

# Bible Commentary

## GENESIS 1

Verse 1. *In the beginning.* This expression is not used with reference to time, but to the order of events. It is as if it read, "In the first place—to begin with", etc. The word for *beginning* is KESHITH and has been rendered in the A. V. by the following words: beginning, chief, chiefest, first, firstfruits, first part, first time, principal thing. Strong defines the word, "The first, in place, time, order or rank (specifically, a firstfruit)." The writer is telling the reader that creation of the material world began with the creation of the heaven and the earth. The time or date when this occurred is not considered here. The word *heaven* is from SHAWMEH and defined by Strong thus, "from an unused root meaning, to be lofty; the sky (as aloft; the dual perhaps alluding to the visible arch in which the clouds move, as well as to the higher ether where the celestial bodies revolve)." In other words, according to Strong the word refers to the first heaven, where the birds fly, and the second heaven, the place of the planets. The word here is in the singular but should be plural just as it is rendered in 2: 1 since it is used with reference to the two regions described in the definition. See notes at verses 6, 20.

Verse 2. *Without form.* This is from TOHUW and one word used by Strong to define it is "desolation." The word *void* is from BOHUW and is defined by Strong to mean "to be empty." Thus the expression could well be rendered "earth was desolate and empty." This is more reasonable since we cannot conceive anything that exists at all as not having any form. Yet we could easily understand how it could be desolate and empty, which was the real condition before the Creator began to arrange it by the six days of the creation. *Darkness.* Since darkness is a negative condition it would exist without creative act. *Deep.* This is from TEHOH and means the sea. *Waters.* As the original condition was water the theory that the earth was at first a ball of fire is false. *Moved.* This is from the same word as "flutter" in Deut. 32: 11.

Verse 3. *And God said.* Note this expression used here and on the five

following days. It is the only recorded means used by the Creator to bring about his purpose regarding his works outside of man. His word was all that was used and all that was necessary. This agrees with Psa. 33: 6, 9; Heb. 11: 3. *Let there be light.* Read 2 Cor. 4: 6. It should be noted that light is here a created fact although the sun and other planets had not been created. This means that light is a substance and not the "effect" of the vibratory motion of the sun on the eye as taught by "science."

Verse 4. *God divided the light from the darkness.* Thus it was that God controlled the light which he had created by his miraculous power, thus giving alternations of light and darkness. After the sun and other lights were created he then ordained them as means by which these alternations were to be accomplished.

Verse 5. Let it be noted that just one evening and one morning are mentioned as forming one day. That is the order of nature now. Thus we see that the "six days of creation" were six periods of days just as we know them now. This being so we cannot accept the speculation that they were periods of several years as the so-called scientists teach. Such would require more than one evening and one morning.

Verse 6. *Firmament.* This is from RAQIA and defined thus by Strong, "An expanse, i. e., the firmament or (apparently) visible arch of the sky." It is thus the region that contains the first and second heavens. See v. 20. Also 2 Cor. 12: 2.

Verse 7. Here we see that in the disposal of the water at the creation, part of it was sent upward. This agrees with the reference here given to Psa. 148: 4 and also with 7: 11. The great abundance of water in the time of Noah would not necessarily require creation of it but only the suspension of this firmament, letting this water come back to its former place around the earth. Compare with "the windows of heaven were opened" in Gen. 7: 11.

Verses 9, 10. Having disposed of the bulk of water above the earth, God next brings a portion of the earth's surface to be above the water thus making a place for land life to subsist.

Verses 11, 12. It should be observed here that in God's arrangement, all fruit plants were to reproduce through their own seed and that the fruit of each seed was to be its kind. The theory that "seedlings" are inferior and that seeds will not bring the same kind of fruit as the original contradicts this statement of Moses. If a fruit seed today will not reproduce after its kind it is because something has been done to interfere with God's law of plant reproduction.

Verse 14. *Signs*. From *owth* and one of Strong's words for it is "evidence." See Psa. 19: 1. Does not mean anything like the so-called signs of those who do their planting "according to the sign." *To divide the day from the night*. See verse 4.

Verses 15, 16. Here we see the sun and other bodies were created some four days after the earth. The theory of "scientists" that the earth is a portion of the sun, having been thrown off from it, is false.

Verses 17-19. Purpose of God in making these planets is said here to be to "give light upon the earth," not to make or originate light as is taught. This light was already in existence from the first day. See note at verse 3. It should be further noted that in stating the uses for which these heavenly bodies were made nothing is said about their being made to furnish a place for living beings.

Verse 20. If this verse should seem to contradict 2: 19 as to the source of material for the fowl, note the same subject in verse 22 is worded "let fowl multiply," etc. This shows the verse here intends only to tell us the proper breeding place of fish and fowl; the one in the waters and the other in the air, and not any direct reference to the creation of the first parent. *Heaven*. As a chain for the three heavens, underscore the word here and write: 1st heaven. See Gen. 22: 17 for the 2nd. Also see 2 Cor. 12: 2.

Verse 21. The word *whales* is from *TANWIYN* and defined by Strong as "a marine or land monster." Note also here as in the case of the vegetable kingdom, everything was to bring forth "after its kind."

Verse 22. The word *fill* is from the same word as *replenish*. Verse 28. *Let fowl*. See note on this verse at verse 20.

Verses 24, 25. Same law of reproduction after its kind that was given regarding creatures of the sea and air.

This law is still observed in the animal kingdom and is a standing refutation of the evolutionary theory of reproduction.

Verse 26. *Us and our*. God and the Word were associated in Creation. See John 1: 3; Eph. 3: 9; Col. 1: 16.

Verse 27. The word *man* is used in its general sense and refers to both sexes. That man is made in the image of God as to his body is seen from the idea that in direct connection with the statement that man was made in the image of God it is stated that he made *them*, male and female. Since the body of man is the only part of him that has sex it follows that the image of God refers to his body.

Verse 28. *Replenish*. This is from the same word as "fill" verse 22 and has no idea of a second reproduction as the letters *re* have been erroneously interpreted. These letters do not form a syllable prefix but are simply a part of the body of the word which means to "fill." Let it also be noted that man is to subdue the earth. He is commanded in the New Testament not to abuse this world nor to permit interest therein to interfere with his more important interests of the soul; but, when kept within these restrictions, man may discover and "invent" and use the various properties of nature for his profit and enjoyment.

Verses 29, 30. At this time man was not given the flesh of animals to eat. No reason is assigned for this in the scripture. And if *every green herb* was given him for meat it would appear that the poisonous plants had not yet been created. Evidently they were brought forth along with the "thorns and thistles" of 3: 18.

Verse 31. Everything which God made was pronounced *very good*. And since this is pronouncement of excellence as to the state of created things in the beginning, we cannot accept the theory of evolutionists that they were crude in the beginning and then afterwards attained to a very good condition through long periods of time.

## GENESIS 2

Verse 1. *Heavens*. Note the word is in the plural. See explanation at 1: 1.

Verse 2. *Ended and rested*. Since both these words are used in the same relation to God's creative work we must know they express the same thought. One does not always rest in the sense of relaxing from weariness or toil, but it is just as often used in

the sense of a pause. God paused in his creative work. Attention is called also to the way it is expressed in the following verse. There it says that in the seventh day God "had rested," etc. This gives the idea of reflection and that the work being considered had all been completed when the seventh day came. This does away with the quibble that God must have done some work on the seventh day as it says that on it he ended his work. The complete thought is that he "had ended" it.

Verse 3. *Sanctified*. This is from QADASH and Strong defines it "a primitive root; to be (causate, make, pronounce or observe as) clean (ceremonially or morally)." This shows the word to mean that the day was set apart ceremonially and not that anything was done to its natural character since such a thing as a day could not be said to be either holy or unholy as to its character. There is no such thing as a holy day except as it pertains to what is done on that day.

Verse 4. *Generations*. This is from TOWLDAH and one definition Strong gives of it is "history." Thus the expression means "this is the history," etc.

Verses 5, 6. This is a summing up of some of God's work. The writer is referring to conditions before and after the plants and animals, including man, were made. And since it had not rained upon the earth and since there was no man to till the ground, it could not be concluded that these plants came up through natural inducement of moisture nor as the result of man's labor. And, since there was not a man to till the ground even though there was moisture in the form of mist, there should be a man to take over this duty. Hence the important statement soon to follow.

Verse 7. In this great work God did not merely speak man into existence as he did his other works, but honored the man by forming him with his own personal act. This verse should be studied in connection with other passages in the Bible which will be cited in this paragraph. 1 Thess. 5: 23 tells us that man has three parts. The verse under consideration mentions only two of these parts, the body and soul. Then, as soon as that much of "man" was created God created, immediately and simultaneously, the spirit (Zech. 12:1), thus completing the triune being. Word *breath* is from SHAMAH and defined by Strong as follows: "a puff,

i. e., wind, angry or vital breath, divine inspiration, intellectually or concretely, an animal." Hence, since the breath introduced into the nostrils of this man is the same as that which makes other animals alive, it required that man, made in the image of his Creator, should have something else added to lift him above the other order of living beings. Therefore God created this spirit within him.

