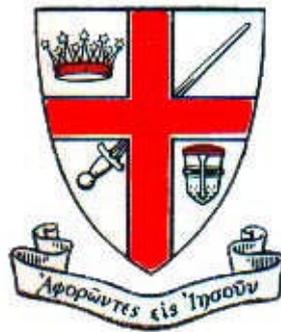


## The Berea School of Theology on Internet (Ecumenical)



## Studying the Whole Bible Series (Old and New Testament)

### Introduction: The Pentateuch

#### The Author(s)

There are a number of views, at least two major ones, of the Pentateuch. The first takes the five books at their face value, and ascribes all of them to Moses. The second view that there are quite a number of documents that gradually came together during the Mosaic times down to about 400 B.C. The first view held the field without challenge until the end of the eighteenth century; and from that date, the alternative theory came gradually to the fore. The holders of the second theory never agreed about the dating and division of the documents; therefore, no more than a fraction of the five books are ascribed to Moses himself. The second theory established a hold on universities and colleges at the beginning of

previous century, a fact that has prejudiced the consideration of evidence to the contrary that has since been progressively accumulating.

## **Evidences of the Books**

Three of these five books contain references to Moses as a writer and recorder. In Exodus 17: 8-14, Moses sets down a record of the battle against Amalek:

“Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. (Exodus 17: 8-14)” *(All Bible quotations in the introduction are taken from the King James Version 1611)*

In Exodus 14: 4 and 7, Moses writes the terms of the Covenant (also chapters 21 to 23), with possibly chapter 20.), reading from a book to all people.

“And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. (Exodus 24: 4)”

“And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, all that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. (Exodus 4: 7)”

In Numbers 33: 2, he keeps a record of the travels of the people:

“And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of the LORD: and these are their journeys according to their goings out. (Numbers 33: 2)”

Deuteronomy 31: 9-12, 24-26 and 28: 58-61, is even more specific.

“And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and unto all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, When all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law. (Deuteronomy 31: 9-12)”

“And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee. (Deuteronomy 31: 24-26)”

“If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD; Then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance. Moreover he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee. Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will the LORD bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed. (Deuteronomy 28: 58-61)”

Here, Moses is definitely declaring to have written down the law the way it is given in Deuteronomy, and has laid the book by the side of the ark. That these are the only immediate references to Moses as author should not surprise us. Twice he is declared to have penned contemporary history, and twice to have written down the divinely given laws. Most of these writing were given by God to Moses in the first instance. If he received them, and by reason of his education in Egypt, he was well qualified to write them, and this brings us to the conclusion, that he did in fact write them. So, the last four books of the Pentateuch, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, contain an implicit claim to be from Moses' own pen. No one can maintain that Genesis does not form a unity with the other four books. If Moses is accepted as being the author of the legal parts of the books, he may also safely be accepted as the author of Genesis.

By “authorship” is meant that Moses wrote these books, while the term does not convey the idea that he received them as directly dictated by God, or in any other particular manner. Now the question of how God revealed His Holy Will through Moses! Sometimes, it appears to have been a direct voice; at other times

it may have been through an inward impression, the still small voice within, which set the divine seal upon the adoption of the laws that, had long been recognised among the Semitic peoples.

As regards the book of Genesis, Moses wrote chiefly as a compiler. Like other historians, yesterday and today, Moses made use of earlier records which were contemporary with the events that they describe. In many cases, he probably acted as translator and interpreter, updating the old stories for the people of his own day, and generations to come.

The general Mosaic authorship is also coherent with a few later additions, such as found in Numbers 12: 3, and 21: 14.

“(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.) (Numbers 12: 3)”

“And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom, Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us: How our fathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time; and the Egyptians vexed us, and our fathers. (Numbers 21: 14-15)”

The account of Moses’ death and other accounts were added to help the reader or just to make the books up-to-date as in Genesis 12: 6 and 13: 7, and parts of chapter 36: 9-43, must be understood in this way.

“And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. Genesis 12: 6)”

“And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land. (Genesis 13: 7)”

Old place names may have been modernised, just as a modern historian would, when writing about the Roman Empire and times, might call the Roman town of Aquæ Sulis by the modern name ‘Bath’. Exodus 1: 11 is probably an example of this, for according to the best available evidence no Pharaoh named Rameses II ruled before Moses’ time, whereby it is known that Rameses II (1300-1225 B.C.) very often claimed credit for the work of his predecessors, and renamed cities after himself. So, it is probable that Moses next wrote the original name, but, when this name had become obsolete, the modern name was substituted for it.

“Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses. (Exodus 1: 11)”

Some have also supposed that certain small additions were made to the laws themselves from time to time, to meet any problem which had not arisen during the time of Moses. The whole law could still be called ‘Mosaic’ in the sense that the few additions were incorporated into the general Mosaic framework.

It would be unbelievable for sound Biblical scholarship to hold that the authentic records of Moses were arranged in their present form during the lifetime of Joshua or even shortly after, while maintaining that every writing or saying that is definitely ascribed to Moses truly belongs to him.

The Pentateuch is generally divided into six major sections:

1. The creation of the world and its inhabitants (Genesis chapters 1 to 11);
2. The period from Abraham to Joseph (Genesis chapters 12 to 50);
3. Moses and the departure of the Israelites from Egypt (Exodus chapters 1 to 18);
4. God(s) revelation at Sinai (Exodus chapters 19 to Numbers 10);
5. The wilderness wanderings (Numbers chapters 11 to 36);
6. The addresses of Moses (Deuteronomy chapters 1 to 34).

As we said before, from the time the Pentateuch was written, the five books were assigned to Moses. His specific writing or compilation is clearly mentioned in the Pentateuch:

*(Repeating the verses again, see above at the beginning of the study)*

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. (Exodus 17: 14)”

“And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. (Exodus 24:4)”

and

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. (Exodus 34: 27)”

In the post-exilic writings the Law or Torah, was often attributed directly to Moses:

“And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel. (Nehemiah 8: 1)”

“But he slew not their children, but did as it is written in the law in the book of Moses, where the LORD commanded, saying, The fathers shall not die for the children, neither shall the children die for the fathers, but every man shall die for his own sin. (2 Chronicles 25: 4)”

“And they removed the burnt offerings, that they might give according to the divisions of the families of the people, to offer unto the LORD, as it is written in the book of Moses. And so did they with the oxen. (2 Chronicles 35: 12)”

The tradition was also supported by Jesus Christ in New Testament times:

“And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? (Mark 12: 26)”

“If a man on the Sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day? (John 7: 23)”

The Pentateuch was also called the Law of the Lord:

“He appointed also the king's portion of his substance for the burnt offerings, to wit, for the morning and evening burnt offerings, and the burnt offerings for the Sabbaths, and for the new moons, and for the set feasts, as it is written in the law of the LORD.(2 Chronicles 31: 3)”

“(As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons. (Luke 2: 23-24)”

Also, the “Book of the Law of God”:

“Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according unto the manner. (Nehemiah 8: 18)”

Obviously, as one may know, the work ‘book’ should not be understood in its modern sense, for several different writing materials were used by Old Testament scribes, as papyrus, leather rolls or sheets, pieces of broken pottery, clay tablets and stone. It is said, that the word ‘book’ has two important usages in connection with the Law. Firstly, it indicates that the material referred to was in written form at an early period. Secondly, it shows the combination of divine authorship and at the same time human transmission, giving the Law its supreme authority, making it ‘The Book’ for the ancient Hebrews.

