was appropriate to his position as cupbearer, and therefore symbolised his important office.

#### VERSE 10

**“And in the vine were three branches”** — This Joseph interpreted as representing three days (v. 12).

**“And it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes”** — This is a symbol of resurrection, and indicated that the king’s cupbearer would be released.

#### VERSE 11

**“And Pharaoh’s cup was in my hand”** — Implying that the prisoner would be restored to his high position.

**“And I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh’s cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh’s hand”** — Wine is the symbol of a life dedicated, and implies that the cupbearer would be restored to his position and render good service unto his lord.

#### VERSE 12

**“And Joseph said unto him, This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days”**—Joseph interpreted under divine impulse.

#### VERSE 13

**“Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head”** — He will consider your case (see margin). The head of the cupbearer was figuratively hanging down at that moment. The time limit is also significant. It is repeated in Hosea 6:2 to describe Israel’s national rejection and ultimate restoration: “After two days will he revive us; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.”

**“And restore thee unto thy place; and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh’s cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler”** — The despondency and worry of the cupbearer must have been greatly relieved when he heard this interpretation. So Israel nationally are the subject of divine prophecy, and will be restored to their former glory (Rom. 11:15,26; Amos 9:11-15).

#### VERSE 14

**“But think on me when it shall be**

**well with thee**” — The margin renders this as “remember me with thee.” We, too, are called upon to remember the antitypical Joseph in prison: “Take, eat; this is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me” (1 Cor. 11:24). In our liberty (Rom. 8:1) we have a duty to elevate Christ in our hearts (vv. 34-35).

**“And shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me”** — We, likewise, are called upon to “shew kindness” unto the antitypical Joseph in addition to “remembering him.” How do we do that? “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matt. 25:40).

**“And make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house”** — We make mention of Christ by confessing “him” before men; in which case, he will confess us before the Father in heaven (Matt. 10:32).

#### VERSE 15

**“For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews”** — This was well calculated to appeal to Pharaoh, and to gain his sympathy, for history indicates that Shepherd Kings of Semitic origin, the *Hyksos*, ruled in Egypt at the time.

**“And here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon”** — The word “dungeon”, *bowr*, is the same word translated “*pit*” in Zech. 9:11, and there used symbolically for the grave. Christ committed no sin, and therefore his execution at the hands of Gentile and Jewish leaders was quite unwarranted. He challenged his opponents: “which of you convinceth me of sin” (John 8:46; 18:23).

#### VERSE 16

**“When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said unto Joseph”** — The chief baker was encouraged by the obviously true explanation of the cupbearer’s dream given by Joseph.

**“I also was in my dream, and, behold, I had three white baskets on my head”** — Strong renders *choriy* as “white bread”, and the R.V. translates: *three baskets of white bread*. The expression sug-

gests leavened bread, which is a symbol of wickedness (cp. 1 Cor. 5:8). The baskets were on the head of the baker, suggesting a wicked mind. This is in contrast to the active hands of the cupbearer, who, in his dream, was actively engaged in doing something to the pleasure of Pharaoh (v. 11). We must be doers of the Word, not hearers only, deceiving our own selves.

#### VERSE 17

**“And in the uppermost basket there was of all manner of bakemeats for Pharaoh”** — The literal Hebrew is *the food of Pharaoh, the work of a baker*. Not the fruit of the vine which is the work of God, but the work of human skill. Again there is a contrast in the two dreams which is most suggestive in relation to the type. God is pleased with the fruits of the Spirit-Word (Gal. 5), not with the works of the flesh.

**“And the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head”** — The fine man-made confections displayed on the head of the baker were consumed by one for whom they were not intended. They were prepared for the benefit and pleasure of Pharaoh, but they were consumed by the bird (for in the Hebrew the word is in the singular) for whom they were not intended. Let us beware, lest the things that we do, even in the cause of truth, are not swallowed up by the flesh by being a form of self-satisfaction or personal glory (Col. 2:23).

#### VERSE 18

**“And Joseph answered and said, This is the interpretation thereof: The three baskets are three days”** — The baker awaited the interpretation with anticipations of hope, but Joseph had no words of comfort to offer him. But as the interpretation was of God, he had to faithfully report it, even though he may have desired to soften its meaning. In like manner, we must faithfully proclaim the will of God, even though it may cause offence to some.

#### VERSE 19

**“Yet within three days shall**

**Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee”**

— The concluding three ominous words provide the sole difference from the expression of v. 13 spoken in relation to the cupbearer. See also the similarity of expressions in the acceptance of the righteous and rejection of the wicked by the Judge recorded in Matthew 25: 31,41. For the “three days,” see comment on v. 13.

**“And shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee”** — The condemned will be as the accursed of God (Deut. 21:22-23).

**Joseph’s Interpretation is Vindicated**

— **Vv. 20-22**

*Three days later, on Pharaoh’s birthday, the cupbearer is restored to his position, and the baker is executed.*

**VERSE 20**

**“And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh’s birthday”** — The third day represents the day of judgment (cp. Hos. 6:2). It can be compared to a birthday, for it will usher in a new era which will see established in the earth a “new heavens (ruling powers) and a new earth (constitution of ruled).” It will be the epoch that will see Zion’s children brought to birth (cp. Isa. 66:7-8).

**“That he made a feast unto all his servants”** — For the antitype see Matt. 22:2; Luke 13:29; 22:30; Isa 25:6-9.

**“And he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants”** — The margin gives this as *reckoned; he took into account*. There will be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust (Acts 24:15), and both will be brought before the Judgment Seat (Rom. 2:6-16).

**VERSE 21**

**“And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again”** — The previous fears of the cupbearer (v. 7), were swept away in the great joy of his acquittal and restoration. So it will be with the redeemed at the Judgment Seat.

**“And he gave the cup into Pharaoh’s hand”** — The antitype: “His

servants shall serve Him” (Rev. 22:3).

**VERSE 22**

**“But he hanged the chief baker”**—

The destiny of the rejected is “the second death” (Rev. 21:8). The baker, figuratively, had already gone through the pangs of death in prison when his doomed destiny had been revealed to him.

**“As Joseph had interpreted to them”**— The destinies of both had been faithfully depicted by Joseph; even as the destinies of the just and the unjust are faithfully set forth in the Word. As it is written, so it will come to pass.

**Joseph’s Plea Is Forgotten By The Butler — v. 23**

*To Joseph’s dismay, he continues to languish in prison. Most likely this was due to the cupbearer’s fear of offending Pharaoh. Nevertheless it was in the purpose of God, for He had designed for Joseph’s elevation to glory as well as release, but the time was not ripe as yet.*

**VERSE 23**

**“Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgat him”** — The Hebrew *shakach* can signify *to put from one’s mind*, and not merely to forget from lack of memory. Once restored, the cupbearer put his prison experiences behind him. Perhaps he did not want to risk the anger of Pharaoh, and the danger of being flung back into prison by advancing the cause of another prisoner; perhaps he decided to wait for a more opportune time to speak to the king, and temporarily drove the thought of Joseph from his mind. In any case, he was “not grieved for the affliction of Joseph” (Amos 6:6), which was a further trial as Joseph languished in prison (Ps. 105:19). Whatever the cause, the cupbearer derived the benefits of freedom in accordance with the interpretation of Joseph, but forgot his own responsibilities towards him until it was again brought to his attention. There is constant need for those who have benefited from the teaching of Christ, to remember their responsibilities towards him (cp. Ps. 31:12; Eph. 2:11).



## CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

## JOSEPH'S DRAMATIC RISE TO POWER

*Joseph's case seems hopeless until after two years Pharaoh has dreams that defy the ability of Egypt's wisest men to interpret. When every assistance is tried in vain, the cupbearer recalls that Joseph is an "interpreter of dreams." He is hurriedly summoned from prison, and having interpreted the dreams, gives such sound counsel to Pharaoh that he is rewarded by being elevated to a position of power next to the monarch himself.*

**Pharaoh's Two Dreams — Vv. 1-8**

*Pharaoh is troubled by two dreams, the interpretation of which his wisest counsellors find to be beyond them.*

**VERSE 1**

**"It came to pass at the end of two full years"** — Joseph was thirty at this time (v. 46), and therefore about twenty-eight when the cupbearer was released from prison. If he was seventeen when sold into slavery (Ch. 37:2), he would have "wasted" (as some might imagine) some thirteen years in captivity. In fact, all that he suffered was essential to the purpose of Yahweh in him. Not only did it develop in him a character that fitted him for eternity in the Kingdom of God, but his very experiences were designed to save lives (Gen. 50:20).

**"That Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river"** — There are several different Hebrew words translated *river* (see note: Gen. 15:18). Here the word is *ye'or*, and is of Egyptian origin, signifying *channel, canal, shaft*, etc. It refers to the Nile with its channels.

**VERSE 2**

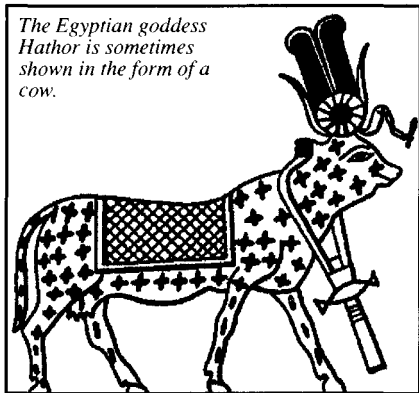
**"And, behold, there came up out of the river"** — The prosperity or otherwise of Egypt is dependent upon the flooding of the Nile. It does so during the summer months.

**"Seven well favoured kine and fat-fleshed"** — It is said that the male ox is the symbol of the Nile, and sacred to

Osiris, who was the Egyptian god of agriculture. "The Osiris steer often appears accompanied by seven cows, e.g. on the vignettes of the old and new *Book of the Dead*" (Skinner). The seven kine of Pharaoh's dream, therefore, were familiar figures in the mythology of the nation, and drew attention to the prevailing superstition regarding agriculture. The cow-goddess Hathor was given prominence in the worship of Egypt. A statue survives of King Amenhotep II standing beneath the protecting head of the cow-goddess. According to one belief, the sun, as a god, was represented as a calf born each day to Hathor. Thus the kine seen by Pharaoh could very easily be identified with Egypt.

**"And they fed in a meadow"** — The R. V. renders this as *reedgrass*. In the dream, the seven well favoured kine were

*The Egyptian goddess Hathor is sometimes shown in the form of a cow.*



plump and contented, grazing in the lush growth on the banks of a Nile channel.

**“And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill favoured and lean fleshed; and stood by the other kine upon the brink of the river”** — As seven kine was an Egyptian emblem of agriculture and prosperity, the identification with the nation was not difficult. But what was represented thereby? Surely the ill-favoured kine represented failure in agriculture upon which Egypt was utterly dependent.

#### VERSE 4

**“And the ill favoured and lean-fleshed kine did eat up the seven well favoured and fat kine”** — This remarkable cannibalism illustrated the extremity to which they were brought, for it was a most unnatural thing for kine to do. In fact, it would suggest a state of things considered utterly impossible!

**“So Pharaoh awoke”** — He awoke troubled and worried, convinced that the dream had a message of vital importance.

#### VERSE 5

**“And he slept and dreamed the second time”** — The second dream was to impress that the message it was intended to convey, was important, and had been “established by God” as to surely come to pass (v. 32).

**“And, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk”** — Wheat and barley were the staple grains of Egypt. The corn of the Egyptian Nile bears seven ears of grain on one stalk.

**“Rank and good”** — The Hebrew signifies “fat” and good (see mg.).

#### VERSE 6

**“And behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them”** — The southeast wind, blowing during March or April is most destructive, completely withering up the grass if it continues too long. It is known as the dreaded *sirocco* or *hamsin*. Sweeping across the desert, the cutting sand can blot out the sun, and cause havoc to life in all

its forms. The reference to the wind speaks of divine judgment. It is used frequently in Scripture in that relationship.

#### VERSE 7

**“And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears”** — This, again, is an impossibility. Whilst the figures of seven kine and seven ears of corn could well indicate Egypt, and thus be easy of interpretation, the devouring of kine by kine, and of corn by corn presents something considered absolutely impossible.

**“And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold it was a dream”** — Obviously it was a variation of the previous dream, impressing Pharaoh with the fact that the message it was intended to convey was vitally important.

#### VERSE 8

**“And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled”** — Pharaoh was deeply agitated and worried as to the import of the dreams.

**“And he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt”** — The Hebrew *chartomim* is from a root signifying *to engrave*, and relates to the Egyptian priests who understood the sacred hieroglyphic writings engraven on stone. They had a knowledge of art and science, pretended to reveal secrets, interpret hidden things, and foretell the future. It is said that they were divided into four classes, and five men were taken from them to act as the king’s counsellors.

**“And all the wise men thereof”** — These constituted the king’s counsellors, and comprised learned men capable of judging and advising.

**“And Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh”** — They were as incapable of doing that, as the world, today, is incapable of properly understanding the significance of the signs. Later, in a similar predicament over a dream, Nebuchadnezzar likewise found his clergy and political advisers to be inadequate (Dan. 2:2-23,28).

**The Butler Recommends Joseph To Pharaoh — Vv. 9-13**

*At this juncture the cupbearer recalls the occasion in prison when he and the baker had dreamed and Joseph had correctly interpreted their dreams. He confesses his fault in this regard to Pharaoh.*

**VERSE 9**

**“Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day”** — This is probably a diplomatic manner of approach, suggesting that he had been reviewing his past conduct as far as Pharaoh was concerned, and then introducing Joseph’s ability as a secondary matter.

**VERSE 10**

**“Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guard’s house, both me and the chief baker”** — The cupbearer recapitulates his experiences from the beginning.

**VERSE 11**

**“And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream”** — The latter part of this statement is rendered by the RSV as *a dream with its own meaning*. The dream was one, but it had two aspects to it. The Gospel is one, but it proclaims life or death to two different types of persons (2 Cor. 2:16).

**VERSE 12**

**“And there was there with us a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret”** — The Lord commenced his ministry as “a young man, an Hebrew,” and interpreted the hidden things of the Word to those with ears to hear (cp. Luke 2:46-47). He made known “the revelation of the mystery,” which was previously “kept secret” (Rom. 16:25).

**VERSE 13**

**“And it came to pass, as he inter-**

**preted to us, so it was; me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged”**—

This is the case inevitably with the revelation of God. His Word never returns unto Him void; it will accomplish that which He intends to be done by sending it forth (Isa. 55:11). He can speak of the future with certainty, for whatever He promises He is able to perform (Rom. 4:21).

**Joseph Before Pharaoh — Vv. 14-24**

*In view of the cupbearer’s words, Joseph is sent for, and after hastily preparing for an audience with Pharaoh, he is ushered into his presence. He disclaims that he can interpret dreams, declaring that the power to do so belongs to God. The dream is described, and is interpreted by Joseph. In the story of Joseph’s elevation, Pharaoh types Yahweh.*

**VERSE 14**

**“Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon”** — The Lord was brought out of the prison-house of death, and presented to the Father (Dan. 7:13).

**“And he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh”** — Shaving was a custom of Egyptians. Budge in *The Dweller On The Nile* writes: “The Egyptians of the upper classes paid great attention to their personal appearance and to the physical well-being of the body. As a rule men shaved off their beards and sidewhiskers, but not the hair of their head.” According to Herodotus (2.37), “The priests shave their whole body every third day,” this being for purposes of cleanliness. Joseph, therefore, followed the custom, knowing that it would please Pharaoh. Figuratively, he said: “Not my will, but thine be done.” His action illustrates the type, for shaving symbolised the state of one cleansed (Lev. 14:8), and the Lord was physically cleansed after he had risen from the dead. Next, Joseph “changed his raiment,” which points to a change of nature (cp. Zech. 3:4, Rom. 6:4). Finally, he came in unto Pharaoh, as the Lord did unto the Ancient of Days in heaven (Dan. 7:13). The verse before us finds comment in

Psalm 105:16-22:

*"Moreover He called for a famine upon the land:*

*He brake the whole staff of bread.*

*He sent a man before them,*

*Even Joseph, who was sold for a servant;*

*Whose feet they hurt with fetters;*

*He was laid in iron;*

*Until the time that His word came;*

*The word of Yahweh tried him.*

*The king sent and loosed him;*

*Even the ruler of the people and let him go free.*

*He made him lord of his house,*

*And ruler of all his substance;*

*To bind his princes at his pleasure:*

*And teach his senators wisdom."*

The description of the Psalm illustrates the type expressed in the teaching of Acts 2:23-24: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have made crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."

#### VERSE 15

**"And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it"** — Pharaoh recognised that the two dreams were actually one, but found nobody who could "unseal" it for him. In similar manner, there was none who could unseal the divine Revelation, but the Lord Jesus (Rev. 5:3-5).

**"And I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it"**—The margin gives the Hebrew idiom: *when thou hearest a dream thou canst interpret it*. Pharaoh attributed the ability to interpret to Joseph, not to God.

#### VERSE 16

**"And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me"** — Joseph, like Daniel (see Dan. 2:30), another type of Christ, disclaimed the ability to interpret dreams, foreshadowing the attitude of the Lord. See John 5:19.

**"God shall give Pharaoh an answer**

**of peace"** — Christ also declared that the doctrine of peace is God inspired. "My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me" (John 7:16). The interpretation of the dreams would set Pharaoh's mind at peace.

#### VERSE 17

**"And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river"** — Pharaoh relates his dreams in substantially the same terms as those in which they have already been described. However, he added certain facts concerning the lean kine.

#### VERSE 19

**"Such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness"** — Thus emphasizing the extremity of the famine.

#### VERSE 21

**"And when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they were still ill favoured, as at the beginning. So I awoke"** — After consuming all that was before them, they remained as destitute and in want as previously.

#### VERSE 23

**"And, behold, seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them"** — Pharaoh also described the seven blasted ears of corn as "withered" which the margin gives as *small*. This suggests that the grain was hard, undeveloped, dead.

#### Joseph Interprets The Dreams

— Vv. 25-32

*The dreams reveal that the plenty of Egypt would be followed by dire famine.*

#### VERSE 25

**"And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one"** — Pharaoh already recognised that. See note on v. 15.

**"God hath shewed Pharaoh what He is about to do"**—The Hebrew includes the definite article *ha-Elohim*, the Elohim, thus distinguishing Almighty God

from the Egyptian gods. What the magicians could not reveal (v. 24), Yahweh would do through the Elohim. This comprised the third set of double dreams that Joseph was called upon to interpret.

The first two, relating to family relations, concern national Israel; the second two, relating to the butler and baker, concern the destinies of the just and unjust; the third two, now before us, concern God's purpose with Gentiles. A little consideration will reveal that these three sets of double dreams take in the whole purpose of God.

#### VERSES 26,27

Joseph now provides the basic meaning of the dreams. He does so by the power of God (v. 25; cp. Dan. 2:28).

#### VERSE 28

**"This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God is about to do He sheweth unto Pharaoh"** — Again the definite article is linked with the word *Elohim* to emphasise that it was the

God of the Hebrews to whom reference was made.

#### VERSE 29

**"Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt"** — Answering to the good kine and corn of the dreams.

#### VERSE 30

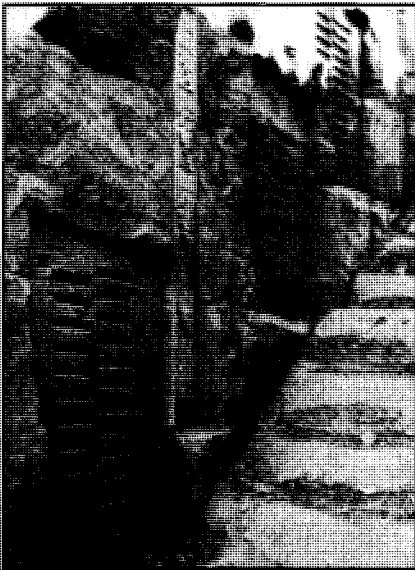
**"And there shall arise after them seven years of famine"** — Answering to the ill-favoured kine and withered corn.

**"And all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land"** — Note Pharaoh's description of the kine in v. 21.

#### VERSE 31

**"And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following"** — The word "reason" is *paniyim, faces*, and can be rendered: "from the faces." The effects of the famine would stare the nation in the face and would drive away the pleasurable aspects of the years of plenty.

**"For it shall be very grievous"** — The grievous effects of dire famine in Egypt are indicated on "an inscription on a rock on the island of Sahal in the First Cataract which tells of a seven year famine which took place in the reign of Pharaoh Djoser (the builder of the famed Step Pyramid) who reigned about 1000 years before Joseph. It reads: 'I was in distress on the great throne, and those who are in the palace were in affliction of heart because of a very great evil, for in my time, the Nile has not overflowed for seven years. There was scarcely any grain; fruits were dried up; and everything which they ate was short. Every man robbed his neighbour. The men who want to walk cannot move, the child wails, the young man drags his body about, and the hearts of the older men are crushed with despair. Their legs give way under them, they sink down on the ground, and they clutch their bodies with their hands (in pain). Their nobles have no counsel to give, and there is nothing to be obtained from the storehouses, but wind. Everything is in a state



*The Nilometer on the island of Elephantine at Aswan, used for measuring the Nile flood.*

of ruin” (from *Dwellers On The Nile*, E.A.W. Budge).

This inscription and description was in existence in Joseph’s day so that the Pharaoh of the time would have realised what the dread news of seven years’ famine signified.

Another seven years famine in 1066-1072 nearly ruined the country. “A loaf sold for \$17, and an egg for a dinar (approx. \$1.20). When all the animals were eaten men began to eat each other, and human flesh was sold in public. Passengers were caught in the streets by hooks let down from the windows, drawn up, killed and cooked. During the famine in 1201 people ate human flesh habitually. Parents killed and ate their children and a wife was found eating her husband raw. The graves were ransacked for food” (Lane Poole, *Middle Ages*, pp. 146, 216).

So dependent was Egypt on the flood waters of the Nile, that Nilometers (ancient Nile gauges) were cut on the rocks to measure the height of the yearly flood.

### VERSE 32

**“And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass”** — Paul makes reference to the promise and the oath as “two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie” (Heb. 6:18). Repetition, which is a frequent feature in the Word is designed to emphasise the certainty of God’s purpose coming to pass.

### Joseph Recommends A National Policy — Vv. 33-36

*Joseph, realising that the situation is urgent, recommends that immediate steps*

*be taken to counter the problem and suggests that a man be appointed to examine the situation.*

### VERSE 33

**“Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt”** — These characteristics form an essential part of the parable of Joseph spoken by both Solomon (Ecc. 4:14), and the Lord (Matt. 24:45). Solomon described him as coming out of prison to reign, and the Lord as being “faithful and wise”.

### VERSE 34

**“Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land”** — The word for “officers” here is different to that which we have met with previously (e.g. Ch. 39:1). It is the word *paqiyyim* from *paqad*, to visit, and signifies *overseers* or *superintendents*.

**“And take up a fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years”** — They normally gave a tenth, so this tax was not over-burdensome in view of the prevailing prosperity. Five is the number of grace, and is appropriate to the circumstances, for that which was taken from them was designed to provide for them in a time of need.

### VERSE 35

**“And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh”** — In the type this reminds us of the “treasure in heaven” that one is able to store up for future use. See Matt. 6:20; Luke 16:9.

**“And let them keep food in the cities”** — It would be retained under the care of Pharaoh through his officers



throughout his realm.

### VERSE 36

**“And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine”** — Joseph suggests that the people be asked to sacrifice in the years of plenty so that they may have that upon which they could draw in the time of want. This, he declared, would save them from “perishing,” or, as the Hebrew expresses it, “from being cut off”. His suggestion was an extremely wise one. Let us apply it spiritually. We should sacrifice something of the present that we may in a time of want (at the Judgment Seat) have that upon which we can draw in order to save us from being “cut off.”

### Joseph Is Appointed In Charge

— Vv. 37-40

*The suggestion is applauded as excellent and it is recognised that Joseph has all the qualifications necessary to implement it. He is appointed to the position. So “from a prison he comes forth to reign,” So, also, did the Lord Jesus.*

### VERSE 37

**“And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants”** — The purpose of redemption in and through the Lord is pleasing to the Father and the angels (1 Pet. 1:12).

### VERSE 38

**“And Pharaoh said unto his ser-**



*Mosaic of Egyptian building activity showing the industry of the times.*

**vants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?”** — In relation to the type, see John 3:34. In the Hebrew, there is no definite article attached to the word *Elohim* in this verse, in contradistinction to when Joseph spake. As an Egyptian, Pharaoh spake of many gods.

### VERSE 39

**“And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this”** — See John 5:20.

**“There is none so discreet and wise as thou art”** — Paul wrote that “in whom (the Christ) are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:3). Joseph foreshadowed that aspect of the Lord.

### VERSE 40

**“Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled”** — In the Hebrew this is a remarkable statement. “Word” is from the Hebrew *peh*, *mouth*, and “ruled” is from *nashaq* signifying *to kiss* (see mg. of A.V.). The idea is that whatever Joseph said or commanded they would be agreeable to, and would obey. Figuratively they would kiss his mouth. This remarkable figure of speech finds its use throughout Scripture. In ancient times, a kiss had far greater meaning than today. It was the token of allegiance (1 Sam. 10:1); friendship (1 Sam. 20:41); affections (Gen. 45:15); true love (1 Pet. 5:14); adoration (Hos. 13:2). It is the natural sign of sympathy. Absalom won the hearts of the people by kissing those who came to court with their suits (2 Sam. 15:5. Cf. Prov. 27:6; Luke 22:47-48). True and right words are as a kiss of the mouth, thus: “Every man shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer” (Prov. 24:24-26), and such words demand homage and obedience, hence the use of the expression in the verse before us. This figurative use of the kiss is the reason why, in the beautiful expressions of *The Song of Songs* the Bride (the perfected ecclesia) speaks ardently of the kisses of the groom (the Lord). She desires to hear the words of his mouth, and is pleased to do all that he

commands. In answer to the type, Christ has been placed over the house of God (Heb. 3:6), and all must submit to him.

**“Only in the throne will I be greater than thou”** — For the antitype, see John 14:28; 1 Cor. 15:28.

### Joseph’s High Authority And Marriage —Vv. 41-45

*Joseph is made Prime Minister. He is given the seal of office, arranged in special garments, and permitted to use the chariot of state. His name is changed, and he marries into high society.*

#### VERSE 41

**“And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt”**—The Lord Jesus was also given a name above all others, being subject only to Yahweh (Phil. 2:9-11). Already he exercises power over the nations (Matt. 28:18). Moreover, his work of redemption was broadened to extend to Gentiles.

#### VERSE 42

**“And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph’s hand”** — This ring was the seal of authority (cp. Est. 3:10; 8:2,10). Christ was sealed with the divine authority (see John 6:27).

**“And arrayed him in vestures of fine linen”** — Herodotus states (Book 2:81) that the priests of Egypt, who constituted the aristocracy of the nation, wore linen garments. Christ will exercise both religious and civil authority.

**“And put a gold chain about his neck”** — This was the symbol of authority to rule (see Dan. 5:29).

#### VERSE 43

**“And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had”** — Special chariots were constructed for the Pharaohs, some of which were discovered in Tutankhamen’s tomb. These chariots gilded over with gold, and with vanquished and bound enemies as their principal decorative motif, were the official vehicles for the Pharaohs, and were resplendent as the sun. There was no mis-



taking them. The appearance of Joseph in one of the royal chariots would establish his status in the sight of all.

**“And they cried before him, Bow the knee”** — The Hebrew is *Abrek*, which the margin gives as *Tender Father*, deriving the latter word from *Ab*, Father, in the Hebrew. There seems warrant for this from the words of Joseph in Gen 45:8, where the Hebrew *Ab* is rendered “father.” It also suits the antitype, for the Lord is described as the *Father of eternity* (Isa. 9:6), and the Redeemed are called his “sons” (cp. Isa. 53:10; Heb. 2:13-14). However, this rendition is disputed by others. Some see in it an Egyptian title signifying, literally, *Thy heart to thee*, and thus likening it to a call to attention, or allegiance. Others give it as the A.V., or, according to Gesenius, “Bow the head.”

**“And he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt”** — For the antitype see Mic. 5:2; Matt. 2:16; Rev. 11:15.

#### VERSE 44

**“And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh”** — My authority is absolute.

**“And without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt”** — Delegated authority and status was vested in Joseph as it has also been in Christ. See John 5:26-27; Matt. 11:27.

#### VERSE 45

**“And Pharaoh called Joseph’s name Zaphnath-paaneah”** — Josephus interprets this as signifying *Revealer of Secrets* (see Ant. 2:6:1), which expresses its Hebrew form. Jerome gives it as *Saviour of the World*, deriving the meaning from the Coptic *p-sot-om-ph-eneh*. Some Egypt-



tologists see in it the Egyptian form of *de-pnute-ef-onh* signifying, *The God speaks and He Lives*. The *Septuagint* has *Psonthom Phanech* or *Saviour of the Age*, whilst Stanley prefers *Rescuer of the World*. All these meanings are closely related, and show that the “new name” given to Joseph witnessed to his ability, and honoured him before man. See Phil. 2:9-10.

**“And he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On”** — This was a position of high authority and prestige in the land. Asenath is an Egyptian name signifying *She Who is of Neith*, the Minerva of the Egyptians. She is described as the “daughter of Potipherah,” the same name as occurs in Gen. 39:1. However, Potipherah is a common Egyptian name, and the priest of this verse doubtless was a different man to the one who bought Joseph as a slave, for he was a eunuch. By marriage, Joseph became associated with the priesthood, and so, by a remarkable type, the elevation of the Lord Jesus as priest was foreshadowed. See Heb. 7:12-13. The marriage with Asenath took place, and was recorded, for the purpose of foreshadowing the purpose of God in Christ. We can be quite sure that Joseph would have educated his wife in the principles of true worship, and that his home in Egypt would be a centre for such.

“On” signifies *Strength*. It is also known as Heliopolis, the *City of the Sun*, being dedicated to the sun-god Ra. It was situated about seven miles N.E. of Cairo. Heliopolis was the chief city of Egyptian science with which religion was closely related. Herodotus speaks of it as one of the four great cities of his day, noted for its religious festivals in honour of the sun. In Joseph’s day it was noted for its huge and ornate Temple, which, in Jeremiah 43:13 is styled Bethshemesh, the *House of the Sun*. The site has been robbed of its magnificent ruins, to

become the rich adornment of other cities like Rome, Constantinople and London. Today, the Cairo airport is in the vicinity of the site.

Of the ancient splendour of On, nothing remains above ground but a red granite obelisk from Aswan erected to celebrate the jubilee of Pharaoh Sesostris I. Originally this obelisk marked the entrance to the great temple of On. Tradition says that Joseph and Mary sojourned in On with the infant Jesus (cp. Matt. 2:13-14). Isaiah 19:18 prophetically refers to a future time when five centres in Egypt shall be set up to proclaim the Truth, one being called *The City of Destruction*. Some apply this to *City of the Sun* and identify it with Heliopolis.

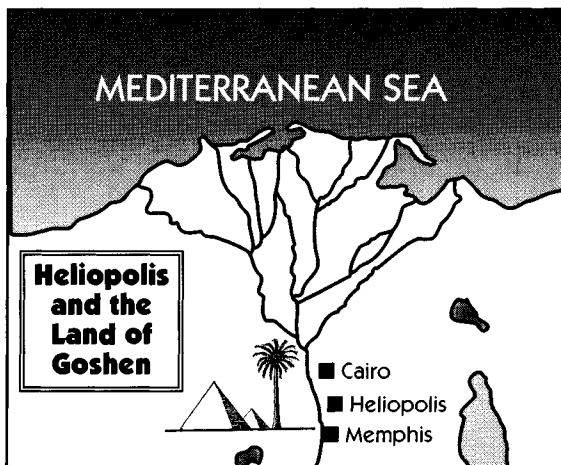
**“And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt”** — He did so in the discharge of his vice-regal duties.

#### Joseph’s Age, Administration and Family — Vv. 46-52

*Though only thirty, Joseph manifests great maturity, confidence and skill in the administration of the nation. Meanwhile, two sons are born to him.*

#### VERSE 46

**“And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt”** — He had been 17 when he experienced the hostility of his brethren (Gen.



37:2), so that thirteen years had passed in exile. If he was three years in prison (cp. Ch. 40:4 with 41:1), he must have served ten years in the house of Potiphar. Isaac died the year before Joseph's elevation (Gen. 35:28-29). His age at this time is significant. Thirty was the age that the Levites commenced their duties (Num. 4:3), and the age that David began to reign in Hebron (2 Sam. 5:4). More significantly, it was the age at which the Lord commenced his public ministry before his Father (Luke 3:23).

**"And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt"** — He did so in the performance of his official duties, establishing and superintending the district overseers. By divine power conferred upon him (Matt. 28:18), the Lord does likewise. As chief shepherd he appointed under-shepherds to supervise the affairs of his administration (cp. 1 Pet. 5:1-4). His activity in that direction is illustrated by his seven messages to the "angels" of the Asian Ecclesias in spiritual Egypt (Rev. 2,3).

#### VERSE 47

**"And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls"** — The RSV renders this as "abundantly." The plenteous years of Apostolic days, which brought many to the Truth, have been followed by times of famine, during which few have "ears to hear."

#### VERSE 48

**"And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt"** — He gathered up all the portions levied (v. 34).

**"And laid up the food in the cities"** — It is always a wise provision, not usually observed in this age of reckless waste, to conserve resources in times of plenty, for use in days of famine, or want. Joseph laid up the corn in granaries provided. This was normal in Egypt. The monuments depict men bringing corn into granaries.

**"The food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the**

**same"** — He compelled the people to labour in days of plenty, even though it did not seem necessary. There was such abundance, that the people may have been disposed to allow it to waste in the field, but he ordered that it be brought into the confines of the city and there stored.

#### VERSE 49

**"And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much"** — The verb signifies *to heap up*. He heaped up corn very much.

**"Until he left numbering; for it was without number"** — At first he kept a very careful record of the amount of corn received in order that it might be fairly apportioned in the years of famine. But ultimately, as it was seen that sufficient was gathered in, this practice was discontinued.

#### VERSE 50

**"And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came"** — In the blessing of Moses, recorded in Deut. 33:17 it is obvious that these two sons represent Israel spiritual and natural, described by Isaiah as "the sons of Zion" (Isa. 66:8-9; cp. Zech. 4:11).

#### VERSE 51

**"And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh"** — Manasseh signifies "forgetting" from *nashah* to forget.

**"For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil"** — The word "toil" is *amal* in Hebrew, and signifies the wearing effort of such labour on mind or body, and hence, worry. For the antitype, see Isa. 53:11.

**"And all my father's house"** — The loss of his father's house was in measure compensated by the building of a house for himself.

#### VERSE 52

**"And the name of the second called he Ephraim"** — Ephraim signifies *double fruit* or *fruitfulness*. He superseded Manasseh in the matter of the firstborn and so represented spiritual Israel.

**"For God hath caused me to be**

**fruitful in the land of my affliction”** — This language shows that Joseph viewed his present glory as of a temporary nature; Egypt still remained for him the land of affliction. For the application of fruitfulness in regard to the antitype, see John 14:12; 15:16; Isa. 53:10.

**Plenty Followed By Famine**  
— Vv. 53-57

*Due to Joseph's crop-conservation policy, Egypt has plenty of food stored for the years of famine. Other countries are not so fortunate. The drought extends beyond Egypt to Palestine and elsewhere, and as its impact is felt more and more, people make their way south to buy corn.*

**VERSE 53**

**“And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended”** — In the antitype, the “fulness of the Gentiles” was typically gathered in. Cp. Rom. 11:25.

**VERSE 54**

**“And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said”** — The extreme effect of famine in Egypt is described in our comments on v. 31.

**“And the dearth was in all lands”** — It spread beyond the borders of Egypt.

**“But in all the land of Egypt there was bread”** — Due to the sound conservation policy of Joseph. In the same way, though there may be spiritual famine in all the world (cp. Amos 8:11), there is always food wherever the antitypical Joseph is found.