Verse 8. *Eden*. This was the name of a region of such a character as to be a place of pleasure. The garden was in this region and thus it was not the garden that was named Eden, but the region in which it was located. Further information on this place will be offered at verses below.

Verse 9. We see in this verse that the fact of being pleasant to the sight did not put a tree in the forbidden class. For, after mention of this fact pertaining to the trees in general the writer says "also" and then tells of the two special ones now so famous. There was nothing evil in the one tree itself but the eating of it would bring knowledge of good and evil. The significant idea in this expression is that it mentions both good and evil. Only one conclusion is possible, and that is that it brought knowledge of evil as distinguished from good. It would have been better for man not to have known anything but good. It was the possession of knowledge of good and evil that was the occasion of trouble.

Verses 10-14. The word "heads" here is evidently used figuratively since a river would not have four heads after having formed a river of stated existence. It might have formed a delta but would not form various heads. But it could be said that the region called Eden was supplied with four streams which is doubtless the thought of the writer. The modern Tigris corresponds to Hiddekel while Euphrates is the river of the same name as now. Incidentally, since we now know the location of these streams we can thus locate the general site of the famous garden.

Verse 15. This verse shows that man was not intended to be idle. Neither was the vegetation of the garden to be miraculously cared for. Then, as now, man was expected to be a worker with God in the enjoyment of divine blessings.

Verses 16, 17. *Thou shalt surely die*. The marginal rendering here is "dying, thou shalt die." The thought is that in

the day they ate of that tree they would become subject to death. That was to be true both physically and spiritually. In a physical sense, in the day they ate they were driven from access to the tree of life, and immediately they began to die since they no longer had access to the tree of life which was the only thing that could have perpetuated their physical life. Then, since death spiritually also means separation, they immediately died since they were on that very day separated from God by their sin.

Verse 18. One reason it was not good for the man to be alone was that, in God's plan for filling the earth with his kind it was to require opposite parties. And also, in order that the creature who was made in the image of the Creator might be prosperous and happy while living on the earth he was to be a social being and this required society which would be impossible with only one kind of human being. *Help*. This means an aid or helper in the same sense as we speak of a worker having a helper. Of course an electric mechanic would want a helper suitable for his needs and thus not one that would be needed by some other kind of mechanic. Even so, the man being the kind he was and with the kind of expected future, he would need a helper suited for his social and reproductive needs. Thus, God declared he would make this man such a helper, hence we have *meet*. This is from *NEED* and is thus defined by Strong: "a front, i. e., part opposite; specifically a counterpart, or mate." At first it might seem inappropriate to have a helper that is counterpart or opposite. But when it is remembered that this helper is for the special purpose of reproduction it will be clear. For instance, it would be of no help in arranging a mechanical effect to place one bolt with another. But a counterpart, one opposite, would be a help. Hence the bolt must be helped by the part that fits over the bolt. And so in reproduction, the principal purpose of the man, a counterpart, an opposite, is necessary to constitute a helper suitable for the man's needs. An appropriate wording of the passage would be "I will make him a helper suitable for his needs."

Verse 19. Since there were vast numbers of these living creatures it would require inspiration to be able to name them. This is why the significant statement that whatsoever Adam called the creatures, that was its name. We

should not be surprised at seeing indication of Adam's being inspired. He was to be a type of the second Adam (Christ, 1 Cor. 15: 45) and so it was proper to demonstrate his power.

Verse 20. Explained in remarks at verse 18.

Verses 21, 22. In taking a part of the first Adam from which to make his helper God caused a deep sleep to come over him. In taking a part of the second Adam (his blood) from which to make his helper, God caused a deep sleep to come over him. It was the sleep of death. For Christ was dead when his blood was shed. The significant coincidence is that in each case the side of the man was opened.

Verse 23. *Flesh of my flesh*. This shows that both flesh and bone were taken from the man. Bone represents structure and the flesh the formation of the body.

Verse 24. From Matt. 19: 5 we learn the language of this in Genesis is that of God and not Adam as it might seem. And in Mark 10: 7 Jesus repeats the same words as his own. This fleshly relation is the original and only Biblical basis of the marriage institution. When a male and female are thus joined they are by that act made one flesh and that union cannot be dissolved except by a similar act of one of the parties with a third party. This is why fornication is the scriptural, and the only scriptural basis for remarriage of an innocent party to a third party. *Leave his father and his mother*. When a male is old enough to perform the marriage act he is old enough, according to God, to leave his parents and become married. Lawmakers who arbitrarily set an age limit for marriage legally, without parental consent, would do well to study the above.

Verse 25. From the ideas set forth in 3: 7 and notes it would appear here that the writer means simply to say that the man and woman had not yet taken any notice of the fact that they were naked.

### GENESIS 3

Verse 1. *Subtil*. This is from *ARUWM* and is defined as "cunning." *Beast*. This is from *CHAY* which has a wide variety of renderings in the A.V. Its outstanding idea is, a living creature. The passage might read "than any living creature of the field." He is here seen to be able to talk with man's language. He is here used as agent of the devil because of his cunning manner.



The devil has possessed superhuman power in the past. See Ex. 8: 18, 19. Here the magicians failed to produce the lice even after having performed the two previous signs. And when they failed this time they explained it by saying "this is the finger of God." Now it is evident that the word "this" refers to the transaction as a whole about the lice and in which they failed. If their failure to produce the lice while Aaron succeeded and if their explanation is that the finger of God accounts for it, then they are acknowledging that their work was not by the finger of God. And if not, and since man alone could not have done what they had been doing at two previous plagues, then it had to be by the finger of the devil. God has at different times suffered evil characters to accomplish the superhuman in order to accomplish some special end of His. See the case of the woman of Endor with Saul in 1 Sam. 28: 12. The behavior and expressions of the woman showed that she had not previously been able to perform the deeds she professed to perform, hence her shock at the happenings on this occasion. This shows that God used this evil woman this time to work a certain result and for that purpose suffered her to have this evil power. And so all the above is to account for the power of the devil exerted through the serpent.

Verses 2, 3. Here the woman truthfully repeats the law that God gave her as to the trees of the garden. This shows that her disobedience afterward could not be laid to any misunderstanding or failure of memory as to what God had said. And yet Paul says the woman was deceived. (1 Tim. 2: 14.) Therefore her deception came by allowing the devil to distract her attention to a one-sided consideration, as follows:

Verse 4. By adding the word "not" to what God had done the meaning of the whole statement was changed. And this was not wholly untrue as will be seen, and that is wherein lay the deception. Since a person can die in one sense and still live in another that gave the devil an opportunity to deceive by playing on the word. See next.

Verse 5. *Shall be as gods knowing good and evil.* See verse 22 where God himself stated the same thing which shows the devil stated some truth. And since a person who is like a god would not be considered as dead, the devil got through with his deception on the woman.

Verse 6. *When the woman saw.* This expression shows that the woman had not taken any special notice of the tree before. Evidently, when God had warned them in such strong terms about the tree, even not to even touch it, she had abstained from interest in the tree as far as possible and thus was taking a safe course. But the wiles of the devil had awakened in her an interest in the forbidden thing and then it was that she saw what had escaped her notice before. *Food, eyes, wise.* See 1 John 2: 16. The apostle says that the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life are all that there is in the world. Those three points of temptation are present in this case. They had the effect desired by Satan. He tried the same three points on Christ in Matt. 4: 1-11 but failed. The record states that the devil then left him. We ask why? The answer is because he had no other points of temptation to use since he had used these three which John says are all that are in the world. Notice that nothing is said about the deception of Adam here. And this is as stated by Paul in passage cited at verses 2, 3 above. He ate merely on the effect of association.

Verse 7. *Opened.* This is from PAQACH and defined by Strong "a primitive root; to open (the senses, especially the eyes); figuratively, to be observant." *Knew.* This is from YADA and in 18 places is rendered "perceive." So the passage as a whole means that they had their attention called to the conditions and perceived or took notice that they were naked. This caused their feeling of shame and their use of fig leaves to cover their nakedness. In last verse of previous chapter it is stated that the man and woman were not ashamed even though naked. But that was because they had not had their attention called to it as it is in the verse here under consideration.

Verse 8. Since a voice does not walk we must take this verse to mean that, as God was walking in the garden, they heard his voice. *Hide themselves.* Since according to Psa. 139: 7-13 and other passages it is impossible really to hide from God, we must take this to mean that Adam intended and tried to hide. But the writer speaks as if he did so. This teaches the principle that a man will be charged with his evil desires and attempts whether he succeeds or not. It is as bad in God's sight to desire and think evil as to perform it. See Mark 7: 20-22.