### **The Wellhausen Hypothesis**

There is real need here to make a full outline of the origin, history and growth of what is generally known as the Wellhausen Hypothesis, but it does not settle the question of the truth or error of its conclusions. Its views from 1876 to 1884 gave the documentary theory its most cogent and popular setting. Stated simply, this theory holds that ‘J’ (c.850 BC) and ‘E’ (c. 750 BC) were combined by a redactor (Rje) about 650 BC. When ‘D’ (the Deuteronomic laws, c. 621) was added by ‘Rd’ (c. 550) and ‘P’ (c. 500-450) by ‘Rp’ about 400 BC, the Pentateuch was basically complete; In Wellhausen’s presentation more was involved than mere documentary analysis. He linked his critical studies to an evolutionary approach to Israel’s history which minimised the historicity of the patriarchal period and tended to detract from Moses’ prominence. The religion of Israel advanced from the simple sacrifices on family altars in the days of the settlement to the intricately legalistic structure of Leviticus (P), which stemmed from Ezra’s era. Similarly, Israel’s concept of God evolved from animism and polytheism of the patriarchal days, through the henotheism of Moses’ time and the ethical monotheism of the eight-century prophets to the exalted sovereign Lord of Israel. So fundamental for later scholarship were Wellhausen’s ideas that his influence in biblical studies has frequently be likened to Darwin’s in the natural science. Mainly, through the writings of W. Robertson Smith and S.R. Driver, Wellhausen’s documentary analysis gained a widespread acceptance throughout the English speaking world. Pentateuchal criticism did not stop with Wellhausen’s researches. Rudolf Smend, expanded a suggestion made in 1883 by Karl Budde, attempting to divide the Yahwistic document into ‘J 1’ and ‘J 2’ throughout the Hexateuch. What Smend had called ‘J 1’, Otto Eissfeldt identified as a Lay-source (L), because it contrasts directly with the Priestly document and emphasizes the nomadic ideal in opposition to the Canaanite mode of life. Julian Morgenstern’s Kenite document (K), purportedly dealing with Moses’ biography and the relations between Israel and the Kenites (HUCA, IV, 1927),

pp. 1-138), R.H. Pfeiffer's S (South or Seir) document in Genesis, corresponding somewhat to Eissfeldt's L (ZAW, XLVIII, 1930, pp. 66-73), and Herhard von Rad's division of the priestly document 'Pa' and 'Pb' (Die Priesterschrift im Hexateuch, 1934) are further refinements of a documentary criticism which had reached its extreme in the detailed dissections of 'P' and 'B'. Baentsch's work on Leviticus (1900), where seven main sources of 'P' are further modified by the discovery of one or more redactors. This extraordinary tendency is given a contemporary form in the works of C.A. Simpson (The Early Traditions of Israel: a Critical Analysis of the Pre-Deuteronomic Narrative of the Hexateuch, 1948).

Whereas the above critical research work and others relied heavily upon the handing down of material by word of mouth, etc., subsequent studies have shown that anything of importance in the ancient world was written down when it happened or shortly afterward. The records were quite independent of any verbal account passed on to later generations. Not all written or spoken material survived, but enough did to provide us with the Pentateuch, and obviously other Scriptures. Any suggestion that the five books of Moses are basically fraudulent in nature, not actually having been compiled or written by Moses, is contrary to the Jewish tradition, as well as the nature of God as revealed in the Torah. The many references to and quotations from them as seen above in this short study, brought forward in the Pentateuch as well as in other biblical books of the Old Testament, and allusions to them by Jesus Christ under the name of Moses, show plainly that Moses was the inspired writer of them, except of course the small portion that records his death and burial.

### **Short outline of each book of the Pentateuch**

#### **Outline Genesis**

<b>1 - 11</b>	<b>Primeval History of Humanity</b>
1 - 2	Creation
3	The Fall
4 - 5	From the Fall to the Flood
6 - 9	The Flood
10 - 11	From the Flood to Abraham
<b>12 - 50</b>	<b>Patriarchal History of Israel</b>
12 - 25	Abraham
25 - 28	Isaac
28 - 36	Jacob
37 - 50	Joseph

#### **Outline Exodus**

<b>1 - 12</b>	<b>Israel in Egypt</b>
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1	Egyptian bondage
2 - 4	Deliverance
5 - 11	Struggle with Pharaoh
12	The Passover
<b>13 - 18</b>	<b>Israel in the Wilderness</b>
13: 1 – 15: 21	The Exodus and the Pursuit
15: 22 – 17: 16	Journey to Sinai
18	Visit to Jethro
<b>19 - 40</b>	<b>Israel at Sinai</b>
19 - 20	Giving of the Law
21 - 23	Social and ceremonial laws
24	Ratification of covenant
25 - 31	Tabernacle and priesthood instructions
32	Golden calf
33 - 34	Renewal of covenant
35 - 40	Erection of tabernacle and institution of priesthood

## **Outline Leviticus**

### **1 - 16**

1 - 7	By sacrifice
8 - 9	By priestly consecration
10	By avoiding priestly violation
11 - 15	By observing purification laws
16	By annual atonement

### **17 - 27**

17 - 22	By separation from sin
23	By observing religious festivals
24	By obedience in worship and true reverence
25 - 26	By observing the Sabbatical year and Jubilee
26	By keeping God's promises and warnings
27	By keeping vows and playing tithes

## **Outline Numbers**

1 - 10	Leaving Sinai
11 - 20	Wandering in the Desert
21 - 36	Journeying to the Land

## Outline Deuteronomy

1 - 4	Moses' first discourse - <b>historical</b>
5 - 26	His second discourse - <b>legal</b>
27 - 30	His third discourse - <b>prophetic</b>
31 - 34	Historical appendixes

## Epilogue

Fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again. (Genesis 46:3, 4)”

Jacob must have trembled at the thought of leaving the land of his father's native land, and dwelling among heathen strangers. It was a new scene, and likely to be a trying one: who shall venture among couriers of a foreign monarch without anxiety? Yet the way was evidently appointed for him, and therefore he resolved to go. This is frequently the position of believers now—they are called to perils and temptations altogether untried: at such seasons let them imitate Jacob's example by offering sacrifices of prayer unto God, and seeking his direction; let them not take a step until they have waited upon the Lord for his blessing: then they will have Jacob's companion to be their friend and helper. How blessed to feel assured that the Lord is with us in all our ways, and condescends to go down into our humiliations and banishments with us! Even beyond the ocean our Father's love beams like the sun in its strength. We cannot hesitate to go where God promises his presence; even the valley of death shade grows bright with the radiance of this assurance. Marching onwards with faith in their God, believers shall have Jacob's promise. They shall be brought up again, whether it be from the troubles of life or the chambers of death. Jacob's seed came out of Egypt in due time, and so shall all the faithful pass unscathed through the tribulation of life, and the terror of death. Let us exercise Jacob's confidence. 'Fear not,' is the Lord's command and his divine encouragement to those who at his bidding are launching upon new seas; the divine presence and preservation forbid so much as one unbelieving fear. Without our God we should fear to move; but when he bids us to, it would be dangerous to tarry. Friends, go forward, and fear not.

# I

## The Old Testament: Genesis

By the Right Reverend Philippe L. De Coster, B.Th., D.D.

### The Bible

This name “Biblia” is from the Greek through Latin, and signifies ‘The Books’. The whole is called ‘The Scriptures,’ and once ‘The Holy Scriptures,’ that is , ‘The Sacred Writings,’ distinguishing them from all others. The advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was the great subject of the scriptures, John 5: 39, and in whom as ‘Son’ God spoke, after a silence of 400 years, naturally led to a division of the sacred writings into two parts, called the Old and New Testaments. The ‘Old Testament’ is mentioned as being read in 2 Corinthians 3: 14; but the term ‘New Testament,’ as applied to the collection of books that commonly bear that title, does not occur in scripture. There was also a change in the language in which various books of the two Testaments were written. The Old was written in Hebrew, except Ezra 4: 08 to 6: 18; 7: 12-26; Jeremiah 10: 11; Daniel 2: 04 to 7: 28: these portions being written in Chaldee or Aramaic. The books of the New Testament were written in Greek (without now taking into consideration whether the Gospel by Matthew was originally written in Aramaic). The glad tidings of salvation were for the whole world, and the language most extensively known at that time was chosen for its promulgation. The New Testament brings out not only the history of redemption by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, but gives the doctrine of the Church in its various aspects, showing that Christianity is an entirely new order of things, even a new creation. Those who form the church are instructed as to their true position in Christ, and their true position in the world, with details to guide them in every station of life. The Bible is the inspired Word of God from cover to cover. Though the word ‘inspiration’ occurs in the Holy Book but once in reference to the scriptures, yet the one statement in which it is found is important and full of deep meaning: “Every scripture is divinely inspired (*God-breathed*), and is profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, fully fitted to every good work.” (2 Timothy 3: 16-17. This places all scripture on one basis as to inspiration, whether it be historical, doctrinal or prophetic. We learn by this

quotation that not simply the persons who wrote were inspired, but the writings themselves are divinely inspired, (Compare 2 Peter 1: 21).

### ***What makes the Bible to be a holy book, the Word of God?***

Three world religions – Judaism for the Old Testament, Christianity and Islam for both Old and New Testament accept the Bible as a holy book, or a book divinely inspired containing a message for their followers. To Jews, this message appears only in the first collection, the Tanakh, a Hebrew acronym derived from the words Torah, Nevi'im, and Ketuvim, or Law, Prophets, and Writings. To Christians, all three collections together with the twenty-seven books of the New Testament represent “The Bible”. The Old Testament contains the historical background to the message of the New Testament. Muslims look upon both Old and New Testament as the historical background to a separate sacred text which embodies their own divine message, namely the Qur'an, a book of later origin than the Jewish and the Christian Bibles.