**VERSE 55**

**“And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread”** — There is no word for “when” in the original; the statement is made: “all the land of Egypt hungered, and the people cried unto Pharaoh ....”

**“And Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do”** — Pharaoh placed supreme confidence in Joseph, as Yahweh does in Christ. He delegated to him his full authority, and directed the people to heed

his wisdom and obey his word. In like manner, the Voice from heaven directed the Apostles to hearken unto the Lord (See Matt. 17:5; John 1:14-16; Phil. 4:19; Col. 1:19).

**VERSE 56**

**“And the famine was over all the face of the earth”** — It extended to those parts which did not have the benefit of Joseph's administration. See Ps. 105:16; Acts 7:11. For the antitype, see Amos 8:11.

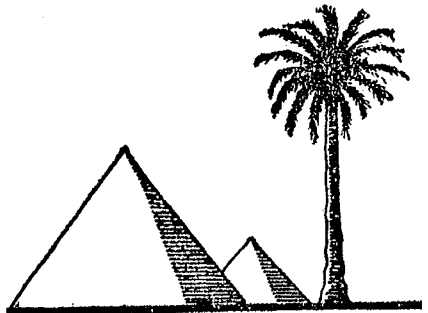
**“And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians”** — The storehouses were granaries established throughout the land. From them Joseph dispersed corn to the people. See Prov. 11:26.

**“And the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt”** — Literally, the *famine was strong*. It increased in its severity as food became increasingly scarce.

**VERSE 57**

**“And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn”** — Joseph became the symbol of salvation “to the end of the earth” (Isa. 49:6). There is a spiritual famine in the earth at present (Amos 8:11), and men must seek Joseph in Egypt (Christ, in the Gentile times) if they would be fed.

**“Because that the famine was so sore in all lands”** — It became more and more severe throughout the earth.



## JOSEPH'S BRETHREN HUMBLLED BEFORE HIM

### (Chapters 42:1–45:15)

*The severity of the drought reaches to Palestine as well as other countries, and ultimately involves the family of Jacob. It is driven by its extremity to seek relief; and the only place where it can be found is in Egypt. Ten sons of Jacob make their way thither, only to run into unexpected trouble. The haughty Egyptian in charge (as they regard Joseph) views them with suspicion and imposes conditions which they find difficult to fulfil. The circumstances prick their consciences, and they begin to view the increasing difficulties and dangers to which they are subjected as punishment for their treatment of Joseph. In all the apparent severity with which Joseph treats his brethren, however, he is motivated by love. Simeon is imprisoned, and the demand made that Benjamin be brought to Egypt in order to vindicate the story of the brethren. One by one they are humbled before him, until Joseph is convinced of his brothers' change of heart. He then reveals himself unto them.*

## CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

### JOSEPH'S BRETHREN HARSHLY TREATED

*Joseph's brethren seek corn in Egypt, but run into unexpected difficulties. They are treated with the utmost suspicion by the imperious governor of the land, who demands that they return and bring Benjamin to Egypt to vindicate the truth of their story. Meanwhile Simeon is retained as hostage. At home, Jacob learns of the imprisonment of Simeon with the greatest foreboding. Both Jacob and his sons link their present distress with the treatment received by Joseph. The brethren view it as punishment for what they did to him; Jacob sees it as further distress in the accumulation of evil stemming from his son's supposed death. He refuses that Benjamin should go down into Egypt.*

#### Joseph's Brethren Sent To Purchase Corn — Vv. 1-5

*Ten sons of Jacob are sent to purchase corn in Egypt.*

#### VERSE 1

**"Now when Jacob saw that there**

**was corn in Egypt"** — He "saw" it by report (v. 2). He probably saw caravans returning from Egypt with supplies, and enquired as to their source.

**"Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another"** — His words describe the despair and helplessness of

men who can do nothing to relieve a situation.

## VERSE 2

**“Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt”** — The famine was so severe that all circumstances were taken into account. Previously, in time of famine, Abraham (Gen. 12:10) had made his way to Egypt, and Isaac (Gen. 26:2) contemplated doing so until restrained by God. On those occasions, however, the famine had not afflicted that country. It was different now. Famine had reached Egypt which normally is not dependent upon rain (Zech. 14:18), but there was corn still to be purchased.

**“Get you down thither, and buy for us from thence”** — Under circumstances of famine, Abraham had gone down to Egypt to dwell therein. Why did not Jacob? Probably because such migrations would not have been permitted under circumstances of famine in Egypt.

**“That we may live, and not die”** — This describes the extremity of their need. It foreshadows the future “time of Jacob’s trouble” out of which he shall be delivered by the antitypical Joseph (Jer. 30:7).

## VERSE 3

**“And Joseph’s ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt”** — The ten were sent probably because the corn was rationed according to the number that applied.

## VERSE 4

**“But Benjamin, Joseph’s brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure, mischief befall him”** — Jacob’s previous love for Joseph was now lavished upon the remaining son of Rachel. Jacob also attributed his loss of Joseph in part to the carelessness of his other sons.

## VERSE 5

**“And the sons of Israel came to buy corn among those that came”** — The literal Hebrew is *in the midst of those that came*. They formed part of a general influx of people into the land to buy corn.

It suggests the present commercial and social assimilation of Jews among Gentiles. In the Age to come, it will not only be Jews who will seek the food of the antitypical Joseph, but Gentiles as well.

**“For the famine was in the land of Canaan”** — This part of the verse should really commence v. 6, as introductory to the next section which describes the position of Joseph in the land and his treatment of his brethren.

## Jacob’s Sons Are Imprisoned As Spies — Vv. 6-17

*Arriving in Egypt, Jacob’s sons pay their respects to the Governor of the land thus fulfilling portion of the dreams. Dressed in his Egyptian regalia of authority, they fail to recognise him as Joseph, whilst he “makes himself strange unto them.” He knows them, but decides to put them to the test, and so manifests an attitude of distrust towards them. He accuses them of being spies, claims that they had visited the land as enemies to overthrow it, and to their growing consternation and fear, finally imprisons them for three days.*

## VERSE 6

**“And Joseph was the governor over the land”** — The Hebrew *shalliyt*, governor, is from a root signifying to *dominate*, and is thus suggestive of supreme, despotic authority. According to Josephus, it is similar in form to the name of the first of the Hyksos, or Shepherd kings, of Egypt (see *Against Apion* 1:14). His name was Salatis, which could easily have been amended to *Shalliyt*, to become the title of a governor wielding absolute power.

**“And he it was that sold to all the people of the land”** — He did not personally dispense the food (see v. 25), but supervised the sale of it. He probably adjusted the price, regulated the amount to be sold to each person, and kept an eye upon those who came to buy in case enemies of Egypt infiltrated into the country to overthrow it in its weakened condition. As Governor, Joseph typed the Lord’s future position over Gentiles and Jews (Jer. 30:21).

**“And Joseph’s brethren came, and**

**bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth**" — What a tremendous moment of triumph for Joseph, as he saw his brethren humbling themselves before him, and recognised that the dreams Yahweh had given him were being fulfilled (Gen. 37:7-10). Many years of sorrow and tears had passed away, and now God's promise to him was vindicated. So it was with the Lord (Heb. 5:7-9); so it will be with all the redeemed (Acts 14:22). In fulfilment of the type, the Jews will likewise be compelled to bow down before the Lord in due time.

**VERSE 7**

**"And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them"** — They came expecting to be greeted by an Egyptian, and saw one dressed as such. Joseph heightened the impression by acting as a foreigner. The Hebrew *nokhar*, "made himself strange", signifies *to act as a foreigner*.

**"And spake roughly unto them"** — He spoke to them in a severe, harsh and pre-emptory manner accusing them of being secret enemies of the State. He did this, not out of the spirit of revenge, but in order to get at their hearts. Christ was compelled to address the Jews in a similar manner at his first advent.

**"And he said unto them, Whence come ye?"** — He spake through an interpreter (verse 23).

**"And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food"** — Their answer admitted their distant and foreign origin, and their need of food.

**VERSE 8**

**"And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him"** — At his first advent the Jews failed to recognise the Lord for what he is (John 1:10; 6:42; 7:15). At his second coming, they will also fail at first to recognise him (Ps. 24:8-10; Zech. 13:6).

**VERSE 9**

**"And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them and said unto them"** — In growing wonder

and gratitude towards God, he could see the unfolding of the divine purpose in his life. Twenty years had passed away since the dreams had been given to him. Thus faith demands patience for the fulfilling of divine promises.

**"Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come"** — The word for "spies" is *ragalim*, signifying *to walk about*. Joseph claimed that they had come to walk about the land to ascertain its unprotected and unfortified condition, with the object of attacking it. Egypt was particularly susceptible to attack from the north, and Joseph's brethren had disclosed that they were from Canaan.

**VERSE 10**

**"And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come"** — The brethren maintain that their only purpose is the satisfaction of their need. The Jews claim to this day that the purpose of the founding of the modern State of Israel is to fulfil the vision of the prophets (see *Encyclopedia Judaica* Introduction to Year Book, 1973), but, as with Joseph's brethren, they will not accomplish their purpose until they recognise the antitypical Joseph for what he truly is!

**VERSE 11**

**"We are all one man's sons"** — The brethren advance this as vindication of their integrity. But what proof did that provide? They claimed, correctly, that no man would expose ten of his sons to the dangerous business of spying, for he would risk the lives of them all. They asserted that they were of one family, not of different nations, or of different families in a nation. However, in doing so, the brethren provided Joseph with the opening he desired, for it gave him opportunity of calling upon them to supply proof that they were all of one family, by supplying the missing member thereof (vv. 9-16).

**"We are true men, thy servants are no spies"** — The word "true" signifies *sincere, upright, honest*.

**VERSE 12**

**"And he said unto them, Nay, but to**

see the nakedness of the land ye are come”—As the brethren urged their genuineness, Joseph assumed an even harsher attitude, probably to hide his growing desire to reveal himself unto them. “The nakedness of the land” is rendered by Moffatt as *how defenceless the land is*.

**VERSE 13**

“**And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan, and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not**” — Here the brethren open their hearts more plainly still and mention points concerning the state of Jacob and Benjamin that Joseph was anxious to learn.

**VERSE 14**

“**And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies**” — Joseph claims that sufficient proof has not been given to vindicate their true status.

**VERSE 15**

“**Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence**” — Joseph’s use of the phrase *by the life of Pharaoh* is more in the nature of an emphatic asseveration as in 1 Sam. 1:26; 17:55, than an oath. The phrase “as Pharaoh lives” is more like an authoritative declaration: *in the name of Pharaoh*, I proclaim this or that.

“**Except your youngest brother come hither**” — The proof of their sincerity was whether they would, or could, bring their youngest brother to Joseph. Perhaps he feared lest they had treated Benjamin as they had himself.

**VERSE 16**

“**Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies**”—The Hebrew word here rendered “prison” signifies *to be bound*; Joseph gave sentence that their liberty would be restrained until they produced Benjamin.

Benjamin signifies *The Son of the Right Hand*, and he, likewise, typified Christ. Joseph therefore demanded (as did John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus at his first advent) that his brethren produce “fruits meet for repentance” by producing Benjamin in their midst. Until they did that, they would be bound. The Lord taught the Jews of his day that if they acknowledged the Truth it would “make them free” (John 8:32). They were “bound” in sin without knowing it; and the only way to freedom was by identifying themselves with Christ (Rom. 8:1).

**VERSE 17**

“**And he put them all together into ward three days**” — Jewry was likewise imprisoned for three prophetic millennial days (Hos. 6:2).

**They Are Released On Condition Of Returning With Benjamin — Vv. 18-28**

*After three days, Joseph changes his tactics. He releases his brethren from prison providing they returned with Benjamin, but retaining Simeon as a hostage. This treatment induces a searching of conscience on the part of the brethren. They recall their treatment of Joseph, and conclude that their present sufferings are Divine judgment upon them because of their unjust harshness towards him. They discuss the matter audibly, unaware that Joseph overhears and understands what they are saying. He is moved with compassion for them, and sends them away with their money in their sacks. But this only adds to their consternation and fear.*

**VERSE 18**

“**And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; for I fear God**” — In the Hebrew, the definite article is supplied: “I fear *the* God.” Joseph, therefore, claimed to worship the true God in contrast to the idols of Egypt, and revealed this to the brethren.

**VERSE 19**

“**If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison**” — Joseph’s comment is made in answer to their claim of v. 11. He pro-

posed to test their sincerity by asking them to produce their younger brother. The severity of his original proposal (v. 16), in which they were all treated as he had been treated by them, is greatly relaxed. Thus he showed them greater mercy than they had revealed towards him.

**“Go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses”** — A further act of grace.

#### VERSE 20

**“But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die”** — Their identification with Benjamin, another type of Christ, would be evidence of their genuineness.

**“And they did so”** — They consented to his proposition.

#### VERSE 21

**“And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother”** — Pricked in conscience, they attribute their problems as just punishment for a terrible sin committed over twenty years before. This is the only place in Genesis where sin is publicly acknowledged, indicating the repentance that had taken place in the hearts of Jacob’s sons. Israel will similarly acknowledge their wickedness in causing the Lord’s crucifixion when caused to mourn in the future (Zech. 12:10).

**“In that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us”** — The pleading of Joseph is not mentioned in the narrative, but is recalled by the brethren on this occasion.

**“And we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us”** — Jewry was similarly deaf to the pleading of the Lord nearly 2000 years ago, and the time will come when the people will recall this to their regret. Nevertheless it will be a necessary step to their conversion.

#### VERSE 22

**“And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear?”** — They had delivered up Joseph against the advice and inclination

of Reuben (see notes Gen. 37:21-22,29) and evidently Reuben had subsequently brought this fact to their notice. In similar fashion, the guilt of Jewry, in the crucifixion of the Lord, has constantly been urged against the nation (Acts 2:23).

The term “child” is *yeled* in Hebrew and signifies *one born, a child, lad, or young man*. Joseph was seventeen years of age at the time his brothers manifested hatred towards him, far beyond the age of one considered a “child” today.

**“Therefore, behold, also his blood is required”** — This proved true, also, of those Jews who demanded the death of the Lord. They shouted, “His blood be upon us, and on our children” (Matt. 27:25). That terrible price was paid by both them and their descendants, and will continue to be paid until they recognise their fault and seek the mercy of God in truth.

#### VERSE 23

**“And they knew not that Joseph understood them”** — Cp. Isa. 11:3; John 2:24-25. They did not comprehend that he was “the silent listener to their conversation.” Do we do so in regard to the antitypical Joseph? Israel still fails to comprehend that the Lord understands their state, for the people consider him as dead, and are in complete ignorance of his present power and omniscience (cp. 1 Pet. 3:22).

**“For he spake unto them by an interpreter”** — The literal Hebrew is *the interpreter was between them*. Joseph, as required by his position and dignity, had kept some distance away from the brethren. Between them there was the interpreter through whom they conversed. How exact the type is to the antitype. The Holy Spirit revealed the Truth to the Apostles (John 16:7), and they acted as “interpreter” of Christ to Jew and Gentile (2 Cor. 5:20).

#### VERSE 24

**“And he turned himself about from them, and wept”** — He excused himself for a moment and withdrew himself a space. Overcome by his feelings of love and compassion, he wept. Compassion is a Divine characteristic. Yahweh was afflict-



ed with the afflictions of His people (Isa. 63:9), and the Lord wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41), and at the grave of Lazarus (John 11:35). He did so, even though he realised that Jerusalem deserved the punishment that would fall upon it, and that Lazarus would shortly emerge from the tomb alive. Joseph's emotion, therefore, prefigured that of his antitype. He was a man of deep compassion. It is mentioned seven times (the number of perfection) that he wept:

(1) As he reflected upon the ways of Providence and the pitiful condition of his brethren (Gen. 42:24).

(2) In his great love for his brother Benjamin (Ch. 43:30).

(3) In joy at his reunion with his brethren (Ch. 45:2).

(4) When he revealed himself to Benjamin (Ch. 45:14).

(5) On meeting his father (Ch. 46:29).

(6) On the death of his father (Ch. 50:1).

(7) At the failure of his brethren to recognise his true motives (Ch. 50:17).

The heroes of faith were not men of cold indifference to the sufferings of others, but were warmly emotional to existing circumstances. Their feelings in that regard were governed by and sprung from the Word.

**“And returned to them again”** — Took his place again before them, probably seated on a throne of state.

**“And communed with them”** — As to whom should be left behind. The negotiations would be conducted through the interpreter.

**“And took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes”** — He first communed with them, but then “took” Simeon. Evidently the brethren could not agree as to who should remain behind; finally Joseph asserted his authority, and selected Simeon. Why select Simeon? Joseph evidently passed over Reuben as being comparatively guiltless, and selected the next to eldest, namely Simeon who would have been next in line of responsibility. This revealed that he had an understanding of the circumstances of the men before him, greater than they imagined

(see also Gen. 43:33). But, for the moment, they possibly passed this over as an evidence of mere chance. Meanwhile, Simeon was left “bound” — a warning as to his fate if they failed to carry out the conditions imposed.

#### VERSE 25

**“Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn”** — There was a blessing bestowed upon the brethren even before they came to full understanding of the identity of Joseph, and the type is fulfilled in Israel after the flesh. Their final restoration to divine favor is preceded by a return to the Land and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. In their development they are recipients of divine blessings, in certain respects.

**“And to restore every man's money into his sack”** — Literally *their pieces of silver*. The corn was supplied by Joseph “without money and without price” (Isa. 55:1), and the silver belonging to the flesh was returned. Silver is the metal of redemption (Exod. 30:13-16; Lev. 5:15), and the brethren had to learn to seek the grace and forgiveness of Joseph. Israel must learn the same lesson; meanwhile Judaism places confidence in what the flesh can offer.

**“And to give them provision for the way”** — The antitype, Christ, provides for all the needs of the brethren, though sometimes not for their wants. See Phil. 4:19.

**“And thus did he unto them”** — Even though they were ignorant of his deep concern for their welfare. See Matt. 5:45.

#### VERSE 26

**“And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence”** — They doubtless had a large number of animals in order to carry sufficient corn for Jacob's extensive household.

#### VERSE 27

**“And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money; for, behold, it was in his sack's mouth”**—The word for

“inn” is *malon*. It is from a root signifying to lodge, or to pass the night. A literal rendition would be *lodging place*. This was probably a well where they paused for the night. There they found the money returned to them: a mysterious occurrence which they could not comprehend, and which filled them with foreboding and fear.

**VERSE 28**

**“And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and, lo, it is even in my sack: and their heart failed them”**— They failed completely to comprehend the significance of this. Each searched his sack and found his money (Ch. 43:21). But this only caused fear. Literally, their *heart went forth*, or, as we would say, their hearts were in their mouths with apprehension.

**“And they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us?”** — They recognised that, in some mysterious way, God was behind all the circumstances that had taken place. Already, they had commenced to search their hearts in connection with their manifestation of hatred and betrayal in regard to Joseph; and now they began to question the purpose of God in all that had taken place. Dimly, they commenced to see a divine foreshadowing in the events of their lives. This is very true of Israel after the flesh, to the present time.

**Jacob’s Deep Concern At The Report Of His Sons —Vv. 29-38**

*The brethren return to their father with an amazing story of adventure, but also with an ominous request which fills Jacob with apprehension. They insist that if more corn is required, Benjamin must accompany them to Egypt. Jacob refuses to permit this, doubtless hoping that the famine will break.*

**VERSE 29**

**“And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befell unto them; saying”** — They had witnessed the honour paid to Joseph by Gentiles. The Lord Jesus

is acknowledged by those whom he is pleased to honor with his presence: his brethren of faith (Heb. 2:10), though Israel after the flesh do not yet understand his true identity

**VERSE 30**

**“The man, who is the lord of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country”** — However they do not mention the full extent of Joseph’s “roughness” — such as his first proposal that they be all retained in ward until Benjamin was brought (v. 16), nor that Simeon had been left bound (v. 24). They probably reasoned that Jacob would never release Benjamin if they did so.

**VERSES 31-34**

**“And we said unto him, We are true men; we are no spies”** — These verses provide a recapitulation of the events that had taken place in Egypt, omitting the points mentioned previously.

**VERSE 35**

**“And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man’s bundle of money was in his sack: and when both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid”** — The circumstances were beyond their comprehension, and being inexplicable, caused only fear.

**VERSE 36**

**“And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children”** — Though ignorant of the facts of the case, Jacob correctly blamed his sons for the succession of family disasters that had befallen him.

**“Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away”** — He viewed Simeon as he viewed Joseph: as lost to him.

**“All these things are against me”** — The words “against me” are literally *upon me*, i.e. as a heavy burden that I must bear alone. Jacob found no comfort nor help in his sons as far as this burden was concerned. Indeed, the circumstances were so black in his sight that he temporarily failed

to comprehend the truth of Rom. 8:28: "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose." Later, however, he was able to discern the overshadowing care of God, and the presence of the Elohim in all the vicissitudes of life. He realised that the angel had redeemed him from all evil (Gen. 48:16). In fact, Jacob's darkest hour was just before the dawn of his greatest joy.

It will be also the case with Israel, as they face the "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7) just before the dawn of a new era (Isa. 60:1-2).

#### VERSE 37

**"And Reuben spake unto his father saying"**— Throughout the type, Reuben represents the flesh, and as such now utters a vain boast.

**"Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee"** — Reuben's sense of need in the supply of corn, and his eagerness to persuade his father outran his prudence. How could the death of grandchildren compensate for the loss of a son? At that time, he had four sons (Gen. 46:9), and offered two of them in compensation for Joseph and Benjamin.

Archaeology has revealed that Reuben's offer was in accord with principles contained in the Code of Hammurabi, a law-giver who lived in the times of

Abraham. It requires that a man who causes the death of another's daughter should pay by having his own daughter slain. It was a matter of the rights of one father against the rights of another father (see *The Patriarchal Age* — C. Pfeiffer). Obviously, if Benjamin did not return, Simeon also would remain behind, and two more of Jacob's sons would be lost.

**"Deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again"** — The flesh always boasts in that manner, but generally proves inadequate to fulfil its claim. Indeed, Reuben had already demonstrated this by the loss of Joseph.

#### VERSE 38

**"And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone"** — As is often the case, Jacob's assessment of the circumstances was based upon a complete misunderstanding of the facts.

**"If mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave"**— The word for "grave" is *sheol* for which see note on Gen. 37:35. Little did Jacob realise, as he made this dismal comment, that the greatest joy of his life was soon to unfold. Little do we realise that often the trials of life are designed to fit us for the Kingdom of God (Est. 9:22; John 16:20,22).

## CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

*This chapter continues to record the incidents that led to Joseph's brethren being humbled before him. It describes the second visit of Joseph's brethren to Egypt in their necessity. They return in fear, and are treated by the strange lord of the country in a manner that arouses their wonderment. But, for the moment, all goes well, and in the assurance that it will continue that way, they relax with Joseph.*

#### **Judah Offers To Be Security For Benjamin—Vv. 1-14**

*It is significant that Judah who was foremost in betrayal (Ch. 37:26) now becomes foremost in restitution. It fore-*

*shadows the attitude of the nation of Judah at both advents of the Lord. The tribe was foremost in crucifying him and will be foremost in the reestablishing of the nation (Zech. 12:7). Meanwhile, Judah*

*himself only persuades Jacob to allow Benjamin to go down to Egypt with extreme difficulty, and only through extreme need.*

**VERSE 1**

**“And the famine was sore in the land”** — See Amos 8:11-13. The famine continued because the divine purpose required it, in order to bring a blessing on Jacob (See Ruth 1:6). But Jacob was ignorant of that; and perhaps praying for relief, wondered why it did not come. God knows what is best in granting or withholding the requests of prayer.

**VERSE 2**

**“And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food”** — Jacob’s emphasis upon a *little* food suggests that the greatest economy was being exercised in regard to that which they obtained which was in short supply. Jacob was desperately hoping for the famine to break, so as to avoid sending Benjamin to Egypt.

**VERSE 3**

**“And Judah spake unto him, saying”** — Judah assumes the leadership among the sons.

**“The man did solemnly protest unto us”** — The language of Joseph in Egypt was similar to that of the Lord towards Jewry. Consider his oft-repeated saying: “Verily, verily, I say unto you...”

**“Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you”** — As we have observed previously, Benjamin was also a type of Christ. Now consider Judah’s statement in the light of that of the Lord: “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Matt. 23:38-39).

**VERSE 4**

**“If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food”** — Literally this is: *If thou art sending our*

*brother with us; that is, if you are agreeable to sending our brother.*

**VERSE 5**

**“But if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down”** — It would be useless to do so: the governor was quite specific in his requirements.

**“For the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you”** — The Egyptian governor (as Judah viewed Joseph) had left no doubt as to what was required. The binding of Simeon before the eyes of the others had demonstrated his determination to carry out his threat.

**VERSE 6**

**“And Israel said”** — The change of name is possibly to emphasise the importance of these events in the furtherance of the plan of redemption (cp. Vv. 8,11). Cp. note Gen. 37:3.

**“Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother”** — Jacob’s petulant rebuke was an attempt to conceal an issue he was afraid to face. This is frequently the case with us all: we refuse to face up to issues in faith and courage; we prefer to act as though they do not exist.

**VERSE 7**

**“And they said”** — The other brothers joined in to support Judah in his statement to Jacob.

**“The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye another brother? and we told him according to the tenor of these words: could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down?”** — They had not tried to conceal anything, but had answered Joseph’s questions truthfully, not knowing that he had knowledge of their circumstances. This was a step in the way of their finding ultimate blessing. Assuming they had tried to hide the facts, Joseph would have known, and would have treated them more harshly. How often, in life, we attempt to hide things, even from God, which it would be better if we frankly

confessed. So it was with the brethren of Joseph. Evidently Joseph has asked these specific questions, though not recorded in the preceding narrative (cp. Gen. 42:13, 32), for Judah mentions them again afterwards (Gen. 44:19).

#### VERSE 8

**“And Judah said unto Israel his father”** — Once again Judah took the lead, as the nation will in the last days (Mic. 4:8). Adversity had worked on him to his betterment, as it will the Jews in the land at the return of the Lord.

**“Send the lad with me and we will arise and go”** — The Hebrew *na'ar*, here rendered “lad” signifies an “adolescent,” and also, by implication, a dependant, such as a servant. Benjamin was over twenty years of age at the time, already married, and with a large family of ten children when he came into Egypt with Jacob (Gen. 46:21). Jacob was ninety-seven when he left Laban, and one hundred and thirty when he came into Egypt (Gen. 45:6). This allows for a thirty-three year interval, during which he dwelt for a time at Shechem, and then moved south towards Bethlehem where Benjamin was born. Benjamin thus married when he was extremely young, and proved to be most prolific. Perhaps Jacob urged an early marriage in view of the assumed tragic death of Joseph. Such terms as “child” (Gen. 42:22) and “lad” are used in Scripture of responsible young people, and the context must determine their actual age.

**“That we may live, and not die”** — It was a matter of life and death to make reconciliation with Joseph; as it will be with Jewry in regard to his antitype (Jer. 30:7).

**“Both we, and thou, and also our little ones”** — The future of the whole tribe was at stake.

#### VERSE 9

**“I will be surety for him”** — The word *arab* rendered “surety,” signifies *to traffic as by barter*. Judah was about to make a proposition. The verb thus conveys the idea of changing places.

**“Of my hand shalt thou require**

**him”** — Judah was prepared to barter his life on the outcome. He would guarantee Benjamin’s return, even though he was imprisoned as a consequence. Why did he so openly take the lead on this occasion? Perhaps he recalled his infamous influence in disposing of Joseph, and desired to make restitution. That certainly will be the case with the nation of Judah in the last days (Zech. 12:5-7). The people will look upon him whom their forefathers crucified, and shall mourn their past blindness (Zech. 12: 10-14).

**“If I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever”** — In this very solemn statement, Judah bartered his eternal salvation on the issue. The word “blame” is *chata*, “sinner”, and “for ever” is *kolhay-omim*, “all the days.” Judah therefore stated that his failure to restore Benjamin would constitute unforgiven sin, to be recalled day after day for the term of his life. His words can be literally rendered: *and I shall be accounted a sinner all my days*. This is a far more realistic, mature, and solemn asseveration than Reuben’s foolish offer of substitution: the putting to death of his two sons. It would mean that if, on this second occasion, he failed his father (for unknown to Jacob he had been foremost in the betrayal of Joseph previously) he, as an unforgiven sinner, would be without hope, with the blame of it resting upon him throughout his life.

How significant this statement is when compared with the antitype. Judah, as a nation, took the lead in putting the Lord to death; but, in the mercy of the Father, and in view of the Abrahamic covenant, the nation will be given opportunity to rehabilitate itself at the second coming of the Lord. If it fails again, it will be branded a sinner without hope, bearing the guilt forever.

Who does Benjamin represent in the typical foreshadowing of this incident? It is obvious that Benjamin (as the Son of the right hand — Ps. 110:1) represents Christ in some way. But in what way? Obviously as the multitudinous Christ (Heb. 2:11). As Joseph refused to receive the brethren before he had honoured his

closer brother, so Christ will honour first the saints before extending help to Israel after the flesh.

#### VERSE 10

**“For except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time”**

— As rendered by the margin, this is literally *returned twice by this*: we could have been to Egypt and back again twice by now. Judah urged upon his father that it was foolish to linger in a matter of life or death. How true; yet we also tend to do so, when a firm decisive action would bring us closer to Christ.

#### VERSE 11

**“And their father Israel said unto them, If it must be so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels”** — The “best fruits of the land” were designed to please the governor and make him well-disposed towards the sons of Israel in their request for relief and sustenance. What are the “best fruits of the land” that will dispose Christ towards us, or towards Israel? Obviously the fruit of the Spirit as outlined in Gal. 5:22. Both saints and Israel after the flesh must have “gifts to offer unto the king,” and foremost among these is a humble, contrite heart (Isa. 66:2). The sufferings of the last days will induce this in Israel.

**“And carry down the man a present”** — That Jacob should send such a gift appears inconsistent with the record of the famine. But the failure of cereal crops does not necessarily mean a failure of fruit, or of the things listed here which might well have been preserved from previous seasons, but which did not constitute a staple diet. Notice, also, that Jacob specifies a *little* balm, a *little* honey etc.

**“A little balm”** — See Gen. 37:25. It was noted for its *healing* qualities.

**“A little honey”** — Honey is used figuratively of the *strengthening* and *soothing* qualities of the Word (Ps. 19:9-10; 119:103).

**“Spices”** — See note Gen. 37:25. Spices symbolised prayer (Exod. 30:34).

**“And Myrrh”**—This is not the usual word for myrrh (see note Gen. 37:23). The

Hebrew word is *lot*, and according to Dr. Strong, is derived from a root signifying *to wrap up*, and so to *cover*.

**“Nuts”** — Hebrew: *botenim* identified as pistachio nuts. The word is from a root signifying *the body, the womb*, and thus associated with birth.

**“And Almonds”** — The Hebrew *shaqedim* is from a root signifying to *be awake, alert*. The almond tree is a symbol of resurrection, being the first tree to blossom in the spring. Known as the *Awakening Tree* it is used as a symbol of divine selection and approval (Num. 17: 8-13).

The “best fruits of the land” of promise, therefore, symbolised in order: healing, soothing and strengthening, communion (prayer), covering, resurrection and approval — the process of divine manifestation leading from a position of need (through sin) to final glorification and acceptance.

#### VERSE 12

**“And take double money in your hand”** — The word *mishneh* signifies repetition, and the phrase can be rendered *money of a second*, suggesting the same amount as was returned. The brethren evidently took twice as much money, returning that which they found in their sacks. The A.V. would suggest that they took three times as much: double money in their hands, as well as the money found in the sacks.

**“And the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight”** — Thus they returned to Joseph with a double payment of money, as was appropriate to the type. Israel after the flesh will likewise pay double for its sins (Isa. 40:2). Under the Law of Moses, the appointed firstborn received a “double portion” of the inheritance (Deut. 21:15-17), and in the light of that legislation, the “double money” in the hands of Joseph’s brethren became an acknowledgement of Israel’s status among the nations seeking food (see Jer. 31:9).

#### VERSE 13

**“Take also your brother, and arise,**

go again unto the man” — So Jacob capitulated to the will of God; commending his sons to Yahweh’s care.

#### VERSE 14

“**And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin**” — Jacob sought the mercy of *El Shaddai*. This title is discussed in our comments upon Gen. 17:1. It can signify either *The Strength of the Destroyers*, or *The Strength of the Nourishers*. Jacob relied upon the providential care of *El Shaddai*. Trouble had driven him to the state of utter dependence upon Him. That is the value of trial and difficulty. Yahweh is always present, and deeply interested in our welfare (see Rom. 8:31-32), but He knows what is best for us, and in order to develop our characters according to His will, permits us to be tried, though never beyond our measure (1 Cor. 10:13). As we read of Jacob’s concern, the drama of the situation is lessened because we know the outcome of that journey to Egypt. But Jacob and his sons did not. To the patriarch, the future looked gloomy indeed. To him, one son was dead — he had no reason to believe otherwise; another son was imprisoned by a despotic tyrant — he had no reason to believe otherwise; a third, beloved son was entering an arena of danger — he had no reason to believe otherwise.

But we see the mercy and goodness of Yahweh in the situation; and that which was like a hideous nightmare to Jacob, was actually a necessary prelude to his final triumph. That being so, let us learn to view our own troubles in faith. It is difficult to do so always. But we must follow the example of Jacob, who when forced to concede to the demands of the Egyptian governor (as he considered Joseph), and the urgent pleas of his own sons, did so with a prayer on his lips for divine help. Isaiah exhorted: “Who is among you that feareth Yahweh, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that *walketh in darkness, and hath no light?* Let him trust in the name of Yahweh, and stay upon his God” (Isa. 50:10). That was the attitude of Jacob at this time of crisis.

“**If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved**” — An expression indicating that having placed his problem in the hands of *El Shaddai*, it was beyond his control, and he would acquiesce with the divine will in the matter.

#### The Brethren’s Fear Of Joseph In Egypt — Vv. 15-25

*Making their way to Egypt, the brethren again encounter unexpected and inexplicable experiences. First of all, the imperious “governor” orders them to present themselves at his house; next, they are told by his steward that he received payment for their corn on their previous visit; finally, they fearfully await their interview with Joseph.*

#### VERSE 15

“**And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt**” — What were the feelings of Jacob as he watched his sons, with Benjamin, disappear into the distance, not knowing what would befall them there? He might well have experienced similar feelings to those of Paul (Acts 21:13), but was forced along the road of circumstance.

The sons probably followed the well known route along the low coastal region, which led by way of Gaza and Gerar, to Pelusium and Tanis, traversing country parallel with the Mediterranean. This included some 120 miles (193kms) of waterless desert, during which they would be scorched by the blazing sun in the day, and chilled by the keen desert air at night, to finally enter a mourning land devastated by years of famine. It was not a pleasant journey.

“**And stood before Joseph**” — In Egypt, they made their way to the corn market over which Joseph presided.

#### VERSE 16

“**And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them**” — The presence of Benjamin moved Joseph emotionally, whilst, at the same time, demonstrated that the others had carried out his conditions of re-entry into the land. If he had fears concerning

the welfare of his brother, they were unfounded.

**“He said to the ruler of his house”** — This official is later described as his “steward” (Gen. 43:19; 44:1).

**“Bring these men home, and slay, and make ready”** — In spite of the worship of all manner of animals in Egypt, flesh was eaten daily by priests, kings and people of the upper strata of society, though priests had to abstain from certain kinds of animal food (see *Herod 2:37,77*). Joseph called upon his steward to slay an

fear as they pondered its reason (v. 18). “Noon” in Hebrew is *tsoharim*, a plural word signifying *double lights*, and signifying midday, the time of greatest light, when the day is divided into two.

**VERSE 17**

**“And the man did as Joseph bade; and the man brought the men into Joseph’s house”** — If this was at On (cp. Gen. 41:45), they would have been taken to a city adjacent to modern Cairo. In any case, they saw the elegance in which Joseph lived, and perhaps caught a glimpse of Asenath, Joseph’s wife.