Verses 9-11. There could not have been any fault found against the man and woman for being naked for that was the way God left them when created. But the knowledge of their being so indicated that something was wrong. That they had obtained such knowledge unlawfully since God did not intend for them to have it. Hence the question that was asked of them.

Verse 12. It may be said that it was like the nature of a man to blame his sin on some one else. But that is just as true of woman. The reason in both cases is that it is according to human nature to justify one's own conduct by hiding behind another.

Verse 13. In this verse we have the truthful statement of the woman. But while it was the truth she was not excused for her conduct. She was destined to be punished for her act as will be seen below.

Verses 14, 15. Much speculation has been done on this noted passage. But one of the accepted principles of interpretation of language is that all statements are to be interpreted literally when the factual context will permit. To force a strained and figurative meaning into a passage in order to establish a cherished theory is as much to be regretted as is any other false teaching. To begin with, this is not a "star of hope" offered to man as is popularly preached, because God was not talking to the man at all when he said these words. As far as we know Adam and Eve never knew God had told these words. He was talking to the devil and it was a threat and not a "promise." Well, it is literally true that a special enmity exists between mankind and serpents. It is also true that the serpent once used his feet for traveling and under certain conditions, such as being exposed to heat, those feet in a reverted condition may be seen. And as part of his punishment he was to lose the use of these organs and be compelled to get down into the dust. See Micah 7: 17. Josephus was the celebrated Jewish historian and certainly understood the significance of their language. This is what he says about this circumstance. "He also deprived the serpent of speech, out of indignation at his malicious disposition towards Adam. Besides this, he inserted poison under his tongue, and made him an enemy of man; and suggested to them that they should direct their strokes against his head, that being the place wherein lay his malicious designs toward men, and it being easi-

est to take vengeance on him that way. And when he had deprived him of the use of his feet, and made him go rolling all along, and dragging himself upon the ground." Josephus, Ant. 1-1-4. Another thing to be noticed, God said "I will put enmity," etc. Now according to the popular speculation on this circumstance God did not mean the woman and the snake at all, but meant Jesus and the devil. But that will not do. If it were said that a man "will put" a fence between himself and his neighbor that means that no fence is there at present. And if the statement that God "will put" enmity between the devil and Christ be the proper conclusion, then the enmity had not yet existed. But that would not be true because that very enmity did already exist. See Rev. 12: 9 and Luke 10: 18. This shows that the devil was already at enmity with Christ before this scene with Adam and that was the very reason he wished to get in his evil work against God's work. And so it would be out of harmony with the sense and facts to speak of "putting" enmity, using the future tense, when that enmity already existed and had for some time. If a speaker wishes to make his own comparisons from this circumstance in order to have a subject for discourse he may do so, but he should not offer it as the meaning Moses had in the passage.

Verse 16. To begin with in discussing this, another noted passage, let it be remembered that the whole verse is on the subject of reproduction and the necessary factors of sexual relations pertaining to it. God said he would greatly multiply. One cannot multiply with only a multiplier. There must be something to multiply and that something must already be in existence. That something in this case consisted in *sorrow and conception*. The first of these words is from a Hebrew word that means pain. So that the expression means that her pain and conception was to be multiplied. This shows that a certain amount of pain and discomfort was to accompany childbirth as the original plan of God. But now it is to be multiplied. Incidentally, this makes us know that all modern so-called painless methods of childbirth are attempts to set aside the declaration of God. Now we are not told just what means God was to use in bringing about this increase of conception. That is, we do not know all of the means. But we can assuredly point to one fact that resulted in such

increase. That is the fact set forth in verse 21. The covering of the man and woman and the continuous requirement of God all through the ages regarding the subject of modesty, is related to this subject of increase of human reproduction. The reader is here requested to read the account of David and Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11. Here is an account of one child that was conceived and born that would not have been had woman always been unclothed. It says the woman was "beautiful to look upon." But had woman always been unclothed previously, the fact of seeing her taking a bath would not have affected his sex nature. The sexes, having always lived in that unclothed manner would have been so accustomed to the appearance of each other that nothing would have been left to the imagination to stir the sex impulse. In that case the only condition that would have urged the male to approach the female would have been the physical accumulation of the male seed that would call for outlet in the mutual relation. But with the female form kept covered, the imagination of the male reacted upon his nature and thus caused his desire for the relation. And hence, further, in the intimacies of married life, the privilege of carrying out these imaginations results in the more frequent desire for the reproductive relation. *Thy desire shall be to thy husband.* Since this verse is all on the same subject we must conclude this to mean that the woman's sexual desire must be subject to that of the husband. It does not affect this conclusion any to say that man is thus given an opportunity to abuse his privileges. One wrong does not condemn the authority of law. The New Testament gives special attention to husbands who abuse this law, but that does not release the woman from the consequences of the scene in the garden.

Verses 17-19. Since God here punishes man with thorns and thistles it is clear that such plants were not created at the start. See notes at 1: 29, 30. Without wishing to speculate on this place it is enough to say that while man would have been required to work the ground for his living even had he not sinned, yet it would have always been a success and no hindrance. Now he must toil in the face of obstacles which would bring the sweat out on his body. *Dust thou art.* The word for dust here as also in 2:7 and other places is from *APHAR* and

defined by Strong thus. "Dust (as powdered or gray); hence clay, earth, mud." So we are not bound to think of it as the dry grains of the earth as is the common idea, but think of it as something of fine grain and also suitable for plastic use. Of this material the man was formed but made to be alive according to 2: 7. Very logically then, when the life leaves the body it will return to its former state and become this dust or earth again.

Verse 20. At the time this occurred no one was living but Adam and Eve. But since we have seen that Adam was enabled to name the other living creatures and that he must have had inspiration to do so (see 2: 19, 20), we can understand how he could here have given to his wife the name appropriate to her destiny as the first mother.

Verse 21. This is explained at verse 16.

Verse 22. In this verse the Lord made the same statement the serpent made in his conversation with the woman as seen in 1: 26. Not that the man had become equal to his Creator in all respects, but in the matter of this knowledge that was unlawful for him to have. *Eat and live forever.* Had man been permitted to eat of the tree of life even after his sin, he would have lived forever, but in sin. It would have been tragic to live forever in sin, hence God is going to prevent that.

Verses 23, 24. Man is now sent forth to till the ground and thus begins the sentence imposed on him in verses 17-19. *Drove out the man.* This explains the statement in Romans 8: 20. In that passage the "creature" is mankind in general but specifically applying at first to the first man. Since God drove the man out Paul says he was not going out willingly. The "vanity" in Romans means "frailty" and refers to his being subject to death after having been separated from the tree of life. And by placing the cherubims in service the guard would be perpetual since these creatures do not die. *Keep.* This is from *SHAMAR* and defined "a primitive root; properly to hedge about (as with thorns), i. e., guard; generally to protect, attend to."—Strong. *Way.* This is from *DEREK* and Strong defines it "a road (as trodden)"; And notice it says God placed the guard at the east of the garden, not merely at the "gate" of the garden as is so commonly stated. But, while the garden was in a place described as de-

lightful, yet there was a way or road leading to it and this entire road was thus guarded.

#### GENESIS 4

Verse 1. *Knew*. Referring to Num. 31: 17; Judg. 19: 25; 1 Sam. 1: 19 and various other places we learn this use of the word is a Biblical way of referring to the relations of the two sexes. *Gotten a man from the Lord*. We do not know how long after the events of chapter one until the man and woman began living as husband and wife. We do know that they were in that chapter commanded to multiply. But without any previous experience or history of others, there would be nothing in even the sexual desire to suggest to the couple that their act would result in offspring. But God has never told man to do or accomplish any result without informing him as to the means. Therefore, we have the necessary inference that when he commanded the pair to reproduce he also told them how it was to be accomplished. That the man had been given a counterpart of himself for the purpose of reproduction and hence this was his provision for obeying the command to multiply. Therefore it was natural for Eve to explain the coming of the child to be from the Lord.

Verse 2. Note that in one short verse we have the statement of the birth, growth to maturity and establishment of an occupation of life. This shows the brief nature of the Bible against the complaint that is sometimes heard, namely, that the Bible is such a long drawn out volume and thus so tedious. It is rather the most concise, yet thorough document in all literature.

Verses 3-5. In this particular place we are not told why God respected the offering of Abel but rejected that of Cain. But other passages will give us light. In Heb. 11: 4 we are told Abel offered his sacrifice "by faith." And in Rom. 10: 17 we are told that faith comes by hearing the word of God. Then, since Abel offered his sacrifice by faith and since faith comes by hearing the word of God, we conclude that the word of God had told them what to offer. Abel offered what he had been told to offer while Cain offered something else. It is not a question of whether the ground product that Cain offered was a good quality but the trouble was that God had not told him to offer that at all, but to offer an offering from the animals.