### ***Is the Bible a book of history, of faith, or both?***

The Bible is above all a book of faith. As such, it transcends history. The events described in both Old and New Testaments, however, are rooted in human history. Only the first ten chapters in the first book of the Bible deal with the question of the beginnings of the universe and the human species, which may be defined as prehistory. In chapter eleven the scene shifts to Babylonia, known to be the place of some history's early civilisations, and to the ancestors of the People of Israel who originated in that part of the Ancient World. The remainder of the Old Testament covers the history of Israel, from enslavement in ancient Egypt to the conquest of the land of Canaan, which becomes the Land of Israel, to exile in Babylonia, and the second return to the Land of Israel.

The overall framework of the Bible is firmly rooted in history. Some individuals and specific events cannot be readily authenticated, although archaeology and such major discoveries as the Dead Sea Scrolls have done much to confirm a great deal of biblical data. For example, there are no precise records of the physical existence of an individual named Jeremiah; but, the prophetic message attributed to Jeremiah is clearly established as the product of the time of the fall of Jerusalem in the sixth century before the Common Era (B.C.).

### ***Is the Bible strictly for the few only, or for the whole world of all ages?***

No. Not any more than God is strictly a Jewish or a Christian God. The message of the Bible is the brotherhood and sisterhood of all men and women under the

parenthood of God. God did not take the Hebrew slaves out of Egypt, given them the Law, and bring them to the Promised Land for their own personal gain and well being. And, the result of Christ's death on the cross and resurrection is that man is reconciled to God, meaning that man, who was estranged and alienated from God, is now at peace with Him. The enmity and hostility has been removed (Romans 5: 10). Through his rebellion in the garden, man moved out of fellowship with God and needed to return to fellowship. Reconciliation is God providing peace where previously there was enmity, and God restoring man to fellowship with Himself (2 Corinthians 5: 18-20). In other words, God made godliness known to humankind through the story told in the Bible. Without that story, humankind would, for instance, still be worshiping idols.

### ***Does the Bible still hold secrets not yet revealed?***

The Bible still holds many secrets as to the things to come. However, the greatest secret is who is God, as this is beyond human comprehension. Also, a great secret, is universal justice, and how does it really work. Here we may have some insights, but not enough. We can continue with the meaning of life, the soul, the historicity of biblical events and personalities, and much more. No book can exhaust the questions raised by the Bible, let alone provide all the answers. One can only try.

## **Genesis**

The title Genesis comes from the Septuagint Greek translation of the Old Testament and means "Origin" or "Beginning." The book justifies its title in three ways:

- (a) As ***history*** it tells the story of creation, of the earliest civilisation, of the flood, and of the origins of the chosen people of God.
- (b) As ***revelation*** it teaches primary truths about God and Man: and with regard to the way of salvation it tells first of the coming of sin into the world through the fall; then of the utter failure of early man to save himself, culminating in the flood; and finally of God's choice of one family in which all families of the earth should be blessed. The fact of God's redemptive purpose, first foreshadowed in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3: 15), shines out from time to time with increasing clearness as the book proceeds. Genesis is thus the story first of man's need of salvation, and then of the early stages in the unfolding of God's wonderful plan of redemption.
- (c) As ***practical teaching*** it introduces us to personalities of profound and universal religious significance, such as Abel and Cain, Noah, Abraham,

Jacob and Esau and Joseph, and by its unforgettable stories teaches lessons of lasting value, showing God at work in human life.

The Pentateuch or Five Books, of which Genesis is the first, was attributed to Moses by universal tradition of the Jews, which our Lord takes for granted and endorses with His own authority: Mark 12: 26; and, John 5: 46-47.

## Abbreviated Outline of the book Genesis

Chapters 1 - 11	Primeval History of Humanity
Chapters 1 - 2	Creation
Chapter 3	The Fall
Chapters 4 - 5	From the Fall to the Flood
Chapters 6 - 9	The Flood
Chapters 10 to 11	From the Flood to Abraham
<b>Chapters 12 - 50</b>	<b>Patriarchal History of Israel</b>
Chapters 12 - 25	Abraham
Chapters 25 - 28	Isaac
Chapters 28 - 36	Jacob
Chapters 37 - 50	Joseph

## Genesis Outline

### Part One: Ancient History (1: 01-11:09)

<b>I.</b>	<b>The Creation</b>	<b>1: 01-02:25</b>
	A. Creation of the Universe and everything therein	1: 01-2:03
	B. Creation of Man	2:04-25
<b>II.</b>	<b>The Fall</b>	<b>3: 01-5:32</b>
	A. The Fall of Man	3: 01-24
	B. After the Fall: Contradictory Family Lines	4: 01-5:32
<b>III.</b>	<b>The Judgment of the Flood</b>	<b>6: 01-9:29</b>
	A. Causes of the Flood	6: 01-05
	B. Judgment of the Flood	6: 06-22
	C. The Flood	7: 01-8:19
	D. Results of the Flood	8: 20-9:17
	E. After the Flood: The Sin of the Godly Line	9: 18-29
<b>IV.</b>	<b>The Judgment on the Tower of Babel</b>	<b>10: 01</b>
		<b>11:09</b>
	A. Family Lines after the Flood	10: 01-32
	B. Judgment on all the Family Lines	11: 01-09

### Part Two: Patriarchal History (11:10-50:26)

<b>I. The Life of Abraham</b>	<b>11:10-25:18</b>
A. Introduction of Abram	11: 10-32
B. The Covenant of God with Abram	12: 01-25:18
1. Initiation of the Covenant	12: 01-20
2. Separation to the Covenant	13:01-14:24
3. Approval of the Covenant	15:01-16:16
4. Institution of the Covenant: Circumcision	17:01-27
5. Testing of the Covenant	18:01-20:18
6. Consummation of the Covenant	21:01-25:18
<b>II. The Life of Isaac</b>	<b>25: 19-26:35</b>
A. The Family of Isaac	25: 19-34
B. The Failure of Isaac	26: 01-33
C. The Failure of Esau	26: 34-35
<b>III The Life of Jacob</b>	<b>27:01-36:43</b>
A. Jacob Gains Esau's Blessing	27: 01-28:09
B. Jacob's Life at Haran	28: 10-31:55
C. Jacob's Return	32: 01-33:20
D. Jacob's Residence in Canaan	34: 01-35:29
E. The History of Esau	36: 01-43
<b>IV. The Life of Joseph</b>	<b>37: 01-50:26</b>
A. The Corruption of Joseph's Family	37: 01-38:30
B. The Exaltation of Joseph	39: 01-41:57
C. The Salvation of Jacob's Family	42: 01-50:26

**Selected readings from Genesis as overview:** Chapters 1 – 2; 3; 15; 27; 29; 37; 41.

In the first phrase of revelation occurs the declaration of the existence of God, whose eternal being is assumed and asserted, and in no sense argued and defined. He is presented in these first chapters of Genesis as the infinite First Cause, the Originator and Creator of all things.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form and empty. And darkness *was* on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light. And there was light. And God saw the light that *it was* good. And God divided between the light and the darkness. And God called the light, Day. And He called the darkness, Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. And God said, Let there be an expanse in the middle of the waters, and let it divide the waters *from* the waters. And God made the expanse, and divided the waters which *were* under the expanse from the waters which *were* above the expanse; and it was so. And God called the expanse, Heavens. And the evening and the morning were the second day. And God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together to one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so. And God called the dry land, Earth. And He called the gathering together of the waters, Seas. And God saw that *it was* good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth tender sprouts ( *the* herb seeding seed *and* the fruit tree producing fruit after its kind, whose seed *is* in itself) upon the earth; and it was so. And the earth brought forth tender sprouts, *the* herb yielding seed after its kind, and the tree producing fruit after its kind, whose seed *was* in itself. And God saw that *it was* good. And the evening and the morning were the third day. And God said, Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to divide between the day and the night. And let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years, And let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth. And it was so. And God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day and the smaller light to rule the night, and the stars *also*. And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night; and to divide between the light and the darkness. And God saw that *it was* good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day. And God said, Let the waters swarm *with* swarms *having* a living soul; and let birds fly over the earth on the face of the expanse of the heavens. And God created great sea-animals, and every living soul that creeps *with* which the waters swarmed after their kind; and every winged fowl after its kind. And God saw that *it was* good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters of the seas and let the fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day. And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after its kind, cattle, and creepers, and its beasts of the earth after its kind; and it was so. And God made the beasts of the earth after its kind, and cattle after their kind, and all creepers upon the earth after their kind. And God saw that it was good. And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over all the creepers creeping on the earth. And God created man in His image; in the image of God He created him. He created them male and female. And God blessed them. And God said to

them, Be fruitful, and multiply and fill the earth, and subdue it. And have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the heavens, and all animals that move upon the earth. And God said, Behold! I have given you every herb seeding seed which *is* upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in which *is the* fruit of a tree seeding seed; to you it shall be for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the heavens, and to every creeper on the earth which *has* in it a living soul every green plant *is* for food; and it was so. And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, *it was* very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. And the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made. And He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He had rested from all His work which God created to make. (Genesis 1: 1 – 2: 3)” (NKJV)

### ***Did God create the universe and all there is?***

Having read Genesis chapters 1 to 3: 24 try to picture the story as a succession of acts or scenes. As you survey these in turn, what truths stand out regarding God and His relation to nature and man?