**VERSE 18**

**“And the men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph’s house”** — This would be the natural reaction of shepherds unused to the elegant sophistication of city life, when taken to the palace of a high official in a foreign land. They were mystified at the arrangements, and fearful that they were about to be charged with thieving.

**“And they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in; that he may seek occasion against us”** — The literal rendition of the latter phrase is *roll himself upon us*. This was another way of saying that he intended to crush them (see Job 30:14).

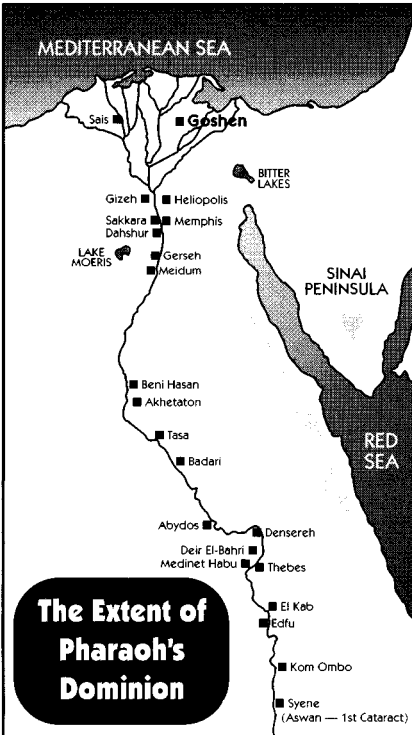
**“And fall upon us, and take us for bondmen”** — They were apprehensive of a charge being levelled against them to deprive them of their liberty.

**“And our asses”** — If they were deprived of their means of transport, they would find it extremely difficult to escape from the land.

**VERSE 19**

**“And they came near to the steward of Joseph’s house”** — Their mounting problems and fears drew them to him, as life’s problems draw us to Christ’s stewards (see 1 Cor. 4:1).

**“And they communed with him at the door of the house”** — The brethren communed with the steward, setting before him their problem, as a precaution



animal on the behalf of his brethren, so that they might eat with him within the house. A similar provision is made on the behalf of all those who enter Christ’s “house” (cp. 1 Tim. 3:15) for the same purpose.

**“For these men shall dine with me at noon”** — This unusual treatment was received by the brethren with the greatest



against a charge of theft being laid against them. There is need for similar communion before conducting anybody into Christ's house that they might understand what is required "in the house" of such a high and influential representative of Heaven (cp. Acts 10:6; Heb. 3:6).

#### VERSE 20

**"And said, O sir"** — Literally, *O my lord*. They treated him with the greatest respect.

**"We came indeed down at the first time to buy food"** — Though bewildered by his demands they were certain of the reality of their need; though they only knew how to satisfy it temporarily by buying. They had no idea that Joseph was anxious and waiting to satisfy it permanently without payment on their part.

#### VERSE 21

**"And it came to pass, when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, every man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight: and we have brought it again in our hand"** — See the circumstances in Ch. 42:27. They could not understand that their money was not adequate compensation for food in a time of famine, any more than Judaism can appreciate that salvation is by grace. Their money was returned to them to impress that fact upon them. They had to learn that the means of salvation is by grace not by works. Like the Jews of another age, "being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit to the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:3). The money had been returned to their sacks to reveal that the governor required something apart from their money: even a self-sacrificing love and affection. But his true identity was hidden from them, so that all they could offer was more money, as they tried to buy their way by personal works into his good grace. But what is the real value of even a double portion of money in time of acute famine!

In like manner, how can works give adequate compensation for salvation? Salvation is dependent upon the grace of

God. That fact will be brought home to Jewry ultimately, and their salvation will be dependent upon their acceptance of it (Zech. 13:1). Meanwhile, the lesson was being typically impressed upon the brethren of Joseph.

#### VERSE 22

**"And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food"** — Typically they acted as though they could buy salvation on the basis of personal merit.

**"We cannot tell who put our money in our sacks"** — They did not comprehend that the grace and love of Joseph had arranged this; and that these were adequate for all their needs. They had to learn the lesson of 1 Pet. 1:18, "Ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold..." That basic fact will ultimately be brought home to Jewry.

#### VERSE 23

**"And he said, Peace be to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father hath given you treasure in your sacks"** — This remarkable statement by the steward of Joseph's house suggests that he had been taught to fear and trust the God of the Hebrews, and implies that Joseph had expounded the Truth to him, which he now, in turn, passed on to the brethren. The Apostles as "stewards" of Christ (1 Cor. 4:1), did likewise (John 17:20). In the Age to come, Elijah, as the "steward" of Christ will bring this same message home to the tribes of Israel (Mal. 4:5-6). The statement is not a subterfuge but one of fact. It was God who influenced Joseph to act as he did, and, therefore, God who had given "hidden treasure" in their sacks.

**"I had your money"** — The literal Hebrew is *your money came to me*. Again, that would have been a statement of fact, for most likely Joseph had paid it, as the Lord has paid the cost of redemption in his blood. However, such a remarkable statement by the steward of Joseph's house, would have completely bewildered the brethren — as the revelation of Christ, in the Age to come, at first will mystify the Jewish people. See the wonderment of the

Jews predicted in Isaiah 49: 21-22.

**“And he brought Simeon out unto them”** — The grace of God brings freedom out of bondage.

#### VERSE 24

**“And the man brought the men into Joseph’s house, and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their asses provender”** — In the natural sense, every care and attention of hospitality was lavished upon them. They were made warmly welcome, and their needs were met. They were given water to wash their feet, representative of a partial cleansing (John 13:10; Zech. 13:1). Their complete education, cleansing and acceptance had yet to wait.

#### VERSE 25

**“And they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon”** — What Joseph wanted was themselves and their love, not their gift as such, unless it was an outward expression of their inward feelings.

**“For they heard that they should eat bread there”** — To eat bread together is an act of friendship and communion. But for the moment they were not quite ready for the full act of fellowship.

### Joseph Entertains His Brethren

— Vv. 26-34

*At last Joseph arrives home, and his brothers pay their respects to him delivering to him their present, and answering his questions regarding Jacob. He meets Benjamin and treats him with the greatest kindness and consideration. In fact, he is so overcome by emotion, that he withdraws from them lest his secret be discovered before the time he had determined (cp. Song 5:6). The meal follows in typical Egyptian fashion, with each group segregated the one from the other. However, the brethren are forced to marvel at the prescience of the governor, for he sets them in order exactly according to their ages. Also notable is his preference for Benjamin. Nevertheless in the general atmosphere of wellbeing and hospitality, they relax for the first time.*

#### VERSE 26

**“And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house”** — “The present which was in their hand” speaks of personal effort and labour. Yahweh desires that of us, not as adequate payment for salvation, but as a token of our loving obedience to His will. The brethren did not have that feeling towards Joseph as yet, so that the “present” was more in the nature of a bribe. It suggests justification through works. The Hebrew word *minchah* is frequently used to denote a bloodless sacrificial offering. The same word is rendered offering in Genesis 4:3, and there descriptive of that which Cain presented to Yahweh. The antitype suggests Jewry’s rejection of the blood of Christ, and their insistence upon the bloodless works of Judaism, as a means of justification.

**“And bowed themselves to him to the earth”** — Once again Joseph had evidence of the fulfilment of his dreams (Gen. 37:7,9-10). The brethren paid their respects in ignorance of the true identity of the one before them, as will the Jews to Christ at his appearing (Zech. 13:6).

#### VERSE 27

**“And he asked them of their welfare, and said”** — The word “welfare” is *shalom*, peace; but true peace can only come through acknowledgement of the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6; John 14:27).

**“Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?”** — Again, the word “well” is *shalom*, peace. Thus, literally, *Is there peace to your father?* This is one of the most moving moments in this drama of family affection. The very eagerness of Joseph’s questions suggests the emotion he must have felt as he thought of his aged parent. It illustrates the close bonds of affection that united true family life in patriarchal days. The eager questions draw out our sympathy, and cause us to feel for Joseph in his separation. Let us remember that the incident is recorded by inspiration of Yahweh Who created the family, and seeks to gather His Redeemed into the most loving and intimately holy family in existence. Paul

wrote (according to an alternative rendition): "I bow my knees unto the Father from whom all fatherhood in heaven and on earth derives its name" (Eph. 3:14, *Twentieth Century Translation*). Emotions of love, affection, consideration, family relationships are not despised of God. Indeed, Edom was condemned and punished because it "remembered not the brotherly covenant" (Amos 1:9). The Law attached a promise to the fifth command (the command of grace): "honour thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land" (Deu. 20:12). Joseph's concern for his father is in sharp contrast to the disrespect of age and responsibility towards parents which characterises this age. As Paul warned, this is an epoch of juvenile delinquency, shown in widespread "disobedience to parents" (2 Tim. 3:2). We must avoid such an influence by following the example of faithful Joseph.

#### VERSE 28

**"And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive"**— In describing Jacob as Joseph's servant, the brethren fulfilled that portion of the dream that involved their father (Gen. 37:9), for the term describes him as subservient to the elevated Joseph (cp. Ps. 110:1; Matt. 22:44). Thus Joseph received tangible evidence of the manner in which all that God had revealed unto him would be fulfilled.

One item remained to be fulfilled. His mother, the "moon" of the dream, was dead. How could she bow down before him? Only through the resurrection (Job 19:25; Psa. 16:9). Therefore, to a discerning man of faith like Joseph, the present was but a typical fulfilment of the dream, with the reality awaiting the future.

**"And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance"** — In doing so, they confirmed their use of the title *thy servant* by which they had described Jacob, and once again fulfilled the prophetic dreams.

#### VERSE 29

**"And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son,**

**and said"** — Again the narrative emphasises the "natural affection" which was characteristic of Joseph, as it was of Christ, and the absence of which is listed by Paul as a latter-day evil (2 Tim. 3:3). In the antitype, Christ has a closer "brother" for whom he has a greater affection than Israel after the flesh: namely, "the Israel of God," styled by Paul as the son of Jerusalem above, "the mother of us all" (Gal. 4:26). Benjamin represents the Ecclesia.

**"Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me?"** — Benjamin must have been surprised at the great gentleness and kindness of the governor of whom he would have heard so much from his brothers, and for whom they had a great fear. In the type, the "younger brother" points to the Redeemed, brought into being after the Israel of the flesh.

**"And he said"** — Without waiting for an answer.

**"God be gracious unto thee, my son"** — This is an unexpected prayer from one so high in the land. It confessed that favour stemmed from God, and not from Egypt. This blessing on Benjamin must have greatly encouraged the brethren as illustrating the ruler's mercy and favour towards them. Joseph singled out this prayer for Benjamin, and thus acted as advocate on his behalf, commending him to the grace of God. In like manner, the antitype, the Lord Jesus Christ acts as Advocate on the behalf of his brethren (1 John 2:1).

#### VERSE 30

**"And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother"** — This statement is expressive of the intensity of Joseph's feelings for his brother; he could scarce restrain himself, so great was his love. And what of Christ's love for his "closer brother?" Does not he have an ardent desire to reveal himself to such? We read that "Yahweh waits" that He may be gracious unto Israel (Isa. 30:18), and we may be sure that the Lord, likewise, awaits that time of reunion with those he loves so much that he died on their behalf. As Bridegroom he has an ardent longing to take his Bride to himself, as the love-

songs of the *Song of Solomon* testify.

**“And he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there”** — Overcome with emotion, Joseph withdrew himself for a moment, and wept tears of joy. They witnessed to the intensity of his feelings for his brother (See note Gen. 42:24). Yet they were unseen by Benjamin who, though conscious of the graciousness of the governor towards him as expressed in the blessing pronounced upon him, yet remained in ignorance of the intensity of his feelings and the tears shed on his behalf. Does not that reflect the attitude of Christ’s “closer brother” whilst he remains in heaven? Read of the lovingkindness of Yahweh towards Israel, as expressed in Isaiah 63:7-10. “In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.” The Lord wept over Jerusalem, and expressed his desire to have extended his covering-wings over the city and people. “How often would I have gathered thy children together... and ye would not” (Matt. 23:37). Again to his disciples: “With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you...” (Luke 22:15). As we ponder the drama in the palace of Joseph, and consider the weeping Joseph hidden in the chamber, let us see in it a drama of Christ’s great love and desire for his brethren, and try to respond with a measure of warmth and love towards him.

Paul declared that there is laid up a crown of righteousness for them that “love his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:8). Are we anxiously desiring his coming? Do we look upon it as we would the coming of a beloved friend or relation? Are not we touched with emotion as we consider Joseph weeping tears of joy in the inner chamber? Let us also remember that those whom the Lord loves “he rebukes and chastens” (Heb. 12:6). There was chastening awaiting Benjamin before the complete revelation would come, and he would come to appreciate the significance of the prayer of grace that had been pronounced on his behalf by the governor of the land.

### VERSE 31

**“And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself”** — So Joseph’s emotion was hidden from the sight of his brothers, as Christ’s feelings on behalf of his own are presently hidden from them. One who died on our behalf is not indifferent to our trials and sufferings. That is the lesson revealed by this incident.

**“And said, Set on bread”** — He provided for their needs, as his antitype does today.

### VERSE 32

**“And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves”** — There was a careful segregation of each group: Joseph on his own as befitted his status; Egyptians, as Gentiles; Hebrews as a privileged company. Historically, the caste system was prominent in ancient Egypt, so that the separation of the three groups would have appeared quite normal. Remarkably, the same distinction is preserved in human affairs: Gentiles segregated from Israel after the flesh and spirit, with the Lord Jesus presiding over all and dispensing gifts of grace to the latter.

**“Because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians”** — According to Herodotus (Book 2:41), Egyptian exclusiveness towards foreigners generally was a feature of their way of life. They considered themselves as the master race. They particularly hated the Hyksos, the so-called “shepherd kings” who invaded Egypt and seized power; and when, in turn, they were expelled, they destroyed all their monuments. It is significant, that the anti-semitism manifested in Egypt in the days of Joseph, is still in evidence throughout the Gentile world.

### VERSE 33

**“And they sat before him”** — Whereas the Romans reclined at meals, the Egyptians sat. The statement is in accord with archaeological evidence.

**“The firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according**

**to his youth**” — The purpose of this arrangement was to demonstrate that Joseph knew all about them; even as “all things are open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”

**“And the men marvelled one at another”** — They were mystified at the amazing knowledge of Joseph, and probably looked upon it as the result of some supernatural power that he possessed. It certainly gave point to the steward’s comment as recorded in Gen. 44:5. Later, however, when Joseph declared himself, the incident helped to demonstrate the truth of his claim.

#### VERSE 34

**“And he took and sent messes unto them from before him”** — He gave them preferential treatment, as Israel both natural and spiritual, have received at the hands of Christ (cp. 1 Pet. 3:22) during Gentile times. This, indeed, has been done in the sight of the Gentiles, is witnessed in the establishment of the Jewish nation. The word “messes” is *masouth* in Hebrew, from *nasa*, to lift, or take, and hence signifies *portions* or *gifts*.

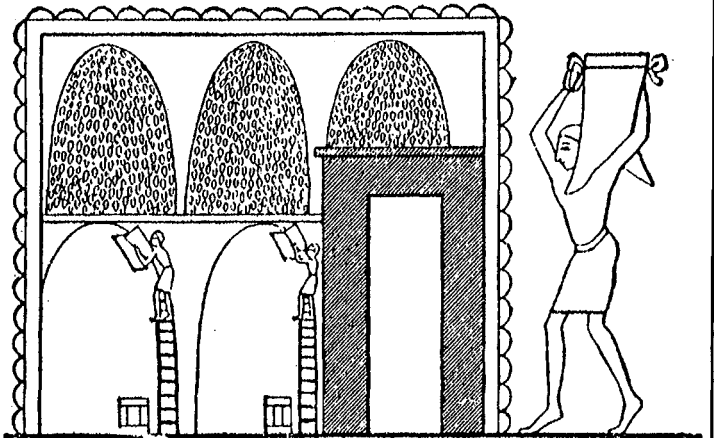
**“But Benjamin’s mess was five times so much as any of their’s”** — Five is the number of grace, and, therefore, represented a visible token of Joseph’s prayer.

In the narrative of Joseph, the number of five frequently occurs (Gen. 41:34; 45:22; 47:2,24). It speaks of grace or redemption. Grace was shown towards Egypt in famine because it had sheltered Joseph; and a special grace was manifested towards Benjamin in the food and clothing granted him because of his closer relationship to Joseph. It foreshadows the greater gifts of grace extended to the Ecclesia of Christ.

**“And they drank and were merry with him”** — This is a Hebraism expressing that they were relaxed and at ease (1 Kings 4:20). As the brethren observed the kindness of Joseph, and the care manifested towards each one of them and Benjamin in particular, their previous fears were assuaged, and they became relaxed and at ease. This, however, was soon to give way to a final test and fear before the revelation would be given them.

What of the antitype? Is it not evident in Israel both natural and spiritual? The final test on the nation of Israel will find it relaxed and at peace (Ezek. 38:11; 39:25-26), but this will give way to a terrible fear (Jer. 30:6-8) before ultimate relief will come. And ecclesially, Christ comes at a time of Laodicean relaxation, before the Judgment. All this seems foreshadowed in the experience of Joseph with his brethren.

Portrayal of  
Harvesting  
and  
Storage of  
grain in  
Egypt.  
Note the  
labourers  
filling the  
silos.



## CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR

### JOSEPH'S BRETHREN FURTHER TESTED: ARRESTED ON CHARGE OF TAKING A CUP

*In order to further the spiritual development of his brethren, Joseph subjects them to a further test. His favorite silver cup is hidden in Benjamin's sack and he is arrested for having it. Faced with the prospect of Benjamin being retained in captivity, Judah pleads his cause, and the brethren react in such a manner as to demonstrate their regret at previous folly and their desire to obtain the ruler's pleasure.*

#### Joseph's Plan To Delay His Brethren

— Vv. 1-13

*Acting under instructions, Joseph's steward hides his silver cup in Benjamin's sack, and when the brethren leave Egypt on their way home, he pursues them with the accusation that it has been stolen. When it is found, they return to the city in consternation.*

#### VERSE 1

**"And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth"** — What they received was really beyond what money could buy.

#### VERSE 2

**"And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money"** — The Hebrew word for "cup" suggests a goblet or bowl, commonly of large size from which wine is dispensed into smaller cups (see Jer. 35:5). This cup was a specially prized possession of great value to Joseph. In the type it points to the "cup of salvation" or "of blessing" (Ps. 116:13; 1 Cor. 10:16; Matt. 26:26-27) such as was used in Passover celebrations. Being constructed of silver, it typically points to the principle of redemption, for the half shekel of silver (Exod. 30:13; Lev. 5:15) is described as "the atonement money" (Exod. 30:16). It is sig-

nificant that such a cup as this should be hidden in Benjamin's sack, for, as being of closer relationship to Joseph than the other brethren, he typifies Christ's true brothers: the Redeemed. The cup of redemption is hidden in their midst, as Israel will recognize in the Age to come. The Jewish people will be converted to Christ by the ministration of saints under his direction (Jer. 3:15; Mal. 4:4-6).

**"And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken"** — As the saints will do in the Age to come.

#### VERSE 3

**"As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses"** — It was to be the beginning of a new era for them. See also Mal. 4:1-2; Isa. 60:1.

#### VERSE 4

**"And when they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off"** — They were probably relaxing in the belief that all danger was past. So it will be with the crisis of the last days: it will come on unsuspecting Jews and Gentiles "as a thief" (1 Thess. 5:2; Rev. 16:15).

**"Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?"** — Though not related to the cup, this certainly characterised their attitude

towards Joseph, as it did later towards Christ.

#### VERSE 5

**“Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? Ye have done evil in so doing?”** — Did Joseph practise divination? It was commonly practised in Egypt, and it would have been wrong if he had done so. But the expression is susceptible of another meaning. The Hebrew word is *nachash*, and signifies *to hiss, to perceive, to discern to learn by experience or observation*. The root from whence it is derived is rendered *serpent* in Gen. 3, but *learned by experience* in Gen. 30:27. The cup was used by Joseph to come to an understanding, in regard to a certain matter. What was it? It was *to learn by experience* as to whether the brethren would abandon Benjamin to his fate when charged with being a thief, and particularly when the evidence found against him proved to be strong. They would have a good reason to justify themselves in doing so by claiming before Jacob that they had done everything in their power to protect Benjamin, but when the proof against him was so strong they could do nothing but leave him to his fate. To do otherwise would jeopardise the future of the family tribe. Certainly they would have reasoned in such a manner in earlier days when they betrayed Joseph. Would they do so now? He put them to the test, as Israel will be put to a test at the coming of the Lord.

Our suggestion of the use of the word *divineth* is endorsed by the margin which renders it as *maketh trial*. It was the cup of testing as far as Joseph and the steward were concerned, and, as we have seen, the word used is susceptible of such a meaning. Is not the “cup of the Lord” a cup of testing, or of *learning by experience*? Do not the unworthy drink condemnation to themselves having ignored the lessons of self-examination (2 Cor. 11:27).

#### VERSE 6

**“And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words”** — The approach of the steward would have filled the brethren with apprehension and

fear; and that most likely, just as they were congratulating themselves upon escaping from Egypt. So, at Christ’s return, when Jewry is relieved at escaping from the destruction of Gog, it will face a spiritual crisis that will send it into mourning (Zech. 12:10).

#### VERSE 7

**“And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words?”** — They were completely bewildered by the charge.

**“God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing”** — They refuted the charge laid against them. In the Hebrew, the word “God” does not appear in such an exclamation. Literally, the words should be rendered: *Far be thy servants from doing such a thing*.

#### VERSE 8

**“Behold, the money, which we found in our sacks’ mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan”** — This provided strong proof of their honesty.

**“How then should we steal out of thy lord’s house silver or gold?”** — Thus they urged their sincerity and self-righteousness.

#### VERSE 9

**“With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord’s bondmen”** — These rash suggestions were not intended to be taken at face value; they were emphatic declarations of innocence. But in fact, this is what is required of all those who accept Christ: they figuratively “die” in baptism, and become Christ’s servants (Rom. 6). Such a state will be required of Israel after the flesh in the Age to come.

#### VERSE 10

**“And he said, Now also let it be according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless”** — They were taken at their word; but subsequently this was modified.

#### VERSE 11

**“Then they speedily took down**

every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack" — They did it speedily because they were supremely confident of the outcome.

#### VERSE 12

"And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest" — This fact demonstrated that he had a knowledge of their state and circumstances greater than they imagined — as do the angels who minister on Christ's behalf.

"And the cup was found in Benjamin's sack" — We can imagine the gasp of astonishment that would be uttered when, to their consternation and chagrin, the cup was brought forth from Benjamin's sack.

#### VERSE 13

"Then they rent their clothes" — It was a moment of mourning for them, as well as of astonishment. First, each one would have found his money returned to his sack, and then, finally the cup revealed. As they recalled their vows, they realised that they had given away the life of Benjamin, and their own liberty.

"And laden every man his ass, and returned to the city" — Even though the steward had said that only the one who possessed the cup would be dealt with, they all realised that their destinies were tied with that of Benjamin. They could not abandon him to his fate.

#### Judah Pleads For Benjamin

— Vv. 14-34

*Brought before Joseph, the brethren have no means of clearing themselves. They make no defence, but confess themselves as guilty before God and man, and, therefore, ready to become the bondslaves of the Governor from henceforth. But this Joseph refuses. Only the one with whom the cup has been found will be retained, the rest might return to their father. It is the crucial test. The ten elder sons have an excuse for leaving Benjamin and returning to their father safe and free, rid of both the brothers who had been their father's favourites. But they refuse to do so. Judah, good to his word, pleads for the*

*restoration of Benjamin to his father as necessary for his father's life, offering to take his place as an Egyptian slave if the liberty of one of the eleven must be forfeited on account of the cup.*

#### VERSE 14

"And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he was yet there" — In this moment of crisis, Judah assumes the dominant role, replacing Reuben in that regard. Cp. Zech. 12:7.

"And they fell before him on the ground" — Once again the dream of ch. 37:5-10 was fulfilled.

#### VERSE 15

"And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?" — Joseph's questions went deeper than the incident of the cup and recalled to their guilty consciences the great sin of their lives when they sold their brother into slavery. By claiming to be able to "divine," Joseph stated that he could determine "by experience" as to their true state.

#### VERSE 16

"And Judah said" — He steps out from before the others and assumes the full responsibility in a manly way.

"What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves?" — Judah, humbled and improved by reverses, desires to make good his promise to his father, even though it brings him into personal danger (cp. Ch. 43:8). He does not attempt to justify himself, and recognises that explanations could not clear them of suspicion. Besides, there was something greater troubling their consciences. They felt the effect of their heartless sin towards Joseph overshadowing them.

"God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants" — This remarkable statement could not have referred to the incident of the cup, for they were not guilty of stealing it, and even though suspicion did rest on Benjamin, the statement applies to them all. In the Hebrew, the definite article is supplied: *the* God; an expression that



Joseph had used in conversing with them (Gen. 42:18). They evidently recognised that the dictatorial and high-handed behaviour of the governor towards them, and the series of unaccountable and inexplicable troubles that had fallen upon them since coming down into Egypt, were God-directed in just retribution of their own tyrannical and cantankerous behaviour towards their brother some twenty-two years previously. Their slumbering consciences were aroused by these means to reconsider their attitude, and to recognise the evil of their ways. Previously they had acknowledged this among themselves (Gen. 42:21), and now they do so publicly, to the governor. In a similar manner, the troubles and trials of life are frequently God-designed to mould our characters for the Kingdom. Certainly, this will be the case with Israel after the flesh when they appear before the antitypical Joseph without recognising who he is (Zech. 13:6). In *The Ways Of Providence* p. 70, Bro. Roberts comments:

“The lesson of Joseph’s life is unmistakable. It is what we have already seen illustrated, that God works when His hand is not apparent, and often when it would seem as if He must be taking no notice, and by means that would seem to exclude the possibility of His being at work. The conclusion is comforting to those who commit their way to God. It may seem to them that God is not only working with them, but actually working against them. Let them remember the agony of Joseph in the pit, in slavery, in false imprisonment, and learn that the darkest paths of their life may be the ways appointed for them to reach liberty and life, wealth and honour — yea, a throne in the kingdom of the antitypical Joseph, who himself had to tread the dark and tearful valley of humiliation, and who, in the day of his glory, will introduce all his brethren, many bright stars, to the most interesting of Jacob’s sons.”

Meanwhile, Joseph must have heard the words of Judah with joy, and recognised that his own trials had been worth while, to bring his brethren to the state of mind they were now exhibiting before him.

**“Behold, we are my lord’s servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found”** — In this statement, Judah pleads for Benjamin. Previously, the brethren as a whole had agreed that he with whom the cup was found should die, whilst the rest of them would submit to Egyptian slavery (v. 9); now Judah requests that they all, with Benjamin, become bond-servants to the governor. In pleading thus, the brethren fulfilled their part in the dreams of Joseph to the utmost. But Joseph tests them even further.

#### VERSE 17

**“And he said, God forbid that I should do so: but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father”** — As in v. 7, the term *God forbid* should be rendered *far be it*: the word “God” does not appear in the original. Joseph submits the brethren to one last test. He gives them opportunity to save their own skins at the expense of Benjamin’s slavery. Twenty-two years earlier they would have done this, for they had sold Joseph into slavery because of their hatred of him. Would they now callously deliver up their father’s present favourite son in order to secure their own freedom?

#### VERSE 18

**“Then Judah came near unto him”** — Judah takes the initiative, and stepping out from before the other brethren, frankly outlines the circumstances of the case, assuming full responsibility. The antitype is predicted in Zechariah 12:7. The latter-day troubles of Jewry will induce great changes in the attitude of political Judah to Yahweh and His purpose; as they already are doing to the Jews in the land.

In such prophecies as Zechariah 12:7, “Judah” relates to those Jews in the land at Christ’s coming. It is a political term, frequently used in that way in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah and the prophecies of Zechariah.

**“And said”** — Authorities claim that Judah’s speech is one of the finest and fairest found in Scripture, and constitutes a

masterpiece of Hebrew composition. It recognises the status of the governor, pleads for mercy on the ground of Jacob's need, offers the liberty of the speaker in the place of that of Benjamin and concludes with an impassioned appeal.

**"Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant"** — Judah commences with respect and deference, acknowledging the governor's status as *lord* and themselves as *servants* whilst seeking a patient hearing of what he had to say. One can almost imagine Judah pressing towards the Egyptian governor (as he considered Joseph) in his eagerness to secure his mercy, appealing to him by both voice and action.

**"For thou art even as Pharaoh"** — The governor had the authority to condemn or acquit, and the power of life or death (see John 5:22; 14:9).

#### VERSE 19

**"My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother?"** — In pressing his case, Judah recapitulates all the circumstances, so that the governor might more clearly see his way to manifest mercy.

#### VERSE 20

**"And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one"** — It would be difficult to resist the pathos of this tender and tactful appeal. Moreover, it reflects the great change found in the ten oldest sons of Jacob. The term, "a child of his old age," (the term for "child" is *yeled*, for which see Gen. 42:22) does not relate to Benjamin's age, so much as to his standing before Jacob as his favourite son, and a greater comfort to him in his declining years than his other sons. The same expression was used earlier to describe Joseph's status with his father (Gen. 37:3, see notes). Now Judah freely states that Benjamin is the favourite son of his father, without manifesting the jealousy and hatred that once aroused him and the others (Gen. 37:4). The status of Benjamin is expressed in the term, *a little one*. The

Hebrew *qatan* signifies *one smaller in size or age*, and obviously merely expresses that Jacob's favourite son was younger in age. The same word is rendered "younger" in Gen. 9:24; 27:15,42; 29:16 etc. As we noted in Ch. 43:8 Benjamin was married, and had a larger family than any of the other brethren. The term "a little one," as we understand the term is incongruous for a married man with ten children and should be replaced by the phrase, "a younger one."

**"And his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother"** — Judah expressed what he believed. Actually, he had sold Joseph into slavery, but to cover up his own guilt in that matter, he had represented to Jacob that Joseph was dead. He, with the others, had repeated the lie so often, that they had come to believe it as truth, and so referred to it as such on this occasion. How like the action of Judah in its attitude to the Lord Jesus! When given evidence of the risen, living Christ, the leaders of the nation bribed the witnesses to say that he was dead (Matt. 28:13-15). Since then, the lie has been repeated so often among the Jews, that they now believe it as truth, and refuse to accept that the Lord rose from the dead. When face to face with the Lord in the Age to come, Jewry will still refuse to believe it (Zech. 13:6), until the evidence will compel them to mournfully acknowledge the past blindness of heart of their nation (Zech. 12:10-14).

**"And his father loveth him"** — This simple statement was calculated to arouse the merciful consideration of the most hardened tyrant — as Judah doubtless viewed the one standing before him, in his Egyptian status of authority.

#### VERSE 21

**"And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him"** — There is a subtle appeal even in these words, for the expression "set mine eyes upon him," is commonly used in a good sense, as manifesting kindness towards one. And, indeed, the governor had first treated Benjamin with outstanding kindness (cp. Gen.

43:34). Judah's words imply that the governor had a responsibility to treat Benjamin with consideration.

#### VERSE 22

**“And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die”**— With tremendous pathos, Judah pleads for mercy on three counts (1) that Benjamin was inexpressibly dear to his father on account of his dead brother; (2) that he was the only remaining son of his dead mother; (3) finally, on account of Benjamin himself.

#### VERSE 23

**“And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more”**— They had no alternative but to bring Benjamin: it was a matter of life or death.

#### VERSE 24

**“And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord”** — Judah omits to mention the effect these tidings had upon their father (Gen. 42:36).

#### VERSE 25

**“And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food”** — Dire necessity drove them to consider the food that Joseph alone could provide. Israel will likewise seek for help from Christ in their hour of extremity (Ezek. 37:11).

#### VERSE 26

**“And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us”** — Judah outlines these circumstances to show what tragic effects any such punishment as the governor contemplated would have on his father. As he was not guilty of any crime, justice demanded that consideration be given to him.

#### VERSE 27

**“And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons”** — With increased tenderness Judah alludes to the alarm with which Jacob listened to the unwelcome proposition that Benjamin should return to Egypt with his brethren.

#### VERSE 28

**“And the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since”** — For the first time, Joseph learned how his beloved father viewed his absence. It must have been with quickened interest, and deep emotion, that he did so.

#### VERSE 29

**“And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave”** — This statement of Jacob, which a stranger might suppose is extreme, is pressed home earnestly by Judah, and in the next verse, confirmed by him as being true in fact.

#### VERSE 30

**“Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life”** — The word “life” in both cases is *nepshesh*, frequently rendered *soul*. Judah urged that Jacob's life was completely secured in that of Benjamin, and that to be denied his presence would result in his death.

#### VERSE 31

**“It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave”** — Notice Judah's skilful pleading of his case. The blame for Jacob's death would not rest with the governor but with Jacob's ten sons. He repeats the very words of Jacob in describing what the result would be if they returned without Benjamin (cp. Gen. 42:38); and on the grounds of mercy and consideration for an aged, bereaved par-

ent, proposes that as he had assumed "surety" for Benjamin, that the governor honour his position. Judah's attitude greatly impressed Joseph. His tender solicitude for his father, his noble offer to sacrifice his own liberty to assist him, showed that a great change had been effected in his character over the years, from that revealed in Gen. 37:26,27. Trouble and trial had made him more thoughtful and considerate of others. Through his own experience, he pleads the cause of Benjamin on higher ground than mere justice; namely, on that of mercy, compassion and consideration for others. Acts of mercy, wrote James, will drown out the demand for justice at the Judgment Seat of Christ (James 2:13). Notice that Judah does not urge the innocence of Benjamin nor make any attempt at self-justification. For one thing, they could not prove Benjamin's innocence; and for another, they were troubled by their own consciences (v. 16) and recognised in their distress the disciplinary hand of God against them. It is quite evident that through these circumstances God had caused them to seek "the spirit of grace and of supplications" as He will do so in the future as far as the nation is concerned (see Zech. 12:10).

#### VERSE 32

**"For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever"** — Judah's action in becoming surety for Benjamin was an act of faith in the governor. In

pledging to return his brother safely, Judah had expressed his confidence that Joseph would do what was right. If Joseph failed him, and retained Benjamin, Judah's guilt would remain for ever. How true of natural Israel in the Age to come.

#### VERSE 33

**"Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren"** — In this statement, Judah expressed his willingness to sacrifice himself for the sake of his brother. Adversity had wrought a remarkable change in him for the better.

#### VERSE 34

**"For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? Lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father"** — This final appeal, almost inserted as an afterthought, expressed most of all what Joseph desired to hear. It revealed the profound change that had been wrought in Judah. He is prepared to sacrifice himself rather than jeopardise the life of his father. He is willing to renounce his own liberty on the behalf of one whom he knew Jacob preferred before himself, rather than see his father die of a broken heart. How different was the cold-hearted disinterest of his former conduct, when he took the lead in selling Joseph into slavery (Gen. 37:26-27). Joseph had evidence of a complete change of heart on the part of his brethren, and could no longer restrain his emotion.

## CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE

### JOSEPH REVEALS HIMSELF TO HIS BRETHREN

*Joseph sees in Judah an amazing change. This man who is prepared to become a slave himself to defend Benjamin, is the one who some twenty-two years earlier had been foremost in urging his brethren to sell him into slavery. Previously greed and passion had guided his life, but now he is willing to pay a supreme sacrifice for*

*the sake of another. Joseph is deeply affected by the change. Stirred with emotion, he orders all others out of the room, and then begins to weep loudly, to the amazement of everyone. His doubting heart is satisfied; his brothers are no longer the heartless men who had sold him into slavery; he reveals himself to them, and makes plans for their future care.*

### Joseph's Startling Disclosure

#### — Vv. 1-15

*Joseph reveals who he is to his brethren; but such a disclosure only arouses fear in them. He calms their agitation, explains the purpose of God in the circumstances they have experienced, and lavishes his love upon them.*

### VERSE 1

**“Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him”**

— A man of deep compassion and feeling, he was now overcome by the impulses of love.