Verses 6, 7. This passage taken as

a whole means that had Cain been doing the thing he should he would have been blessed of God. And since he was the older of the two brothers he would have had priority over the other. But since he was disobedient, the responsibility for sin was laid at his door.

Verse 8. Cain selected a time when they were not in presence of others to slay his brother. That this was his plan is seen by the falsehood he uttered to the Lord in the following verse.

Verse 9. He not only falsified about the whereabouts of his brother, but offered as defense the idea that he was not his brother's keeper. Many people have since taken that attitude. When they are urged to do something for the sake of others and it is something they do not wish to bother about, they will offer the same thing in one form or another. They will speak as if they will not be to blame if others do not look after themselves. But, while it is true that a man's neglect to take proper care of his own interests will be charged up against himself, it is also true that others who could have done something about it but did not will also be to blame.

Verse 10. *Blood crieth*. By considering verses 15, 24 Paul says the blood of Christ "speaketh better things than that of Abel." That is because the blood of Christ speaks or cries for mercy while the blood of Abel cried for vengeance.

Verses 11, 12. *From the earth*. This does not mean that Cain was to be sent away in the sense of out of the earth for the last line says he is to be a fugitive in the earth. But it means that his punishment was to be produced from or by the earth. That would be accomplished by the failure of the earth to yield to him the expected fruit of his labor. Yes, this same ground that kindly received the innocent blood of his murdered brother would be his instrument of punishment. *Fugitive*. This is from a word that means to be unsettled and not be allowed to have any abiding place. He was to be tossed to and fro and become the object of hatred wherever he went. He would not be permitted to dwell in any desired locality that would have God represented in any favorable circumstance. In this sense was he to be banished from God. Cain understood this to be the meaning of the language of God as expressed by him in following.

Verse 13, 14. The last word of this



passage is used as including Cain and his descendants since no one man could be slain more than once. But he understood that on account of his wandering, uncertain manner of life, the public would consider him in about the same way they would a vicious beast and seek to slay him. But God did not wish to have that extent of punishment imposed on him. See following paragraph.

Verse 15. *Mark*. This is from UWTB and Strong defines it as "a signal (literally or figuratively), as a flag, beacon, monument, omen, prodigy, evidence." From this we see that the mark placed on Cain was not necessarily some physical blemish stamped on his body as is the popular impression. What it was we do not know, only, there was some kind of unusual sign or token placed in his hands for use in identifying him with the implied information to the public that no one was to molest him bodily. And that if anyone did so molest him, vengeance might be taken on the would-be attacker.

Verse 16. *From the presence*. See notes on verses 11, 12.

Verse 17. *Knew his wife*. Consult the references given at verse 1. This merely means that at this place Cain and his wife had intimate relations with the result that a son, Enoch, was born. Since Adam and Eve were the first human pair and to be the ancestors of all other human beings, the conclusion is inevitable that Cain's wife was his sister. Whatever objections that came later against such intimate marriage might indicate, at this early stage of man's existence God would overrule all obstacles.

Verses 18-22. This is a simple statement of the rapid production of Cain's son and grandsons and of their developing into various trades.

Verses 23, 24. *To my hurt*. The marginal reading is "in my hurt." The idea is that a man had made an attempt on Lamech's life and he had defended himself by slaying his would-be murderer. He justifies himself by referring to the protection that had been offered Cain. If Cain, the man so wicked as to be banished from the presence of God, was entitled to vengeful treatment of his attackers, certainly Lamech who is not under any such demotion would be entitled to much more protection.

Verse 25, 26. Note the marginal reference here gives us "call themselves by the name of the Lord." This is sig-

nificant. Since Cain has been banished from the peaceful presence of the Lord it would be considered that his seed could not claim much nearness of relation with the Lord. By the same token, the descendants of Seth, the one taking the place of righteous Abel who was slain, would feel entitled to call themselves by His name. This, then, is doubtless the beginning of recognition of two distinct classes of human beings referred to in 6: 1 and which will be considered in its proper connection.

## GENESIS 5

Verse 1. *Generations*. This is from TOLDAH and Strong defines it "descent, i. e., family; (figuratively) history." The statement means that it is the family history, as to descent, of Adam. *Adam*. The Hebrew word here is spelled the same as the English and defined as follows. "To show blood (in the face), i. e., flush or turn rosy; ruddy, i. e., a human being (an individual or the species, mankind, etc.)."

Verse 2. *Adam*. See previous verse. Also in Josephus, Ant. 1-1-2 we are told the original color of the earth was red. This would account for the coincident of the name of the first man being the same as a word that means "red." *Their name*. Since the writer is speaking of the human species it is significant that the plural pronoun refers to the same common name. And since this first Adam (see 1 Cor. 15: 45) was a type of Christ the second Adam, it was fitting that the name be used in common. This agrees with the idea that both the second Adam and his partners should have a name of common meaning namely, Christ-Christians.

Verses 3-32. It is thought as well to group these verses into one paragraph since most of the comments will be on the passage as a whole. Mention will be made of the eleven lineal descendants from Adam commonly referred to as the Patriarchs. They are Adam (mentioned in verse 2), Seth, v. 3; Enos, v. 6; Cainan, v. 9; Mahalaleel, v. 12; Jared, v. 15; Enoch, v. 18; Methuselah, v. 21; Lamech, v. 25; Noah, v. 29; Shem, v. 32. These formed the immediate and lineal line from the first man down to the time of the flood in the time of Noah. *Enoch walked with God* in verse 24 refers to his life before being taken to heaven. This is evident from the language of Paul in Heb. 11: 5 where he says that Enoch had the testimony of pleasing God "before his translation." The three sons

of Noah were not triplets, hence the language in last verse means that Noah was the age of 500 years in round numbers when his three sons were brought into the world. Also, the brothers are not named in the order of their birth. In Gen. 10: 21 it speaks of Japheth and calls him the "elder." This is from GADOL and Strong defines the word here as follows. "Great (in any sense); hence older; also insolent." But this is not to be wondered at. It frequently happens in the Bible that members of a family will be named or regarded in the order of their importance and not always in the order of birth. As instances, Jacob and Esau, Ephraim and Manasseh, Abram, Nahor and Haran.

### GENESIS 6

Verses 1, 2. *Sons of God*. See comments at 4: 25, 26. From all considerations at hand the conclusion is that these sons of God are the descendants of Seth while the daughters of men are the descendants of Cain. It was not the Lord's wish that the two classes of people should intermarry. But then, as well as now, the will of God is not always carried out by human beings. This seems to be specially true when the animal nature of the man is being entertained. So here they made wives of women who met their choice instead of the ones who met the favor of God. And when God's people marry those who are not God's people there is sure to be trouble. That is a statement of rule that has been and always will be true.

Verse 3. *Strive*. This is from DAWN and defined thus. "To rule; by implication to judge (as umpire); also to strive (as at law)."—Strong. The verse here means that God will not keep up his pleading with them indefinitely. He will, however, continue this for a period of 120 years. And this period of grace was the time when God was still endeavoring to bring the people to repentance through the preaching of Noah. It is mentioned in 1 Peter 3: 18-20 and 2 Peter 2: 5. God and Christ directed the Holy Spirit to inspire Noah in those days so that he could preach to the people. In this way God was striving or pleading with them to repent. But this period of probation was to last only 120 years.

Verse 4. *Giants*. This is from NEPHIL and defined thus. "Properly a feller, i. e., a bully or tyrant."—Strong. *Renown*. This is from SHEM and the

same authority defines it as follows: "Shame; a primitive word—perhaps from 7760 through the idea of definite and conspicuous position; compare 8064—; an appellation as a mark or memorial of individuality." With these critical explanations the verse is very clear. The offspring of these men with the women of strong personal physical character, since it says they were fair, would naturally be more athletic than otherwise. So these men were not giants in the sense of stature, but, as the definition gives, they were strong physically and also, since they were the offspring of parents who were more carnal than spiritual, they became tyrannical and of the nature of a bully. And all this explodes the speculative theory advanced by some that the "sons of God" above meant angels from heaven. In the first place, Jesus says of such persons that they do not marry (Mark 12: 25), and thus would not cohabit with human females. And if they did, their offspring would not be like the ones described in the present passage.

Verse 5. If men had given themselves over to their carnal lusts in the selection of wives it might be expected that their general life would be one of like character.