The Bible’s point of departure is the creation of the universe. The first sentence of the Bible reads: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Why should we believe those words? On whose authority? The easiest answer would be, we don’t know how the universe started. We have some scientific theories, but we are still in the dark when it comes to so-called ultimate questions, and may always be. Recalling someone, one can choose to believe the biblical account of creation rather than stay in the dark. However, the former Soviet physicist Joseph Davydov quite recently wrote a book called ***God Exists***, in which he shows how science in our time has fully corroborated the biblical account of creation. He refers to our current understanding of matter, which proves that something physical can be created out of nothing. He points out to the existence of light before such luminaries as the sun existed. And he makes the case that, scientifically speaking, everything created must have a creator. He calls this creator the “absolute God” who created our “relative universe.”

### ***Why does Genesis start with the story of creation?***

If the Bible is a book of law, order and faith, why does it start with stories about the formation of the natural universe, instead of concentrating on issues of law, order and faith? Most likely, because the Bible is, primarily, the history of the God of the universe, and only secondarily the story of a certain small people (*at the beginning*) in antiquity called Israel to whom God turned to transmit

knowledge of the absolute universal God, which they in turn were to impart to the rest of the world.

On the face of it, the biblical story of creation is a transmitted story, like so many other folk stories around the world. People have always wondered where they came from, and how it all started. Many stories about the origins of the universe and of human life have come down to us from civilisations as old or even older than the Bible. Some of the best known are the Babylonian Myth of Gilgamesh, the stories of Greek mythology, and the Popol Vu text of the ancient Maya. In all of those stories, some superhuman being or beings create the physical universe in which we live, and fashion human beings out of the elements of this physical creation, such as earth, water, and so on.

In this context, the story of creation in the Book of Genesis is another story of creation among many. **But there is an essential difference between the biblical account and all others.**

Most importantly, the biblical Creator “God”, unlike the one or ones in other cultures, is not superhuman, but rather *metahuman*, or beyond human. In other words, the nature of the Creator is beyond any human experience or understanding. One can never hope to reach direct or concrete knowledge of this metahuman reality. One can only experience its creation, but not the creator per se. In this sense, the Bible puts forth the idea of a God who created the universe, but whose existence transcends the universe.

### ***Why did God create the universe and all there is?***

Unlike other stories of creation, in which the world and human beings are created for no obvious reason, or, in some cases, for the gods to amuse themselves, the story in Genesis makes it clear that creation has a purpose and a reason. This idea is conveyed in the words, repeated on each day of creation (*twice on the third day*): “And God saw that it was good.” In other words, the universe was created in such a way that it has what one may call a moral purpose, reflecting the will of God who is not merely an aimless cosmic force or energy, but One that created the universe for a reason. That purpose can be seen in the words, “Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness”, meaning “Let us create a human being in our likeness.” The likeness here is not physical, since God has no physical likeness (as it is made clear in the Ten Commandments, “You shall make no graven image of what is in heaven above”). Rather, it is the likeness of God’s attributes of justice and mercy, which human being must live by.

## *How were man and women created?*

The book Genesis presents the creation of man as male and female in the image of God (Genesis 1: 26-27, 5: 03; and 9:06), man's fall and ruin, his judgment, and his possible triumph in the Grace of God. In relation to man's judgment came the first whisper of the Gospel message of the final triumph of Christ over Satan. "And I will put enmity between you (the serpent) and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel" (Genesis 3: 15). This prophecy was obviously fulfilled by the death of the Lord Jesus on the cross, a sacrifice that destroyed the works of the devil (1 John 3: 08)

Taken from Hebrew theology, there are three versions of the creation of human life in Genesis. In chapter 1, Adam, meaning "person", is created as male and female. In chapter 2, Adam is first created alone from *adamah* ("earth" in Hebrew). Finally, in the third version, God decides Adam needs a "companion or helpmate," and takes a rib out of Adam's body from which Eve, meaning "companion," is created. The first version, then, makes no distinction between male and female creation. Both are created at the same time. The second and third, taken together, seem more figurative than factual. Some may look upon this version as sexist, suggesting male superiority, while others may point out to Adam's words after Eve is created from rib: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. (Genesis 2: 23)" Take this as an expression of man and woman being equal.

## *Are all people descendants of "Adam and Eve", the first couple?*

Human life as we know started somewhere, at some point in time. One could also argue that it started simultaneously at different places and times. Witness the existence of different races whose cultures developed separately from each other all over the globe. No long ago, genetic studies have shown remarkable similarities among human groups as far apart as China and Africa, Russia and South America. It appears that if we go far enough back in time, the entire human race is interrelated.

There is also a moral lesson implied in the first three chapters of Genesis, namely the appearance of human life on earth. There are no superior or inferior races. There are no superior or inferior people. All people stem from a common ancestor, and all have a common purpose. Each person has the right to say, "For my sake the world was created." Each person is as important before the universal law of justice as the next one, whether prince, great genius or a common labourer.

Finally, destroying one human life is equal to destroying the entire universe, for each person embodies the entire work of creation.

### ***Did Adam and Eve eat a forbidden apple?***

This may seem an insignificant question, but it has to do with a misreading of the Bible, which ought to be corrected. The Hebrew text does not use the word 'apple'. Instead, it refers to "the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." We are never told what kind of fruit it was. This is an example of an interpretation, rather than an accurate rendition of the biblical text.

### ***Why was man given free will?***

The Lord God could have created an obedient creature, who did God's bidding at all times and never strayed from the straight and narrow path. But this is not what God chose to do. God created a being in God's likeness, namely, one endowed with free will. This has been the source of both human greatness and human failure. After Eve talks Adam into tasting of the forbidden fruit, God asks Adam why he did it. Adam shifts the blame to Eve, who in turn shifts it to the serpent. It is then that God realises man must be taught to take responsibility for his actions, which can only be done through hardship and struggle. This may almost be the main lesson of the Bible. After 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001, many of us have asked: How could God have allowed this happen? Indeed, no matter how atrocious it was, it was the result of human choice, not divine will.

### ***Why is so much human history compacted into the first ten chapters of Genesis?***

As was seen earlier, the Bible is not primarily a book of history. It is not the intention of the author of Genesis to narrate in detail the history of the world. Instead, the first ten chapters of Genesis set the stage for the rest of the Bible, providing us with a brief summary of the origins of mankind, seen through the perspective of God's ethical plan for His creation. However, here is found the beginning of salvation history, the story of God and man, sin and grace, wrath and mercy, covenant and redemption even in the first book of the Bible. As the Book of Revelation is the climax and conclusion of the Bible, so the Book of Genesis is the beginning and an essential part of the Bible. Genesis is in fact an important book for understanding the meaning of the entire Bible, Old and New Testament.

### ***Cain and Abel and the beginning of civilisation?***

Genesis chapters 4 to 6. Trace in chapter 4 the growth of sin and also the evidences of its power and its effects. Abel died and Cain lived. But what had Abel that Cain had not.

“For this is the message that you have heard from *the* beginning, that we should love one another; not as Cain *who* was of the evil one, and killed his brother. And for what did he kill him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's things were righteous. (1 John 3: 11-12)” (NKJV)

Read again, Genesis 4: 01-09. This story regarding Adam and Eve's two sons, is not so much about the actual two children of the first human couple, but also a morality account about the early stages of human civilisation. Abel is a shepherd, while Cain is a farmer. Here we have the beginnings of civilisation, when man learns how to domesticate animals and cultivate the soil. The two activities are in conflict with each other, as one's flocks violate the other's fields. Disagreement and conflict result in violence which leads to murder, or the destruction of God's work, created “in the likeness of God's image.” Once again, as in the narration of the temptation of Adam and Eve, the one who breaks God's law fails to take responsibility for his actions. When God asks Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?” Cain replies, “Am I my brother's keeper?” Even today, human progress does not result in moral progress. Once again Genesis here makes it clear that rivalry and conflict are at the heart of the human condition.

Abel was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ as shepherd. There is no report of evil about him. In fact, he was hated by his brother without a cause. Abel died on account of his brother's sin. Cain, how hated his brother Abel, foreshadows the Jew, who rejected Christ and delivered Him into the hands of the Gentiles and shed innocent blood.