**“And he cried, Cause every man to go out from me”** — He desired privacy for the startling disclosure he was about to make to his brethren, as will Christ when he “turns away ungodliness from Jacob” (Rom. 11:26).

**“And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren”** — The emotional disclosure was not for Gentile eyes, so all Egyptians were sent from the room. Stephen declared, “At the *second time* Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph’s kindred was made known unto Pharaoh” (Acts 7:13). This “second time” answers to the second advent of the Lord. For the revelation at that time, see Rev. 1:7; Zech. 12:10; Jer. 31:34.

### VERSE 2

**“And he wept aloud”** — The emotion of this compassionate man was great. See note on Gen. 42:24.

**“And the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard”** — The Egyptian officials who had just been sent from the room, and were standing outside heard Joseph’s emotion, and reported the strange circumstances to Pharaoh. For the anti-type, see Jer. 33:7-11.

### VERSE 3

**“And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph”** — The antitypical Joseph used a similar introduction to Paul on the way to Damascus: “I am Jesus” (Acts 9:5); and can imagine a similar declaration to the Jews who will enquire of their Deliverer: “What are these wounds in thine hands?” (Zech. 13:6).

**“Doth my father yet live?”** — He had asked the same question previously (Gen. 43:27). He does not doubt the answer they then gave him, but enquires again out of tender affection. He desires to hear all news possible concerning his beloved father.

**“And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence”** — For “troubled” the margin has *terrified*. They were overcome by a sense of guilt, shame and fear, as they realised that they were face to face with one whom they had wronged so terribly, and whom they had heartlessly sold into captivity — and who now wielded such power and authority. In the future, Israel after the flesh will yet mourn before Christ (Zech. 12:10).

### VERSE 4

**“And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you”** — Joseph’s gracious invitation anticipates that of Christ (Matt. 11:28; Eph. 2:13) which doubtless will be offered to Israel in the future. In the case of Joseph, the brethren at first doubted the truth of his disclosure. In consternation, they had evidently drawn back in fear, wondering at the strange behaviour of Egypt’s second ruler who burst into tears, and made the preposterous claim that he was Joseph! Previously he had spoken to them through an interpreter, but now the interpreter was dismissed, and Joseph spoke to them in his

native tongue (Zeph. 3:9).

**“And they came near”** — They could not do this before. There had been a barrier between them and Joseph. They could only stand at a distance, and speak through an interpreter. Now they drew near, gradually overcoming their fear of the one before them.

**“And he said, I am Joseph your brother”** — He emphasised his relationship to Israel after the flesh. The Apostles did likewise in speaking to the Jews, for they described them as “men (who are) brethren” (Acts 2:29); Paul expressed his great love for Israel because of such a relationship (Rom. 9:1-3); and Christ, on behalf of Yahweh will do likewise (see Jer. 51:5; Rom. 11:28).

**“Whom ye sold into Egypt”** — This was a feature of the past that they had not disclosed to Joseph in his guise as governor; the revelation of which from his lips, revealed that he, indeed, was Joseph.

#### VERSE 5

**“Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither”** — The generous, affectionate attitude of Joseph foreshadowed that of the Lord Jesus Christ. Even while on the cross, he prayed for the forgiveness of those who had participated in his death through ignorance (Luke 23:34; Acts 3:17); and, in the Age to come, he will “comfort his people, and have mercy upon

his afflicted” (Isa. 49:13).

**“For God did send me before you to preserve life”** — Thus the providence of God in the difficult circumstances of life were designed for the preservation of Abraham’s seed and to ultimately provide redemption (Heb. 2:15-17; Acts 2:28).

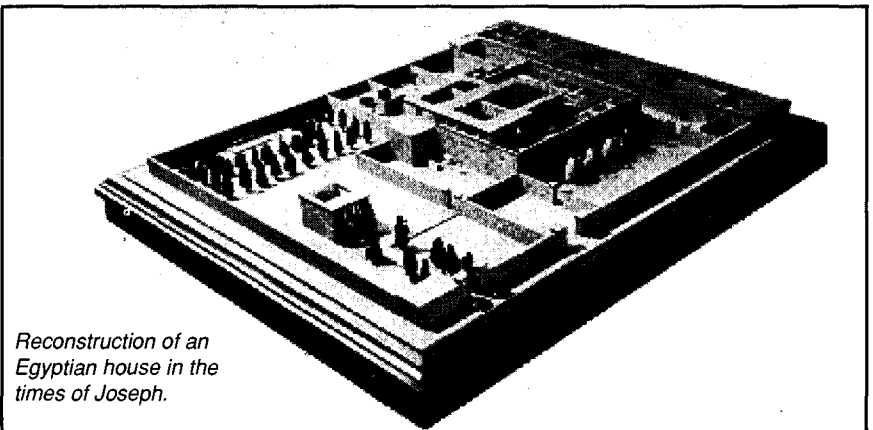
#### VERSE 6

**“For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest”** — “Earing” is old Saxon for *ploughing*, so rendered by Rotherham.

#### VERSE 7

**“And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth”** — With the appearance of his brethren in Egypt, Joseph clearly discerned the ways of providence in his sufferings. He now saw that his trials were not only designed for the preservation of life in a general sense (v. 5), but also to preserve a remnant to Israel. The word *sheeriyth*, rendered “posterity” signifies *remnant*, and is translated as such in the R.V. Joseph’s statement clearly foreshadows the work of his greater antitype (Isa. 49:6; Rom. 15:8).

**“And to save your lives by a great deliverance”** — As the Deliverer of his brethren, Joseph foreshadowed the Deliverer who shall come (Rom. 11:26).



Reconstruction of an Egyptian house in the times of Joseph.

**VERSE 8**

**“So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God”** — In fact, both sent him though not in the terms of the context of this passage. Joseph’s brethren sent him to be a slave, God sent him to be a saviour. Both ideas are combined in the descriptive statement of Psalm 105:17, “He (Yahweh) sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant.” For the antitype, see Mark 12:8-11; Acts 2:23.

**“And he hath made me a father to Pharaoh”** — A father is a wise and confidential friend and counsellor. Joseph was as this to Pharaoh. Moreover, he was as an Author of life to Egypt, for his wise counsel preserved the nation from disaster.

**“And lord of all his house”** — The authority of Pharaoh was vested in Joseph as that of Yahweh is today vested in the Lord (John 5:27).

**“And a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt”** — Similarly, all power in earth is today given into the charge of the Son (Matt. 28:18).

**VERSE 9**

**“Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not”** — A similar message will be delivered to the Jewish people scattered abroad at the coming of the Lord, so fulfilling the antitype (see Mal. 4:4-6; Isa. 42:16; Jer. 3:12; 4:1; Jer. 31:31; Hos. 8:10. See *The Second Exodus* pp. 446-454 in *Elpis Israel*).

**VERSE 10**

**“And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen”** — Goshen was a district in the Delta, a few miles north-east of On, about 120 miles from Hebron. Being well watered by springs, and elevated above the annual overflow of the Nile, the land was suited for flocks. It therefore was a choice piece of land, ideally situated for shepherds, separated in the midst of Egypt.

**“Thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children’s children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast”** — The reunion would be complete — as Joseph would

identify himself with the children of Israel.

**VERSE 11**

**“And there will I nourish thee”** — The verb *kool* signifies to *hold up, to sustain*, as well as *provide nourishment*. Joseph promised his brethren that they would enjoy his special care in every way. This will be true also of those Jews who return at the invitation of the Lord at his coming (Ezek. 20:33-37).

**“For yet there are five years of famine”** — The worst of the famine was yet to be felt; answering to the “time of trouble” that shall break forth at Christ’s return (Dan. 12:1-2).

**“Lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty”** — Because of the extremity to which people would be brought, it was needful for the children of Israel to keep close to Joseph, otherwise dire poverty and slavery would become their lot.

**VERSE 12**

**“And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you”** — Joseph saw in the wonderment of their faces, the dawning realisation that he, indeed, was their brother, now become their saviour. How great will be the amazement shown by Israel after the flesh in the Age to come (Zech. 12:10; Rev. 1:7). What joy on the face of the antitypical Benjamin, the Ecclesia, at such a time (1 John 3:2).

**VERSE 13**

**“And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt”** — From Christ’s manifestation of himself to Jewry in the land, the news shall spread to those Jews still scattered abroad at his coming. Already, Elijah will have made himself known to them, and they will have received great encouragement by learning of the remarkable events in the Land itself (the overthrow of Gog, etc.) that will testify to the presence of their Messiah in the earth.

**“And of all that ye have seen”** — Suggesting that their eyes have seen more

than their mouths are able to express. Like the Queen of Sheba, only half the glory could be described by word.

**“And ye shall haste and bring down my father hither”** — Joseph was anxious to see his father again, that they both might be reunited in love.

#### VERSE 14

**“And he fell upon his brother Benjamin’s neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck”** — The two brothers are united in love; as Christ will be with the true Israel (Gal. 6:16). For the emotion of Joseph, see comment at Gen. 42:24.

#### VERSE 15

**“Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them”** — Joseph and Benjamin embraced each other standing upright, each with his face resting upon the shoulder of the other; but Joseph wept *upon* the others.

This would imply that they were bowing before him, perhaps in fear lest they irritate him in any way (cp. Ch. 50:17).

**“After that his brethren talked with him”** — They became reassured by Joseph’s demonstration of affection towards them.

## THE LAST DAYS OF JACOB

### (Ch. 45:16–50:13)

*Knowledge that the men from Canaan are actually Joseph’s brethren is brought to the attention of Pharaoh, and he courteously responds by inviting them to permanently shelter in the land of Egypt. The invitation is supported by Joseph, and the brethren return home to Jacob with the wonderful and unbelievable news that his favourite son, whom he thought to be dead, is alive, and is governor of the greatest nation on earth. At first Jacob is incredulous. The news is almost too good to be true, and under the pressure of conflicting feelings of joy, doubt, astonishment and misgiving, he suffers attack. But he is convinced by the explanation of his sons, and the visible evidence of wagons and goods sent to him by Joseph. His spirit revives, and he expresses a desire to see his son again. It was a momentous resolution. To descend into Egypt, with the whole of his belongings, to place himself and his tribe under the protection of Pharaoh, was to give up for himself and them the freedom and independence which had been enjoyed now for above two centuries. He perhaps recalled the difficulties that faced Abraham when he visited Egypt, and the refusal of Isaac to leave the Land under any circumstances. On the other hand, he may have recalled the prophecy given to Abraham, that his seed should dwell in a strange land for a time (Gen. 15:13-16), and from this might reason that it was the will of God that he should remove into Egypt. Certainly that same prophecy was recalled by Joseph later,*



*and given as an incentive to Israel in Egypt to await in faith the time of deliverance (Gen. 50:24). With conflicting emotions struggling within him, Jacob leaves Hebron for Beersheba, on the border of the Negev, and there makes his problem a matter of prayer. Receiving the divine approval for the move, Jacob leads the tribe into Egypt, and there receives from Pharaoh a permit to reside in the land of Goshen. Then, as Jacob feels his life drawing to an end, he exercises his privilege of bestowing blessings upon his children and grandchildren. The sons of Joseph are adopted by him as his own, and receive special blessings; Jacob's twelve sons are given a prophetic outline of their future; and then, with his work complete, the patriarch makes ready for his death. When this has claimed him, his body is embalmed, and is ceremoniously conveyed back to the Promised Land, to the family tomb in the cave of the field of Machpelah.*

### **Invitation To Shelter In Egypt**

— **Vv. 16-24**

*Hearing that the men from Canaan are Joseph's brethren, Pharaoh invites them to make their residence in Egypt, and offers them the good of the land. They are given substantial gifts and sent on their way, with the exhortation to return with their father.*

#### **VERSE 16**

**"And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house"** — The word "fame" is literally *voice* from the Hebrew *gol*, and here signifies *rumour* or *report*. Egyptian officials had heard evidence of Joseph's emotion (v. 2), and evidently passed on the cause of it to Pharaoh.

**"Saying, Joseph's brethren are come: and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants"** — In the antitype, the "return" of Israel to the Lord will be pleasing in the sight of the Father. Meanwhile, Yahweh "waits" for that day to come (Isa. 30:18-19).

#### **VERSES 17, 18**

**"And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan; and take your father and your households, and come unto**

**me"** — Pharaoh evidently conferred with Joseph, and learning of the circumstances, granted permission for the invitation to be issued.

**"And I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land"** — This description can likewise apply to the inheritance of Israel in the Age to come.

#### **VERSE 19**

**"Now thou art commanded, this do ye"** — Rotherham renders: "Thou, therefore, command them" but the Hebrew is as the A.V. Pharaoh issued the decree to Joseph, whom he recognised as the head of the family, and he passed it on to the others.

**"Take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come"** — The greatest assistance would be rendered to the family of Jacob. See Isa. 49: 22-23.

#### **VERSE 20**

**"Also regard not your stuff"** — The Goodspeed Bible renders: "Never mind your goods." However, the record states that they brought "all they possessed" (Gen. 46:1,32).

**"For the good of all the land of**

**Egypt is your's**" — Whatever loss they may experience in leaving Canaan would be more than compensated for in Egypt. To perform the will of God often entails a temporary sacrifice, but the ultimate benefits are beyond doubt.

#### VERSE 21

**"And the children of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way"**

— The brethren of Joseph saw where their interests lay, and took the right steps towards obtaining what they had been offered. That is the right attitude for flesh to adopt towards the gifts of God. Moreover, Joseph saw that they had every means to assist them to that end. Christ likewise, has made available every means for us to obtain the gift of God.

#### VERSE 22

**"To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment"** — The very appearance of the brethren of Joseph was changed by their contact with him, as the characters of all are changed by contact with Christ. The raiment given the brethren were not duplications of the garments they were already wearing, but *changes* of raiment, or different *sorts* of garments, such as were substituted for ordinary clothes on festal occasions. See Gen. 27:15. Thus they were equipped for worship. In the antitype, Israel after the flesh will not merely be brought back into the land, but there will constitute a priestly community (Zech. 14:20-21; Isa. 66:20-21; Ezek. 48:19), providing a channel of grace for all mankind who worship there (Zech. 14:16).

**"But to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver"** — Benjamin received privileges above the other brethren.

In Biblical numerics, three is the number of completion through resurrection. The earth appeared for the first time, and produced growth on the third day (Gen. 1:9-13).

Again, silver is the metal of redemption (Exod. 30:12-15; Lev. 5:15, ct. 1 Pet. 1:18).

In the type, Benjamin appears to represent the Ecclesia, the "beloved of Yahweh" (Deut. 33:12), redeemed through a resurrection from the dead. Joseph's preference for Benjamin was openly manifested before the other brethren as Christ's preference for the Ecclesia will be openly manifested before Israel after the flesh, in the manner of Rev. 3:9 (though the reference here is not to Israel after the flesh but to apostates who claim to be the Israel of God). See Isa. 49:21.

**"And five changes of raiment"** — Five is the number of grace and privilege. The raiment given Benjamin were not merely five different suits of clothing, as we may imagine, but five different *changes* or *sorts* of raiment, comprising priestly garments adequate to every situation that grace would require. The Ecclesia will constitute a priestly community in the Age to come (Rev. 5:9-10; 20:6), dispensing grace unto all who seek Yahweh.

#### VERSE 23

**"And to his father he sent after this manner; ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt"** — The good things of Egypt represented the heavenly blessings that came to the nation because of the presence of Joseph in it. Tokens of this were sent to Jacob to draw him to enjoy their fulness in the presence of his son. In the same manner, Israel in dispersion at Christ's coming, will be invited to enjoy that which the antitypical Joseph will be able to offer (cp. Jer. 3:15-18).

**"Ten she asses laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way"** — The mention of she asses indicates the lesser value of this part of the gift. It was designed for temporary benefit only; to sustain Jacob until he would receive the full blessing in the presence of his beloved son. The word "meat" is from *mazown* from a root *zoon* which A. Clarke suggests indicates *to prepare, provide*, and hence relates to *prepared meat*. This could be some special delicacies prepared for his father to relieve the tedium of the way.

#### VERSE 24

**"So he sent his brethren away, and**

**they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way”** — Moffatt renders this: “Do not quarrel on the road.” Why should they do so? Because they realised that when they arrived home, they would have to make full confession to Jacob of their complicity in the plot against Joseph. The natural tendency would be for each one to depreciate his failings, and to emphasise the complicity of the others thereto. This could lead to arguments and quarrels, and Joseph exhorted them to avoid doing so. His exhortation required that each one frankly recognise his own guilt in relation to Joseph, and avoid self-justification. A similar attitude will be required of Israel after the flesh in the Age to come (cp. Ezek. 43:11; Jer. 16:17-18).

**Jacob’s Joy At The News Concerning Joseph — Vv. 25-28**

*Arriving at Hebron, the brethren proclaim the exciting news to Jacob. At first he does not believe it. But when shown the tokens of goodness that Joseph sent, he is compelled to do so, and with joy anticipates reunion with the son whom he loves so fondly.*

**VERSE 25**

**“And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father”** — At the time, Jacob was sojourning at Mamre, close to Hebron.

**VERSE 26**

**“And told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt”** — To fulfil the antitype, a similar, dramatic message will be sent to scattered, unbelieving Israel at the Lord’s return, proclaiming that he is alive, and has been granted authority over the Gentiles.

**“And Jacob’s heart fainted, for he believed them not”** — Rotherham, in a footnote, renders *fainted* as *began to cease beating*. Jacob heard their statement with the greatest concern. At first he did not believe his sons, and possibly wondered what they were up to in making such an obviously false statement. He viewed them with the greatest misgiving. Deeply

concerned with all the circumstances of his sons’ visits to Egypt, this final statement proved almost too much: his heart momentarily ceased to beat.

**VERSE 27**

**“And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived”** — In telling Jacob all the words of Joseph, they would have had to confess to their own failings and deception; then, as the patriarch saw evidence of their repentance and the present sent to him, he recovered from his temporary heart failure. His unbelief gave way to a joyous conviction. In similar manner, when Moses was sent back to the people of Israel, they refused to believe that he was sent of Yahweh until he presented his credentials to them: showing them the outstanding signs that Yahweh had made it possible for him to perform (see Exod. 4:1-5). The antitype of the experiences of both Jacob and Moses will be fulfilled in the mission of Elijah to Israel scattered abroad (Mal. 4:4-5). He will proclaim that the Messiah has returned, and, doubtless, will confirm the truth of his message by tokens that he and his assistants will be able to display.

**VERSE 28**

**“And Israel said”** — The interchange of names between Jacob and Israel is quite significant; the latter being used to describe incidents in which the patriarch displays spiritual strength.

**“It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive”** — His previous sorrow and mourning gave place to a great joy.

**“I will go and see him before I die”** — Rotherham renders this in the imperative mood: “*I must go*”. As the realisation is borne home upon Jacob that his beloved son is still alive, his strength is renewed and he becomes filled with enthusiasm. One sight of Joseph will compensate for all the years of suffering and sorrow he has experienced, and therefore he declares his determination to try and accomplish his desire.

## CHAPTER FORTY-SIX

### MIGRATION INTO EGYPT

*Having declared his intention of moving down into Egypt to make acquaintance with Joseph again, Jacob makes it a matter of prayer, and is encouraged by God to carry on with his mission. A register of the family is then made, and as a community, it makes its way down to Egypt and to Joseph. The various members of the tribe are warmly greeted by Joseph, who instructs them in what they should say to Pharaoh. The joy of this meeting between the patriarch and his son anticipates that glorious meeting day that is coming after the trials and mistakes of the present have been corrected.*

#### The Migration to Egypt — Vv. 1-7

*In spite of the news that Joseph was in Egypt, it was not easy for Jacob to leave Canaan, for it was the Promised Land, and his whole life was based on the covenant made to him in relation to it. He therefore seeks divine guidance and is given permission to take the journey to Egypt to meet with his son.*

#### VERSE 1

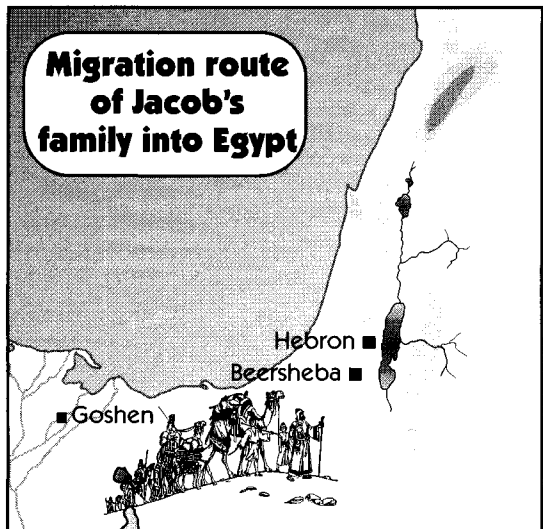
**“And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba”** — Beersheba is about twenty-five miles from Mamre or Hebron (Gen. 35:27). It was a place of great significance to the patriarchs, as its name indicates, for Beersheba signifies *The Well of the Oath*, and points to the covenant with Abraham which God confirmed with an oath.

**“And offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac”** — It was at Beersheba that Jacob had received the blessing and promise (Gen. 28:10), and at this significant site he now turns to God to receive guidance as to his future movements. His worship probably comprised a mixture of thanks-

giving and petition. He could thank God for the wonderful tidings concerning Joseph, seek guidance for his future movements, and beseech His blessing upon his offspring, in view of the prophecy of oppression in Egypt delivered unto Abraham (Gen. 15:13).

#### VERSE 2

**“And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night”** — The phrase,



*visions of the night*, suggests more than an allusion to night time, and seems to imply a relationship to Gentile times. Daniel, certainly, used the term in that way (cp. Dan. 7:7,13 with John 9:4), and it is appropriate for the sojourning of the children of Israel in Egypt, through which they reached nationhood.

**“And said, Jacob, Jacob”** — God speaks to the old Jacob, reminding him of what he had been, and so implying that His love and care had been with him in his weakness.

**“And he said, Here am I”** — The response of Jacob suggests compliance with what God required, as though he said: “Take me.” It suggests that Jacob was ready to obey God in whatsoever He bade him to do.

### VERSE 3

**“And He said, I am God, the God of thy father”** — Two different words for “God” are used in this statement. The first is *El* and signifies Might, Power; the second is *Elohim*, and signifies Mighty Ones. The latter word is translated *angels* in Psalm 8:5, and represents the medium through which the Divine power is manifested to men. When the two words are used in conjunction, they signify *The strength of the mighty ones*, elsewhere described as *El Shaddai*, rendered “God Almighty” (Gen. 17:1). Jacob and his descendants could rely upon that Strength during their sojourn in Egypt, and therefore need not fear what man might do unto them.

**“Fear not to go down into Egypt”** — Jacob had received divine guidance throughout his life. He had done so when he left Beersheba for Padan-aram (Gen. 28:15); and again when he was directed to leave Padan-aram for home (Gen. 31:13). God overshadows the lives of all His servants, and will provide them with guidance during crises that may come upon them. Let such be pliable to His moulding influence, and constantly seek His help. From the exhortation to “Fear not,” we can conclude that fears were disturbing the mind of Jacob. Probably he recalled how disastrous had been the experience of

Abraham (Gen. 12:10-20) when he had entered Egypt, and now feared for the future of his family.

**“For I will there make of thee a great nation”** — This statement explained to Jacob why his children would be permitted to enter Egypt, whereas others had been prohibited from so doing. The experiences there would develop them into nationhood. Their waywardness had revealed that they were not ready for that as yet. Their characters needed purifying for the Kingdom. Jacob may have feared that his sons’ treachery towards Joseph, and the evidence of waywardness that they had subsequently manifested (cp. Gen. 35:22; Gen. 38) would hinder the development of the nation that God had promised. He was told to fear not, for it would be established. See the antitype in Isa 43:1-2.

### VERSE 4

**“I will go down with thee into Egypt”** — With this assurance, Jacob could enter Egypt with full confidence. Similar words are used in relation to the nation in later times: “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee” (Isa. 43:2). Yahweh is with Israel even today (cp. Zech. 1:15-16; Ezek. 38:16). Notice the fourfold promise of vv. 3-4.

1. Jacob would develop into a great nation, in Egypt.
2. God would protect him and his descendants.
3. His descendants would return as a nation.
4. Joseph would perform the last rites for his father.

**“And I will also surely bring thee up again”** — Jacob, himself, was brought up again in his coffin (Gen. 50:4-13), but in this verse, as is often the case elsewhere in Scripture, he is referred to nationally, and identified with his descendants. God here repeats in different terms what he previously told Abraham (Gen. 15:13-16). It was with this assurance, also, that Joseph comforted his associates before his death (Gen. 50:24). Meanwhile, the trials the children of Israel would experience in Egypt would help bring them to nationhood.

In *Elpis Israel*, Bro. Thomas writes: "In this promise Jacob was re-assured of a resurrection to life. The action of putting the hand upon the eyes represents death; for this was one of the last offices of the nearest relations. Hence, to tell Jacob he should die, and yet that he should be brought up again, was telling him in effect that he should rise from the dead again to possess the land" (p. 278).

**"And Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes"** — God thus gave assurance to the old man that he would again see his beloved son, and that finally he would die in peace with Joseph ministering to him to the very end, finally closing his eyes in death.

#### VERSE 5

**"And Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba"** — Reassured by the voice of God, he arose spiritually refreshed and with greater confidence.

**"And the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him"** — Pharaoh had instructed Jacob's sons not to regard their possessions because all the good of Egypt was before them, but they desired to maintain their independence as a separate people in the midst of Egypt.

#### VERSE 6

**"And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him"** — Jacob was then 130 years of age (Ch. 47:9), so that 215 years had elapsed since Abram entered the land. See *Expositor: Exodus* on Exod. 12:40.

#### VERSE 7

**"His sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt"** — This need not imply that Jacob had more daughters than Dinah, but may include his sons' wives who are not otherwise mentioned in this enumeration.

#### Jacob's Descendants — Vv. 8-27

*The migration into Egypt comprised "the souls" of Jacob (he thus being included) summarised as follows:*

*Leah — v. 15 (33 souls). With Er and Onan there are 34 mentioned, but excluding them, and including Jacob, there are thirty-three.*

*Zilpah — v. 18, sixteen in all.*

*Rachel — v. 22, fourteen in all, but excluding Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh who were already in Egypt, there were eleven.*

*Bilhah — v. 25, comprised seven.*

*These figures (33+16+11+7) total sixty-seven; but add Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, they make seventy in all.*

#### VERSE 8

**"And these are the names of the children of Israel which came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons"** — Thus Jacob is included in the enumeration.

**"Reuben"** — Sig. *See a Son.*

**"Jacob's firstborn"** — He was first-born to Jacob according to the flesh, but was supplanted by Joseph (1 Chron. 5:1).

#### VERSE 9

**"And the sons of Reuben; Hanoch"** — Sig. *Initiated or Dedicated.* Significantly, this also was the name of Cain's first-born (Gen. 4:17).

**"And Phallu"** — Sig. *Distinguished.*

**"And Hezron"** — Sig. *Enclosed.*

**"And Carmi"** — Sig. *Vine-dresser.*

The names of Reuben's sons set forth the ideal of the firstborn. To be *Dedicated, Distinguished, Separated* in order to labour in the *Vineyard*.

#### VERSE 10

**"And the sons of Simeon"** — Simeon signifies *Hearing*.

**"Jemuel"** — Sig. *Day of El.*

**"And Jamin"** — Sig. *Right Hand.*

**"And Ohad"** — Sig. *Joined together.*

**"And Jachin"** — Sig. *Whom God establishes.*

**"Zohar"** — Sig. *Whiteness.*

**"Shaul"** — Sig. *Asked for.*

The names of Simeon's sons express the result of a thorough hearing of the

Word. There is set before such the *Day of God* when, with He of *the right hand*, they will be *joined together, established of God*, in the *whiteness*, which they have *asked for*.

**“The son of a Canaanitish woman”** — Simeon’s marriage to such must have been a “grief of mind” to Jacob (Gen. 26:35). Nevertheless, by hearing the Word, evil can be redeemed.

#### VERSE 11

**“And the sons of Levi”** — Levi signifies *Joining*; i.e. *Fellowship*.

**“Gershon”** — Sig. *Expulsion*.

**“Kohath”** — Sig. *Assembly*.

**“And Merari”** — Sig. *Bitter, Sad*.

Fellowship with God requires the *expulsion* of the things of the flesh, and joining with the *Assembly* or *Ecclesia*. This invariably brings its *bitter* trials.

#### VERSE 12

**“And the sons of Judah”** — Judah signifies *Praise*.

**“Er”** — Sig. *Watchful*.

**“And Onan”** — Sig. *Strong*.

**“And Shelah”** — Sig. *Request, or Petition*.

**“And Pharez”** — Sig. *A Breach*.

**“And Zarah”** — Sig. *Sunrise*. 1 Chron. 2:6 reveals that Zarah had five sons, but evidently they were born after the descent into Egypt.

**“But Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan”** — The effect of sin thus dimmed the praise and joy of Judah. See notes Chapter 38.

**“And the sons of Pharez were Hezron and Hamul”** — These names sig. *Enclosed* and *One who has experienced mercy or spared*.

The names of Judah’s sons are also significant. The first two speak of *watchfulness* and *strength*, but this was in regard to the things of the flesh, so that in their death there was no praise but regret and sorrow. The names of the sons who follow, speak of *Petition* or *Prayer*, the *breaking forth* or *breaching* of praise, and the promise of the *sunrise* (Mal. 4 :1-2) for the *separated* and *spared*.

#### VERSE 13

**“And the sons of Issachar”** — Issachar signifies *Reward*.

**“Tola”** — Sig. *Worm* or *Scarlet*.

**“And Phuvah”** — Sig. *Mouth*.

**“And Job”** — This name is given as Jashub in the Septuagint as it is in Num. 26:24. Jashub signifies *Turning oneself*.

**“And Shimron”** — Sig. *Watch*.

The names of Issachar’s sons spell out how to obtain the reward: by seeking the cover provided through the *scarlet* of Christ’s blood; by *witnessing* to his truth; *turning* in true repentance; and *watching* for the coming of the Lord.

#### VERSE 14

**“And the sons of Zebulun”** — Zebulun signifies *Dwelling*.

**“Sered”** — Sig. *Fear*.

**“And Elon”** — Sig. *Oak*, from a word indicating *Strength*.

**“And Jahleel”** — Sig. *Wait for God*.

The names of Zebulun’s sons also proclaim vital truth. For, *feared* of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge, and, therefore, of true *strength*. It leads to one *waiting for God*, and for the dwelling that He will provide.

#### VERSE 15

**“These be the sons of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob in Padan-aram, with his daughter Dinah”** — Dinah sig. *Judgment*.

**“All the souls of his sons and his daughters were thirty and three”** — With Dinah, there are thirty-four mentioned; but if Er and Onan are excluded, and Jacob is added, the total becomes thirty-three. From v. 8 it is obvious that Jacob should be included.

#### VERSE 16

**“And the sons of Gad”** — Gad signifies *Company*.

**“Ziphion”** — Sig. *Expectation*.

**“And Haggi”** — Sig. *Festive*.

**“Shuni”** — Sig. *Quiet*.

**“And Ezbon”** — This name is given in the margin as Ozni. It signifies *Toiling*.

**“Eri”** — Sig. *Guarding*.

**“And Arodi”** — Sig. *Wild Ass*.

**“And Areli”** — Sig. *Lion of God*.

The names of God’s sons set forth the characteristics of those who will make up the company of the redeemed. They are found in a state of *expectancy; feasting in quiet* with their Lord (Rev. 3:20); *toiling and guarding* the Truth, in the assurance of a transformation from the status of a *wild ass* (the symbol of Israel after the flesh) to that of a *Lion of God*.

#### VERSE 17

**“And the sons of Asher”** — Asher signifies *Blessed*.

**“Jimmah”** — Sig. *Prosperity*.

**“And Ishuah”** — Sig. *Even, Level, or Peaceful*.

**“And Isui”** — Sig. *Even, Level, Peaceful*, the same as Ishuah. Perhaps these two sons of Asher were twins.

**“And Beriah”** — Sig. *Gift*.

**“And Serah their sister”** — Sig. *Abundance*.

**“And the sons of Beriah”** — Asher was a grandfather when he went down into Egypt.

**“Heber”** — Sig. *Fellowship*.

**“And Malchiel”** — Sig. *King of God (El)*.

The names of Asher’s children illustrate the condition of *blessedness or happiness* which his name signifies. *Prosperity, true peace* (indicated by the twins, or peace doubled), the gift of *abundance*, expressed in true *fellowship*, and leading to *royalty with God*, are expressive of the blessedness and happiness of the future age, suggested by the name of Asher.

#### VERSE 18

**“These are the sons of Zilpah”** — See Gen. 30:10-13.

**“Whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter”** — See Gen. 29:24.

**“And these she bare unto Jacob, even sixteen souls”** — Sixteen children are mentioned in these verses.

#### VERSE 19

**“The sons of Rachel Jacob’s wife; Joseph and Benjamin”** — Jointly sig. *He shall increase the son of his right hand*. This comprises the basic fact of Yahweh’s

purpose in the earth (Isa 53:10-12).

#### VERSE 20

**“And unto Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim”** — These names signify *Forgetting and Double Fruit*. They suggest the means whereby the son of Yahweh’s right hand shall increase; it is by those of the two great families of humanity: Jew and Gentile, *“forgetting their father’s house”* (Ps. 45), and producing *fruit* to the glory of the Lord.

**“Which Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On bare unto him”** — See Gen. 41:50 for details.

#### VERSE 21

**“And the sons of Benjamin”** — Benjamin signifies *Son of the Right Hand*, a title of Christ (Ps. 110).

**“Were Belah”** — Sig. *Devouring*.

**“And Becher”** — Sig. *Young Camel*.

**“And Ashbel”** — Sig. *Opinion of God, or Flowing*.

**“Gera”** — Sig. *Grain*.

**“And Naaman”** — Sig. *Pleasantness*.

**“Ehi”** — Sig. *My brother*. In Num. 26:28 his name is given as Ahiram.

**“And Rosh”** — Sig. *Head*.

**“Muppim”** — Sig. *Adorned ones*. In Num. 26:39, his name is given as Shuppim. The initial letters of both names are similar in Hebrew. Shuppim signifies *serpents*.

**“And Huppim”** — Sig. *Coverings*. The name is given as Hupham in Num. 26:39.

**“And Ard”** — Sig. *Fugitive*.

Again, these names provide the foundation of a significant paraphrase relating to Christ, the Son of the right hand. Those associated with the Lord are expected to *devour the unclean* (camel), and through *divine teaching*, provide *grain and pleasantness* to the elder brother, as the chief of the *adorned ones*.

From a literal viewpoint, it will be noted that “little” Benjamin had more children than any other of the brethren. Moreover, in Numbers 26:40, Ard and Naaman are given as the sons of Bela, and the grandsons of Benjamin. In the same list,



Becher, Gera and Rosh are omitted. Perhaps they died without issue. For other references to Benjamin's descendants, see notes at Numbers 26 (*Expositor: Numbers*). Thus Benjamin was a young grandfather when he was taken down into Egypt to meet his brother Joseph.

#### VERSE 22

**"These are the sons of Rachel, which were born to Jacob: all the souls were fourteen"** — The fourteen include Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim who were already in Egypt.

#### VERSE 23

**"And the sons of Dan"** — Dan signifies *Judgment*.

**"Hushim"** — Sig. *Those who make haste*. In the face of *Judgment* there is need to *make haste* for a proper covering.

#### VERSE 24

**"And the sons of Naphtali"** — Naphtali signifies *wrestling*.

**"Jahzeel"** — Sig. *Allotted by God*.

**"And Guni"** — Sig. *Painted with colours*.

**"And Jezer"** — Sig. *Image, form*.

**"And Shillem"** — Sig. *Retribution*.

The names suggest the result of successful *wrestling* with sin. *God allots* an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, one glorified with the *colours* of the rainbow (Gen. 9:13), reserved for those who conform to the *image* and *form* of Christ, to be received in the day of *retribution*.