Verses 6, 7. *Repented the Lord*. The universal meaning of repentance is *change*. The scriptures clearly teach that God does not repent as man repents, yet he repents. Hence we must look for the explanation in some definition that is true of both, at least in some sense. Well, we have that common definition in the word *change*. Whether it is the case of God or of a man that repentance takes place, we must expect to find that a change has taken place. Hence, the definition that is true of man is that when he repents he *changes* his will. When God repents he wills a *change*. Now in the present instance, when it repented God that he had made man on the earth, it means that he willed a change in conditions. Hence he is going to remove man from the earth and in that way would bring about the *change* which is the fundamental meaning of repentance.

Verse 8. We are not told anything about the personal character of the sons and families of Noah. It simply says that Noah found grace or favor with God. Now we know this was under the Patriarchal Dispensation when the father or chief father as the word patriarch means, counted for the rest of the family. And thus we always see

the name of Noah as outstanding in this instance. On this thought the reader is requested to read 2 Peter 2:5. Here the A.V. says "Noah the eighth" while Robinson's Greek Lexicon renders it "Noah and seven others." At any rate, the outstanding idea is that Noah was the one whose signal righteousness brought favor from God for the family.

**Verse 9. Generations.** This is the same word as explained at v: 1, which see. *Walked.* This is from HALAK and defined thus. "A primitive root; to walk (in a great variety of applications, literally and figuratively)"—Strong. As an indication of the general meaning of the word I shall here set down a number of the words used to translate it in the A.V. Behave, be conversant, follow, move, and many others. The meaning is that Noah's life was pleasing to God.

**Verse 10.** As to the relative ages of these sons see explanation at the end of chap. 5.

**Verses 11-13. Earth.** As the earth literally would not be thought of as corrupt morally we should seek for some other use of the word as used in this paragraph. The word is from ERETS and Strong defines it as follows. "From an unused root probably meaning to be firm; the earth (at large, or partitively [in part] a land)." The word has been rendered by country, field, land, nations, world. From this it would appear to be used as referring to life on the earth and especially that part of life dominated by the human beings. *Flesh.* This is from BASAR and one of the words used by Strong to define it is a word that means "modesty." So, with these critical data the meaning of the whole paragraph is that man had become so immodest and immoral that his entire influence was toward the vile. This would naturally result in an abused use of everything which God had created and placed in the hands of man. And this presented a general picture of violence and perversion of the original will of God. And in deciding to clear the earth of these wicked human beings it was just as well to remove the other living creatures also since their widespread existence would not serve any good purposes. Hence God's decree to wipe it all from the face of the earth except that which was entitled to live and whatever would also be needed for the use of those persons entitled to live.

**Verse 14. Gopher.** This is the only

place in the Bible this word is used. Strong says it is apparently the cypress. *Rooms.* From QEN and defined "a nest (as fixed), sometimes including the nestlings; figuratively a chamber or dwelling."—Strong. This word is rendered "nest" in following places: Num. 24: 21; Deut. 22: 6; Job 29: 18. *Pitch.* This is from KOPHER and defined by Strong "properly a cover, i. e. (literally) a village (as covered in); specifically, bitumen (as used for coating)." The nature of this substance is to prevent water or other liquids from going through. The quibble might be made that since God is all-powerful he could have kept the water from saturating the walls of the ark without any such natural means. That is true. But this is just another instance of the many where we see that God uses the cooperation of man in carrying out his great plans. Christ could have healed the blind man without the use of clay and the elders with spiritual gifts might have healed the sick without oil. Likewise, the prophet could have fed the widow without the use of her small supply of meal and oil. But it is the will of God to require man to do something for his own good.

**Verse 15. Cubit.** This word is used several times in the scriptures and seems to be somewhat indefinite except that it is known to be a unit of measure. Most tables describe it as being the length of the forearm below the elbow. From this the general amount of the cubit as used in the Bible is 18 inches.

**Verse 16. Window.** This word at this place is from TSOHAR and defined by Strong "a light (i. e., window); dual double light, i. e., noon." But in 8: 6, where the same window is meant, the word is CHALLOWN and defined "a window (as perforated)." Next let us examine *above.* This is from MAHAL and Strong gives us "properly the upper part, used only adverbially with prefix upward, above, overhead, from the top, etc." Now then with this information concerning the leading words in this verse we can conclude the meaning of the verse as a whole. Since a cubit is about 18 inches it would be unreasonable to think that the verse means to tell us the size of this window. While God could cause enough light to go through a pin puncture to serve all needs if he wished, yet it is not in keeping with his rule

of propriety to do so. But since the outstanding thought of the original word for "above" is upward, from the top, etc., it now seems plain that the verse means that the window was so arranged that it was elevated above the common level of the roof of the ark to the distance of a cubit. Then, since one part of the definition of the word for "window" is that it was something perforated, and since that was the day before transparent glass, the conclusion is that the sides of this "window" were perforated to admit light and ventilation. The length and breadth of this window are not being considered here by the writer. The word *stories* is not in the original, but the words lower, second and third are. And since the ark is the principal subject of the verse we should conclude that the word *stories* is necessarily implied. This will also correspond with the three classes of living creatures to occupy the ark, which are man, clean and unclean animals.

Verses 17-19. Attention is invited in this paragraph to the designation of the things that were to be destroyed to be "wherein is the breath of life." But more will be said on this matter at 7:22.

Verse 20. As far as this verse goes the word "two" applies to the sex pair, male and female. Additional thoughts on it will be given in chapter 7.

Verses 21, 22. Note the prescription that it was the food "that is eaten" that was to be taken in. This implies that some things that could be eaten might not have been so used. This will specially apply to the matter of animal flesh.

### GENESIS 7

Verses 1-3. Here is where we see the further instructions about what living beings were to be taken in. The clean were to be taken in by sevens which means seven pairs and the unclean one pair, and each of these pairs was to consist in the male and female. Since no record is here given us as to what constituted clean and unclean we are forced to conclude that God instructed Noah verbally about this. One purpose for taking these things into the ark is expressed in last of this paragraph to be "to keep seed alive upon the face of the earth." And we will learn later that man was to be given flesh to eat, also would be called on to make animal sacrifices to

God. But in both these uses only the clean would be accepted. Hence the seven of the clean required to be taken in while only one pair of the unclean.

Verses 4, 5. "Yet seven days" and it was to rain forty days and forty nights. Of course this means that when forty days had come the rain would start and continue for that long a period. And we note here that Noah did as was told which means that at the end of this paragraph Noah is in the ark although it is to be seven days yet till the rain starts.

Verse 6. This means it was in the year that would make him that many years of age. See verse 11 below.

Verses 7-9. Comments on this paragraph are same as on verses 1-3 above.

Verse 10. *After seven days.* This was seven days after Noah had entered the ark.

Verses 11-16. This gives the exact date when the rain began to fall which was the 17th day of 2nd month of Noah's 600th year of life. Therefore the date he entered the ark was the 10th day of that month. *Windows of heaven were opened.* See notes at chapter 1: 7.

Verses 17-21. So-called scientists claim the Bible does not teach that the water was over the entire earth. That only the comparatively small portion, the part where man was living, was covered. But the statement is that the waters were over all the high hills "under the whole heaven." Since the entire earth has some hills on it the conclusion is that the whole earth was covered. *Fifteen cubits upward.* That is, the water extended upward from the tops of the highest hills that distance. So whatever is the height of the highest hill, by adding 15 cubits to that we will have the depth of the water at the lowest place.

Verse 22. The use of such words as "nostrils" and "breath of life" and "dry land" shows that only land animals entered the ark. That was because the other creatures were not in any danger from the flood. Had God wanted to destroy the fish he would have used some other means since water is their natural element.

Verse 23. *Living.* This is from CHAY and Strong defines it "alive; hence raw (flesh); fresh (plant, water, year), strong; also life whether literally or figuratively." So the context would have to be referred to in determining in any given case



whether the living thing being considered is plant or animal. And the context in this case is right in the verse because it mentions animal things only. This would leave us with the thought that plant life was not all destroyed. And this agrees with the statement in 8: 11 that the dove came in with an olive leaf. This could not have been propagated from the provisions of Noah in the ark for he had not left the ark as yet. Besides, there would not have been time enough for that kind of development.

Verse 24. *Prevailed*. Means they remained at their height that long.

### GENESIS 8

Verse 1. *Remembered*. God never forgets anything in the sense of letting it slip his mind as is the case with man. But one word in the definition of the original here is to "recognize." It means that God now took notice and was not going to leave Noah and his group in the ark as in a prison. He was now ready to dispel the water as it has accomplished its purpose on the wickedness of the earth so that Noah could again occupy the land. *Asswaged*. This is the same meaning as "abated" in verses 3, 8.

Verse 2. See comments at chapter 1: 7.

Verse 3. *Returned and continually*. Both these are from the same original and the central word in the definition is "retreat" without any specific designation as to where the retreat reached. But the context in chapter 1: 7; 7: 11 and verse 2 here would tell us they retreated to their former places, namely, the deep or sea, and heaven.