### ***Noah and the flood: history or fable; and, was the ark ever found?***

Genesis chapters 7 to 8: 19, Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. What were his characteristics? Observe God's care for every living creature.

“By faith Noah, having been warned by God of things not yet seen, moved with fear, prepared an ark to *the* saving of his house, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness *which is* according to faith. (Hebrews 11: 7)” (NKJV)

The story of the flood in Genesis, chapter 6, points to a time of a global natural calamity, when life on earth was destroyed. The Bible looks upon natural calamities as an act of God meant to punish evil. Stories of great floods are also found elsewhere in all parts of the world. They may allude to earlier prehistorical times of great natural cataclysms. During the 1950s, archaeologists explored the peak of Mount Ararat, where, according to the biblical account, Noah's ark landed. Embedded in the ice they found wood fragments dating back 5000 years. This gave rise to think that pieces of the biblical ark were recovered. There is no way of ascertaining this view, but the discovery does give merit to this possibility. Genesis 9: 13, does not imply that the rainbow was now seen for the first time, but that God now gave it as a token of His covenant of promise to Noah.

### ***The Tower of Babel: Who was at fault?***

Reading Genesis chapters 10 to 11: 9, what does chapter 10 teach about the origins of the nations and of their relation to one another and to God?

“Therefore go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things, whatever I commanded you. And, behold, I am with you all the days until the end of the world. Amen. (Matthew 28 : 19)” (NKJV)

“And He has made all nations of men of one blood to dwell on all the face of the earth, ordaining fore-appointed seasons and boundaries of their dwelling. (Acts 17: 26)”

“Or *is He* the God of the Jews only, and not also of the nations? Yes, of the nations also, since *it is* one God who will justify circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Romans 3: 29-30)” (NKJV)

In the story of the Tower of Babel as found in Genesis, chapter 11, the entire human race is concentrated in one place, presumably Babylonia (today's Iraq). All people speak the same language. Civilisation makes great progress. Tall towers are built, presumably the ziggurats of ancient Babylonia. All seems well, until we hear people, who are given no specific identity, say: “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower reaching into the sky, and make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered over all the earth.” (Genesis 11: 04) God decides to punish the builders by confusing their language, so that they are not able to communicate easily with one another, and as a result they stop the construction and are scattered over the earth. Are we to take it to mean that unity and a common language lead to a folly such as building a tower reaching the sky? Did the builders seek to become like God? Did they fail to follow God's command to

spread and fill the earth? Commentaries of this story have abounded over the ages. Whatever the case may be, this story represents the culmination of the first ten chapters of Genesis, as the human race, incapable of living in harmony and unity with each other, is scattered over the face of the earth.

### ***What do the stories of the beginnings of human history teach us about the human condition?***

The picture that emerges from the biblical stories about the early origins of humanity is not very flattering. Quite to the contrary. “The inclination of man’s heart is evil from an early age (youth),” we are told early in the book of Genesis (Genesis 08:21). This is confirmed by the fratricide committed by Cain against his brother Abel (and his refusal to take responsibility); by God’s decision to bring on a flood and put an end to a generation in which only one person, Noah, is found to be righteous; and by the arrogant act of building a tower reaching into heaven. The Bible seems to suggest that, left to its own devices, humanity fails time after time. It is for this reason that God decides to turn to one specific person, namely, Abraham to start a historical process involving Abraham’s descendants, which would lead to a reaffirmation of God’s plan for humanity, namely the pursuit of a world of justice and righteousness.

### **The Ages of the Patriarchs**

Adam	960 years	Jared	962 years
Seth	912 years	Enoch	365 years
Enosh	905 years	Methuselah	969 years
Cainan	910 years	Lamech	777 years
Mahalaleel	895 years	Noah	950 years

### ***The first great Patriarch Abraham, ancient of Israel and perfect model for Christianity.***

The book of Genesis passes in chapter 11 from the story of the race as a whole to one line, one family, and finally one man as the chosen instrument of God’s purpose of redemption.

***“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out into a place which he was afterward going to receive for an inheritance. And *he* went out, not knowing where he went. (Hebrews 11: 8)” (NKJV)***

With the stories of Abraham, starting in Genesis, chapter 11, we emerge from biblical prehistory to enter history. The stories of Abraham, as all subsequent biblical stories, are rooted in historical fact. Abraham is a native of the

Babylonian culture that dominates the prehistorical narratives of the Bible. Abraham was the father of the Hebrews and the prime example of a righteous man. According to the Midrash (Jewish legends and lore), when Abraham was a child, he realised that the idols worshiped by the Babylonians were powerless, and grasped the existence of the one invisible God who ruled the universe. So that when, years later, he hears God telling him to leave his native land and go to a strange land where his descendants would become a great nation, he does not hesitate, and embarks on the journey to the land of Canaan. Abraham had faith in the promises of God. Therefore, he is presented as a model for human behaviour. Welcoming the strangers (Genesis 18: 01-08, he was God-fearing man (Genesis 22: 01-18) who was obedient to God's laws (Genesis 26: 05). The promises originally given to Abraham were passed on to his son Isaac (Genesis 26: 03), and to his grandson Jacob (Genesis 28: 13; 35: 11-12). In later biblical references, the God of Israel is frequently identified as the God of Abraham (Genesis 26:024), and Israel is often called the people "of the God of Abraham" (Psalm 47: 09; 105: 06; Isaiah 41: 08). Abraham was in fact an ordinary person with an extraordinary mission. He was such an important figure in the history of God's people that when they were in trouble, Israel appealed to God to remember the covenant made with Abraham (Exodus 32: 13; Deuteronomy 9: 27; Psalm 105: 09). In the New Testament, Abraham is presented as the perfect model of vivid faith and as the first example of the faith required for the Christian believer (Galatians 3: 06-09; and 4: 28). He is viewed as the spiritual father for all who share a similar faith in Christ (Matthew 3: 09; Luke 13: 16; Romans 11: 01).

### ***Who are the "three angels" who visit Abraham?***

In Genesis, chapter 18, Abraham is visited by three men. In the next chapter we are told of two angels who go down to the city of Sodom to find out about the wickedness of the Sodomites. Since the two stories are interrelated, the three men in the first part have been taken to be three angels. In both Greek and Hebrew, the word "angel" is derived from the word "messenger". So, an angel is often an intermediary between man and God. In this story, the messengers are sent to investigate the evil deeds of men, which may result in divine punishment. The existence of angels (*messengers, also defined as Sons of God, Holy ones, Hosts*) is uniformly presented in the Bible. Thirty-four books of the Bible make reference to angels (seventeen in the Old Testament; seventeen in the New Testament). Critical to the belief in angels is the relationship of angels to Christ. The Lord Jesus was helped by angels following His temptation (Matthew 4: 11); He referred to the resurrected state as comparable to angels (Matthew 22: 29-30); He taught that angels would re-gather the nation Israel at the time of His return (Matthew 25: 31—32, 41). The existence of angels is tied to the reliability of the testimony of Christ. Certainly, an angel is a creature, but also holy and

uncorrupted spirit in original essence, endowed with free will, and therefore not necessarily impervious to temptation and sin. There are many indications of an angelic fall, under the leadership of Satan (Job 4: 18; Matthew 25: 41; 2 Peter 2: 04; and, Revelation 12: 09), but its effect belong strictly to the realm of demonology.

### ***Sodom and Gomorrah – Why did Abraham question God?***

Put yourself in Lot's place when Abram's offer was made to him. What was the motive that decided his choice and how did it end? On the other hand, did Abram suffer any real loss through his unselfishness? What fresh light do the events of chapter 14 throw on Abram's (*later Abraham*) character?

**“For whoever desires to save his life shall lose it, and whoever desires to lose his life for My sake shall find it. (Matthew 16: 25)” (NKJV)**

Do you find indications in the story that Abram (*ham*) was at this time discouraged? He had incurred the enmity of powerful kings and had refused the spoil of Sodom and Gomorrah. How do God's Word in Genesis 15: 1 exactly meet his need?

In contrast to Abraham's hospitality in the story of the three messengers, the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, who lived what is today the Dead Sea, treat the two angels who go down to Sodom, and their host, Abraham's cousin Lot, with extreme cruelty; God lets Abraham know that the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are facing total destruction. Abraham is taken aback by the thought of collective punishment, and questions God. Would God destroy those cities if there were fifty righteous persons living there? And, what about 45, 30, 20, 10? To each figure, God responds: If such a number is found, the cities will be spared. In the end, the only righteous person found in Sodom and Gomorrah is Lot.

Biblical faith is not blind obedience. Since the ways of God are often unknown to us, questioning seems necessary, and is not an uncommon phenomenon. In so doing, one is not rejecting divine authority or even justice, rather for coming to terms with what one does not readily comprehend.