#### VERSE 25

**"These are the sons of Bilhah, which Laban gave unto Rachel his daughter, and she bare these unto Jacob: all the souls were seven"** — See Gen. 29:29.

#### VERSE 26

**"All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were threescore and six"** — The descendants of Jacob recorded in Vv. 8-25 total seventy in all. However, they include Er and Onan, Ephraim and Manasseh which being excluded make a total of sixty-six.

This is the number that went from Canaan to Egypt.

#### VERSE 27

**"And the sons of Joseph which were born him in Egypt, were two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten"** — This computation includes Jacob (as one of the souls of his house), Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh. See note preceding v. 8 above. However, in Acts 7:14, Stephen states that seventy-five came from Canaan into Egypt. This can be computed in various ways. As a Hellenistic Jew, Stephen could have used the Septuagint which, at Gen 46:20 adds: "There were sons born to Manasses, whom the Syrian concubine bore to him, even Machir. And Machir begat Galaad. And the sons of Ephraim the brother of Manasses, Sutaalam and Taam. And the sons of Sutaalam, Edom." This addition in the Septuagint is probably taken from Num. 26:28-31; 1 Chron. 7:14-20, and the additional names make seventy-five in all, answering to the number cited by Stephen. On the other hand, Stephen may have obtained his number by taking account of the wives of Jacob's sons. Judah's wife, Shuah, was dead (Gen. 38:12). Rachel and Leah were dead (Gen 35:20; 49:31), Joseph was already in Egypt, making 65 who went into Egypt "besides Jacob's sons' wives" (v. 26). This allows for ten wives, excluding those of Judah and Joseph. Whatever computation is accepted, the fact is that Stephen did not make a mistake, and the various totals of sixty-six (Gen 46:26), seventy (v.27), and seventy-five (Acts 7:14) can all be accounted for. As Israel's family numbered seventy persons when he went into Egypt, so there is a seventy-fold division of Gentile "families" (or nations) listed in Genesis 10. Concerning this enumeration, Moses later recorded: "He (God) set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel" (Deut. 32:8). Thus there is a compensating balance of seventy in the two great families of the human race: the Gentiles and Israel. Seventy is a combination of seven (the covenant number) multiplied by ten

(the number of completeness). The redeemed are those drawn out of these two great families (Rev. 5:9-10). See the Introduction to Genesis 10.

### **Jacob Meets Joseph — Vv. 28-34.**

*Nearing Egypt, Jacob sends Judah as the new leader of the brethren ahead of the others in order to work out the details of the settlement in the new land, so that all will be in readiness on their arrival. But Joseph, as a high official, has access to Egypt's swiftest means of transportation, and excited at the prospect of welcoming his beloved father, goes forth to meet him. A dramatic, emotional and affectionate reunion takes place. Conducting the family into Egypt, Joseph next turns his attention to obtaining formal approval of Goshen as a place of settlement for his family. Because of the delicate conditions then existing between Egyptians and shepherds he carefully instructs his brethren as to the correct procedures to be adopted under the circumstances.*

#### **VERSE 28**

**“And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph”** — Reverses and trials had brought out the good qualities of Judah, so that Jacob came to rely upon him more and more (Ch. 43:3). Antotypically, Christ will reveal himself first to the Jews in the land, thus described as Judah (Zech. 12:7).

**“To direct his face unto Goshen”** — Judah went ahead in order to ascertain what procedures should be adopted in order to enter the land as sojourners.

**“And they came into the land of Goshen”** — See note Gen. 45:10.

#### **VERSE 29**

**“And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen”** — As a high official, Joseph had access to the state chariot, and therefore made his way to his father by that means. It represented the authority he wielded in the land.

**“And presented himself unto him”** — Rotherham renders this as “appeared” unto him, and in a footnote *or*

*“manifested himself — an interesting word”*. This is an interesting word, because the niphal form of the verb is commonly used of the manifestation of God and angels. The antitype points to the manifestation of the Lord in the future age.

**“And he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while”** — A very dramatic and emotional reunion took place between the aged patriarch and his beloved son. For the emotion of Joseph, see note on Gen. 42:24. See also Luke 15:20.

#### **VERSE 30**

**“And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive”** — By these expressions, Jacob meant that he could die happy having thus attained more than his dearest wish, and mortal life could hold nothing better for him. All he could look for to exceed his present joy was a resurrection to life eternal. Actually, Jacob lived a further seventeen years before his death.

#### **VERSE 31**

**“And Joseph said unto his brethren, and unto his father's house, I will go up, and shew Pharaoh, and say unto him, My brethren, and my father's house, which were in the land of Canaan, are come unto me”** — Joseph proposes to act as mediator between the supreme authority and his people, as the Lord will between Yahweh and Israel after the flesh in the Age to come (see Zech. 13:1).

#### **VERSE 32**

**“And the men are shepherds, for their trade hath been to feed cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have”** — In a spiritual sense, this really describes the pastoral work of Yahweh's shepherds, to which all Israelites have been called (1 Pet. 5:4).

#### **VERSE 33**

**“And it shall come to pass, when**

**Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say, What is your occupation?"** — Such a question was bound to be asked, for Egyptian life was regulated by such considerations. Herodotus claims that under the monarch Amasis a law was established "that every Egyptian should declare to the governor of his district by what means he maintained himself; and if he failed to do this, or did not show that he lived by honest means, he should be punished by death" (Book 2.177). Enquiry will be made into spiritual occupation in the Age to come (Zech. 13:5), and that of shepherding will be accounted honourable (v. 7).

#### VERSE 34

**"That ye shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and also our fathers"** — This answer would set the children of Israel aside as a special people in Egypt, intent upon caring for the flocks, and not unduly interested in city life or the administration of the nation. For the anti-type see comments on the previous verse.

**"That ye may dwell in the land of Goshen"** — See note Gen. 45:10. Joseph probably desired his brethren to dwell in Goshen for three reasons: (1) It was admirably suited to the grazing of flocks and herds; (2) It would keep them as a

separated, isolated community from the rest of Egypt; (3) It was on the outskirts of Egypt, closest to the land of promise, so that their eyes would be always centred on the hope of their calling.

**"For every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians"** — These are obviously not the words of Joseph, but the explanatory words of Moses. In his day, a change had occurred in the attitude of the Egyptian monarchy towards the people of Israel (Exod. 1:8). This is in accordance with the historical records of Egypt. Prior to 1700 B.C., the Hyksos (shepherd: *sos*, King: *hyk*) or *rulers of foreign lands* established themselves in Egypt, and evidently, in the time of Joseph, were in authority over the nation, so that to a true Egyptian "every shepherd was an abomination." This particularly would have been so when the Hyksos were overthrown, as subsequently, was the case. The Hyksos were a Semitic race, a rural people who invaded Egypt. The centre of their power was in the eastern Delta, their capital being established in the Plain of Tanis, called *the field of Zoan* (Ps. 78:12). They were ejected about 1550 B.C., according to Unger (see *Bible Dictionary*). They were the first to introduce the swift war chariot to Egypt (Gen. 41:43; 46:29; Exod. 14:6).

## CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN

### JACOB AND HIS DESCENDANTS EXALTED IN GOSHEN

*Joseph presents his father and his brethren to Pharaoh, and secures for them the land of Goshen. The famine increases in severity and he acquires all Egyptian property on behalf of Pharaoh. The children of Israel increase in number, and finally Jacob prepares for death which he realises is imminent.*

#### **Jacob Presented to Pharaoh — Vv. 1-10.**

*The crucial test of Joseph's character had now come. For the viceroy of Egypt to acknowledge these foreign suppliants as his brethren, men who had given every*

*reason for him to repudiate them, called for the highest loyalty and devotion. But the issue was never in doubt for these were inbuilt characteristics of Joseph. In this, his character foreshadowed that of*

the Lord Jesus Christ. In the days of his flesh, Christ wept over Jerusalem, and lamented the hard-heartedness of the people as he submitted to the cruel oppression, but he will return to help and elevate the nation that then hated and rejected him. Paul was similarly willing to "be accursed" for the benefit of his brethren (Rom. 9:2-3). Joseph identified himself with his father and his brethren, and received the permission of Pharaoh for them to dwell in the land.

#### VERSE 1

**"Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and, behold, they are in the land of Goshen"** — Whilst it was permitted strangers to enter Egypt, a permit to remain as dwellers therein had to come from Pharaoh personally.

#### VERSE 2

**"And he took some of his brethren"** — The word "some" is *getseh*, and signifies *extremity*. The R.V. renders *From among his brethren he took five men*. He made careful choice of them.

**"Even five men"** — Five is the number of grace, and Joseph sought the grace of Pharaoh. "Men" is *enoshim* and relates to weak, mortal men. Those whom Joseph selected, therefore, were not the most powerful among his brethren, but were the "extremity" of them. As such, they might well evoke the sympathy of Pharaoh, and excite his grace.

**"And presented them unto Pharaoh"** — This is referred to by Stephen as taking place "at the second time" (Acts 7:13)

#### VERSE 3

**"And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your occupation?"** — Cp. Ch. 46: 33.

**"And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds, both we, and also our fathers"** — They answered as Joseph had instructed them to do.

#### VERSE 4

**"They said moreover unto Pharaoh, For to sojourn in the land are we come"** — To "sojourn" is to dwell temporarily, not permanently. This is the very language of the prophecy made to Abraham concerning his descendants (Gen. 15:13) and, therefore, was a vindication of its truth. Later, after the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, their sojourning there was ever kept in mind (Deut. 26:15). To petition Pharaoh in such a manner was a tactful statement that they had not arrived to take up permanent residence in the land, nor to unduly presume upon the status of authority enjoyed by their illustrious brother.

**"For thy servants have no pasture for their flocks; for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan"** — They explained that only dire necessity had driven them to move to Egypt, and they implied that they would leave as soon as the famine was over. In fact they remained for over two hundred years.

**"Now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen"** — They made formal request to remain where, already, they were dwelling (cp. Gen. 46:34). Goshen is said to signify *Approaching* (*The English and Hebrew Student's Concordance*). It is identified in the north-eastern section of the Egyptian Delta. This constituted the *approaches* of Egypt to those arriving from Canaan. It was a very fertile section of the land, excellent for grazing and for certain types of agriculture. It extended some thirty or forty miles in length between Lake Timsa and the Nile.

#### VERSE 5

**"And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee"** — The emphasis is not that they had come to Egypt or to Goshen, but to Joseph, the typical Christ.

#### VERSE 6

**"The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell"** — Pharaoh's gracious generosity and kindness to Joseph's father

and brethren foreshadow the goodness and grace of Yahweh towards Israel.

**“And if thou knowest any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle”** — “Activity” is from the Hebrew *chayil*, and signifies *strength*. It is from a root meaning to *twist* as rope. Rotherham renders it as ability. The word implies *strength of mind and body*. The word for “cattle” is *migneh* from *kanah*, to *possess*, and signifies *property or possessions* of any kind, though it frequently is used for *cattle*, because in ancient times they constituted the principal part of a man’s possessions. These men of ability from among the children of Israel, therefore, were to be placed in control over those who tended Pharaoh’s possessions. For the antitype see Isa. 30:23.

#### VERSE 7

**“And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh”**— Jacob’s presentation to Pharaoh was deferred until after the formal introduction of the family described in the previous verse because of its personal and private nature. This was a unique and moving occasion when the old pilgrim and man of God met the great monarch of Egypt. Obviously Jacob, who had experienced such vicissitudes in life including wrestling with an angel of God, possessed great dignity, due, no doubt, to his spiritual experiences and his intimacy with God. This was recognised by Pharaoh as he looked into the countenance of the outstanding man before him. It caused him to seek Jacob’s blessing, or, at least, consented to it being bestowed upon him. A life-long walk of faith even though punctuated with many a failure, adds to the experience and dignity of a man which others note and respect.

**“And Jacob blessed Pharaoh”** — He acknowledged Pharaoh’s position of authority. See verse 10.

#### VERSE 8

**“And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou?”** — The margin provides the Hebrew equivalent: *How many are the days and the years of thy life?*

#### VERSE 9

**“And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage”**—This important statement, clearly set before Pharaoh the fact that Jacob had a hope that saw beyond the present. His life was a “pilgrimage.” The word is *magurim* and signifies *wanderings*, suggesting places of temporary abode. A pilgrim is one who has an objective before him as he travels through a foreign land. It implies a religious journey requiring one to submit to many privations and hardships to attain to the end in view. In this sense, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were pilgrims (Exod. 6:4; see also Psa. 119:54; Heb. 11:10-16), and Jacob now proclaimed that fact to Pharaoh, leaving it to the monarch to seek further information if he so desired. All true saints are “strangers and pilgrims” (1 Pet. 2:11).

They are *strangers* and *foreigners* having been called to separateness by the Gospel (2 Cor. 6:14-18); they are *pilgrims* for there is objective and purpose in their separation. Their very attitude is a proclamation of the Gospel, a witness to the Truth.

Jacob claimed that he had not attained the age of his predecessors. Abraham was 175 at his death, and Isaac 180, as against Jacob’s present age of 130, and his death at the age of 147 (v. 28). Significantly, his age when presented to Pharaoh was 215 years from the time Abram commenced his pilgrimage in the land, and exactly halfway from the 430 years of Israel’s sojourn among oppressors (see Exod. 12:41; Gal. 3:17). Jacob describes them as “evil years” because they were years of adversity and affliction. If Jacob married immediately on arrival at Haran, at the age of 57, as seems most likely, Reuben would have been about 70, Dinah over 40, Joseph 39, and Benjamin a little over 30.

#### VERSE 10

**“And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and**

went out from before Pharaoh” — The verb *barak* signifies to kneel as in veneration, and shows that Jacob acknowledged the authority vested in Pharaoh by God (Rom. 13:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:17). On entering and on leaving the presence of Pharaoh, Jacob thus acknowledged his position. See v. 7.

### Land Granted To Jacob In Egypt — Vv. 11-12

*Joseph's family is granted outstanding privileges in Egypt.*

#### VERSE 11

“And Joseph placed his father and his brethren” — He established them in the land of Goshen.

“And gave them a possession in the land of Egypt” — He gave each his separate property. The antitype: Ezekiel 48.

“In the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded” — This was before the time of Rameses, but was so called by Moses because of the later building activity of this Pharaoh in the vicinity that brought it into historical importance. See Exod. 1:11.

#### VERSE 12

“And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to their families” — He apportioned them



*In the land of Goshen, with a distant view of the pyramids of Gizeh. In foreground is an irrigation canal.*

their quota of corn as with all the people of Egypt. For the antitype, see Isa. 40:11.

### The Egyptians Made Bondservants To Pharaoh — Vv. 13-21

*As the famine increases in severity, Joseph's grain-storage plan proves to be invaluable. The people are able to purchase the means of sustenance, first with money, then with cattle, thirdly with their land, and finally with themselves. Thus the people become serfs in exchange for bread.*

#### VERSE 13

“And there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine” — Famine in Egypt was of such serious consequences, that its results were depicted on Egyptian inscriptions. The land is described as having “fainted,” literally was *exhausted*, so as to become spiritless, discouraged, or to lose heart. For the antitype see Amos 8:12-14; Dan. 12:1.

#### VERSE 14

“And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought” — The word for “money” is *keceph*, *silver*, the coin of redemption (Exod. 30:13-15; Lev. 5:15).

For the antitype see 1Pet. 1:18. In the age to come, after Israel has been established in its inheritance, the call will go forth to all nations to submit to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to seek the means of redemption he shall offer (cp. Psa. 2:10-12; Rev. 14:6-7). Those who refuse this offer of mercy will perish (Isa. 60:12).

“And Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house” — For the antitype, see Hag. 2:8-9; Isa. 60:5, mg; Rev. 21:24. The wealth of the nations, both spiritual and literal, will be used to glorify the house of Yahweh in the age to come.

#### VERSE 15

“And when money failed in

the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence? for the money faileth" — The statement "the money failed" taught that more than money was required. Our redemption requires even more than the offering of the Lord: it necessitates as well, a striving on our part to be worthy of it. This requires personal sacrifice as the parable of Joseph's life illustrates.

#### VERSE 16

"And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail" — This was a course of true wisdom, both for the preservation of the people, and of the cattle. As the people had no grain for their own sustenance, they had none for their cattle. Starving animals would be little use to them, and if retained by the people would have been eaten, to the ruination of the future restoration of the nation. Purchased by Joseph, they were available when the famine ceased. Thus step by step Joseph was bringing the people to the end of their resources, forcing them to recognise their utter dependence upon Pharaoh and his servant. Christ will do likewise in regard to Israel and the world. He "shall deliver the needy when he crieth" (Psa. 72:12).

#### VERSE 17

"And they brought their cattle unto Joseph" — The word *miqneh* is a general term signifying *property*, i.e. livestock.

"And Joseph gave them bread in exchange for horses, and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds, and for the asses" — As noted above, in view of the severity of the famine, the value of such livestock would have been greatly depreciated.

"And he fed them with bread for all their cattle for that year" — The verb is *nahal* which signifies *to run with a sparkle, to flow, and hence to conduct, protect, sustain, lead*. Joseph stood at the head of the nation, confidently leading them as a shepherd. For the antitype, see Ps. 23:2; Isa. 40:11; John 10:14-16.

#### VERSE 18

"When that year was ended, they came unto him the second year" — This "second year" is dated from after the money was spent, not after the commencement of the famine. It was the "next" year after the circumstances of v. 15. See v. 23.

"And said unto him, We will not hide it from my lord, how that our money is spent; my lord also hath our herds of cattle; there is not ought left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands" — Their dire need of Joseph was completely evident to them; as the world's need of Christ will be brought home to it in the age to come.

#### VERSE 19

"Wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give us seed, that we may live, and not die, that the land be not desolate" — The people thus offered themselves as servants to Pharaoh.

#### VERSE 20

"And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them: so the land became Pharaoh's" — The people recognised their utter dependence upon Pharaoh and Joseph, and delivered all up to them. In the antitype, the time will come when mankind will realise that all belongs to Yahweh, and will willingly offer themselves and all their possessions to Him and His Son (Isa. 2:17-22). Dire necessity will compel the people to acknowledge this (Isa. 60:12).

#### VERSE 21

"And as for the people, he removed them to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end thereof" — Food having been stored in certain cities (Gen. 41:35), the people were settled in centres where they could be conveniently fed. The future will see a similar arrangement. The populations of the earth will be placed where they can be

conveniently fed — with the bread of Life (Mal. 1:11; Luke 19:17). Altars for worship and spiritual nourishment will be appropriately located throughout the world (Mal. 1:11).

Before the famine was over, Joseph had acquired in order (1) money; (2) cattle and livestock; (3) lands and persons. Typically, these represented (1) the price of redemption; (2) the means of livelihood, or activity; (3) their inheritance and very being. All of this Christ claims of believers today, and will require it of all mankind in the age to come. Having received these in order, Joseph, as the type of Christ, distributed seed to the people that they might bring forth fruit to the benefit of all. The significance of the type is obvious.

### The Priests' Land Exempted

#### — Vv. 22-26

*The priests' land is exempted from the general acquisition of land. They are treated as a class apart. Meanwhile, to relieve the hardship of the people, Joseph distributes to them corn for sowing, with the understanding that one-fifth of the increase is to be returned to the government.*

#### VERSE 22

**“Only the land of the priests bought he not”** — The priests were treated as a privileged class. Wallis Budge in *The Dwellers On The Nile* observes: “The power of the king of Egypt at that time was absolute, and right of conquest made him the owner of the whole country, and master of every living being in it, and the religious directors of the people were his servants. But sooner or later, every king of Egypt has found it expedient to be on good terms with the ancient priesthood of the country, and the early dynastic kings obtained the support of the priesthood of Nekhen in Upper Egypt, and of the priesthood of Per-Uatchit in the Delta.” Joseph, therefore, followed the normal traditional policy of the Pharaohs.

**“For the priests had a portion assigned them of Pharaoh”** — In the parable, the priests represent the believers, the immortal priests of the age to come (1

Pet. 2:9; Rev. 5:9-10), who will have special portions assigned them of Christ. (Cp. Matt. 25:21; Eph. 1:10-14). They comprise the seed of the Redeemer (Isa. 53:10), the “sons” whom Yahweh has granted him (Heb. 2:13), and as such they inherit special privileges (see Ezek. 46:16).

**“And did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them”** — There was no demand made on them to purchase the available corn, for already, as priests, their whole lives were given in service to Pharaoh and the State. This will be the case with the members of Christ's Melchizedek priesthood. They will receive the gift of life eternal from the great King of the heavens, even Yahweh. Not only so, but they will have the privilege of “eating” with His viceroy, even Christ the king (Matt. 26:29; Luke 12:37; 14:15; 22:30; Ezek. 44:3).

**“Wherefore they sold not their lands”** — Figuratively, they dwell in their inheritance for ever (Gen. 13:15).

#### VERSE 23

**“Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh”** — The people of Egypt were now a “purchased people.” That is the condition of all who accept Christ today (1 Cor. 7:23; 1 Pet. 2:9, Gr.), and will be the lot of all peoples in the Kingdom age, in their relationship to the Lord Jesus and to Yahweh.

**“Lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land”** — This implies that this took place in the last year of famine, clearly revealing the wisdom and foreknowledge of Joseph. In the parable, Joseph's actions show that it is not sufficient for a person to “sell” himself to Christ; he must also bring forth fruit to the glory of the Lord. This also will be required of all mortals in the age to come who, as such, will be incorporated into the kingdom (cp. Mal. 4:4; Zech. 14:16; Isa. 65:20; Isa. 2:2-4). Meanwhile there was a need to restore Egypt's depleted resources.

#### VERSE 24

**“And it shall come to pass in the**



**increase, that ye shall give the fifth part unto Pharaoh**" — Five is the number of grace. See note Gen. 43:34. Seeing that the seed, land, animals and lives of all now belonged to Pharaoh, the command that a fifth of the increase should be paid to him was by no means exorbitant. In fact, mercy and justice are blended in the system introduced by Joseph. Under this tenant law, the people became the grateful, contented and prosperous subjects of a well-ordered kingdom (cp. v. 25).

**"And four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones"** — In this instruction, Joseph divided the use of the increase into five parts, the first of which was to be allocated to Pharaoh. The rest was to be for (1) increase; (2) personal use; (3) use of fellow labourers; (4) personal offspring.

#### VERSE 25

**"And they said, Thou hast saved our lives"** — The work of Christ to that end will be universally recognised in the age to come. See Ps. 72:13.

**"Let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants"** — Divine grace, manifested in Christ, elevates believers to the status of Yahweh's servants (1 Cor. 7:22; Luke 12:42-43, Rom. 1:1). That same grace, in the age to come, and after the judgments have been poured out, will bring all surviving humanity to seek the servitude of Yahweh under Christ (Isa. 60:14), for "all nations shall serve him" (Ps. 72:11).

#### VERSE 26

**"And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth part"** — For the significance of the "fifth part" see the note on v. 24. This shall be required of the mortal populations of the Kingdom of God in the Age to come. But it is also a fact, attested by historians, that the economy of Egypt was established upon some such law. For example, Herodotus, (book 2, 109) records that the land was "divided among all the Egyptians in equal square allotments to each," and "from thence he

(the king) drew his revenues, having required them to pay a fixed tax every year."

**"Except the land of the priests only, which became not Pharaoh's"** — The priests inherited their land "for ever." See v. 22; Ezek. 46:16-17.

#### Israel's Descendants Multiply In Egypt — v. 27

*With the privileges granted the children of Israel, and the cessation of famine, they multiply and prosper in the land of Goshen.*

#### VERSE 27

**"And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen"** — In this verse, for the first time, Israel is used of the nation, and not merely of the individual.

**"And they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly"** — Their increasing prosperity foreshadowed their future increasing power and influence (Mic. 4:7), whilst, at the same time, fulfilling the prophecy made to Jacob (Gen. 46:3).

#### Israel's Command Concerning Burial — Vv. 28-31.

*For seventeen years the land of Goshen remains the quiet resting-place of Jacob in his old age. During this time his life seems eventless. His descendants increase about him, and prosper. But Jacob recalls the ominous prophecy delivered to Abram concerning oppression (Gen. 15:13), and lest his descendants, in their prosperity, forget the covenant and the land, and the hope of the resurrection, he orders that he should be buried in the Land of Promise.*

#### VERSE 28

**"And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years"** — They were years of relaxation and peace for the old man, a contrast to the "evil" conditions that had been his lot previously (v. 9). The same Pharaoh remained upon the throne; Joseph continued to be Prime Minister; the land of Goshen provided every means of

prosperity. Thus Jacob had few cares. A space was allowed him, during which he might meditate upon the past and the future glory. He could recall the "sins and offences of his youth," wrestle in prayer as a "prince with God" and prevail; and look forward with anticipation to the "joy set before him."

Happy are they to whom such a quiet time is granted, free from distracting cares and anxieties, from trouble, from undue toils, with time and leisure given to contemplate what God "has in store for them that fear and love Him." That now was Israel's lot.

**"So the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years"**— See Note v. 9.

#### VERSE 29

**"And the time drew nigh that Israel must die"** — Since Adam's disobedience, this is the imperative law of human nature (Rom. 5:12); though the redeemed living at the end of the age may escape it (1 Cor. 15: 51-52; 1 Thess. 4:17).

**"He called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me"** — Israel calls upon Joseph to swear by the most solemn oath of the covenant that he will fulfil his bidding. See Note Gen. 24:2.

**"Bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt"** — Two considerations may have motivated this request of Israel: first, the growing prosperity of Israel's descendants made it necessary for him to recall to their minds that their hope was not in Egypt, but in the future of the land of Promise through a resurrection from the dead; and, second, his own hope of such a resurrection, and his desire to meanwhile rest in the dust of that beloved land. *Elpis Israel* (p. 278) comments: "Why was Jacob thus anxious? Surely it could make no difference to him where he should crumble into dust! Nor would it, if Jacob had been a faithless Gentile; or a religionist whose mind was perverted by Platonism. He would have cared nothing about his body; all his solicitude would have been about his 'immortal

soul.' But in Jacob's deathbed scene, he expressed no anxiety about 'his soul'; all his care was for his body after death, that it might be duly deposited in the cave of Machpelah, where Abraham, Isaac, Sarah, Rebekah and Leah were sleeping."

#### VERSE 30

**"But I will lie with my fathers"** — In these words, Israel proclaimed his confidence in the promise of Gen. 46:4, and in doing so honored the Word of God, and so "worshipped" as Paul states (Heb. 11:21).

**"And thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying place"** — Undoubtedly Israel's request was made in view of his hope of the resurrection.

**"And he said, I will do as thou hast said"** — Joseph was the more willing to accede to Israel's request because he was motivated by the same hope. See Gen. 50:24-26.

#### VERSE 31

**"And he said, Swear unto me"** — Israel called upon Joseph to bind himself in the manner expressed in v. 29, which would tie him in with the covenant to perform what he was called upon to do.

**"And he sware unto him"** — That is, he solemnly promised to perform Jacob's will on the basis of the covenant.

**"And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head"** — The verb suggests an act of worship. Israel bowed in thankfulness and prayer before God. The Septuagint renders it: *And Israel worshipped leaning on the top of his staff*. That this is the correct rendition is proved by Paul's use of the same words in Heb. 11:21. The Hebrew words for *staff* and *bed* differ only in the punctuation. Before the vowel points were added to the Hebrew consonants, the two words were identical; the sense and meaning being governed by the context alone. When the Masoretes added vowel-points to the text, they inserted those which made the word mean *bed*, whereas the Septuagint translators, centuries before, had rendered it as *staff*. The two words are *mittah* rendered *bed's head*, and *matteh* signifying *a branch, bough, or*

*staff.* Paul's words should be paraphrased: "By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff" (Heb. 11:21). The order in which these incidents are recorded by Paul is reversed, but that is of little consequence. What is of importance is that both acts were selected by Paul out of the many experiences of Jacob's varied life to express his strong faith in God. The attitude of Israel worshipping, as he placed all his weight upon his staff, epitomised his strength through-

out his life, for therein he had constantly rested upon God who was as the staff in his hand. Now, as he came to the conclusion of his pilgrimage, he thanked God for all His goodness: the reunion with Joseph, the peace of his last years, the assurance of the resurrection, the knowledge that he would rest in the family sepulchre until the time of renewal of life came, the realisation that God had overshadowed his life through all its vicissitudes to this point of time. All this could have been called to mind in this act of faithful worship.

## CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT

### JACOB ON HIS DEATH-BED BLESSES JOSEPH'S SONS

*A turn for the worse in Jacob's health brings Joseph and his two sons to the aged man's bedside. It is a most important meeting in which blessings were bestowed. But first, Jacob recalls the past, when at Bethel he received the promise of God. He then formerly adopts Joseph's sons as his own, and blessing them, gives the right of firstborn unto Ephraim, the younger son. Joseph, believing that his father has made a mistake in his weakened state, tries to correct him, but is himself restrained with the comment that it is all in accordance with the divine pleasure.*

#### **Jacob Recalls God's Blessing — Vv. 1-4.**

*On his deathbed, Jacob receives Joseph and his two sons and reminds them of the promise of God made to him at Bethel.*

#### **VERSE 1**

**"And it came to pass after these things"** — The events recorded in the previous chapter, and particularly, the arrangements made for the burial of Jacob.

**"That one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick"** — Inferring that he was mortally sick, and was about to die.

**"And he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim"** — The two boys would be about 18 or 20 years of age.

#### **VERSE 2**

**"And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee"** — The arrangements for such a meeting, and the bestowal of blessings, had evidently been made earlier, so that each of the parties realised the intent of such a visit.

**"And Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed"** — The change of name from Jacob to Israel in this verse is significant. It is used as the narrative reverts to the subject of the covenant of promise. Israel realised that he had to convey a blessing, and strength was needed for that purpose. Thus he gathered his strength for this last great act of faith (cp. Heb. 11: 21).

## VERSE 3

**“And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me”** — See Gen. 17:1 for the first use of the title *El Shaddai*. As Israel “strengthened himself” upon the bed, and spake of *El Shaddai*, he figuratively took hold of the staff represented by the name of Deity, and leaned upon it (Gen. 47:31). This caused Paul to link together the incidents of this and the previous chapter, as an example of the patriarch’s great faith (Heb. 11:21). Jacob visited Luz on two occasions: as a fugitive from the wrath of Esau (Gen. 28:11-19); and as a stranger and pilgrim in the land, sheltering under the protective care of *El Shaddai*, when the “terror of God” was upon the other inhabitants (Gen. 35:5-15). As the old man now spake to Joseph, he seems particularly to have had in mind this second occasion.

## VERSE 4

**“And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people”** — There was a token fulfilment of these words in the increasing prosperity and multiplication of Jacob’s descendants in the land of Egypt (Gen. 47:27), but obviously, as his subsequent words reveal, Israel saw beyond the present to future glory. Here he refers to the promise of Gen. 35:11 where the phrase “a nation and a company of nations” combines *qahal* and *goyim*, which can signify “an ecclesia of Gentiles,” for *qahal* is the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek *ecclesia*, whilst *goyim* is a word constantly used in the plural for Gentile nations.

In the phrase above, however, the Hebrew is *laqahal amim*, signifying *a company gathered out of the nations or an ecclesia of the nations*, for the plural *amim* (peoples) relates to peoples, or Gentiles, generally. Again, reference is made to the Ecclesia gathered “out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev. 5:9). Such a people have been separated from the Gentiles and constituted one with Israel (Eph 2:11-13). The promise was fulfilled in the descendants of Jacob. There

were seventy of them who went down into Egypt, and constituted there a separated people, or an ecclesia unto God. The number is significant, for it is representative of the nations as a whole. The descendants of Noah were divided into seventy nations as listed in Genesis 10. Moses comments: “When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel” (Deut. 32:8). The seventy Israelites separated in Egypt, therefore, comprised a parable of Yahweh’s intention to gather together His ecclesia as representative of all nations comprising the true Israel of God (Gal. 6:16). The promise will be finally fulfilled in the “nations of them which are saved” (Rev. 21:24), the numberless multitude of the redeemed (Rev. 7:9), identified as the true Israel of God (Rev. 7:5-8). Therefore, the promise of God to Jacob, epitomised His plan to be consummated in the millennium. It was typically set forth in the two sons of Joseph who represented Israel after the spirit and Israel after the flesh (Deut. 33:17).

**“And will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession”** — This part of the promise can only be fulfilled in the future promised of God; thus as death was about to claim Jacob, his mind was centred upon the millennium.

**Jacob Adopts Joseph’s Sons — Vv. 5-7**

*After recalling the divine blessing, Israel formerly adopts Joseph’s sons as his own, replacing Reuben and Simeon in that regard.*

## VERSE 5

**“And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine”** — In this statement, Israel elevated Ephraim and Manasseh from the status of grandsons to that of sons, and as such they were numbered among the heads of tribes. As sons, they were entitled to the blessings that Israel subsequently pronounced. It is

significant, that in doing so, Israel named Ephraim before Manasseh. That this was not a mistake (as Joseph imagined) was revealed when blessings were pronounced upon each of them.

**“As Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine”** — Reuben and Simeon were the first two sons of Jacob, now to be supplanted by the sons of Joseph in the legal family position (see 1 Chron. 5:1). By this means, Joseph received a double portion of inheritance among the tribes, as was the firstborn's right (Deut. 21:17).

#### VERSE 6

**“And thy issue, which thou begetteth after them, shall be thine”** — They shall be reckoned as descendants of Joseph, in contrast to Ephraim and Manasseh who would be numbered among “the children of Israel.”

**“And shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance”** — They should not form heads of separate tribes, but be apportioned to either Ephraim or Manasseh. It is unknown whether Joseph had any more sons, but if so, they were included in the families of their brethren (cp. Num. 26:28-37).

#### VERSE 7

**“And as for me”** — The literal Hebrew is simply *And I*. The moving reference to Rachel and her death which follows was introduced by Jacob to show why he adopted Joseph's sons and appointed Joseph a double portion. His affection was strongly set upon Joseph because he was the son of his beloved Rachel, whom he had lost in tragic circumstances.

**“When I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath”** — The reference to Rachel dying *by* Jacob, or *upon* him as the Hebrew can be rendered, showed that the patriarch experienced this sad loss as an additional unexpected burden at that time. His love for his beloved Rachel was so deep, that even time had not entirely erased his sense of loss.

### Ephraim Receives The Birthright

#### — Vv. 8-14

*Joseph's two sons are presented to Israel in order to receive his blessing. They were so placed by Joseph that Manasseh, the elder, is towards his grandfather's right hand, and Ephraim, the younger, is towards his left; but Israel sensing this, “guides his hands wittingly,” and places the right upon Ephraim's head, and the left upon Manasseh's. In vain Joseph seeks to alter the arrangement: Israel acts under the guidance of prophetic insight, and being simply the interpreter of God's purposes, can make no change. Ephraim is to be greater than Manasseh and the manner of the blessing shows it.*

#### VERSE 8

**“And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who are these?”** — Israel's question should not be considered as indicating that he did not know his grandsons, for he frequently would have seen them during his seventeen years sojourn in Egypt. The question was a formal preliminary to bestowing the blessings (cp. v. 11). No doubt his eyes were now dim with age, so that it was only with difficulty that he could see the two boys standing behind their father. He thus was in a similar condition to that of his father when Isaac bestowed the blessing on him (Gen. 27:1); though, doubtless, the question was asked by way of emphasis.

#### VERSE 9

**“And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place”** — A similar acknowledgement concerning Israel spiritual and natural will be made by the anti-typical Joseph in the age to come. See Heb. 2:13; Isa. 66:8.

**“And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them”** — Israel remains the channel of blessing to mankind in every age. Cp. Eph. 2:12-14.