Verse 4. *Ararat*. This original word is also rendered Armenia in the A. V. Notice the statement is that the ark rested on the mountains. Since it would not rest twice nor in two places at once we should not refer to the resting place of the ark as on any particular mountain as is popularly expressed. The principal thought is that it was in that country and also that it rested on a mountain. This accounts for the fact that the ark ceased floating a number of months before they left it. The ground generally must become dry before Noah could leave the ark.

Verse 5. The waters continued to abate after the ark rested on a mountain and by the first day of tenth month the mountain tops were seen.

This is from RAAH and defined by Strong "a primitive root; to see, literally or figuratively." From verses 7, 11 it indicates that Noah had not yet seen the ground. Therefore we would be left with the figurative part of the definition of the word and would read it as if it said the tops of the mountains were visible without regard to whether any human actually saw them.

Verse 6. *Opened the window*. See comments at chapter 6: 16. If the window was made as there described it would be clear as to how Noah would open this place. It would be on the side of the window which would be the natural place to make an outlet.

Verse 7. *To and fro*. The last of these words is from SHUWB and thus defined by Strong: "a primitive root; to turn back (hence, away) transitively or intransitively, literally or figuratively, (not necessarily with the idea of return to the starting point): generally to retreat." Since the word does not necessarily mean that the returning was to the place of starting we would not get the idea the raven returned to the ark. This would be a strange conduct for Noah to have the raven leaving the ark and then returning to it, and keeping this up till the waters had dried up. In that case no occasion would have been present for sending the dove on this reconnaissance mission. But the raven, being tireless on the wing, continued its flight until the waters were abated. This made it necessary for Noah to send out the other bird.

Verses 8, 9. The raven not having reappeared Noah makes another inquiry by the use of the dove. The statements in this paragraph do not contradict that of verse 5. The tops of the mountains would not necessarily be in many places and thus not close enough to the ark to provide a resting place for the dove. Therefore, not being such a hardy bird, would be compelled to return to the ark.

Verses 10-12. The olive leaf in the mouth of the dove would not mean that the earth was entirely dried, only abated. And the existence of the olive leaf indicates that vegetation was not to be destroyed by the flood. See comments on this point at 7: 23. The failure of the dove to return after the third flight showed that the earth was practically clear of the flood.

Verse 13. *Covering*. This is from

MIKCEH and Strong defines it "a covering, i. e., weather-boarding." The nearest we can safely come to the meaning of this statement is that at some place accessible for Noah a part used for protection against the weather was so constructed that it could be removed. It could not have been the same as the window, for, had it been so, he could have looked to see the "face of the ground" at the time he sent the birds out. So, recalling that God shut him in before the waters began to come (see 7: 16), it is a necessary inference that he would not be privileged to open any part of the exterior of the ark until God so directed him. That was done here.

Verse 14. The earth was dry in the year 601 of Noah's life, second month, twenty-seventh day. In year 600, second month, 17th day of his life the flood started according to 7: 11, and according to 7: 4, 10 Noah entered the ark seven days before the rain started. Then he entered the ark the 10th day of second month of 600th year of his life and left the ark 27th day of second month of 601st year. Therefore he was in the ark a year and 17 days.

Verses 15-19. Nothing new in this paragraph but it is well to note again that only things with flesh or that crept are mentioned which again reminds us that vegetation was not all to be destroyed by the flood.

Verse 20. This is the first time that an altar is mentioned by name although we know that one was used by Abel since he offered an acceptable sacrifice. Note also that the clean creatures were the ones offered which shows us the propriety of his having taken a greater number of the clean than the unclean into the ark.

Verse 21. *From his youth.* Attention is called to the point in human life that evil is charged against individuals. This opposes the doctrine of fatalists who teach that mankind is depraved from birth.

Verse 22. A popular speculation of prophecy is that the time is to be when we can not tell difference between summer and winter. This verse declares that the usual seasons will continue as long as the earth stands. The existence of the famine in Egypt and other places does not contradict this verse. It does not say that no famine will ever come. It only says that the seasons and the planting and reaping times will always recur. That

was true in spite of those local famines. Furthermore, while it was said that the famine in the days of Joseph affected the whole earth, that was a miraculous famine and provision was made for it by an overproduction through the seven previous years.

## GENESIS 9

Verse 1. This verse is a repetition of the command given the first man and wife as it is written in 1: 28. The command to replenish the earth, not merely a certain locality, would require that they spread abroad as reproduction progressed. And this will explain some of the mistakes made by the people recorded in 11th chapter.

Verse 2. The fall of man did not alter the condition of subjugation of the lower orders of creation under man as has been taught. For this is practically the same as was declared in the first chapter. Besides, Jas. 3: 7 states that such subjugation had taken place in the time of that writer. The only way that a member of the lower order can overcome the human is through its superior physical strength, while man does not effect his control over the beasts by his physical strength but by his intellect. This is one unanswerable argument in favor of the complete superiority of man in spite of the theory of evolutionists.

Verse 3. This is the first instance that we read of the privilege given to man to eat the flesh of animals. We have no information in the scriptures as to why this is.

Verses 4, 5. Whether it be man or beast, the blood is the life. This forms the basis or a part of the basis for various commandments. The first one mentioned is in the paragraph under consideration. It is even stated here that vengeance is to be had on beasts that cause the death of a man. This law was made still more specific as seen in Ex. 21: 28. And the executioner is pointed out here to be the "man's brother." Of course it will be seen in numerous instances as we pursue our study of the Bible that a man's brother is not confined to the strict fleshly relation usually meant in this expression, but whoever is his nearest kin.

Verse 6. Here we have the law of capital punishment proclaimed for the first time. This law has never been repealed by the Lord. Not only does God here state that said punishment

is to be meted out to a murderer but no other punishment was ever given by divine law for said crime. It is a well established principle of justice that all law must have some motive for its existence. And as long as that basis is in existence that law is in force. In this case the basis for the law is the fact that man is made in the image of God. This is unavoidably set forth by the word *for* in direct connection with the law. If this capital law had been based on some later date, then the law would not be permanent. But it is as true as it ever was that man is still made in the image of God. If positive proof in the scriptures were thought necessary it will be seen in the following: 1 Cor. 11: 7; Col. 3: 10; Jas. 3: 9. Since then it is still true that man is made in the image of God it is still the law of God that the murderer should be put to death. Not only so, but this punishment is to be administered by *man*, not God. It is so stated in the verse under consideration. It is claimed that capital punishment was under the Old Testament law but not in force now. In the first place, this punishment was decreed long before the law of Moses was given. Besides, it is not a law that is of the character to be affected by any certain dispensation of time or religion. But even granting the above argument (?), it still will not hold against the plain teaching found in the New Testament. In Romans 13: 4 Paul speaks about an officer of the law of the government and calls him the minister of God. Here he states that "he beareth not the sword in vain." Now any one knows that there is only one use for the sword and that is to take life. And yet this very officer who bears the sword to take life is said by the apostle to be a minister of God. Therefore Paul here endorses the law of capital punishment. Furthermore, in Acts 25: 11 this same Paul uses these words: "If I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die." Now if Paul had not favored capital punishment he could not have referred to the possibility of doing any thing worthy of death. And even had he not endorsed such a form of punishment and they were determined to administer it to him, he could have said that he could not prevent it. But he could have refused his submission. But he did not merely say that he would expect to die if they decided he was worthy, but

said he would not refuse to die. That is the same as consenting to it beforehand, provided he had done anything worthy of death. Therefore it is plainly taught even in the New Testament that capital punishment is God's form of punishment for a murderer.

Verse 8. See comments at verse 1.

Verses 9-17. These verses are grouped into one paragraph because they have to do with one subject, that of the covenant between God and man never again to bring another destruction by water. And the word that is the center of controversy is the word *set*. The question is whether God here created the rainbow for the first time or that it had been already in existence but used here for the first time for the special purpose stated. I am sure the former is the correct view and shall give my reasons. First, I shall give the original word which is *NATHAN* and defined thus: "a primitive root; to give, used with great latitude of application (put, make, etc.)"—Strong. Among the different words in the A. V. used to translate it are the following: appoint, 11 times; give, 1023 times; make, 108 times; set, 101 times; yield, 14 times. Some of these words indicate the thought of its being used for this special purpose while others indicate that of its being made or created for the purpose. This also agrees with Strong's definition which admits both put and make. Therefore, the subject must be considered from the standpoint of logical reasoning. To insist that the rainbow was already in existence because it is a law of nature is to say that God had to establish all the law of nature at the same time. But that would be assuming the very point in controversy. We might as well argue that thorns and thistles were created at the same time with all other plants since they are a product today of nature. And yet we know from chapter 3: 17, 18 that they were not created until after the first sin of man. Again, it is suggested that it had not rained before this time and thus the bow, while a natural appearance now was something new at the time of Noah. But in that case the cloud would also have been something new. Yet the language indicates that the cloud was already a phenomenon that had been seen before. Notice it says, "when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud." Had the whole thing been unseen before it

would have called for a statement something as follows: "I will create a cloud and also a bow so that you may remember my covenant not to destroy the earth again by a flood." But if the cloud was created so as to bring the bow, then by not bringing the cloud at all, no need would have existed for a sign of assurance against a flood, for nothing would have been in their sight to even suggest the possibility of a flood. And if no cloud had existed as yet and God had kept the vegetation alive through some miraculous application of moisture, then what call was there for the changing of his plan?