### ***Did Lot's wife turn into a pillar of Salt?***

Fire and brimstone are showered from heaven, and the two cities of the plain go up in smoke and disappear from the face of the earth. This story may well refer to a similar and major earthquake in ancient times, which created the volcanic valley stretching from the sources of the Jordan River in the north, to the Red

Sea in the south. Today the site is the lowest spot on earth, with a salt lake called the Dead Sea. Lot and his family flee Sodom while there is still time; They are commanded not to look back, lest they turn into a pillar of salt. Lot's wife ignores the order, looks back, and turns into a pillar of salt. To this very day, the local Arabs point to a pillar of salt overlooking the Dead Sea and call it Lot's Wife. It is possible that when she looked back fell behind, and was taken by the earthquake.

### ***The would-be sacrifice of Isaac: Why did God test Abraham?***

What may we learn from Genesis chapter 20 – 21:21, of the weakness of human nature, even in a believer, and of God's protecting care?

“When I said, My foot slips; Your mercy, O LORD, held me up. (Psalm 94: 18)” (NKJV)

“Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. Truly the spirit *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak. (Mark 14: 38)” (NKJV)

“So let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. (1 Corinthians 10:12)” (NKJV)

In Genesis, chapter 22, we are told:

“And it happened after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, Abraham! And he said, Behold me. And He said, Take now your son, your only one, Isaac, whom you love. And go into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will name to you. (Genesis 22: 1-2)” (NKJV)

Abraham does as he is told, and at the last minute God stops him from doing so. No story in the Bible is more vividly engraved in the collective consciousness of the Jews and Christians than this one. A puzzle for Jews, Christians and Moslems.

The supreme test of Abraham's faith was his presenting of Isaac as a sacrificial offering. In intention he actually did sacrifice his 'one and only son', typifying the Father 'who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all' (Romans 8: 32). The test was intensified because God had said to Abraham face to face, 'through Isaac your offspring will be reckoned' (Genesis 21: 12). Abraham's faith met the supreme test because it conquered the fear of death, 'he considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead'; and, it retrieved Isaac from

death by what was a parable of the resurrection, in the sense that Isaac was figuratively dead by being potentially sacrificed.

“By faith Abraham, being tested, offered up Isaac. And he who had received the promises offered up his only-begotten *son*, of whom it was said that in Isaac your Seed shall be called, concluding that God *was* able to raise him up, even from *the* dead, from where he even received him, in a figure. (Hebrews 11: 17 – 19)” (NKJV)

Abraham was put to the supreme test by a God we cannot question, and prevailed. So, he became worthy of transmitting the faith to future generations.

### ***What is the role of Isaac in the stories of the patriarchs?***

A lot of questions arise around Isaac (Genesis 26). Why did Isaac so grievously just after receiving gracious promises of God? What did he not do after this first appearance of God to him which he did do when God appeared to him the second time?

“And the LORD appeared to him the same night, and said, I *am* the God of Abraham your father. Do not fear, for I *am* with you, and will bless you and multiply your seed for My servant Abraham's sake. And he built an altar there, and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there. And Isaac's servants dug a well there. (Genesis 26: 24-25)” (NKJV)

“What shall I give to the LORD *for* all His benefits toward me?  
13 I will take the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the LORD.  
14 I will pay my vows to the LORD now in the presence of all His people.  
(Psalm 116: 12-14)” (NKJV)

The Bible moves Isaac between two towering giants: his father, Abraham, and his younger son, Jacob. Isaac himself is dismissed with a few short episodes, which portray him as a passive but impressive personality. He first appears as the willing victim in the sacrifice story. A marriage is arranged for him with his cousin Rebecca. They beget twins, Esau and Jacob. Jacob grew up to be a righteous person, in contrast with Esau a wild and unruly hunter. Isaac prefers his firstborn, for he brings back venison from the hunt to feast on; When Isaac lies on his deathbed, and it is time to confer the blessing upon his successor, Rebecca manages to fool her husband, who has gone blind, and makes him believe Jacob is Esau, so that the blessing is given to the younger brother without Isaac realising what he is doing.

The name Isaac is derived from the Hebrew word for laughter (his mother, Sarah, gave him this name because she claimed God was making fun of her, enabling her to become pregnant in her nineties).

What is the lesson for us from this? As in the stories of Abraham's and Sarah's domestic life, the Bible makes it clear that the patriarchs and the matriarchs, when all is said and done, are flesh and blood like anyone else. One of them, Isaac, is not even particularly impressive. He happens to be Abraham's son and Jacob's father. So, the links between the founding father and the nation builder, is the entire claim to fame.

### ***If Jacob was destined to have the birthright, why was Esau born first?***

Genesis chapters 24: 61 – 25. What light do we get from this portion on the kind of man Isaac was? (See Genesis 24: 63-67 and 25: 28) Contrast Jacob and Esau, as described in Genesis 25: 27-34, in their habits, character and spiritual outlook. What lesson is drawn in Hebrews 12: 14-17 from Esau's conduct concerning his birthright?

“Follow peace with all, and holiness, without which no one shall see the Lord; looking diligently lest any fail of the grace of God, or lest any root of bitterness springing up disturb *you* , and by it many are defiled, (lest there *be* any fornicator, or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected; for he did not find any place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears). (Hebrews 12: 14-17)” (NKJV)

When Rebecca conceives and is about to give birth to twins, she feels that the two are struggling in her womb. When she asks God for the reason, she is told:

“And the LORD said to her, two nations *are* in your womb, and two kinds of people shall be separated from your bowels. And the one people shall be stronger than the other people, the older shall serve the younger. (Genesis 25: 23)” (NKJV)

By the way, before anything else review Abraham's life. What gives him an outstanding place in world history and makes him a conspicuous example to us all?

“For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. (Isaiah 61: 8)” (NKJV)

“Look to Abraham your father, and to Sarah *who* bore you; for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him. (Isaiah 51: 2)” (NKJV)

“So then those of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. (Galatians 3: 9)” (NKJV)

Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Do you see how faith worked with his works, and from the works faith was made complete? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God." You see then how a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. (James 2: 21-24) (NKJV)

The younger turns out to be Jacob, who is born second. And yet Jacob is destined to give rise to the Jewish people, so that God's promise to Abraham may be fulfilled, and therefore he needs the birthright. Why, then, was not Jacob born first, so as to carry out God's promise? Why did his mother, Rebecca, have to cheat his father, Isaac, to secure the birthright for him?

Jacob's life, both in this instance and in subsequent stories, seems to be great object lesson regarding human life and God's ways. Just because God has made a promise, it does not mean man can sit back and let God do all the work, so to say. As was explained earlier, God gave man and woman free will, or the ability to think and make decisions. That makes them partners with God. Nothing in life is easy. While Jacob was destined to become Abraham's heir, the birthright was not handed to him outright. He had to earn it, and so he did.

### ***Why does Jacob see a ladder in his dream? (Genesis chapters 27-33)***

Which of Jacob's wives was the ancestress of the Lord? How does the portion Genesis chapters 29 – 30 show the evils of polygamy and supply an answer to the question heard in some mission fields. Why should we not have many wives like men of God in the Bible? It is said that when inward desire, favouring circumstances and the Divine Word agree, we may venture forth with sure confidence. In spite of all his cunning and trickery, what qualities in Jacob are to be commended?

“A man's heart plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps. (Proverbs 16: 9)” (NKJV)

# Jacob's Ladder

When Isaac sends his son, Jacob, to find a wife among his relatives in Babylonia, Jacob, who, we are told, had chosen a sedentary, non-nomadic life (dwelling in tents), is facing a very hazardous journey. In a state of high anxiety, he dreams and sees a ladder leading up to heaven, with angels of God going up and down; God then appears to him as the God of his forebears, Abraham and Isaac, and proceeds to renew the ancestral promise.

The vision of the ladder is one of the most intriguing scenes in the Bible. It is rife with symbolism. Here Jacob meets God for the first time, although in a dream. Jacob is not yet ready to meet God directly. A ladder full of angels provides contact between his earthly place and heaven. God has let down that ladder. Now Jacob is ready for his mission. The ladder is the symbol of human-divine contact. In time, it will become a ladder of prayers, through which Jacob's descendants will seek to reach God.