#### VERSE 10

**“Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see”** — His natural powers had been taken from him, so

that he was utterly dependent upon divine guidance and inspiration for all that he now did.

**“And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them”** — A similar display of affection had been shown by Isaac when he was about to bless his son (Gen. 27:27). In embracing the two sons of Joseph, Israel drew them to him between his knees (v. 12), thus indicating by this intimate action, that he considered them as his sons in relation to the covenant blessing. See notes Gen. 47:29; 24:2.

#### VERSE 11

**“And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed”** — For the antitype, see the question that will be made by Israel nationally in the future, when the two sons (Israel spiritual and natural) experience the redemptive work of Christ: “Then shalt thou (Israel as a nation) say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these (Israel spiritual and natural remnant) seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?” (Isa 49:21). Israel found that his apparently irreparable loss had been turned into a double gain; and the nation will experience a similar blessing in the future age (Isa 40:1-2).

#### VERSE 12

**“And Joseph brought them out from between his knees”** — The form of embrace was religious in its significance. See note on v. 10.

**“And he bowed himself with his face to the earth”** — In this act of worship he thanked God for the great blessings he had received (v. 11), as well as seeking divine endorsement of the blessings he was about to bestow.

#### VERSE 13

**“And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand towards Israel’s left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel’s right hand,**

**and brought them near unto him”** — Joseph naturally felt that the main blessing would be bestowed upon Manasseh his firstborn.

#### VERSE 14

**“And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim’s head, who was the younger”** — Israel sensed that Joseph would place his sons in the manner determined by their relative ages, but guided by divine inspiration as to who was to be elevated to the position of legal firstborn went against nature by placing his right hand on the head of Ephraim. The younger thus became the legal firstborn, “the son of the right hand.” The term *firstborn* in Scripture is a legal term, relating to position and status, and not necessarily to age. The literal firstborn could be deposed from his position if a younger son proved more worthy of it, or if the older son disgraced the position. This, indeed, was the reason why Reuben was replaced by Joseph as “firstborn” (1Chron. 5:1). It is in this legal sense alone, that the Lord Jesus is to be considered as “the firstborn of every creature” (Col. 1:15). The Scriptures refer to two specific sons of God among men: Adam (see Luke 3:38), and Jesus (Luke 1:35). According to the law of nature, the primogeniture rested with Adam, but the Fall proved him to be unworthy of the position, and Yahweh’s younger son, the Lord Jesus Christ, has been elevated to the position of “firstborn” and “son of the right hand” (synonymous terms). This fulfils the prophecy of Psalm 89:27, “I will make him My firstborn.” Yahweh’s purpose to provide a younger son who would be elevated to firstborn had been foreshadowed by the elevation of younger sons to that position from the beginning of time. Thus Abel, Seth, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and now Ephraim, had been so privileged. Yahweh was proclaiming to His people that He would provide one who would restore the blessings lost in Adam. Thus Christ is referred to as “the man of Thy right hand” (Ps. 80:17; 110:5), and as such, the appointed firstborn son of blessing.

**“And his left hand upon Manasseh’s**

**head, guiding his hands wittingly”** —

The word “wittingly” is *sakal* and normally signifies to act intelligently, or with care and prudence, but all the ancient versions render; *he put his hands across*, whilst Rotherham has: *crossing his hands*. Israel acts with care, deliberation and intelligence, crossing his hands, or *going against nature* to establish what Yahweh decreed. This, indeed, is what God has done in elevating the Lord Jesus Christ to be “firstborn of every creature.” He has acted deliberately and intelligently in so doing, and has gone against nature in establishing His purpose (Matt. 1: 23; John 1:14).

*The Amplified Bible* notes: “God acts independently of the claims of priority based on time of birth when He chooses men. He too ‘crossed His hands’ in the case of Seth over Cain, of Shem over Japheth, of Isaac over Ishmael, of Jacob over Esau; of Judah and Joseph over Reuben; of Moses over Aaron; of David, whom He chose over all his brothers.”

**“For Manasseh was the firstborn”**

— In the type, Manasseh represents Israel after the flesh. By the blessing, Ephraim was appointed firstborn (see Jer. 31:9).

**The Blessing On Joseph — Vv. 15-16**

*The blessing is now bestowed in a most important statement in which Israel epitomises the guiding care of God throughout his life.*

**VERSE 15****“And he blessed Joseph, and said”**

— Joseph was blessed in the privileges bestowed upon his two sons, for they were elevated into tribes in Israel.

**“God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk”** —

The Hebrew has the definite article: *the Elohim*. The Elohim, in such a context, represented Yahweh in manifestation, but the Name had not been revealed to Jacob, though he had sought to know it (see Gen. 32:29). Abraham and Isaac had walked in conscious recognition of the reality of God from day to day. See Gen. 17:1; 24:40.

**“The God which fed me all my life long unto this day”** — The Hebrew has

*which shepherded me*. Israel was not referring merely to the eating of necessary daily sustenance, but also to the guidance and discipline that he had received from God throughout his life. He looked back over the past, and recognised the hand of God shaping his course and moulding his character. He saw God as a Shepherd, caring for him, leading him, guiding him, disciplining him, feeding him. This subsequently became a title of Deity: “Shepherd of Israel, Thou that ledest Joseph like a flock” (Ps. 80:1). There was an intimate link of affection between God and Israel, as there is between a true shepherd and his sheep, and because of that great, divine love, and the constant manifestation of faith on the part of such as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Paul declared, “God is not ashamed to be called (surnamed) their God” (Heb. 11:16). What tremendous love is this; and how potent is faith as an attribute in pleasing God (Heb. 11:6). All that most people can see in Jacob are his failures, but God saw beyond them to the great faith that motivated him, and in spite of what flesh might think, He is not ashamed to be surnamed the God of Jacob. Indeed, this title will be carried on into the Millennium, for the Temple will be called: “the house of the God of Jacob” (Isa 2:3).

**VERSE 16****“The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads”** —

In this important statement, Jacob aligns “the angel” with “the Elohim” of the previous verse. “Angel” (*malak, messenger*) is in the singular number, but Elohim is plural. This angel was the messenger of Yahweh, the representative of the *Elohim* in general, whom Jacob had seen, in vision, ascending and descending the stairway to heaven (Gen. 28:12). Of all the multitudinous angels, who perform the will of Yahweh (Ps. 103:20-22), there was one into whose care Jacob was specifically placed. This was the angel with whom he had previously wrestled (Gen. 32:30), and who obviously was in charge of that heavenly host which earlier had met with Jacob to encourage him (Gen. 32:1-2). Jacob desired to know the name of the angel, but

the privilege was denied him (Gen. 32:29).

Earlier there had been a specific angel into whose care the affairs of Abraham had been placed (Gen. 24:7), and later, one who assumed authority over other angels to minister to the needs of the nation of Israel (Exod. 23:20-23), styled "the captain of Yahweh's host" (Josh. 5:15). This suggests that the welfare of saints is placed in the charge of specific angels, and that they act as a channel of grace linking heaven and earth. Incidentally, this is the first use of the word *goel*, redeemer, in Scripture. In the case of Jacob, God had revealed Himself as the Avenger, Vindicator and Purchaser of His people. See this theme further developed in the Book of Ruth.

**"And let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac"** — Let them be considered as my sons, and the children of my ancestors, though born of thee.

**"And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth"**—The verb *dagah*, used as a denominative from *dag*, a fish as prolific. The expression can be literally rendered: "Let them *swarm as do fish* into a multitude".

#### **The Birthright Confirmed — Vv. 17-22**

*Joseph is disturbed at the action of his father in giving the main blessing to Ephraim, for he believes that it is a mistake due to the infirmity of the flesh, but Israel endorses the action as being from God.*

#### **VERSE 17**

**"And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head"** — Joseph, imagining that his father had so acted through infirmity of the flesh, sought to correct the supposed mistake. In doing so, he acted similarly to the way in which Isaac had acted when he attempted to give the birthright to Esau. The wisdom of God's choice of the nations was revealed by subsequent developments, for, certainly, the descendants of Jacob proved

more amenable to divine influence than did the quarrelsome, warlike Edomites; and within the compass of the tribes, Ephraim provided a better leadership than did Manasseh. God's wisdom and foreknowledge are illustrated by such choices.

#### **VERSE 18**

**"And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the first-born; put thy right hand upon his head"** — The revelation of the divine purpose in the two boys had not been given, so that Joseph thought that his father had made a mistake.

#### **VERSE 19**

**"And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it"** — Israel revealed that what he did was deliberate and was by divine direction.

**"He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great"** — The word "people" in this statement is in the singular number, *am*. It is from a root signifying to *associate together as a tribe* or a nation. Unfortunately, the A.V. does not discriminate between the use of the singular number, *am*, or the plural form, *amim*; though the R.V. does. The singular form can be used for Israelite or Gentile; but the plural form is invariably used for the Gentile nations.

**"But truly his younger brother shall be greater than he"** — Similar words had been spoken in regard to Israel himself (Gen. 25:23), so that the prophecy lived on in the person of Ephraim.

**"And his seed shall become a multitude of nations"** — In this chapter, the word "multitude" occurs three times (Vv. 4, 16, 19), but on each occasion, a different Hebrew word is used. Here it is the word *melo* signifying *fulness* (see *mg.*). The phrase *fulness of nations* suggests that Ephraim would not only represent a tribe, but also a nation made up of other tribes or nations. This was fulfilled later when all the northern tribes were classified under the general term of *Ephraim*. The remarkable language of this blessing, therefore, anticipated the division that ultimately took place between Ephraim in the north,



and Judah in the south.

#### VERSE 20

**“And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying”** — In “thee” relates to Joseph, the type of Christ. Only in the Lord will the promised blessings find their full scope.

**“God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh”** — These two sons of Joseph type Israel spiritual and national: the natural firstborn being replaced by the younger son. This type is carried on in the blessing of Moses upon the tribes, for referring to Joseph (the type of Christ), he likens him to a bullock (see Heb. 13:10-12) whose two horns “shall push the people together to the ends of the earth,” or, more literally, shall establish his power throughout the earth by means of conquest. And the comment is added: “They are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh” (Deut. 33:17). Ephraim and Manasseh have never fulfilled the prophecy as yet, but they will do through their respective antitypes: Israel after the spirit (see Ps. 149:4-9), and Israel after the flesh (Zech. 10:9-12). Ephraim is only to be considered as representing “the Israel of God” in type, of course, for many prophecies relating to the tribe will be fulfilled by Israel after the flesh.

**“And he set Ephraim before Manasseh”** — Spiritual Israel is given the pre-eminence above natural Israel.

#### VERSE 21

**“And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die; but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers”** — Jacob’s faith never wavered in the promises of God; nor was he unduly influenced by the current affluence of his people. He realised that as God had given Abraham warning of oppression in Egypt (see Gen. 15:13), so it would come to pass. Nevertheless, God would be with them to deliver them. Joseph never forgot the words of his father, and repeated them when he was about to die (Gen. 50:25).

#### VERSE 22

**“Moreover I have given to thee one**

**portion above thy brethren”** — The term “one portion” is *achad shechem*, one shechem (or *Burden-bearer*, see comment in Gen. 12:6). Perhaps this is a reference to the lower slope or ridge of Gerizim upon which Shechem was situated. Jacob “redeemed” the portion of land there, that had been previously purchased by Abram when he entered the land (see our comments on Gen. 33:19). Shechem was a most significant portion of the land promised to Abraham. There he heard the voice of God promising that his seed would inherit the land; and there he built his first altar in the Land of Promise (Gen. 12:6-7). Apparently, for that purpose, Abram purchased a piece of land there (Acts 7:16), but when Jacob arrived at the same spot, he found Gentiles in possession of it, and redeemed it by purchase. The record says that “he bought a parcel of a field” (Gen. 33:19). The verb “bought” is from *qanah*, and signifies, according to Gesenius, to acquire by purchase or redemption. The word is rendered “recover” (Isa. 11:11), and “redeem” (Neh. 5:8). It can therefore relate to the repossession of something. Jacob redeemed it by the purchase of “lambs” (Gen. 33:19 mg.), but, apparently, he also defended it by warfare. The circumstances are not revealed but are implied in the verse before us. They may have been subsequent to the slaughter of the Shechemites by Simeon and Levi. Jacob may have been threatened with an attack by neighbouring Gentiles at the time, to avenge the blood of the Shechemites, but manifesting his intention to defend his right to his purchased possession, caused the Canaanites to withdraw (Gen. 35:5). Now that significant spot is willed to Joseph. Subsequently he (Josh. 24:32) and some of his brethren (Acts 7:16) were buried there.

Joseph, however, has not entered into his inheritance as yet. To do so, he must be raised from the dead. The blessing on Joseph, therefore, involves his resurrection to life eternal.

**“Which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow”** — “Amorite” is a general name for Canaanite (see Gen. 15:16). The circum-

stances of this incident are not given, but evidently Jacob had to defend his right to the plot of land he possessed. Later, the

descendants of Joseph had to wrest it from the Canaanites, and, in doing so, inherited this portion of the land.

## CHAPTER FORTY-NINE

### JACOB'S BLESSINGS ON HIS SONS

*As old age claims Jacob, and he realises that he is about to die, he gathers his sons together that through divine inspiration, he might reveal their destinies unto them. His words provide guidelines for future generations, visions of hope and glory upon which the thoughtful among his descendants could build their faith. There is frequently revealed in the several blessings, a primary and ultimate application of prophecy. In regard to the latter, it involves the "last days of Judah's Commonwealth" at the first advent of the Lord, as well as the "last days" of the Gentiles, when the Lord will return to bring to fulfilment the rest of the prophetic vision. Except for the first verse, this portion of Scripture is poetic in form, comprising the oldest piece of Hebrew poetry in existence. In a series of oracles, it describes the characters and future of the twelve tribes of Israel. It is rich in parallelism of thought, word-play, and metaphor.*

#### Jacob's Blessing Of The Last Days

— Vv. 1-28

*Jacob's sons gather around the death-bed of the patriarch to hear his final message of warning and hope. One by one, commencing from the eldest, and moving down to the youngest, they are brought into review by him. Apart from v. 1, this section of Genesis is in poetic form. In our verse by verse notes, from v. 2, we cite Genesis according to the lines of poetry.*

#### VERSE 1

**"And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together"**

— The naming of Jacob's sons had a special significance as the record clearly shows (Gen. 29, 30). Wherever they are listed as in this chapter (and various varieties of listings are provided throughout

Scripture), they can be paraphrased into a sentence expressing divine truth. In this chapter they are given in the order of descent, thus: Reuben: *See a son*; Simeon: *Hearing*; Levi: *Joining*; Judah: *Praise*; Zebulun: *Dwelling*; Issachar: *Reward*; Dan: *Judgment*; Gad: *Troop or Company*; Asher: *Blessed or Happy*; Naphtali: *Wrestling*; Joseph: *Adding*; Benjamin: *Son of My Right Hand*. The sentence thus formed is: *See a Son! Hear, join, praise and dwell with him. He will bestow a reward at the judgment upon a company of blessed or happy ones who, after wrestling, will add further to the Son of Thy right hand.*

**"That I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days"** — The phrase has been rendered both *the last days* and *the latter days* throughout Scripture, and has been applied to both advents

of Christ. The first advent of the Lord is described as "a time of the end," or "the last days" because it came at the end of Judah's Commonwealth and saw the termination of the Mosaic age (see Heb. 1:2; 1 Cor. 10:11; Heb. 9:26).

#### VERSE 2

**"Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob"** — This is the first line in the poetic construction of Jacob's speech.

**"And hearken unto Israel your father"** — The repetition underlines the importance of the impending revelation.

#### VERSE 3

**"Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength"** — These clauses emphasise the status of Reuben as firstborn of the flesh. In type, he represented natural Israel being superseded by spiritual Israel, as exhibited in the pre-eminence given to Joseph over Reuben, the natural firstborn (see 1 Chron. 5:1; Ps. 89:24; Col. 1:15). The birthright conferred a double portion of the inheritance upon the holder of it (Deut. 21:15-17). This was forfeited by Reuben in favour of Joseph who was represented by two tribes in Israel: Ephraim and Manasseh.

**"The excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power"** — In addition to a double portion of inheritance, the firstborn acted as priest within the family and therefore was consecrated to God (Num. 3:45; 8:16; Luke 2:23). This is described by Jacob as *the excellency of dignity*. Reuben was deposed from his position as firstborn, and subsequently the priestly pre-eminence was conferred on Levi. The "excellency of power" expressed the right of the firstborn to rule (see 2 Chron. 21:3). This was taken from Reuben and given to Judah. This verse, therefore, refers to the threefold blessing conferred upon the legal firstborn: Birthright, Priesthood, Rulership. They were taken from Reuben and given to Joseph, Levi and Judah.

#### VERSE 4

**"Unstable as water, thou shalt not**

**excel"** — The Hebrew *pachaz*, here rendered "unstable," signifies *to froth*, and figuratively *to lust*. It comes from a root signifying to bubble over, or froth, as boiling water, and therefore can be rendered: *boiling over like water* (see *A New Old Testament*). It suggests the boiling over of unrestrained lust driven on by flesh-weakness. Strong gives the meaning as *ebullition*, suggesting the impetuosity of water when driven swiftly along. Under such circumstances water will break every barrier of restraint. "Thou shalt not excel" is rendered by some as "thou shalt not have *the pre-eminence*," or "Thou shalt not have the excellency" (R.V.). The reference is to the status of the firstborn, which was withdrawn from Reuben because of his misconduct. The subsequent history of the tribe of Reuben justified the judgment of Jacob. It did not have the pre-eminence. The tribe was numerically inferior at the beginning of the wilderness wandering (cp. Num. 1:21); and at the conclusion of it, the camp of Reuben, comprising the tribes of Reuben, Simeon and Gad, had actually decreased by 45,020 (cp. Num. 2:16 with Num. 26:7). Reuben was among the first of the tribes to be taken into captivity by the Assyrians (1 Chron. 5:26).

**"Because thou wentest up to thy father's bed"** — See Gen. 35:22; 1 Chron. 5:1.

**"Then defiledst thou it; he went up to my couch"** — Reuben had desecrated what ought to have been regarded as sacred and untouchable (Deut. 27:20). The change from the second to the third person in the grammatical construction of the final clause, expressed Jacob's indignation, even after so long a time. He appealed to all present to consider the justice of his decision and action in deposing Reuben from his position of pre-eminence. Typically, Reuben the firstborn according to the flesh, represents natural Israel. It has been deposed from its previous lofty position, in favour of the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16). All who consider the reason for this can agree that the decision is just.

But in what way was the deposition of Reuben related to "the last days?" Only in its typical application. It was at the first

advent of the Lord, during “the last days of Judah’s commonwealth,” that Israel after the flesh lost its previous honored position of privilege, in favour of the Israel of God drawn from both Jew and Gentile (see Rom. 11:11-22).

#### VERSE 5

**“Simeon and Levi are brethren”—**

These two brothers were closely associated from birth (Gen. 29:33-34), and became brethren in crime (Gen. 34:25-29). Jacob now reveals that the crime then committed, foreshadowed an even greater one in the future.

**“Instruments of cruelty are in their habitations”** — The word “habitations” is from the Hebrew *mekerah*, from a root signifying *to dig, or pierce through*, and therefore *to stab* (see Gesenius). Accordingly, the R.V. renders: “Weapons of violence are their swords.” Once again Jacob is harking back to the past as a base for his predictions of the future. He recalls the violent ruthlessness of their attack on Shechem (Gen. 34:26), and sees that as a foreshadowing of the future.

#### VERSE 6

**“O my soul, come not thou into their secret”** — In this burst of indignation, Jacob expressed his horror and repudiation of their action. The word “secret” is *sode*, a session, suggesting a company in secret and close deliberation. The R.V. has “council”. Evidently the two brothers formed themselves into a council of two, and plotted the attack on Shechem, drawing others in with them. For the antitype see Matt. 27:1; Luke 22:3; John 11:53.

**“Unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united”** — The Hebrew is *qahal*, and, like the word “ecclesia”, signifies those called out by special invitation. Simeon and Levi did not bring the whole family together to discuss the problem facing it in the matter of Shechem and Dinah, but only called together those whom they knew would support their action of violence and treachery. For the antitype see Ps. 22:16; Matt. 26:14.

**“For in their anger they slew a man”** — The word is *ish*, denoting a man

of higher status than *adam*; it is a word that is used for a prince, in this case, the prince of Shechem, the *Burden-bearer!* The history of the past becomes typical of the future murder of the Lord Jesus.

**“And in their selfwill they digged down a wall”** — The R.V. alters this to *houghed an ox*; the *Concordant Version* has *felled a chief* (i.e. a bull). In Hebrew, the only difference between *wall* and *ox* are the vowel points. “Wall” is *shuwr*, and “ox” is *showr*. They are from a common root, *shuwr* signifying *to travel about*. The Hebrew word for “ox” signifies *traveller* — and a wall “travels” about a city. See AV. margin. “Ox” or “bull” is appropriate to the antitype, for it anticipates the treacherous murder of the Lord Jesus by the priests of his day. He died a sacrificial death as “the bullock for the sin offering” (Heb. 13:11-13), so that the expression here is appropriate to the divine purpose.

In this remarkable statement, therefore, Jacob anticipated that the prince to be slain would die a sacrificial death. His horror at the treachery by which this would be brought about, is matched by that of Peter when he expounded the circumstances on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:22-24). In *Elpis Israel*, Brother Thomas comments: “The verification of these things will easily be recognised in the history of the tribe of Levi at the era of the crucifixion. It was the priests who sought and at last accomplished the death of Jesus, to whom Jacob refers; and to mark his sense of their conduct, he said, ‘I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.’ This was fulfilled in giving Levi no cantonal inheritance in the land, and in including Simeon’s portion within the limits of the canton of Judah (Josh. 19:1,9). From this arrangement Levi, Simeon, and Judah became the tribes principally concerned in the transactions of the last days” (p. 280).

#### VERSE 7

**“Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce”** — In consequence upon the fierce anger of Jewry in putting the Lord to death, the curse of God has rested upon the nation, and will continue to do so until

provision is made for its cleansing on a national basis as predicted in Zech. 13:1. The Jews demanded the death of the Lord, proclaiming: "His blood be upon us and upon our children." Until the children of those who murdered the Lord completely repudiate such action, and turn to him as their Saviour they will continue to experience the curse proclaimed by Jacob in the beginning.

**"And their wrath, for it was cruel"**

— Three words in Jacob's statement deserve additional attention: "anger," "wrath," and "cruel." The first is from the Hebrew *aph*, signifying *the nose*. In the present context it denotes the emotion of "anger" such as may cause rapid breathing through deep feeling. "Wrath" is from *ebrahim*, the plural form of the word, denoting outbursts or outpourings of passion suggesting the fulness and intensity of the tide of fury manifested by Levi and Simeon, which foreshadowed the unreasoning and ungovernable madness excited in the priests and leaders of Jewry at the crucifixion of the Lord. "Cruel" is *qashah*, and signifies *to be dense or obstinate, tough or severe*.

**"I will divide them in Jacob"**

— Simeon was settled within Judah's territory (Josh. 19:1,9), providing the type for the future. Simeon's part in the tragedy of Shechem was fulfilled by the leaders of Jewry, the Pharisees etc., in the days of the Lord. Levi was represented by the priests.

**"And scatter them in Israel"** — Levi was given no inheritance, but was scattered up and down throughout the land (Josh. 21).

**VERSE 8**

**"Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise"** — There is a play on words here, for Judah means *praise*. But when have the brethren of Judah praised him? Only for a very brief period in the past, under David and Solomon, when it is recorded that "Judah prevailed above his brethren" (1 Chron. 5:2). That brief moment was the period of the united Kingdom, which foreshadowed Messiah's reign (Amos 9:11). So this prophecy sweeps on to the "last days" of Gentile

ascendancy; the time when Messiah shall appear to "restore the kingdom to Israel" (Acts 1:6), and as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev. 5:5), to receive the praise of all the tribes (Ps. 65:1).

**"Thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies"** — The expression denotes the subjugation of the enemies of the Lord. It is found again in David's Messianic Psalm (Ps. 18:40). The "brethren" shall praise Messiah, for he shall appear before them as their Deliverer (Rom. 11:26).

**"Thy father's children shall bow down before thee"** — As Judah types Christ who shall be praised, this statement reveals that Jewry shall submit to him. See Rom. 11:25-26.

**VERSE 9**

**"Judah is a lion's whelp"** — In this verse, the Lion of Judah is variously described as a whelp, as a full grown lion, and as a lioness. These expressions combine youth, experience and productivity. The young lion is pictured as (1) developing into full strength and ferocity, (2) roaming the land in search of prey, (3) repairing to its lair to consume it and to protect its offspring. The representation of "he whom his brethren shall praise" (the Lion of Judah, Rev. 5:5) as a lioness is significant, for it suggests the reproduction of seed. It is written of the Lord that he "travailed" to bring forth seed (Isa. 53:10-11), so that the feminine gender is appropriate to the Lord as the multitudinous Christ.

It is significant that elsewhere the King of Israel, the City of Jerusalem, and the Altar of the House of Prayer of the future age, are all given the title of Lion (Rev. 5:5; Isa. 29:1; Ezek. 43:16 mg.), for "Ariel" in the latter references signifies *Lion of God*. Christ, as the Lion of Judah, will be king, ruling from Jerusalem; priest, presiding over the millennial temple (Isa. 56:7); and altar to receive the offerings. He represents the ruling authority (Rev. 5:5), the antitypical New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:23), and the altar (Heb. 13:10). See also references to the Lion of Judah in Joel 3:16; Num. 23:24; 24:9; Deut. 33:20-21.

**"From the prey, my son, thou art**

**gone up**” — An expression denoting that the prey has been caught and consumed and that the king of beasts has returned in peace. It indicates that the one referred to will not always be tearing down and consuming, but rather, once his objective has been satisfied, he will return in peace from the prey. That one is represented as being so strong and courageous that when he seizes his prey none can resist him; when he goes up from it, none dare pursue him to avenge it. It is significant that Jacob refers to one in particular, styled “my son” who would accomplish the prophecy. It was never done so by Judah personally, so obviously the patriarch must have looked beyond his immediate son to the promised Messiah.

**“He stooped down, he couched as a lion”** — In these terms the lion is represented as *couchant*, at peace. This suggests that Messiah will not make war for the sake of war, but to establish peace. “In righteousness, he doth judge and make war” (Rev. 19:11). The prophecy thus describes the Lion of Judah as stalking the prey, consuming the prey, and returning in peace. This is a remarkable allusion to the work of Messiah in subduing the nations in order to establish peace (Isa. 9:6-7).

**“And as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?”** — Here the word is in the feminine gender, and has so been translated by the R.V.: “As a *lioness*.” The lioness is particularly fierce in defending her cubs, and will exceed the male beast in so doing. The figure therefore suggests that Messiah will not only overthrow his enemies and return in peace, but will successfully protect his own against molestation. Messiah, appropriately, is described as both lion and lioness, for the prophecy does not apply to him merely, but also to the multitudinous Christ, who as one with him, is described as his bride. This vision of Jacob should be aligned with the revelation of John: “The Lion of the tribe of Judah... hath prevailed” (Rev. 5:5). The final clause: “Who shall rouse him up,” can read: “Who dare rouse him up!” What man is hardy enough to dare antagonise a ferocious and virile lion, ready to defend its own?

## VERSE 10

**“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah”** — The exercise of authority and rulership, was one of the privileges of the firstborn, and therefore, under normal circumstances, would have been enjoyed by Reuben. But Jacob’s natural firstborn, Reuben was ultimately replaced by Judah in that regard.

**“Nor a lawgiver from between his feet”** — Messiah is to be both Prince and Lawgiver. In regard to the latter, he is described as being “like unto Moses” (Deut. 18:18-19), whilst references to the Law he will establish throughout the earth at his coming, are found in Isaiah 2:2-4; 42:4; Mal. 4:4, and elsewhere. In anticipation of this, Yahweh declared: “Judah is My lawgiver” (Ps. 60:7; 108:8). This was never the case until the Lord set forth the principles of his “new commandments” as set forth in his policy speech for kingdom citizenship (see Matthew 5,6,7). Though based upon the Law of Moses, it went so far above and beyond it as to constitute a new Law (John 13:34).

This will form the basis of the Law that shall emanate from Zion when the Kingdom is established. As Brother Thomas remarks: “Moses was a lawgiver, not of Judah, but of Levi; but when Shiloh comes as the lawgiver of Judah, then ‘the law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem’ (Isa. 2:3)” (*Elpis Israel* p. 281).

The lawgiver is described as being “between the feet” of the one whom his brethren shall praise. This is a reference to the staff of office held upright in front of the dispenser of the law. The R.V. gives “lawgiver” as *ruler’s staff*, whilst *The New Old Testament* has *leader’s staff*. According to Strong, however, the Hebrew relates to a dispenser of law, the staff of which, as the insignia of his office, is described as being “between the knees” of Shiloh, the Messiah.

**“Until Shiloh come”** — The Hebrew has *tsad ki*, “for that” which is equivalent to “because.” Brother Thomas comments: “The passage is easy enough, and teaches that the reason why the staff or sceptre shall not depart from Judah is ‘because

Shiloh shall come” (*Herald Of The Kingdom And Age To Come*, vol. 8, p. 103). This translation makes the verse consistent with the facts. It shows that the coming of Shiloh was necessary for the continuance of the sceptre in the hand of Judah, and the issuing of a Law from the same source. Jacob saw not the limiting of these matters, but the perpetuity of them “for that Shiloh shall come.” His presence alone would make the prophecy possible. The prophecy is taken up by Ezekiel, who told Zedekiah, the last king to sit on David’s throne: “I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it; and it shall be no more, until he comes whose right it is, and I will give it him” (Ezek. 21:27; cp. the expressions concerning Jehoichin in Jer. 22:2,30).

But who is Shiloh? The word comes from a Hebrew root signifying *peace, rest, tranquility*. As a proper noun it can signify *The Bringer of Peace or Tranquility*. This title will be appropriate to the Lord at his second advent. When he appeared among men 1900 years ago, he declared: “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to sent peace but a sword” (Mat. 10:34). He extended peace to his followers (Jn. 14:27), but not to the world either Jewish or Gentile. At his second advent, however, he will be revealed as the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6). He will be manifested as Shiloh whose lionlike roar (Joel 3:16) will put fear into the hearts of his enemies, and establish peace in the earth (Psa. 72:3,7; 85: 8). Jerusalem will then be established in peace, and for this the Lord’s people continually pray (Psa. 122:6-7). Meanwhile, as Shiloh, the Lord offers “rest” to his people (Mat. 11:28-30).

**“And unto him shall the gathering of the people be”** — The word “people” is in the plural *amim*, and therefore relates to the peoples of the earth. Having established his authority in the earth, and laid the foundation of peace in Jerusalem, Shiloh will extend the Kingdom of God into an empire embracing all nations (Ps. 72:11). Moreover, they will ascend up to Jerusalem to worship before the King (Zech. 14:16; Isaiah 2:2-4; Jer. 3:17).

The Hebrew is even more expressive of what shall be accomplished by the Lord

as Shiloh. It is *yiggarah amim*, “obedience of the nations” as rendered by *The New Old Testament*. The R.V. has “unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be.” He shall command and receive the respect and obedience of all peoples (Isa. 60:12).

## VERSE 11

### “Binding his foal unto the vine” —

There was a typical fulfilment of this prophecy when the Lord rode into Jerusalem upon the “foal of an ass” (Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:2-5). Why was Christ so particular in selecting such an animal for such a purpose? The ass so excellent a worker in the field, so patient a beast of burden, is used in Scripture as a symbol of Israel. The use of this animal became so common in Israel that the nation was identified with it, and it was rumoured that Israelites even worshipped an ass’s head (ancient testimony cited by Josephus concerning an Alexandrian ambassador who falsely reported that the Jews worshipped an ass’ head. See *Against Apion*, II, Sect. 7). The ass, if a high bred animal, conferred a status on its owner. Abraham and Moses both used this animal (Gen. 22:3-5; Exo. 4:20), judges and kings adopted it as the symbol of their rank (Judges 5:10; 10:4-14; 2Sam. 16:1,2). When David wanted to confirm Solomon as king, he commanded that he should ride upon the special ass reserved for such use (1Kings 1:38). When the Lord rode into Jerusalem upon the ass’s colt, the people recognised the symbol of royal dignity, and responded with the words of the Passover Psalm: “Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of Yahweh,” “Blessed be the kingdom of our father David” (Luke 19:38; Mark 11:9-11). Jacob’s reference to Shiloh’s animal as “his foal”, therefore relates to his symbol of royalty. The word “foal” is *ayir* which comes from a root signifying *to raise*, and thus the *bearer of a burden*: the burden, in this context, being the authority wielded by the rider thereon.

The prophecy describes the foal as being bound to the vine. The vine is used as a symbol of Israel (Ps. 80:8-11). But the symbology is used in such a way as to bring home to the people that they did not

produce fruit such as the husbandman desired; therefore it was destroyed (Isa. 5; Ezek. 15; Hosea 10:1). A vine is only good for fruit-bearing. When it does not produce fruit, it is given over to destruction. Its wood is useless for any other purpose. What of its fruit? Wine is the product "which cheereth God and man" (Jud. 9:13). How can wine be described as cheering God? Because fermented wine is the symbol of a new life, such as is produced by sacrifice. To make wine, men trod the ripened grapes underfoot to crush out the juice, which was permitted to mature and so produce wine. It is a wonderful lesson of new life through sacrifice.

Israel, however, failed to reveal that new life, and so the privilege of being Yahweh's vine, was taken from the nation, and given to a people who would bring forth the fruits thereof (Matt. 21:43). The Lord's disciples now constitute the new vine (John 15:1-3), and to them the warning of the symbol must apply.

Shiloh, however, is described as binding his foal (the symbol of authority) to the vine. What is meant by this? Surely the restoration of the Israel vine, and the identification of Shiloh with it in assuming his rightful status as King of the Jews (see Matt. 2:2-6; 27:37; Ezek. 37:21-22). When the Lord is accepted as King in Israel (Hos. 3:5), "his foal", the symbol of kingly authority, will be found bound to the vine.

**"And his ass's colt unto the choice vine"**— The reference to the "choice vine" is not mere repetition. In fact, Scripture speaks of two vineyards: that of Israel after the flesh, and that of Israel after the spirit. The "choice vine" is the one referred to by the Lord in John 15:1-3, and in the age to come, will represent the Lord's immortal associates who shall reign with him (Rev. 5:9-10; 20:4). The Hebrew is *soreqah* suggesting the redness of the grapes. The reference is to the richest variety of vines, such as yielded purple grapes. Purple is the colour of God-manifestation and royalty (Luke 16:19; John 19:5), appropriate to the true Israel of God (Gal. 6:16).

In Hebrew, "ass' colt" is *son of an ass*.

The word for "ass" is *athown*, which Strong gives as being derived from a root signifying *patience*. *Son of Patience* certainly is an appropriate title for Shiloh.

**"He washed his garments in wine"**

— A similar figure is taken up by the Revelator (Rev. 14:18). He describes how the sharp sickle will be used on the harvest of the earth, so that the fully-ripe clusters of grapes will be reaped. They will be reaped to be trodden underfoot in the winepress "without the city" (v. 20) as a result of which the Victor's clothes are described as being "dipped in blood" (Rev. 19:13).

This apocalyptic language describes the conquest of the nations by the Lord Jesus in company with his immortalised saints (Psa. 149). Commencing at Armageddon, it will continue until all nations are brought within the scope of his rule. But the Lord's objective will not be merely conquest, but also the manifestation of a new way of life in the earth. Therefore, the conquest of the nations is described as a vine-harvest, and the wine so produced is expressive of a "new life" dedicated to Yahweh (Zech. 14:16). Similar language is found in Isaiah 63:1-3.

**"His clothes in the blood of grapes"**

— The "blood of grapes" describes the ripened juice. Unless it is ripened it will not produce wine. Therefore the warmth of the sun is necessary to bring the fruit to maturity. For the symbol see Mal. 4:1-2.