Verses 18, 19. Mention is made here of the fact that Ham was the father of Canaan. This doubtless is given to the reader as a "tip" for the coming importance of this man.

Verses 20-23. See notes at 2: 25, 3: 7; 3: 21. From those instances it can be known what had become the established principle of modesty as to the body of the male as well as the female. Thus it was considered improper to take advantage of one's shameful exposure of himself. The mere fact that Ham saw the condition of his father as one might have done unavoidably was not what condemned him. But the first definition of the word *NAGAD* which is the word for "told" is "a primitive root; properly to front, i. e., stand boldly out opposite"—Strong. And this definition would evidently be apt in this case since Ham could have taken the same precautions of modesty that his brothers did. But he did not and only went to them with the story after having left his father's shameful condition unchanged. This conduct, which was in defiance of the principle of modesty that God set forth in the case of Adam, doubtless was what brought upon him and his descendants the terrible curse which soon follows.

Verse 24. The fact that enough time has passed since coming out of the ark for grapes to grow and the juice be allowed to ferment is another example of the brevity of the Biblical accounts. And no blame seems to be attached to Noah for having become so drunken from it that he was in the sleep or stupor caused by the wine. No teaching had yet been given on the subject that we know of. Furthermore, since he was in his tent, the place of his own privacy, he could not be justly accused of complete indifference in the matter. At least, the most

that can safely be said that the circumstances justify is that he was allowing himself to be more careless than he would have done, even though he is in a place where he had a right to be, and this was because of the wine. And all of this was no reason for Ham's conduct which not only showed disrespect for his father, but irreverence for the teaching of God in the example of the first man.

Verse 25. This is under the Patriarchal Dispensation in which the father of the family represented the authority of God. His predictions and instructions were therefore inspired. (See on this point 20: 7.) Therefore we are to take the statements he made here as inspired. Note also that nothing is said directly about Ham but instead it was about his descendants as represented coming through his most prominent son which was Canaan. *Brethren*. This is from *ACH* and defined "a primitive root; a brother (used in the widest sense of literal relationship and metaphorical affinity or resemblance)"—Strong. Thus we are to understand Noah to mean those nations of the world which, like Canaan, came from a common stock, Noah, who is now the sole remaining head of the races to follow. *Servant of servants*. A glance at next chapter will show us that the inferior nations sprang from Canaan including the people called Canaanites and Sodomites and also related to the Ethiopians and other African tribes. The prediction of Noah is that the descendants of Ham will be seen in the attitude of servitude toward other races. Present day conditions support this conclusion as may be observed at every prominent instance of the subjugation and servile demeanor of the Negro.

Verses 26, 27. Shem became the ancestor of the Jewish people while Japheth came to represent the better grades of the nations generally referred to as Gentiles. And the prediction in verse 27 is significant. For fifteen hundred years the Gentiles were shut out from the society of the Jews in their religious relationship. But at last the barrier was taken down and both Jews and Gentiles (descendants of Japheth and Shem) came together. See Eph. 2: 13, 14; 3: 6.

Verse 28, 29. This is simply a brief summing up of the great life of a great man who outlived the first man by twenty years.



## GENESIS 10

Verse 1. *Generations*. For the definition of this word see at 2: 4. The great point of interest in this whole chapter is that it gives prophetically as well as historically, the names of the principal nations that came from Noah. Some of the names came to have other forms than those given here which may be discovered by reading secular history. The reader is recommended to read a volume by George Rawlinson on this matter. The title of the volume is *Origin of Nations*. In this work the author traces, through dependable history, the origin of various nations and shows them to have started from the very sources set forth in this chapter. It is a strong showing for the truth of the statements of Moses and is helpful for the instruction of the student of Holy Writ. It is not questioned by lovers of the Bible as to whether the narratives therein are true. Yet it is wholesome reading to find that whenever secular history deals with subject matter presented also in the Bible that it always corroborates that divine volume. The student is therefore advised to procure said treatise for this chapter.

Verse 2. The modern names that correspond to most of the names in this verse will here be subjoined to them. This information is based on the History of Rawlinson referred to in previous paragraph. *Gomer*—Celts. *Magog*—Slavs. *Javan*—Greek. *Madai*—Medes. *Tiras*—German.

Verses 3-5. *Gentiles* and *nations*. Both these words are from *gor* and this word has been rendered in the A. V. as follows. Gentile, 30 times; heathen, 142; nation, 373; people, 11. From this it should be understood that the word Gentile does not always denote the opposite of Jew as is so generally thought. There were Gentiles before any Jew was known. But because of the wide latitude of meaning of the word, after there did come a people restricted to one common head and which came to be called Jews, then the term Gentiles was to be understood as being any of the peoples of the earth outside the Jews.

Verses 6, 7. The name *Cush* is from the same Hebrew word as Ethiopia. Therefore, the people referred to as the sons of Cush, and the Ethiopians, are the same. *Mizraim*. This means "upper and lower Egypt." Therefore the people of that area are meant

when the name *Mizraim* is named. *Canaan*. From this man came the people forming one of the most noted heathen nations of the country west of the Jordan and generally referred to in terms of reproach.

Verses 8, 9. Although verse 7 above starts out with "And the sons of Cush," with a number of names following, yet that of Nimrod is not mentioned. Evidently it was reserved for special mention which we have in the present paragraph. This was because he became noted in history for two facts. He became a mighty hunter before the Lord, and the other is in the following verse.

Verse 10. *Babel*. This is from the same word as Babylon and is defined as follows: "Confusion; Babel (i. e., Babylon), including Babylonia and the Babylonian empire"—Strong. The fact that Nimrod was the founder of the famous community here named explains the prominence given him in this and preceding paragraph. *Shinar*. This is the name of a plain in the region of Babylonia.

Verse 11. *Asshur*. He was the founder of the Assyrian Empire with its capital at Nineveh. This power became an enemy of Babylon. But when it reached its height a mighty officer by name Nabopolassar (father of Nebuchadnezzar), revolted from his lord and founded the later Babylonian Empire. See Myers' *Ancient History*, pp. 66, 72.

Verses 12-14. The chief reason for calling attention to this passage is that Philistim is mentioned, and he was the founder of the Philistines.

Verses 15-20. Principal name mentioned in this paragraph is *Jebusite*. By reference to Josh. 15: 63 we learn this was a name for the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Verses 21-31. *Eber*. According to Josephus, Ant. 1-6-4, this name came to be the origin of the word Hebrews which is one of the names applied to the people of the Jews.

Verse 32. By beginning and ending this chapter with a verse that cites the reader to the family history of Noah, the importance of that piece of history is emphasized. I have not said anything special about many of the names recorded in this chapter. This is not because I don't think they had any importance, for they did or else they would not have been given space in a book as concise as the Bible. But

their importance to us is not always shown and hence nothing much can be said of them without speculation.

### GENESIS 11

Verse 1. *Language.* This is from SAPHAI and defined "the lip (as a natural boundary); by implication, language"—Strong. *Speech.* This is from DABAR and defined as "a word; by implication a matter (as spoken of) or thing; adverbially, a cause"—Strong. Thus the two words used together as they are in this verse have almost the same meaning. Yet the fact of their both being used together calls our attention to a special idea in the definition of the latter one, that of "adverbially, a cause." This means that the one "lip" spoken of signified that not only did the people use the one language, but they were interested in one cause. That cause will appear in a statement and scheme soon to follow.

Verse 2. *From the east.* The marginal reading here gives us "eastward." Not much importance is attached to this distinction, yet the marginal theory has something worth considering. A look at the map would show the region of Ararat, the place where Noah disembarked, as being more westward than otherwise, of the plain of Shinar, the place where the events of the present actions took place. And the naming of Shinar as the place of present events connects it with the statements in 10: 9-11. It is noteworthy that Nimrod was the founder of Babel. This was stated in previous chapter as a related fact of Nimrod although the work was not done until the present chapter. And it is worthy of note that Nimrod, the mighty hunter, and founder of the great city and people of Babylon, was a part of the family "tree" of Ham.