## *Jacob's struggle with the angel: Can man defeat God?*

“And Jacob was left alone. And a Man wrestled there with him until the breaking of the day. And when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the hollow of his thigh. And the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with Him. And He said, Let Me go, for the day breaks. And he said, I will not let You go except You bless me. And He said to him, What *is* your name? And he said, Jacob. And He said, Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for like a prince you have power with God and with men, and have prevailed. (Genesis 32: 24-28)” (NKJV)

After years of absence from Canaan, Jacob returns with his wives and children to his native land. Once again, Jacob is experiencing great fear. His brother Esau is looking for revenge. Rumour has it he is about to attack Jacob. The younger brother fears for his life and for the welfare of his family, and is having a most unusual nocturnal experience (Genesis 32: 24-28). These four verses bears a profound message. God does not expect us to simply worship God, but rather to wrestle with our belief in God. It is rather, a constant struggle. Jacob's faith on the night prior to his encounter with his estranged brother was shaken. After all the bad experiences he has had since his youth, could he still trust God to keep the ancestral promise? The mysterious stranger can be understood in various ways. One way is, “Jacob actually struggled with his own faith.

## *Why are the Jacob stories so full of deception?*

It was foretold from the beginning that each of Rebekah's twin sons would beget a nation (Genesis 25: 23), and so it came to pass. Was it the case with the nations, as it was with their progenitors, that the one was chosen of God and the other rejected? Jacob and Esau were both sinners. What was the vital difference between them and between nations that sprang from them ?

“For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected; for he did not find any place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears). (Hebrews 12: 17)” (NKJV)

“I have loved you, says the LORD. But you say, In what have You loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? says the LORD; yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau and made his mountains a desolation, and his inheritance *to be* for the jackals of the wilderness. If Edom says, We are beaten down, but we will return and build the waste places. So says the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them the region of wickedness, and the people *with* whom the LORD *is* indignant forever. (Malachi 1: 2-4)” (NKJV)

“And not only *this* , but when Rebekah also had conceived by one, by our father Isaac (for *the children* had not yet been born, neither had done any good or evil; but that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who called,) it was said to her, "The elder shall serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. (Romans 9: 10-13)” (NKJV)

The name Jacob in Hebrew means, among other things, to follow someone stealthily, connoting deviousness. Jacob's entire career seems to be a crooked road, full of twists and turns. His mother has to cheat his father to secure the birthright for her son. He himself exploits his brother's hunger to buy the birthright from him. His father-in-law-to-be, Laban, cheats him and gives him his older daughter, Leah, for a wife on his wedding night, instead of Rachel, his beloved. His sons lie to him when they sell his favourite son, Joseph, as slave to the Medianites, and tell old Jacob the boy was devoured by a wild beast, and so on and forth.

Why would the author of the Bible, who surely did not wish to put his (or her) own people in a bad light, present us with such a series of uncomplimentary stories about his (or her) own ancestors? Why not at least soften them a bit, make them sound better?

One could speculate for a long time about this, but whatever one's answer may be, it is clear that the author of Genesis, or that part of the book is holding up a mirror to Jacob's life, showing us what human experience is all about. As adult believers, we surely know that we do not live, nor have people ever lived in a fairytale world. Life is not an easy road free of pitfalls.

The path of the Christian is not always bright with sunshine; he has his seasons of darkness and of storm. True, it is written in God's Word, 'Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace;' and it is a great truth, that religion is calculated to give a man happiness below as well as bliss above; but experience tells us that if the course of the just be 'As the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day,' yet sometimes that light is eclipsed. At certain periods clouds cover the believer's sun, and he walks in darkness and sees no light. There are many who have rejoiced in the presence of God for a season; they have basked in the sunshine in the earlier stages of their Christian career; they have walked along the 'green pastures' by the side of the 'still waters,' but suddenly they find the glorious sky is clouded; instead of the land of Goshen they have to tread the sandy desert; in the place of sweet waters, they find troubled streams, bitter to their taste, and they say, 'Surely, if I were a child of God, this would not happen.' Oh! say not so, thou who art walking in darkness. The best of God's saints must drink the wormwood; the dearest of his children must bear the cross. No Christian has enjoyed perpetual prosperity; no believer can always keep his harp from the willows. Perhaps the Lord allotted you at first a smooth and unclouded path, because you were weak and timid. He tempered the wind to the shorn lamb, but now that you are stronger in the spiritual life, you must enter upon the riper and rougher experience of God's full grown children. We need winds and tempests to exercise our faith, to tear off the rotten bough of self-dependence, and to root us more firmly in Christ. The day of evil reveals to us the value of our glorious hope.

Other cultures may have embellished the history of their founders and ancestors. However, the Word of God is always brutally honest. Domestic strife, sibling rivalry, human conflict, all are part of life. Jacob is not an angel. He is a man whom destiny heaves by the scruff of his neck, and tosses across the ancient world, all the way to Babylonia, back to Canaan, and later to Egypt, putting him through many trials and tribulations. He marries two sisters and two of their maidens, and begets twelve sons and one daughter, whose lives are far from calm and uneventful. Out of the turmoil of his and his large family's life a people is born who will go through centuries of great glory and even greater tragedies, leaving their mark upon the human race unlike any other people in the world. The mirror held up to Jacob's life is the same mirror held up to the history of the entire human race, and, to repeat, it is told with brutal honesty, which is the hallmark of the biblical narrative.

## *What is Jacob's place in biblical history?*

Of all the three patriarchs, Jacob's name appears most often during the one thousand years of biblical history. This is because Jacob, particularly under his new name, Israel, embodies the Jewish people. The trials and tribulations of Jacob's life and the trials and tribulations of the Jews from the time of Moses to the end of the biblical period and beyond, are the same. Like Jacob, the Jews and Gentiles converted to Christ from the time of Moses to the end of the biblical period and further into these very days, are absolutely the same. Like Jacob, believers have often found themselves wrestling with their faith in God. Like Jacob, they have wandered from land to land. Like Jacob, they have dreamed great dreams, found great fulfilment, and suffered great adversity. When God says to Jacob: "Fear not, O my servant Jacob, for I am with you", every believer in God and Jesus Christ can hear God talking to the entire Jewish people.

*"Fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again. (Genesis 46:3-4)" (NKJV)*

Jacob must have shuddered at the thought of leaving the land of his father's sojourning, and dwelling among heathen strangers. It was a new scene, and likely to be a trying one: who shall venture among couriers of a foreign monarch without anxiety? Yet the way was evidently appointed for him, and therefore he resolved to go. This is frequently the position of believers now—they are called to perils and temptations altogether untried: at such seasons let them imitate Jacob's example by offering sacrifices of prayer unto God, and seeking his direction; let them not take a step until they have waited upon the Lord for his blessing: then they will have Jacob's companion to be their friend and helper. How blessed to feel assured that the Lord is with us in all our ways, and condescends to go down into our humiliations and banishments with us! Even beyond the ocean our Father's love beams like the sun in its strength. We cannot hesitate to go where Jehovah promises his presence; even the valley of death shade grows bright with the radiance of this assurance. Marching onwards with faith in their God, believers shall have Jacob's promise. They shall be brought up again, whether it be from the troubles of life or the chambers of death. Jacob's seed came out of Egypt in due time, and so shall all the faithful pass unscathed through the tribulation of life, and the terror of death. Let us exercise Jacob's confidence. 'Fear not,' is the Lord's command and his divine encouragement to those who at his bidding are launching upon new seas; the divine presence and preservation forbid so much as one unbelieving fear. Without our God we should fear to move; but when he bids us to, it would be dangerous to tarry. Believer in Jesus Christ, go forward, and fear not.

While Jacob is one of the three patriarchs, or fathers, of the Jewish people, and of all believers in God through Christ, there is something very personal about his fatherhood. He remains in the collective consciousness of all the people as the one everyone can identify with on a personal level, not as a remote patriarch, but as an immediate parent.

### ***The matriarchs and other women in the Bible: what do we learn here about the role of women in ancient Israel?***

The Bible is the Word of God, and therefore an honest book, which also reflects a sexist time in history, which obviously did not end with the biblical period from Genesis to the book of Revelation. However, one thing can be mentioned about the four matriarchs of Israel, Sarah, Rebecca, Leah, and Rachel. They were very active women, who simply did their husbands' bidding. They all played decisive roles in promoting their own children according to what they believed was God's plan. They all stand tall alongside their husbands not merely as helpmates, but as leaders in their own right, who played a critical role in the formation of what became the people of Israel.