## VERSE 12

**"His eyes shall be red with wine"** —

Wine is used in Scripture for the doctrine of Truth that stimulates to newness of life (see Isa. 55:1). The symbol represents one who has drunk so continuously of the wine, that the effect is seen in his appearance. Like so many other symbols, wine is used in Scripture for both good and bad doctrine. There is wisdom's wine (Prov. 9:5) that gladdens the hearts of those receiving it (Ps. 104:15), as well as the wine of Babylon that will induce stupefying drunkenness (Rev. 17:4).

**"And his teeth white with milk"** —

Milk is used figuratively in Scripture for teaching (cp. Isa. 55:1). But whereas wine is for adults, milk is for children and



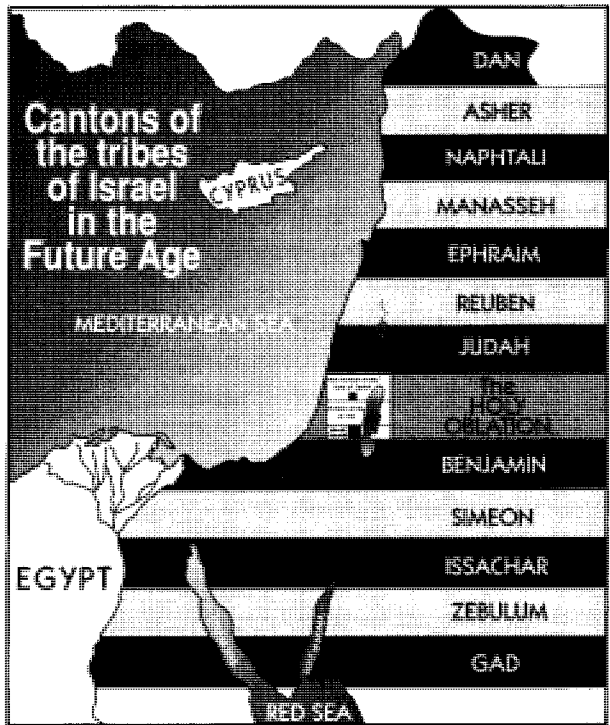
relates to the basic principles of truth (1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:13-14). Shiloh's eyes are described as "red with wine," and his teeth "white with milk," to illustrate that he is equipped to dispense both the deep things of Truth as well as its elementary principles. After subduing the nations as implied in the previous verse, he will educate them in righteousness: "He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths" (Isa. 2:3).

**VERSE 13**

**"Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea"** — Zebulun signifies *dwelling*, so that, again, there is a play upon words. According to Josephus (Ant. 19:10,16), Zebulun was never bounded by the sea, being cut off by the tribe of Asher. It is obvious, therefore, that, as with the prophecy of Shiloh, we must look to the future for the fulfilment of this prophecy. When the Kingdom is set up, there will be a re-allotment of tribal inheritance, and Zebulun will be placed in the deep south (Ezek. 48:26). According to the map drawn by the late Bro. H. Sulley (see *The Temple of Ezekiel's Prophecy*), Zebulun then will "dwell at the haven of the sea." This will provide the means whereby the prophecy of Deut. 33:18-19 will be fulfilled. It is significant, that in this place, Moses places Zebulun and Issachar in conjunction one with the other, as Ezekiel does also in the reallocation of the tribes in his 48th chapter.

**"And he shall be for an haven of ships"** — In Moses' blessing upon the tribes, he declares of Zebulun and Issachar, "They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness"

(Deut. 33:18-19). These are remarkable words, for at that time, Zion had not been selected as the mountain of worship, and Zebulun has never provided "an haven of ships." The future will see changes in that regard. Isaiah predicts "I (Yahweh) will bring them (the nations) to My holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon Mine altar; for Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people" (Isa. 56: 7). See also Isa. 2:3; Zech. 14:16; Isa. 60:11. These worshippers, and the wealth they will bring with them (Isa. 60:5 mg.) apparently will enter the land through the haven for ships that will be provided in the territory of Zebulun and Issachar. These tribes, by that means, will "suck of the abundance of the seas," as they "call the people unto the mountain" as the blessing of Moses requires.



**“And his border shall be unto Zidon”** — Here, again, commentators are in a quandary, inasmuch as the border of Zebulun was never “unto Zidon.” Some have observed that the Hebrew word can be rendered *towards* Zidon, and suggest that the ancient territory of Zebulun was like a dagger pointing at Zidon. However, this is the only place in Scripture where *yerekah* has been translated “border.” The word signifies the *side* or *rear* of a person, so that the picture of Zebulun that Jacob presented to his sons was that of the tribe with its side or back turned to Zidon, whilst offering a welcome and refuge to others. This would suggest that Zebulun, or the *dwellers* in the land will have no welcome to extend to Zidon. Why? The word *Zidon* is from the Hebrew *Tsuwd* signifying *to lie in wait*, and from the idea of *catching*, or *ensnaring*, came to mean a *fishery*. The Zidonians were among the original inhabitants of Canaan whom the Israelites failed to drive out (Jud. 1:32), in consequence of which they became a *snare* to Israel (Jud. 10:12). Instead of turning the back to them, as the dwellers (Zebulun) in the land should have done, they eagerly embraced them. Indeed, Ahab married Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, King of Zidon (1Kings 16:31), and this became a snare to Israel, so much so, that even Elijah had to flee to the refuge of Horeb. Unfortunately, the influence of Jezebel has ever remained with the dwellers with the Lord (see Rev. 2:20-21; 17:5), and the tendency of such has been to embrace her. There will be a change in the future, however, for the *dwellers* with the Lord will have their backs turned to antitypical Zidon, and their faces averted from her. Christ has decreed the destruction of Roman Catholicism (2 Thess. 2:8; Rev. 18), so that there will be no welcome for such as may be influenced by her. The backs of the dwellers in the land will be “turned unto Zidon.”

#### VERSE 14

**“Issachar is a strong ass”** — Issachar is a combination of *yis*, “there will be,” and *sachar* “a reward.” He is likened to a “strong ass,” or, more literally, *an ass of*

*bone*. The word for “ass” in this verse, is different from that of v. 11. It is from the Hebrew *chamor*, signifying *reddish*, and therefore is suggestive of sin’s flesh strengthened to bear the burden of humanity in order to provide for a reward (Ps. 80:17). Strong gives the meaning of Issachar’s name as *He will bring a reward*. The reward and rest of the future is only possible through Israel (Eph. 2:11-13).

**“Couching down between two burdens”** — The Hebrew *mishpathim* has been the subject of considerable conjecture by Hebraists. Some give it as *sheep-folds*, others as *boundaries*, others again as *burdens*. The R.V. has *sheepfolds*. The figure suggested by Jacob, is that of Israel as a redeemed ass (cp. Exod. 13:13), at ease among the sheepfolds, or Christ’s flock drawn from Jews and Gentiles (John 10:16). Other renditions provide a millennial significance to the passage. The Chaldee paraphrase provides the following: “He saw his portion that it was good, and the land that it was fruitful, and he shall subdue the provinces of the people, and drive out their inhabitants, and those who are left shall be his servants and his tributaries.” The *Septuagint Version* has: “Issachar has desired that which is good; resting between the inheritance. And having seen the resting place that it was good, and the land that it was fertile, he subjected his shoulder to labour, and became a husbandman.”

#### VERSE 15

**“And he saw that rest was good”** — The word “rest” is *menuchah*, and signifies a *safe shelter*. It is the word by which Hebrews describe a husband’s house, which provides a refuge, a home, a place of rest and safety for the bride. The word was used by Naomi when to Ruth she declared: “My daughter, shall I not seek *rest* for thee, that it may be well with thee?” (Ruth 3:1). She was seeking a husband and a home for her daughter-in-law; and Boaz, as redeemer, provided such a *menuchah* for Ruth. Christ will act as a redeemer for Israel in the future age. He will call the tribes back home and they will see that the *menuchah* he offers “is

good.”

**“And the land that it was pleasant”**

— In the future age, the promised land will provide the *menuchah* for Israel, for “thy land shall be married,” declared Yahweh (Isa. 62:4).

**“And bowed his shoulder to bear”**

— He submitted to the discipline of the yoke or bridle (Prov. 26:3), and in doing so found the promised rest (Matt. 11:28-30). The ass is a sure-footed animal, used to heavy burdens, and able to exist on a very meagre diet, pointing to the spiritual lessons implied. It is a symbol of Israel as a nation.

**“And became a servant unto tribute”**

— The phrase suggests tribute rendered by labour (1 Kings 9:21; 2 Chron. 8:8). In a rural community this takes the form of agricultural pursuits, so that the *Septuagint* has rendered it: “became a husbandman.” As such, Israel will be expected to render unto the king the fruits of its labour. See Matt. 21:33-46.

**VERSE 16**

**“Dan shall judge his people”**

— Dan signifies *judge*, so that again there is a play upon words. The word “judge” *diyn* has the sense of avenging as well as judging. The great Judge of Israel will avenge his people from their enemies and adjudicate over their lives.

**“As one of the tribes of Israel”**

— Dan, as a tribe, was situated north of the tabernacle. The Hebrew word for “north” suggests the place hidden from human eyes, the great unseen: Yahweh’s throne of judgment. The Psalmist declares: “Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another” (Psa. 75:6-7). If promotion does not come from the east, west, or south, it must come from the north — the place where the tribe of Dan (the Judge) was situated in relation to the tabernacle and in the tribal allotments of the land. The Psalmist excluded the north from his comment, but declared: “God is the Judge.” This seems to point to Dan on the north of the tabernacle emphasising the Judgment of Yahweh. In Isaiah 41:25,

Messiah is said to be “raised up from the north” that is, figuratively, from the place of Yahweh’s throne of judgment. Dan will retain the northern position among the tribes even in the millennium, according to the allocation of the tribal inheritances outlined in Ezekiel 48.

**VERSE 17**

**“Dan shall be a serpent by the way”**

— The word is *nachash* as is found in Gen. 3:1. It was noted for its subtlety (see also Mat. 10:16), suggesting that the Judge of Israel will act wisely and skilfully.

**“An adder in the path”**

— The margin suggests *arrow-snake*. The Hebrew *shephiphon* occurs only here. Gesenius derives the word from a root signifying *to slide*, others, *to sting*. According to G.S. Cansdale in *Animals of Bible Lands*, “This description would fit one of the desert vipers that lie hidden in the surface and strike out when disturbed.” As the serpent strikes suddenly, unexpectedly and swiftly, and as the “adder in the path” is overlooked by the rider on a horse because he is lifted high above it, so the Judge of all the earth, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, will suddenly, unexpectedly and swiftly avenge his people in the age to come, by striking at the “horse,” and bringing its “rider” crashing to the ground.

**“That biteth the horse heels”**

— In ancient times the horse was used almost exclusively for war and is used frequently in the symbology of the Bible for that purpose. To “bite the horse heels” would be to destroy the use of the horse in war. “He maketh war to cease unto the end of the earth” (Psa. 46:9). The Hebrew *aqeb*, “heel”, is from the same root as “Jacob,” the *heel-catcher* or supplanter.

**“So that his rider shall fall backward”**

— In Bible symbology, riders on horses are those who sit in the seat of authority and guide the nations, particularly in their schemes of conquest. The blessing on Dan the Judge reveals that the nations will be unseated by a hidden menace that they will overlook in their ambitious plans. Zechariah prophesies how that Messiah will use Israel after the flesh to subdue the nations: “They shall be as

mighty men, which tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle; and they shall fight, because Yahweh is with them, and the riders on horses shall be confounded" (Zech. 10:5). "Blood came... even unto the horse bridles" (Rev. 14:20), signifying that the destruction will reach to those who are seated in authority. The symbol of Christ at war, is The Word of God seated upon a horse (Rev. 19:21).

### VERSE 18

**"I have waited for Thy salvation, O Yahweh"** — From this short, beautiful and fervent prayer, it is obvious that Jacob comprehended the Messianic application of the blessing on Dan. The patriarch's actions, through life, were motivated by the desire to participate in the Divine salvation. It was for that reason that he sought the birthright and the blessing from Esau early in life, the reason why he was prepared to dare the wrath of his more powerful brother in returning to the land with his wives and family. It was his ardent longing throughout the "evil days" of his life, even when separated from his beloved Joseph.

The verb is *qavah* signifying to *twist, or bind together* so as to give strength, then *to expect, to await* "perhaps from enduring, remaining, which differs but little from the notion of strength" (Gesenius). Jacob's strength had been in his patient endurance and waiting for the coming of salvation.

This verse records the first occurrence in the Bible of the word *salvation*. The Hebrew is *yeshuwah*: a noun in the feminine gender, the passive participle of the root *yasha* from whence is derived the proper noun *Joshua* or *Jesus*, it being a combination of *Yah-shua*. Jacob, in using the term he did, proclaimed to his sons that God would effect his salvation, through means beyond his ability to accomplish, and that he would be but the passive recipient of the divine goodness manifested through the Saviour who would come.

The prayer of Jacob, as expressed in the Hebrew, includes the name of Yahweh. But Jacob did not know the memorial

Name of God! That information was denied him on the occasion that he wrestled with the angel and pleaded that the Name be revealed unto him (Gen. 32:29). Why then is the Name included in this personal prayer of the patriarch? Because, in common with all the faithful from the Fall onwards, he looked for the coming of the Redeemer promised in Genesis 3:15, in whom God would be revealed. He doubtless looked upon *El Shaddai* as *He Who will be revealed* in due time, and used the common Hebrew verb to express his belief and desire for the coming of the promised one. He would worship God as the One Who will be, without knowing the self-styled Name by which Yahweh later chose to be known (Exod. 3:14; 6:3). Moses, recording the incident after the proclamation of the Name, appropriately included it in the prayer, as to all intents and purposes, Jacob had used the words which express it.

### VERSE 19

#### **"Gad, a troop shall overcome him"**

— In the original this expresses a play on words that is lost in the A.V. The Hebrew is *Gad geduwd yedudennu*. *Gad* signifies a *troop* or *company* and the line can read: *Gad, a troop shall troop on him*. This part of the blessing speaks of the domination of Israel by the Gentiles. This has been fulfilled in the long period of Gentile oppression since the days of A.D. 70 (Luke 21:24).

#### **"But he shall overcome at the last"**

— The Hebrew is *vehu yagud ageb* — and *he shall troop upon their heel* completing a triple alliteration, or play on words in the two lines of poetry. The idea of "a troop" of true Israelites trampling upon the heel of the once triumphant enemy speaks of the ultimate triumph of the nation as its forces press upon the heels of the retreating enemy. This is a promise of ultimate victory to take place at "the latter end" such as is predicted in Deut. 32:29-30. The word "last" in Hebrew is *ageb* rendered "heels" in v. 17 and forms the base of the word "Jacob." As he supplanted his enemies, so his children will theirs.

## VERSE 20

**“Out of Asher his bread shall be fat”** — Asher signifies *blessed* or *happy* and the promise is of abundance and fruitfulness.

**“And he shall yield royal dainties”** — The literal Hebrew is *dainties of a king* or *dainties for a king*. This remarkable statement anticipates the establishment of a monarchy in Israel a thousand years before Israel requested a king of Samuel. It anticipates the future restoration of the monarchy under Messiah (Ezek. 37:21-22). Ezekiel, in vision, saw the tribes bearing their oblation, or portion, to the Prince of Israel as a “royal dainty” or tribute (Ezek. 45:16). This oblation, or portion, will help provision the temple in the age to come, providing the means of supplying a “feast of fat things” to be enjoyed by the assembled worshippers from all nations in that day (Isa. 25:6).

## VERSE 21

**“Naphtali is a hind let loose”** — Naphtali signifies *wrestling*. But what do the words *a hind let loose* signify in the form of blessing? The *Septuagint* has *a tree trunk let loose* reading perhaps *ayloh* for *ayaloh* (the same consonants in Hebrew). The trunk and branches of the mighty oaks, twisting and forcing their way upwards and outwards, symbolise the principle of wrestling and of strength. See comments on Gen. 12:6; 13:18. The territory of Naphtali was in Galilee, which witnessed much of the wrestling of the Lord at his first advent. Indeed, Isaiah specifically refers to Naphtali in that relationship (Isa. 9:1), in words that are cited in Matt. 4:15. Bochart translates: “Naphtali is a spreading oak producing branches.” The *Concordant Version* is similar: “Naphtali is an oak stretched out, the giver of products that are seemly.”

On the other hand, the Peshito (Syriac) version has: “Naphtali is a swift messenger.” The swift and graceful hind could symbolise the swift messengers of the gospel in the age to come (Isa. 52:7), successfully wrestling with the forces of darkness. Whether Naphtali is likened to an oak for its spreading strength, or the hind

for the grace and swiftness of its message, the blessing anticipates the time when the Truth shall be common knowledge throughout the world.

**“He giveth goodly words”** — Isaiah selected the area of Naphtali as being particularly the place from whence the “goodly words” of the gospel sounded forth at the first advent of the Lord (Isa. 9:1), and the context of his prophecy moves on to reveal that what was heard then was but a foretaste of greater things to come (cp. Vv. 2-7).

## VERSE 22

**“Joseph is a fruitful bough”** — As Jacob’s eyes turn towards his favourite son, they must have kindled with joy. Joseph’s name means *Increase*, and his life typified that of the Lord Jesus who as “a fruitful bough” shall increase mightily in the earth (Rev. 7:9). The past has revealed a typical fulfilment of the future, for Joseph developed into two tribes in Israel: Ephraim and Manasseh. The words “fruitful bough” are *ben paroth*, *son of a fruitful (tree or vine)*. *Paroth* is in the feminine gender, suggesting a reference to Rachel (see Isaiah 54:1). The term *A Son of Fruitfulness* is a good title for the Lord Jesus (John 12:24; 14:12; 15:4).

**“Even a fruitful bough by a well”** — The R.V. alters “well” to *fountain*, and one is reminded of “the fountain of Jacob” (Deut. 33:28), symbolised by the well that the patriarch dug at Shechem (the burden-bearer). It was at that well that the Lord discoursed with a Samaritan woman upon the hope of the Gospel (John 4:6-7), and from the figurative well associated therewith that he drank deeply of the water of life (Psalm 1). Thus the Lord Jesus was truly *A son of fruitfulness by a well*, for he was a true son of the Abrahamic covenant, which is likened to “Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all” (Gal. 4:26).

**“Whose branches run over the wall”** — In this line of poetry, “branches” is in the feminine gender, *banoth*, or *daughters* (see mg.). The figure is that of a vine so prolific, that its branches (or *daughters*) spread over the wall and beyond. It there-

fore is a remarkable prophecy of the spreading influence of Christ, typically expressed in the sons of Joseph. His two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, developed into two tribes, in contrast to the single tribe developed from each of the other sons of Jacob, so that in that sense, it could be said that the "branches" of Joseph extended beyond the wall.

Again, those tribes were located east and west of the Jordan, with two portions given to Manasseh, the firstborn according to birth, also suggest the figure of a spreading vine. But the full force of the prophecy is discovered in the antitypical Joseph, the Lord Jesus Christ. He declared to the disciples: "I am the vine, ye are the branches" (John 15:5). In that relationship, the feminine gender for "branches" in the verse before us, is appropriate, for the Lord's disciples comprise both *his* offspring (Isa. 53:10; Heb. 2:13) and *his* bride. As the "first Adam" could describe *his* "bride" as *his* offspring "bone of *his* bones, and flesh of *his* flesh" (Gen. 2:23), so can the "second Adam" of *his* bride (Eph. 5:25; John 17:21). The branches of the Christ-vine have spread "over the wall," for they have extended beyond the limits of Israel unto the Gentiles. Christ has "broken down the middle wall of partition" and has "reconciled both (believing Jews and Gentiles) unto God in one body" (the vine, Eph. 2:14-16). In order to effect this purpose, Yahweh strengthened the Christ-branch, and planted it to form the vine of His choice (see Ps. 80:14-17). As a vine is susceptible to transplanting, so the Israel-vine will be transplanted into the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 11:24).

### VERSE 23

**"The archers have sorely grieved him"** — The Hebrew *baalai chitstsim* signifies *chief archers*, or *masters of arrows*. In the case of Joseph, they comprised his brethren who became the "fathers of the children of Israel," and entitled to the term *baalai* or *chiefs*. But the experiences of Joseph foreshadowed those of Christ, who was hated and "shot at" by the leaders of Jewry as to cause him much grief. In Psalm 64, their attacks are likened to bow-

men "shooting their arrows, even bitter words," "shooting in secret at the perfect" without fear (vv. 3-4). The Psalmist, however, predicted that "God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded" (v. 7). The "arrow" by which the enemy should be overthrown comprised the Lord Jesus Christ, represented by Isaiah as "a polished shaft" hidden in the quiver of Yahweh (Isa. 49:2). His opponents were no match for him. They felt the weight of his wisdom, and the strength of his mouth which "like a sharp sword" (Isa. 49:2), was "quick, powerful, and sharp, dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). The Lord revealed his opponents for what they were, openly rebuking them as hypocrites and perverters of truth.

**"And shot at him, and hated him"** — Joseph's brethren "shot at him" secretly, hiding their true motives from Jacob, allowing their hatred of their brother to dominate them, and blind their sense of proportion. They would have killed him, but were dissuaded from doing so on the grounds of expediency, and sold him into Egypt. The leaders of Jewry "shot at" the Lord, by maligning him in secret; they hated him so as to bring him to the cross.

The word for "hated" is *satam*, "to lurk for, to lay snares." The type finds its fulfilment in Luke 11:54, "Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him."

### VERSE 24

**"But his bow abode in strength"** — "Strength" here is *ethan*. *Own* is used for *strength* in Gen. 49:3. Though hated by his brethren, Joseph continued on his course before God, and refused to be diverted therefrom. When, in Egypt, his brethren appeared before him, he "shot at them" so effectively as to more than match the ability they had revealed in directing their arrows of malice against him, so that they were compelled by his very skill to submit to him. His "arrows" hurt them, but were directed in love for their own good, and to their ultimate benefit, and in this he typed the Lord. As Psalm 64:7 and Isa. 49:2

reveal, the Lord also was a master of the bow. He used his words with ability and skill, revealing the error and hypocrisy of his opponents — but for their own good, and to the ultimate benefit of the nation as a whole. In the cases of both Joseph and the Lord, Yahweh was really the bowman, and they His arrows directed skilfully against the enemy. In spite of all opposition, the “bow abode in strength,” for it was used with ability and success.

**“And the arms of his hands were made strong”** — The word “strong” is *pazaz*, “to spring” or to be active. The R.V. has *active* in the margin. The *Amplified Bible* has “the arms of his hands were made strong and active.” He derived from the God of Jacob the skill to match his enemies, and to wage war successfully with them, even though outnumbered. The ability and the activity which characterised the labours of the Lord, the antitype of Joseph, stemmed from his divine parentage. Whereas the type, Joseph, had *natural* potential for spirituality, the antitype, the Lord Jesus had *supernatural* potential. Both through God, conquered in their respective conquests with their enemies. See Isa. 11:2; Psalm 80:17.

**“By the hands of the mighty God of Jacob”** — Notice that *God* is in italics which indicates that there is no comparable word in the Hebrew. “Mighty” is *abiyr* and is better rendered *Mighty One* as in the R.V. It is from the root *abar*, “to be strong, to soar,” and is rendered *fly* in Job 39:26. The title of *Abiyr of Jacob* suggests the Lofty One whose strength is sufficient for every need, who is high above flesh, and therefore, is not bounded or limited by it. Like the soaring eagle, whose keen vision takes in the panoramic view beneath, *Abiyr* is able to see beyond the horizon of human vision to the beyond, and so provide for all man’s needs. Let all who suffer, all who are oppressed by the opposition of their fellows, or who are depressed with the consciousness of their own failings, lift themselves up to seek the *Abiyr* (Lofty One) of Jacob (see Col. 3:1), for from His elevated position, He can see beyond present difficulties and can help accordingly.

**“From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel”** — These remarkable words reveal that Jacob saw the coming Redeemer, the antitype of his beloved son, Joseph, as both Son of Man and Son of God. As the former, he made mention of him as the Shiloh, the Lawgiver of Judah, the great Ruler of the tribe whom his brethren shall praise (Gen. 49:8-10); as the latter, he saw him as the great antitypical Joseph, the Son of God, who would conquer his enemies by the sword of the spirit, and the arrow of truth. The divine begetting of the Lord is expressed in the line before us: “From *thence* (from *Abiyr* or the *Lofty One*) is the shepherd, the stone of Israel”.

Jacob thus described the antitypical Joseph as “God manifest in the flesh.”

As far as the Lord’s fleshly descent is concerned, the words of Paul are to the point, and illustrate the blessing upon Judah: “It is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah” (Heb. 7:14). As far as the Lord’s heavenly origin is concerned, and illustrative of this blessing upon Joseph, Gabriel told Mary: “The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the *Highest* shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

This merging of spirit and flesh was necessary for the work Christ was to undertake. As Son of Man, he identified himself with the limitations and infirmities of the flesh; as Son of God, he represented and manifested Yahweh in such a way as to conquer the flesh. As both Son of Man and Son of God he represented both humanity and Deity, and was in a position to help and uplift those cast down by sin.

As such, he became the ideal shepherd of Israel. The shepherd characteristics of Christ are a manifestation of the shepherd characteristics of his Father (see Ps. 77:20; 78:52; 80:1; Jer. 31:10; Micah 7:14 etc.).

In the reference to *The Stone of Israel* the Hebrew word *eben* (stone) is from *banah*, the same root from which is derived the word *ben*, “son,” signifying to build. Thus as sons and daughters build a family, stones build a house. The word

*eben* occurs in Ps. 118:22; Isa. 8:14; 28:16, in prophecies relating to Christ. Reference also should be made to 1 Sam. 7:12 where Samuel set up a stone to commemorate the help received of Yahweh and called it *Eben-ezer* or *The Stone of Help*. The Lord Jesus has been set up as a Stone of Help to all who put their trust in him.

The reference to "the stone of Israel" seems to particularly relate to Jacob's experiences at Bethel. He selected one of the stones of the place to use as a pillow upon which to rest, and on the morrow, having received a wonderful blessing from God (Gen. 28:13-15), he set it up as a pillar to memorialise the spiritual temple that would be erected (vv. 17,22).

Christ is the foundation stone upon which the "house of God" is being erected (Zech. 4:8-10; 1 Pet. 2:4-6), "the chief corner-stone" into which the other "living stones" must be fitted (Eph. 2:22), and the "head stone" that provides the crowning beauty of the building (1 Pet. 2:7). He was also "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence" to those who failed to believe in him (1 Pet. 2:8), and therefore, "the stone that the builders rejected" (Matt. 21:42). In discoursing upon this theme, the Lord likened himself also to the stone that smote the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar, and destroyed it. He warned that that would be the lot of all those upon whom he should fall in judgment (Matt. 21:42-44).

As both "foundation stone" and head-stone (cp. Zech. 3:9; 4:7), the Lord is "the author and finisher of faith," the "alpha and omega" of the purpose of God. Without him there is no permanent strength or beauty; with him there is both. Peter saw him as "a chief corner stone, elect, precious" and declared, "He that believeth on him shall not be confounded" (1 Pet. 2:6). He saw the ecclesia as living stones, built up together as a "spiritual house, an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." As the indwelling divine glory gave significance to the tabernacle and temple, so the manifestation of divine glory by the saints reveals that He dwells with them. Peter

emphasised the purpose of the divine call: "That ye should shew forth the praises (virtues) of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Pet. 2:9). A community manifesting such qualities "is none other than the house of God" — to use the words of Jacob when he set up the stone of Bethel as a pillar.

## VERSE 25

**"Blessings of the deep that lieth under"** — In a natural sense, "blessings of the deep that lieth under" refer to the subterranean storages of water that provide the source of wells and springs, and to the rivers of water that irrigate the land. Spiritually, these refer to the hidden truths of revelation, the "deep things" of the Word that comprise part of the blessings of heaven above. Thus the Psalmist described the righteous as "trees planted by the rivers of water" (Psa. 1:3). They are replenished and strengthened by "the deep that lieth under," the figurative springs and wells of water that are hidden in the Word, and which provide nutriment in seasons of drought. Christ described the gospel as the thirst-quenching waters of a well that springs up into everlasting life (John 4:14). Therefore, whereas the "blessings of heaven" in the form of rain and dew, water and fructify the earth, the wells, springs and rivers store it for future use. The roots of trees and plants must dig into the soil to derive benefit from such "blessings of the deep that lieth under." The blessings of heaven above, and of the deep that lieth under, therefore, point to the influence of divine revelation as it is manifested in the Word, symbolised by life-sustaining water. Such blessings were conferred on Joseph who became the channel of them to others. As he typed the Lord, so they are revealed in the Christ. To him true Israelites must turn if they would participate in the benefits to be thus derived.

**"Blessings of the breasts, and of the womb"** — These blessings imply a numerous, healthy, well-fed progeny. This was typically fulfilled in the descendants of Joseph. In the first census of the tribes the numbers of Ephraim and Manasseh exceeded those of any of the other sons of



## The God of Jacob

Wherever the term "God of Jacob" is used in Scripture, it is found in a context of trouble from whence deliverance is obtained, and therefore comprises a most significant and encouraging divine title. The *Abiyr of Jacob* is the Lofty One who had supervised his life from the beginning, who had brought him through all his troubles, who had moulded his character, and who had so revealed His purpose, that the aged patriarch could now pass on to his sons the revelation of the future. The *Abiyr of Jacob* was the God who had appeared to him at Bethel, to declare that He would be with Jacob the fugitive in all his wanderings. He is the God who, knowing the weakness of humanity, yet proclaims that He will be with those who put their trust in Him during the days of their trial. Though they may be the victims of the evil thoughts of their fellows as Jacob was of Laban, or may find themselves endangered by fierce and unscrupulous enemies such as the patriarch was when facing Esau, the God of Jacob will deliver them to establish in them His covenant of peace, and to grant them immortality.

It is a very profitable exercise to examine every occurrence of divine titles appended to the name of Jacob, for he was a man whom God remade, and his very weaknesses, timidity, failings, but ultimate conversion, provide a parable for those whom God will change for the kingdom. When considering men like Jacob, and even meditating their failures, we must never forget the comment of Paul: "God is *not ashamed* to be called (or surnamed) their God" (Heb. 11:16). If God is not ashamed to be known as the God of Jacob, we must never despise the patriarch, nor the association with him which our acceptance and identification with the Abrahamic covenant establishes with us.

As one writer has expressed it: "God revived the promise over which Jacob had brooded for nearly 60 years since he learned it in childhood from his mother. Angels conversed with him. Gradually he felt more and more the watchful care of an ever-present spiritual Father. Face to face he wrestled with a representative of the Almighty. And so, even though the moral consequences of his early transgressions hung about him, and saddened him with a deep knowledge of all the evil of treachery and domestic envy, and partial judgment, and filial disobedience, yet the increasing revelations of God enlightened the old age of the patriarch; and, at last, the timid 'supplanter,' the man of subtle devices, waiting for the salvation of Yahweh, dies as the 'soldier of God,' uttering the messages of God to his remote posterity."

In *The Christadelphian* for 1940, the late John Carter, wrote beautifully upon the theme of "the God of Jacob," expressing the great comfort that this divine title has for all who experience the problems and reverses that fell to the lot of the patriarch. He declared: "The God of Jacob, then, is One who has promised to be with His people in all their sojourn, never to leave them in all the days of trial during which they may be the victims of the evil thoughts of their fellows as Jacob was of Laban's. The God of Jacob is One who, fulfilling His Word, will bring the heirs of the promise to the land covenanted, with life preserved through unending days.

"The Psalms when read with this background, are found to have a fuller meaning. David says (20:1):

*The Lord hear thee in the DAY OF TROUBLE;  
The name of the God of Jacob defend thee.*

"In the troubled days of Hezekiah, when the Assyrian cloud covered the land, but when men of faith believed the message that God would deliver them, one could say (46:7):

*The Lord God of hosts is with us*

*The God of Jacob is our refuge.*

“There were faithless men at the time, as Shebna; but in the assurance of the victory of the righteous, Asaph sang (75:9-10):

*I will declare for ever;*

*I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.*

*All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off:*

*But the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.*

“The same writer uses the title when he bemoans Israel’s failure to secure the blessing because they would not hearken to His voice (81:1). There was no failure with the God of Jacob.

“Human promises with the best of efforts are bounded by the limits of frail human life. What a magnificent contrast is that of Psalm 146, where the Lord’s irresistible might to accomplish is put over against human weakness!

*Put not your trust in princes,*

*Nor in the son of man,*

*In whom there is no help.*

*His breath goeth forth,*

*He returneth to his earth;*

*In that very day his thoughts perish.*

“We quote these verses, and rightly quote them, to prove the mortality of man; but we miss the writer’s object if we thus limit our meaning. We are not to put our trust in men; they are of small power and soon are dead. God knows no end to His years or failing of His powers. Therefore the Psalmist continues:

*Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help,*

*Whose hope is in the Lord his God:*

*Which made heaven, and earth,*

*The sea, and all that therein is:*

*Which keepeth truth for ever:*

“The Creator is not a God afar off; He has come into close association with men; has revealed His truth which will not fail; and He has been proved in the experience of Jacob as a God who neither leaves nor forsakes. If ours is the God of Jacob, the beatitude of this Psalm is written of us.”

The references above are to the *Elohim* of Jacob, except that of Psalm 146:5 where it is the *El* (Strength) of Jacob, whereas the title before us is the *Abiyf of Jacob*. But when the name of Jacob is connected with any of these titles they become expressive of One who has promised and will perform; One who had revealed His truth and will not fail; One who has power to redeem and will not leave nor forsake those who put their trust in Him. And will do so even in spite of human weakness.

Jacob himself expressed this in an earlier blessing on Joseph: “And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them...” (Gen. 48:15-16).

During much of his life, Jacob walked in darkness and could not see beyond the immediate future. Hemmed in by trouble, beset with fears, he placed his hand in *Abiyf* and ultimately walked out of darkness into light. For *Abiyf*; being the *Lofty One*, can see beyond the darkness (see Isa. 50:10).

The title occurs only a few times in Scripture. David was the next to use it after Jacob. He did so, in connection with the choice of Zion as the place of Yahweh’s rest. He spake of how he “swore unto Yahweh,” and “vowed unto the *Abiyf* of Jacob,” that he would not rest until he found “a place for Yahweh, a habitation for the *Abiyf* of

Jacob" (Psa. 132).

Both the Name of *Yahweh* and the title of *Abiyr of Jacob* are appropriate to the context of David's words. *Yahweh* is the covenant name of Deity the name that guarantees the perpetuity of the seed of Jacob (Exod. 3:14). *The Abiyr of Jacob* is appropriate to describe the One whose lofty eminence enables Him to see beyond their present humiliation to their future glory. Accordingly, it is appropriate that the temple of the age to come is described as "the house of the God of *Jacob*" (Isa. 2:3), for all who will appear there, both mortal and immortal, apart from the Lord Jesus, will be men and women who have been remade through the influence of the Lofty One who has elevated them. Thus, even in the future, the name of Jacob, and the example his life presents, will be perpetuated.

Isaiah uses the title *Abiyr* three times. In Ch. 1:24 he joins it with the name of Israel. In the spirit of prophecy he speaks of how the Lofty One will avenge Himself on His enemies, and will restore Israel: "Zion shall be redeemed with judgments and her converts with righteousness" (v. 27). Zion's converts comprise the true Israel of God (Gal. 6:16), the Jacobs of the flesh, whose names are changed to Israel to conform to their remade characters.

In Isa. 49:26, Deity is described as "I *Yahweh* thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One (*Abiyr*) of Jacob." Here the title is associated with the work of saving and redeeming Israel. "I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh... and all flesh shall know that I *Yahweh* am the *Abiyr* of Jacob." The experiences of Jacob will be reflected in those of the redeemed, both individual and national.

The third occurrence is in Ch. 60:16, "Thou shalt suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings; and thou shalt know that I *Yahweh* am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One (*Abiyr*) of Jacob."