While Jacob became the symbol of the Jewish people, his beloved wife Rachel became the archetypal mother of Israel. When the Jews go into Babylonian Exile, the prophet Jeremiah evokes Rachel with these words:

***“So says the LORD: A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her sons; she refuses to be comforted for her sons, because they are not. So says the LORD: Hold back your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears; for your work shall be rewarded, says the LORD. And they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope for your future, says the LORD, that your sons shall come again to their own border. (Jeremiah 30: 15-17)” (NKJV)***

## **Joseph**

Eleventh son of Jacob and first of Rachel. He was the beloved one of his father: this with the intimations given to him of his future position, destined for him by God in the midst of his family, stirred up to envy of his brethren and resulted to be sold to the gentiles, as the Lord was hated by His brethren the Jews and sold by them. Joseph was accounted as dead. He was brought very low, being cast into custody, under a false accusation against him because he wanted to remain sinless. On the elevation of Joseph to power in Egypt he was unknown to his brethren. During this time he had a Gentile wife and children, and became

fruitful. Joseph ruled over the Gentiles, as later our Lord will also do. Then Joseph's brethren bowed down to him, as eventually all the twelve tribes will bow down to the Lord. This is followed by all the descendants of Jacob being placed in a fruitful part of the country. The beautiful and touching way in which Joseph dealt with his brethren, will be repeated in a magnified way by the Lord's tender and loving dealing with the remnant of Judah when they come to speak to Him about the wounds in His hands and to mourn over the way He was treated by them. When Jacob prophetically blessed his sons, Joseph had a prominent place.

“Joseph *is* a fruitful son, a fruitful son by a well, whose branches run over the wall. The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot *at him*, and an archer lurks for him. But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob (from the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel); by the God of your father, who shall help you. And may the Almighty bless you with blessings of Heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb. The blessings of your father are above the blessings of my ancestors, to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. They shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him, the ruler, the leader of his brothers. (Genesis 49: 22-26)” (NKJV)

Joseph was destined to save his family from famine. While he is serving the Pharaoh as chief economic advisor, there is famine in the land of Canaan, and Jacob's sons go down to Egypt to look for bread. Joseph sees them, but they do not recognise him. He does not repay them for what they had done to him, and instead becomes their patron. So, Joseph, who started out as Jacob's spoiled child, has become Joseph the Saviour. Later tradition refers to him as Joseph the Righteous.

Jacob, we are told, made a special garment for Joseph, commonly known as “the coat of many colours.” The Hebrew text, however, makes no mention of colours, but refers to it as a “striped shirt.” Here again, as in many other known translation, we have a mistranslation. The meaning of the words literally translated as “striped shirt” was never clear. Some thought it was a “sleeved garment” (both in the Midrash and the Catholic Jerusalem Bible). Others, a garment with more than one colour (Rashi). And the King James (1611) translation gives us “coat of many colours.”

In the New King James Version: “And Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a tunic *reaching to the soles of his feet*. (Genesis 37: 3)” (NKJV)

This is a perfect example of the many linguistic problems associated with the Hebrew text of the Bible. Even in early post-biblical times many words were not clear, and had to be interpreted. In the course of time, the problem became further complicated because of the multitude of interpretations. Anyone who claims to know exactly what Joseph's garment was, is simply overreaching.

### ***Joseph and his dreams: What are these stories for us today?***

Few stories in the Bible are more intriguing, more exciting, and richer in meaning than Joseph's dreams. The other thing that can be said about those dreams is that there is a certain peculiarity, or "otherness," about them, taking us away from the thread of the stories of Genesis. Beginning with the early dreams, in which he sees his brothers as sheaves of wheat standing in the field and bowing to him, and as the sun and the moon representing his brothers, bowing to him, to his later dreams in which he sees the seven lean cows devouring seven fat cows, and so on and forth, there is a common element running through them: Joseph has his father's gift of predicting the future, a gift which his brothers do not seem to have. Joseph successfully puts this gift to practical use. After his brothers gang up on him and sell him as a slave to a passing caravan of Ishmaelites, he finally finds himself in Egypt, where his gift of dream interpretation gets him out of jail and into Pharaoh's court, where he becomes second to the king. Joseph is undoubtedly one of the most engaging personalities in the Bible.

### ***Who were those Hebrews, Jacob's family, who went down to Egypt?***

While we have many historical records of Egyptian history during the time of Jacob, we do not hold records of Joseph, Jacob or any other Hebrew or Israelite people living in Egypt, later enslaved, and finally liberated by Moses. This raises the question: Are these stories historically true? And if so, who were, in fact, those Hebrews?

Not surprising that we do not have records of those strangers who came to Egypt at that time, driven by hunger. Egyptian history during that period was very turbulent, with foreign invaders conquering the land, and later defeated and expelled. The records preserved by subsequent Pharaohs were the ones they cared to preserve, while all other records most likely were destroyed. However, we do have documentation of two ancient people coinciding with the time of both Abraham and Jacob. The first were called Habiru, a name very close to Hebrew, who wandered through Babylonia and Canaan. The second were called Hyksos, who invaded Egypt at the time of the Patriarchs and among whom the name Jacob in various combinations (Jacob-Baal, Jacob-El, Jacob-Har) appears several times. As in many other biblical narratives, the overall historical

background can be authenticated. The specific individuals and events, are yet to be substantiated.

***Jacob's last words and moments to his sons, as well as his last wish to be buried in the Land of Canaan.***

On his deathbed, Jacob assembles his children and foretells their future. He settles scores with Reuben, Levi, and Simeon, who failed him. The last two, Jacob predicts, will be scattered among the other tribes. He promises the most glorious future to Judah, whose tribe will give birth to King David and will lend its name to historical Jewry and to Judaism. He sings the praises of the remaining sons, some of whom become warlike and others sedentary, giving a special blessing to Joseph, his favourite.

Jacob's words to his sons seem to be a mixture of retribution, accurate prediction of the future as to Judah, and, once again, a show of favouritism to his beloved Joseph. In due time, the twelve tribes of Israel with established its united kingdom, and later split between Judah in the south and the ten tribes of Israel in the north. The ten northern tribes will be taken into exile and disappear forever. Judah will remain, become the Jewish people, and return to its land and its capital Jerusalem, first from Babylonian Exile in the sixth century B.C.E., and then a second time in our time, in the twentieth century. When the State of Israel was first formed in late 1947, the first name chosen for the new state was "Judah". By May 1948, when the "Declaration of Independence was signed, the name had officially been altered to "Israel."

The Book of Genesis ends with Jacob's children taking their father's body to be buried in the family burial cave in the Land of Canaan, and with Joseph exacting a promise from his brothers that he too will be buried there. While the brothers continue to live in Egypt, and while Joseph continues to serve as Pharaoh's high official, the message here is very clear: All of Jacob's sons look upon their sojourn in Egypt as temporary. In time as we know, their descendants will return to the land that God had promised to their Ancestor, Abraham.

The ancestors are relevant to believing Jews, Christians and Muslims. Each of the three faiths looks upon them as the founders of that faith, and they are equally revered by all three: the Abrahamic Faith.

***These all died in faith. (Heb 11:13).***

See the earthly pilgrimage of all those blessed saints who fell asleep before the coming of our Lord! It matters nothing how else they died, whether of old age, or by violent means; this one point, in which they all agree, is the most worthy

of record, “**they all died in faith.**” In faith they lived—it was their comfort, their guide, their motive and their support; and in the same spiritual grace they died, ending their life song in the sweet strain in which they had so long continued. They did not die resting in the flesh or upon their own attainments; they made no advance from their first way of acceptance with God, but held to the way of faith to the end. Faith is as precious to die by as to live by.

Dying in faith has distinct reference to the past. They believed the promises which had gone before, and were assured that their sins were blotted out through the mercy of God. Dying in faith has to do with the present. These saints were confident of their acceptance with God, they enjoyed the beams of his love, and rested in his faithfulness. Dying in faith looks into the future. They fell asleep, affirming that the Messiah would surely come, and that when he would in the last days appear upon the earth, they would rise from their graves to behold him. To them the pains of death were but the birth pangs of a better state. Take courage, my soul, as you read this epilogue. Your course, through grace, is one of faith, and sight seldom cheers you; this has also been the pathway of the brightest and the best. Faith was the orbit in which these stars of the first magnitude moved all the time of their shining here; and happy are you that it is yours. Look anew to Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith, and thank him for giving you the precious faith with souls now in glory.

### **Examination / Written Work**

1. Among all the great themes of the Bible, of which can you trace the ‘beginning’ in Genesis?
2. God chose to be called the ‘God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob’ (Exodus 3: 6 and 15; Matthew 22: 32). What reasons for this choice are suggested by the history?
3. What foreshadowing’s are there in the life of Jacob of the special calling and election of the people of Israel? (Isaiah 44: 1-2; Jeremiah 30: 10; Hosea 11:1)?
4. Study the sacrifices recorded in Genesis in relation to the Sacrifice on Calvary.
5. What features in the career and character of Joseph justify us in regarding him as a type of Christ?
6. Study the names of God recorded in chapters 1, 2, 14, 17, 31, 48, 49 (KJV). In the light of the occasions where they are used, what do they suggest as to the character of God?

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## **Recommended reading:**

Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties, by Gleason L. Archer. (Regency Reference Library / Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA.

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