Jacob successfully supplanted the flesh because the Lofty One was with him. For the same reason, the nation that came from him shall do likewise. Therefore, the title as used by Jacob in the blessing before us, can be paraphrased: *The God whom I have found to be high above flesh, alike in His mercy and His faithfulness as also in His power to save and redeem, and whose overriding providence has caused me to successfully supplant my enemies, will enable the antitypical Joseph to likewise conquer his enemies and bring succour to his brethren in need.*

Jacob. Antotypically, however, the fulfilment is seen in the progeny of the Lord Jesus. The ecclesia comprises "the children whom God has given him" (Heb. 2:11-14), and the possession of such a family constitutes him *the Father of eternity* (Isa. 9:6), the *Author of life* (Acts 3:15 mg). From him will be developed that "great multitude which no man could number" (Rev. 7:9), being the aggregate of his spiritual offspring. Ephraim and Manasseh, the two sons of Joseph, typically represent spiritual and natural Israel (Deut. 33:17). Isaiah likens such to the sons of Zion to "be brought forth" by a personal and a political resurrection at her travelling in the future (Isa. 66:8-10).

Earlier Jacob had imagined his son Joseph to have been destroyed, but by the

working of Providence, he was now able to pronounce upon him the blessing of a greater progeny than that of any of his other sons. What of the Lord Jesus, Joseph's great antitype? Isaiah prophetically enquired: "Who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living" (Isa. 53:8). But he adds, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, *he shall see his seed*, he shall prolong his days" (v. 10). The Lord spiritually begat a numerous progeny, for the blessing of Joseph reached down to him.

#### VERSE 26

"**The blessings of thy father**" — To Jacob were confirmed the promises made to Abraham and Isaac, with the assurance that *El Shaddai* would be with him in all

## The Shepherd of Israel

The tender solicitude of a shepherd for his flock aptly illustrates the care which Yahweh exercises in the affairs of His people, as shown by His dealings with the people of Israel. He guided them to pastures and fed them with His Word. He protected them against the wild beasts (Gentiles) which would devour them, whilst disciplining them in love when such was needed. He taught them to hearken to His voice, and provided under-shepherds who would teach them what was required.

One of those "under-shepherds" was David, the shepherd-boy that became shepherd-king. "He chose David also His servant, and took him from the sheepfolds; from following the ewes great with young He brought him to feed (Heb. *shepherd*) Jacob His people and Israel His inheritance. So He fed (*shepherded*) them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands" (Ps. 78:70-72).

David experienced the anxious care of a true shepherd for the sheep; he knew how the shepherd had to anticipate the needs of the flock, how he had to watch over its welfare, guard it from danger, deny himself for its sake, risk his life in its defence, encourage it with a gentle, caressing voice along the rough and dangerous paths it sometimes had to tread, and lead it to the green fields beyond.

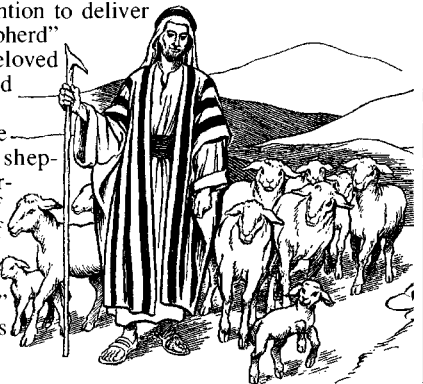
He knew too, how the sheep trusted him, relied upon his guidance, recognised his voice and responded to it. The sheep lacks the ability to defend itself and is completely reliant upon the shepherd. It is meek and submissive to guidance but is also susceptible to following a wrong lead.

Frequently, in Scripture, the word shepherd has been translated *fed* or *feed*. Thus "the lips of the righteous feed (*shepherd*) many" (Prov. 10:21). "I will give you pastors (*shepherds*) according to mine heart, which shall feed (*shepherd*) you with knowledge and understanding" (Jer. 3:15).

It was a high and responsible position. The king in Israel was the shepherd of the nation — its servant. He was expected to "walk before the people" in leadership and example (1 Sam. 12:2). David was praised for the manner in which he had accomplished this: "Thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and Yahweh said to thee, Thou shalt feed (*shepherd*) My people Israel..." (2 Sam. 5:2; 1 Chron. 11:2).

David was a type of the "good shepherd" whom Jacob foresaw in his blessing upon Joseph. In Psalm 23:1, *Yahweh-Rohi*, Yahweh My Shepherd, becomes a divine title, anticipating the manifestation of the Lord Jesus as "the good shepherd," and providing a contrast to the "hirelings" that camouflaged themselves as shepherds in Israel (cp. Isa 56 :11; Jer. 23:1; Ezek. 34:1-4). Yahweh declared that He was against such pseudo-shepherds, and proclaimed his intention to deliver the flock from such, and to set up "one shepherd" over them, even His servant David (the beloved — the Lord Jesus Christ), who would become "their shepherd" (Ezek. 34:23).

In the N.T. the Lord is set forth as "the good shepherd" (John 10:11), "the great shepherd" (Heb. 13:20), "the shepherd and overseer of your souls" (1 Pet. 2:25), the "chief shepherd" (1 Pet. 5:4). The responsibility of the sheep is to hearken to his voice, and follow in his path. If they do that, he will "lead them unto living fountains of waters" and wipe away "all tears" from their eyes (Rev. 7:17).



his wanderings, and would restore him back into the land (Gen. 28:13-15). The promise was irrevocable (Rom. 11: 29), as was dramatised to Jacob when he wrestled with the angel, and was told: "As a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed" (Gen. 32:28), or, as it has been rendered: "He who strives with God and prevails will certainly prevail with men."

**"Have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors"** — This statement presents a difficulty. As it stands in the A.V., it would suggest that the blessings of Jacob were greater than those of Abraham. However, the interlinear *New-Old Testament* alters this to: "The blessings of thy father surpass (upon) the blessings of the mountains of everlastingness." This reading, which is supported by Gesenius, the Septuagint, and other authorities, reads *horim* "mountains" instead of *hourim* "progenitors." The lines can then read: "The blessings of thy father prevail over the blessings of the mountains of continuance (or the ancient mountains — Heb. *od*), the delight, glory or loveliness of the hills of eternity (*olahm*)." This rendition is supported by the R.V. mg. which cites ancient manuscripts as reading "the blessings of the ancient mountains" instead of "the blessings of my progenitors." The term *mountains of continuance* or *ancient mountains*, has a symbolic or political significance, in similar manner as Babylon is described as a "destroying mountain" (Jer. 51:25); or as "the Mighty One from Teman" is pictured "scattering the everlasting mountains" (empires of antiquity), and causing "the perpetual hills (nations) to bow" (Hab. 3:6). In that sense, "the blessings of the ancient mountains" over which the blessings of Jacob prevail, relate to the benefits derived from the glory, culture and political prestige of such mighty empires of antiquity as that of Egypt. Jacob's sons, and Joseph in particular, had evidence of the material advantages derived from such, but now they are assured that all such glory and wealth will be superseded by the blessings derived from Jacob in the future governing of the nations. Certainly, the blessings of Jacob

to be revealed in the millennial reign of Christ, will surpass the benefits derived from fleshly power and prestige. Whatever glory Joseph enjoyed through his position in Egypt, that which he ultimately will receive through "the blessings of his father," will greatly surpass it.

**"Unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills"** — The word "bound" is from the Hebrew *taavah*, and whilst it can signify the *boundary* or *extent* of a thing, it particularly expresses the idea of *desire*, *delight* or *glory*. "Everlasting" is from *olahm*, frequently used to express the millennial hidden period. Therefore, in the context of this verse, "hills of olahm" seem to relate to those nations which shall be incorporated in the empire, the Kingdom of God which Christ shall set up at his coming, and of which Israel shall comprise the "first dominion" (Mic. 4:6-8; Ps. 72:10-11; Isa. 60:12; Rev. 11:15). The blessing of Jacob will attain unto the full glory, the *taavah*, of such, for those associated therewith shall exercise "power over the nations" (cp. Luke 1:32-33; Matt. 19:28-30; Rev. 2:26).

The statement of this verse, therefore, can be rendered: "The blessings of thy father prevail over, are greater than, the blessings of the ancient mountains, the delight, glory, or loveliness of the hills of eternity." These terms should be interpreted symbolically and prophetically.

**"They shall be on the head of Joseph"** — The blessings of Joseph will be received through Christ, who is the "head" of the multitudinous body of the elect. Joseph foreshadowed the Lord, and the significance of his name, *The Increaser*, will be manifested by the great company of the redeemed that will own the Lord's name (Acts 15:14) in the age to come. He will be chief over them, acknowledged as Lord of Lords and King of Kings (Rev. 17:14).

**"And on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren"** — Primarily, this was Joseph, but ultimately is the Lord Jesus Christ, the antitypical Joseph. "Crown" is *qodqod* and relates to the top of the head, where the

anointing oil was poured when a priest was consecrated to his holy office (Ps. 133). Priests, prophets and kings were all so consecrated to their high and holy office: three forms of service that are combined in the Lord Jesus Christ who is prophet, priest and king. In the symbolic description of the "one like unto the son of man" (Rev. 1:13-16), attention is drawn to "his head and his hairs" which are said to be "white like wool, as white as snow." This speaks of the righteousness of the one described, the antitype of the white mitre that was placed upon the head of the high priest (Exod. 39:28) with its caption in gold: *Holiness to Yahweh* (Exod. 28:36). The Lord needed no such artificial arrangement, for his "crown of glory" "grew out of his head." He was a true Nazarite, the vow of which made priests of laymen, the external badge of which was the hair, permitted to grow long as a token of submission to the divine requirements (Num 6:5; 1 Cor. 11:5,7). Therefore he was "separate from his brethren."

The verb "separate" is *nazir*, a word that is used to describe the separateness of a Nazarite, a priest, or a prince. It is the root of the noun *Nazarite*, as well as of *Nezer*, or *royal diadem*. Joseph was forcibly separated from his brethren, and elevated to his high position above them; the Lord Jesus was separated by the excellence of his mind and character, both of which stemmed from Yahweh. In nature, he was identical to others, but in mind and character he was divine.

## VERSE 27

**"Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf" —** To "ravin" is to tear the prey in pieces, a characteristic for which the wolf is noted (Ezek. 22:27). The prediction takes in the warlike characteristics of the tribe of Benjamin (Jud. 3:15, 5:14, 20:16). But as Benjamin signifies *the Son of the right hand*, and typically represents the Lord Jesus Christ (Ps. 110:5; Matt. 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42-43; Acts 2:34-35), it also provides a foreshadowing of the future when "the Lord at Thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his

wrath," "shall judge among the nations, and shall fill the places with dead bodies" (Ps. 110:5-6). In that day the Lord Jesus Christ, as the *Son of His right hand* shall destroy all opposition to the divine theocracy to be set up, and will apportion the loot.

**"In the morning he shall devour the prey" —** The reference takes in the coming "day of Yahweh," the "morning" of which will witness the rising of the "sun of righteousness" (Mal. 4:1-2; Isa. 60:1). Concerning "the prey," Zephaniah declared: "Therefore wait ye upon Me, saith Yahweh, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them Mine indignation, even all My fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy" (Zeph. 3:8).

**"And at night he shall divide the spoil" —** The morning of Zion's day will comprise the night of Gentile power: At that time the *Son of the right hand* shall "spoil those that spoiled" Israel (Ezek. 39:10). Again, at the end of the millennial reign, there will be further national judgment and a final dividing of spoil (Rev. 20). Thus, at the beginning and at the ending of the millennial day, there will be an epoch of judgment and an apportionment of rewards.

## VERSE 28

**"All these are the twelve tribes of Israel" —** This statement or summary by Moses emphasises that Jacob's "last words" to his sons were actually future predictions relating to the tribes.

**"And this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them" —** In each case there was a play upon the name of the son addressed. The blessings can be summarised thus:

*Reuben — pride* in the son of flesh misplaced.

*Simeon and Levi —* will be found *hearing* and *joining* in an ungodly conspiracy.

*Judah* — will receive *praise* for valour and rulership.

*Zebulun* — will  *dwell*  in peace with his back turned to his enemies.

*Issachar* — will receive the *reward* of a pleasant inheritance.

*Dan* — shall *judge* the people.

*Gad* — shall trample upon the enemy as a *troop*.

*Asher* — shall be *blessed* with royal luxuries.

*Naphtali* — shall successfully *wrestle* the forces of darkness with words of truth.

*Joseph* — shall *increase* on all sides.

*Benjamin* — as the *Son of the right hand* shall apportion the spoil.

The blessings revealed that the natural seed of Jacob would be deposed through the wickedness of its leaders and priests rejecting the Messiah. However, as the lion of Judah he will reign over them at which time Israel after the flesh will attain unto the blessing of the land. Nevertheless, the greatest blessings will be reserved for the antitypical Joseph (singular and multitudinous) at a time when the Son of the right hand will apportion the spoil.

#### VERSE 31

“There they buried Abraham and

Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebecca his wife; and there I buried Leah” — From this it appears that Leah died before Jacob came into Egypt.

#### VERSE 32

“The purchase of the field and of the cave that is therein was from the children of Heth” — See notes Gen. 23:3-17.

#### The Death of Jacob — v. 33

*Having delivered his final instructions to his sons, Jacob allows death to take hold upon him.*

#### VERSE 33

“And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons” — The command was in relation to his burial (v. 29).

“He gathered up his feet into the bed” — On the arrival of his sons Jacob had strengthened himself and sat up upon the bed with his feet overhanging the edge in order to deliver his final oration.

“Yielded up the spirit, and was gathered unto his people” — The R.S.V. has *breathed his last*. See notes Gen. 25:8. Jacob allowed death to temporarily possess him.

*Mourning in Egypt was extreme in its manifestations of grief (see ch. 50:2-3). Here professional mourners are depicted on the monuments.*



## CHAPTER FIFTY

## THE LAST DAYS OF JACOB

*With loving care Joseph gives himself to fulfilling the dying wish of his father. The preparation of the body of Jacob and his burial in the Land of Promise is conducted with great ceremony. On the return of Jacob's sons to Egypt, the brethren express their concern as to Joseph's future intentions towards them. Their suspicious attitude causes him great distress. He assures them that he has their welfare at heart and that he will care for both them and their children. Then after a long period of sojourning in Egypt, Joseph also dies. Prior to his death he repeats the assurance of Jacob that God will deliver Israel out of Egypt. Therefore, on his death, he is embalmed and placed in a coffin awaiting the moment of departure.*

**The Mourning for Jacob — Vv. 1-6.**

*Joseph's affection for his family means more to him than the glory and dignity of his position in Egypt. He manifests great emotion on the death of his beloved father, and openly reveals his feelings in that regard. He seeks and receives permission from Pharaoh to superintend the burial of Jacob in the Land of Promise.*

**VERSE 1**

**“And Joseph fell upon his father's face”** — He embraced him, closing his eyes in death as Jacob had been promised he would do (Gen. 46:4).

**“And wept upon him, and kissed him”** — Joseph was a man of deep compassion. As has already been noted, it is mentioned seven times that he wept. See note Gen. 42:24.

**VERSE 2**

**“And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians”** — The word “physicians” is *raphaim* in Hebrew. A variation of the word is used as a divine title in Exod. 15:26. In Egypt, in the times of Joseph, medicine was the prerogative of the priesthood. Moreover, the *Edwin Smith Surgical Papyrus* (1550 B.C.), which

is named after the Egyptologist who found it, reveals that doctors in Egypt practised real medicine, even by modern standards. This papyrus takes up 48 cases of injury, including wounds, fractures, and dislocations, in a systematic order, starting from the head and working downwards, including ten cases of injury to the brain, four to the nose, and so on to the spinal column. In each case the condition is carefully described, and the descriptions make abundantly clear that an examination by an Egyptian doctor was thorough. It included interrogation, inspection, functional tests, and a diagnosis with one of three conclusions: favourable to treatment, uncertain, unfavourable.

The *Ebers Medical Papyrus* is also impressive. It provides teaching for general practitioners. It has a section on the heart and the vessels, which is rated a most interesting essay on speculative medical philosophy; and another on pharmacy. One of its remedies is a prescription for castor oil as a laxative (see *Ancient Egypt*). Herodotus states (*Hist. Book 2.84*) that Egyptian physicians were specialists devoted to certain disorders, and claims that they were world renowned. Nevertheless, Egyptian medicine, being in the



hands of the priesthood, was closely related to Egyptian mythology. Because of this, Israelites were instructed to place their confidence in Yahweh Ropheka, and not in Egyptian physicians (cp. Exod. 15:26 with 2 Chron. 16:12). However, the physicians used by Joseph constituted "his servants," and as such were perhaps taught in the principles of the truth.

**"To embalm his father: and the physicians embalmed Israel"** — In embalming, the Egyptians removed the brain and viscera, and with a concoction of spices, and by mummification, they preserved the body. The purpose of embalming, according to their religious beliefs, was in order that the *Ka* or ghostly double of the person, might return to take possession of the body, and that it might be ready for resurrection. According to Diodorus (1.91) the process took over thirty days; according to Herodotus (*Book 2:86-88*) it took seventy days. Both periods are referred to in the following verse. The embalming of the bodies of Jacob and Joseph, however, was merely an expedient for preserving the body until burial could take place. It endorsed the Hebrew belief in the resurrection without subscribing to the Egyptian superstition concerning the soul.

### VERSE 3

**"And forty days were fulfilled for him"** — According to *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* "we learn from the Greek historians, that the time of mourning was while the body remained with embalmers, which Herodotus says was *seventy* days. During this time the body lay in nitre, the use of which was to dry up all its superfluous and noxious moisture: and when, in the space of thirty days, this was sufficiently effected, the remaining *forty*, the time mentioned by Diodorus, were employed in anointing it with gums and spices to preserve it, which was properly the embalming. This sufficiently explains the phraseology of the text."

**"For so are fulfilled the days of those which are embalmed"** — These parenthetical words are inserted in explanation by Moses, because the Hebrews did

not practise the art of embalming.

**"And the Egyptians mourned for him threescore and ten days"** — This coincides with the period mentioned by Herodotus as cited above. It is also indicative of the great respect that was paid Joseph throughout Egypt, for such a lengthy mourning was reserved for the nobles of the land. Jacob was honored in such a way because of his relationship with his son Joseph.

### VERSE 4

**"And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh, saying, If now I have found grace in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying"** — Joseph sought the help of Pharaoh's household for such a purpose because he was still in mourning for his father, and therefore felt it unbecoming to enter thus into the presence of the king (cp. Est. 4:2). According to Herodotus (*Book 2:36*), the Egyptians "left the hair of their head and beard to grow in mourning being at all other times shaven." Previously, when Joseph made ready to visit Pharaoh, he "shaved himself" (Gen. 41:14), but to do so on this occasion would dishonour his mourning for his father; and therefore he adopted the expedient of approaching Pharaoh through nobles of his household.

### VERSE 5

**"My father made me swear, saying, Lo, I die: in my grave which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me"** — Jacob's solemn request of Joseph is recorded in Gen. 47:29. The reference to Jacob having "digged" his grave, evidently relates to some preparation of the niche that he would occupy in the cave of Machpelah, to which the patriarch evidently gave himself.

**"Now therefore let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father, and I will come again"** — The royal permission was required for Joseph to pass beyond the boundaries of Egypt and to return again, especially when accompanied by such a large retinue of people as on this occasion.

His request was equivalent to obtaining passport permission today.

**VERSE 6**

**“And Pharaoh said, Go up, and bury thy father, according as he made thee swear”** — The answer would have been made through Joseph’s intermediaries.

**The Burial of Jacob — Vv. 7-13**

*A large procession is formed to convey the body of Jacob to its resting place. It comprises not only members of the patriarch’s family, but representatives of the principal Egyptians. Indeed, at first the Egyptians take the principal part in the mourning, and make themselves so conspicuous, as to impress the Canaanites with the solemnity of the occasion. Accordingly, the name of the place where the procession rests is changed from Goren-Atad to Abel-Mizraim. At this spot, the last rites are performed by Joseph and his brethren. Leaving the Egyptians at Goren-Atad they carry the body of their father to the cave in the field of Machpelah, to place it by the side of Leah.*

**VERSE 7**

**“And Joseph went up to bury his father: and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt”**—The burial procession comprised a witness to Israel’s hope of the resurrection.

**VERSE 8**

**“And all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father’s house: only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen”** — In this description of the funeral procession, seven specific groups are mentioned (the covenant number), comprising all sections of the community such as are called by the gospel. They are (1) the servants of Pharaoh; (2) the elders of his house, perhaps religious leaders; (3) the elders of the land, perhaps princes of the realm; (4) the house of Joseph; (5) his brethren; (6) his father’s house; (7) Joseph

himself.

**VERSE 9**

**“And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen: and it was a very great company”** — Funeral processions are commonly displayed on the monuments, but never with horses. The exceptional character of this procession, and the fact that the burial was in a far-away land would account for that, and would provide for any protection necessary under such conditions.

**VERSE 10**

**“And they came to the threshingfloor of Atad”** — In Hebrew this is Goren-Atad, and signifies *the threshingfloor of buckthorn*. “Atad” is from a root signifying to *pierce*, or *hold fast*, and therefore, is appropriate for death. The Egyptians ascended to the place, mourning greatly; the Israelites were more restrained, as appropriate to them in view of their hope (cp. 1 Thess. 4:13). The place and the circumstances suggest judgment, for here a discrimination was made between the wheat and the chaff. From here, Jacob’s sons went on alone with the body of their father to the cave of Machpelah, leaving the Egyptians at Goren-Atad. Thus, although a great company of all classes came out of Egypt, it was separated into two categories at the place signifying *The Threshingfloor of Buckthorns*, and the genuine mourners went on alone.

**“Which is beyond Jordan”** — As Moses wrote on the *east* side of Jordan this expression in his books means *westward* of Jordan (Deut. 1:1) whereas in other parts of Scripture it generally means *eastward*. Mamre, is west of the Jordan.

**“And there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation”** — In the next verse, this extremity of mourning is attributed mainly to the Egyptians, who evidently “mourned as those who have no hope” (1 Thess. 4:13).

**“And he made a mourning for his father seven days”** — The mourning of Joseph and the Israelites with him was more restrained, though more genuine, than that of the Egyptians. Their mourning

at this stage (cp. v. 4) was a special mourning before interment. See also Num. 19:11; 1 Sam. 31:13; 2 Sam. 1:17; Job. 2:13. They "sorrowed not as others which have no hope."

#### VERSE 11

**"And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they said, This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians"**—The word for "mourning" is *ebel*, so there follows a play on words. The Egyptians were noted for their excessive and vehement display of lamentations of the dead, rending their garments, smiting their breasts, throwing dust on their heads, calling on the deceased by name, and chanting funeral dirges.

**"Wherefore the name of it was called Abel-mizraim, which is beyond Jordan"** — The name of the place as in the Hebrew text (with the vowel points) signifies *The Meadow of the Egyptians*, but with different vowel points and the same consonants. This becomes *The Mourning of the Egyptians* as in the margin of the A.V. and the text of the Septuagint. The translators of the latter read the original Hebrew in that way; evidently it is a more correct reading. The word "Mizraim," or "Egyptians" signifies *oppressors* (see note Gen. 12:12). The book of Exodus reveals how the Egyptians lived up to the significance of their name as far as the Israelites were concerned. In the day of judgment, all oppressors will have cause

to mourn.

#### VERSE 12

**"And his sons did unto him according as he commanded them"** — They honored their father by respecting his request. See Gen. 47:29-31; 49:29-32; Exod. 20:12; Acts 7:16; Eph. 6:1.

#### VERSE 13

**"For his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought with the field for a possession of a buryingplace of Ephron the Hittite, before Mamre"** — The constant repetition of these details emphasises the only portion of the Land of Promise secured by those to whom it was promised for an everlasting possession. Jacob's insistence upon being buried at this spot underlined his hope in the resurrection and ultimate possession of that promised unto him. Therefore, in the circumstances of his burial he gave witness to his hope, the cave of Machpelah being a token of this to all true Israelites. Though representatives of all stratas of society were drawn out of Egypt by this mute witness of Israel, the demonstration at Goren-Atad separated genuine mourners from pseudo-mourners. There have been many who mourned the passing of Jacob politically, but genuine worshippers, are separated from mere pseudo-worshippers by recognising the divine purpose to revive the nation again by a political resurrection (Ezek. 37).

## THE LAST DAYS OF JOSEPH (Genesis 50:14-26)

*The death of Jacob brings to the surface fears that had lain latent in the minds of his sons since the revelation of Joseph to them. Now that the restraining influence of the father is gone, would Joseph exact vengeance upon them such as they realise is his due? When they humbly approach him seeking forgiveness, he is overwhelmed that they should think such of him, and with deep affection allays their fears. Instead of harming them, he uses his influence in Egypt to help both them and their descendants. Final-*

ly, after a sojourn of an hundred and ten years in the land of oppression, he dies, leaving a message of hope behind him, in the assurance that God will visit the Israelites, and take them out of Egypt to the Land of Promise. He repeats the request of his father that he be not buried in Egypt, and, in consequence, his body is embalmed, and is placed in a coffin awaiting the moment of departure.

### Joseph Reassures His brethren

— Vv. 14-21

*The selfless love of Joseph is beyond the comprehension of his brethren. They view the death of Jacob as the end of an epoch, and fear that Joseph may now take revenge for their previous conduct of which they are now thoroughly ashamed. Joseph reassures them, and promises a continuance of the good he has already shown towards them.*

#### VERSE 15

**“And when Joseph’s brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him”** — The Hebrew is in the imperfect tense, suggesting a possible but undesirable hypothesis. The *New-Old Testament* (Hebrew Interlinear) renders: “If (he) should be hostile to us...” In view of such a hypothesis, they tactfully decided to again express the genuineness of their contrition. The antitype of such action will be revealed when the revelation is brought home to Israel after the flesh that they are nationally responsible for the death of Christ (Acts 2:23). They will be overwhelmed with fear (Rev 1:7; Zech. 12:10-12) but then will learn that the goodness and mercy of Yahweh and His Son are adequate for all such needs. Instead of condemnation, they will receive consideration and mercy (Rom. 11:26-27).

#### VERSE 16

**“And they sent a messenger unto Joseph”** — This can be literally rendered, *They sent a message unto Joseph*. This, probably, was through one of their own number, and who better than Benjamin,

Joseph’s brother? The antitype will be revealed in the interest shown by the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16) in the destiny of Israel after the flesh. Even now, the former pray for the peace of Jerusalem; how much greater will be their solicitousness for Israel in the age to come.

**“Saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying”** — The alleged command of Jacob is not recorded, but the instruction could be true fact. It represents the spirit that was later reflected in the “Father’s Son” (Luke 23:34).

#### VERSE 17

**“So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil”** — This approach and confession evinces their humility and genuineness. It indicates the vast change that had been brought about in their attitudes and characters due to their contact with Joseph. So do the examples and actions of good men inspire others. The humility of the brethren on this occasion foreshadows the contrition that will be manifested by Israel in the future when the nation is restored to covenant-relationship with Yahweh through the mediation of the Son. See Ezek. 43:6-11, 25-27.

**“And now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father”** — They correctly approach Joseph as the servants of the God of Jacob, and their frank confession evinces the depth of their humility, the sincerity of their repentance, and the genuineness of their status as the servants of God.

**“And Joseph wept when they spake unto him”** — As a man of deep emotion, he typified the Lord who wept at the

graveside of a friend, and over a disobedient city. See comment at Gen. 42:24.

#### VERSE 18

**“And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants”** — For the antitype see Phil. 2:10; Ezek. 43:27.

#### VERSE 19

**“And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God?”** — According to the Hebrew, this can be rendered as a statement instead of a question: “I am in the place of God.” Indeed, the context indicates that this is how Joseph’s words should be treated, and it is so rendered in the Septuagint version. Joseph became mediator between his brethren and God, as Moses did later between the people and Yahweh (see Exod. 4:16 where similar words are used). The Lord Jesus Christ is Yahweh’s representative to the people, and therefore, truly Emmanuel or *God with us* (Matt. 1:23). Mortals will have to acknowledge that principle before they will be accepted in the age to come (see Isa. 45:14-15). Therefore of national Israel it is recorded: “They shall look upon Me (Yahweh) Whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him (the Lord Jesus), as one... that is in bitterness for his firstborn” (Zech. 12:10). They will be compelled to see in the Lord Jesus more than a mere historic reality, a great prophet and a great teacher; they will acknowledge in him the principle of God manifest in the flesh, as was typified by Joseph.

#### VERSE 20

**“As for you, ye thought evil against me”** — This, likewise, was the motive of the Jewish leaders in their opposition to Christ. See Luke 20:14; Acts 2:23; 7:52.

**“But God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive”** — As Joseph reviewed the past, he could discern the hand of God in all that had happened, using the evil motives of his brethren to the advantage of a numerous people. See his explanation in Gen. 45:5,7. He was conscious of the reality of God. He recognised a

divine manipulation of those actions intended to harm him, so that they worked out for the good of all concerned. How true this is of Joseph’s great antitype. Peter preached: “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Acts 2:36). The Jewish leaders meant it for evil but God turned it to good.

The “good” in Joseph’s case, was not merely to save people from starvation, but to preserve them for the kingdom. The reverses suffered by each member of the family assisted in purifying the characters of each one, so that under God’s providence all the brethren were benefited by the circumstances of trial that their own folly had helped to create.

#### VERSE 21

**“Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones”** — Joseph repeats and confirms the promise which he originally made to them when he invited them to come to Egypt (Gen. 45:11). As he superintended events to their good and the good of their seed, so also does Christ in regard to those who shelter under his wings. The benefits of the truth extend to the families of those who “love and fear Yahweh,” even though eternal life will be reserved for those alone who assume the individual responsibilities of the Truth. See Isa. 65:23.

**“And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them”** — Joseph spake to his brethren as the Lord will speak to the children of Israel in the age to come (Isa. 40:1-5; Mic. 7:19-20). To “speak kindly,” is literally to *speak to their hearts* (see mg); an expression that is also found in Isa. 40:2 (see mg). The brethren of Joseph were touched and moved by his words, as Israel after the flesh will be at the coming of the Lord.

#### Joseph’s Long Life — Vv. 22-23.

*Joseph’s life extends for a further fifty-six years after the death of Jacob, enabling him to see the children of Ephraim and Manasseh unto the third generation.*

**VERSE 22**

**“And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father’s house”** — Joseph lived in Egypt 93 years in all, and his father’s descendants lived there 215 years (Exod. 12:40; Gal. 3:17).

**“And Joseph lived an hundred and ten years”** — It is interesting that Joshua, who superintended the burial of Joseph, also lived 110 years (Josh. 24:29).

**VERSE 23**

**“And Joseph saw Ephraim’s children of the third generation”** — This suggests the rapid increase of the children of Israel, a population explosion, the effects of which are described in the early chapters of Exodus (see Exod. 1:10). Joseph was 30 when he appeared before Pharaoh (Gen. 41:46). Some time after this he was married to Asenath (Gen. 41:45), and then followed the births of Manasseh and Ephraim. The latter son might well have been born when Joseph was 33 years of age, allowing a span of seventy-seven years. Granted early marriages, the statement that Joseph saw the third generation of Ephraim’s children is very probable.

**“The children also of Machir the son of Manasseh”** — The name Machir signifies *sold*. He was the firstborn of Manasseh, and founder of the family of the Machirites (Josh. 17:1). His mother was an Aramite, a concubine. Owing to the fact that Machir’s grandson, Zelophehad, only had daughters, a special enactment was made as to their inheritance (Num. 27:1; 36:1; Josh. 17:3).

**“Were brought up upon Joseph’s knees”** — The descendants of both Ephraim and Manasseh were given Joseph’s particular care, and treated as his (cp. Gen. 48:5). The Lord has concern for both Israel spiritual and natural.

**Joseph’s Final Message and Death**

— Vv. 24-26.

*The time comes for Joseph to die. He delivers a final message and prophecy to the children of Israel, and, like his father before him, takes steps to ensure that he will be buried in the Land of Promise.*

**VERSE 24**

**“And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die”** — As his life neared its end, Joseph called his associates to him to deliver a final message of comfort and exhortation. The term *his brethren* signifies his associates, members of the covenant nation, and not necessarily Jacob’s immediate sons (cp. Acts 2:29). The Lord Jesus also gathered his friends around him with words of instruction in his final hours (John 14:16).

**“And God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob”** — On his deathbed Joseph reminds the children of Israel of the family covenant promise. His words form an introduction to the *Book of Exodus*, for that Book records the visitation of Yahweh through the Elohim to Israel. See how Moses drew attention to Joseph’s words when about to leave Egypt (Exod. 13:19). “God will *surely* visit you,” he declared. There was no doubt about it in his mind. The very promise made to Abraham and repeated to Isaac and Jacob necessitated it. Paul cites this incident in the life of Joseph as an outstanding evidence of his faith (Heb. 11:22). Like Jacob before him, on the threshold of death, Joseph anticipated the resurrection, for he made reference to a land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who, to obtain it, must be resurrected. So, as he was about to close his eyes in death, his spiritual vision took hold of the promise of the return of Israel to the land; the resurrection of the fathers; and the inheritance promised each one. “By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones” (Heb. 11:22). And “faith is the confident anticipation of things hoped for, the full persuasion of things unseen” (Heb. 11:1).

**VERSE 25**

**“And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence”** — He repeated the action and words of his father (cp. Gen. 47:29-30; 48:21; 49:29-33). In *Elpis*

*Israel*, Brother Thomas comments: "The last thoughts of these holy men were on 'the exceeding great and precious promises' which are to be manifested in the land of Canaan; where their posterity will yet become 'a great and mighty nation' under Shiloh and his saints as the lords of Israel and the Gentiles. Seeing this, then, though afar off, they gave expression to their faith by giving commandment concerning their bodies; as it is written, 'By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel: and gave commandment concerning his bones'." (p. 279).

Actually 144 years passed away before the time came for Israel to leave Egypt, and, unfortunately, long before then the people had forgotten the warning message of Joseph. They became so involved with the materialistic opportunities of Egypt, that the coffin of Joseph became only an interesting relic of the past. When they did leave, they carried out Joseph's instructions (Exod. 13:19), and he was ultimately buried near Shechem, in the piece of ground reserved by his father for him (Gen. 48:22). Therefore, throughout the

wilderness wanderings of the children of Israel, they carried with them the tokens of the death of Joseph, as believers remember the death and resurrection of the Lord to this day (1 Cor. 11:24-26). So the type is completed in the death of Joseph, and his confident expectation of a resurrection unto life eternal.

#### VERSE 26

"So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old — See note v. 22.

"And they embalmed him" — See note v. 2.

"And he was put in a coffin in Egypt" — The Hebrew *arown* signifies "chest," and perhaps relates to a mummy-case usually made of sychomore wood. The mummy was then usually placed in a stone sarcophagus (coffin). If this was the case with Joseph, the children of Israel had the laborious task of conveying that heavy, stone sarcophagus through the wilderness to the Promised Land where Joseph's remains were deposited in the sepulchre of Shechem — "the *Burden Bearer*".

This remarkable first book of the Bible, the seed-bed of all subsequent revelation, ends with the statement a *coffin in Egypt*: expressive of death in exile. Such a conclusion is indicative of the fallen state of humanity, from the time that the Creator looked upon "all that He had made and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). That *very good* state of creation had been disrupted by the sin of the first human pair, and the further transgression of their posterity. The great theme of Genesis is the unfolding purpose of Yahweh as shown in creation, the fall, and the redemption of man. The book provides the foundation for all that follows. Every great doctrine, every prophetic vision, is rooted in Genesis, found there either in type or direct teaching. With a thorough grip of the teaching of this seed-plot of the Bible, the student is equipped to move into the glorious revelation found in the remaining sixty-five books of revelation, until in *The Apocalypse*, the final unveiling of the divine purpose is revealed; and there is outlined how all will end that commenced in the *Book of Beginnings*.