Verse 3. *Burn them thoroughly.* The student of history and geography will learn that brick made and used in the south countries, such as Egypt and in the south parts of the U. S. were not always burned. Instead, they were made into the form of adobe. This was permissible because of the small amount of rainfall there. It would not necessarily be different in seasons in the place where people were now pausing. But the fact of their intending to build a tower of such great height would make it necessary to burn the brick in order to withstand the physical pressure exerted on them. *Shime.* This is from

CHEMAR and defined as "bitumen"—Strong. It was of the nature of asphalt except of somewhat harder nature.

Verse 4. *Unto heaven.* These people did not know anything about "heaven" as the abode of God for that region is not visible to the natural eye and no one would ever think of trying to reach it by a material means. But the reader is asked to consult notes at 1: 6, 20 and see the meaning of this word as used regarding the material universe. The sky or atmosphere was the place these people had in mind. Their idea was to build a tower so high that, as a boy might exclaim regarding the height of his kite, reached up to the sky. Their motives for such a scheme are given in latter part of the verse. They wanted to make a name for themselves, and also wished to avoid being scattered over the earth. But in this last motive they thought to contravene the command of God as given in 1: 28 and repeated to Noah in 9: 1. For it would be impossible to fill the earth with their kind unless they spread out over the earth.

Verses 5, 6. *Lord came down.* God does not personally come away from the heaven of his dwelling place. But when it is said that he goes or comes to places on this earth, it means he is represented by an angel. See 18: 21 where it says of the Lord "I will go down now" in reference to the report of the wickedness of Sodom. This was done through the angels as will be seen in 19: 1. And thus in the case now considered, God proposes to visit the place of this rebellion through his divine representative. And all this is in keeping with the principle of God's dealings with man. He does not propose to know that man fears him until it is shown by his works. See 22: 12. On the same principle of justice, he will not accuse man of wrong doing until the case has been investigated and then decided upon testimony. *People is one.* Here is a divine tribute to the strength of unity. As long as people are united in their aims and works they are encouraged to succeed. This is indicated by the statement in the close of this paragraph. And it is no less true today that unity will accomplish what cannot be accomplished otherwise. For this consideration compare John 17: 21.

Verse 7. *Us.* For this see note at 1: 26. *Confound their language.* The

first word in this citation is from a word that means "to mix." The result of mixing their language was to put an end to their scheme. It is another principle of fact and truth that is acknowledged all through the sacred teachings. If all of God's people speak the same thing they will be able to accomplish the work God requires. Hence the command that they be of the same mind and judgment. The reader is earnestly requested to consult the following. Rom. 12: 16; 1 Cor. 1: 10; Rom. 15: 6.

Verses 8, 9. This is one instance where confusion was a good thing. It is always right to confuse evil doers in their evil attempts. And here is the historic circumstance that gives us the name and significance of Babel or Babylon. And hence the reason for referring to the confused condition of the religious world as Babylon.

Verses 10-26. This large number of verses are thus grouped on the same principle as was done in chapter 5. The importance of the names mentioned is not ignored but as it is another place where the family history (designated by the word *generations*) is the burden of the passage, we will here be concerned chiefly in pointing out the place where each name is recorded that forms the family tree. This will now be done by naming the verse and the man in couplets. Shem and Arphaxed; 10. Salah; 12. Eber; 14. Peleg; 16. Reu; 18. Serug; 20. Nahor; 22. Tereh; 24. Abram; 26. Abram is mentioned first of the three sons of Terah because of his importance. He was not the oldest. In verse 26 Terah was 70 when he became a father. But he was 205 when he died according to verse 32 below. And that was the same time that Abram came into Canaan at which time he was 75 according to 12: 4. To sum up, if Abram was 75 when his father was 205, then Terah was 205 less 75, or 130 when Abram was born. Therefore Abram was not the oldest of Terah's sons.

Verses 27, 28. *Ur of the Chaldees*. The exact location of this place is somewhat uncertain. Stephen says (Acts 7: 2) that it was in Mesopotamia that Abram was dwelling when God appeared to him. This word means "between the rivers" and refers to the region between the two most important rivers there, the Euphrates and Tigris. But this was so extensive that a definite point as to

geography would be hard to determine. But the Chaldees was a term that had reference often to a colorful race of people and whose influence was in evidence throughout the greater part of the land of "the East." Hence we should satisfy ourselves with the surety that Abram's native land was east of the great river Euphrates. Note in this paragraph that Haran, father of Lot, died in his native land. This will account for Abram's taking his nephew Lot with him when he left.

Verse 29. *Abram and Nahor*. The two remaining sons of Terah. Haran had died before this. Nahor's seed will figure in the history of the people later.

Verse 30. *Barren*. The leading word Strong uses to define this word is "sterile." This would mean that her inability to have children was solely from lack of fertility and not from any malformation of the reproductive organs. This is in accord with the fact which will be observed later, that after fertility had been provided by miracle, her body was prepared naturally to nourish the unborn child until the usual period for birth.

Verses 31, 32. *To go into the land of Canaan*. Thus the entrance into Canaan was not effected at this time. But on the way, at Haran, they halted evidently because of the age and infirmity of Terah. However, they had left the immediate location of their nativity as commanded by the Lord. But when Terah was dead they resumed the journey.

## GENESIS 12

Verse 1. *Had said*. This form of speech shows that what is about to be reported did not take place in this chapter but previously. The student is referred to 11: 31 above and comments thereupon. The halting of Abram and his family at Haran was not on account of slackness in obeying the Lord's command. He has never been accused of any hesitancy in carrying out the commandments of God. Instead, he was always obedient. But the situation as described shows clearly that the pause at Haran was made necessary by the age and infirmity of Abram's father. But the language in chapter 11 does not go into the particulars of the command. This is evidently because the writer was reserving that detail until after the interval made necessary by Terah. But let it be noticed in the present

paragraph that not only was Abram commanded to leave his native land, but was to leave his father's house. It might be said that the one fact would include the other. That is true. But God sometimes specifies certain facts that might have been known anyway, evidently to make the seriousness of the situation more impressive. For instance, his specific command in 22: 2 which will be given further notice in the proper place. Another thing that is significant in this place is that God did not tell Abram about the kind of place he was to reach nor where it was. He was to learn that after leaving.

Verse 2. *Great nation.* This is one of the important promises which God made to Abram. Of course it referred to the nation that came to be known as the Jews. Observe further that at the very time when the promise was made that he was to become the head of a great nation he was an old man and childless, also that his wife was barren. But this is a true illustration of faith.

Verse 3. In this verse are no less than three distinct promises. They will be pointed out in italic type with the fulfillment indicated. *Bless them that bless thee.* This was fulfilled in Rahab (Josh. 2 and 6) and the midwives (Ex. 1: 21). *Curse him that curseth thee.* Fulfilled in Pharaoh (Ex. 7 to 14), and Amalek (Ex. 17: 14; Est. 9: 24). *In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.* This was fulfilled in Christ and the passages are too numerous to cite here. But one that is general is 1 Jn. 2: 2.

Verse 4. *As the Lord had said.* The outstanding point in all of Abram's service to God is that he did what he did because the Lord commanded it. This is the essence of faith and was always the motive in his activities. When a person hesitates at a command until he is able to see what he thinks is the propriety of the command, then even the carrying out of the command could not be justly called an act of faith. Take God at his word and do what is commanded, asking no questions as to the why. Of course the student should here take note of the age of Abram at this time, which is seventy-five.

Verse 5. *Souls that they had gotten in Haran.* This is the place where Abram paused in his journey toward his destination. The fact that enough time had passed in Haran for their

family number to increase indicates some considerable stay there. But still we must not attribute it to slackness in obeying God's command. There is nothing in any part of the Bible that criticizes Abram for this. But instead, the language of Stephen in Acts 7: 4, "when his father was dead," is in the form of favorable explanation of the delay at that place. *To go into the land of Canaan.* Similar language to this is in 11: 31. But we have no evidence that Abram knew at this time that the name of the country to which he was journeying was Canaan. The only detail that is recorded on this point was that he was to go to a country "that I will show thee." But it is a common thing to find the inspired writers getting "ahead of the story" and telling the reader something which an inspired man could tell and yet which had not occurred at the time immediately being considered. For instance, the town of Dan is mentioned in 14: 14 and yet that was not its name until Judg. 18: 29. But the writer could see into the future. Another thing, frequently the name given to a place by a writer might be its name at the time of the writing while it did not bear that name at the time that is being written about.

Verse 6. *Shechem and Moreh.* These were places in the northernmost part of the country of Palestine and are mentioned here as merely a tracing of the journey of Abram on his way to the place intended by the Lord for him to reach. *Canaanite was then in the land.* The word "Canaan" is from KENAAAN defined "humiliated; Kenaan, a son of Ham; also the country inhabited by him"—Strong. And the word "Canaanite" in italics here is from KENAANITY and defined "patril from KENAAAN; a Kenaanite or inhabitant of Kenaan; by implication a pedlar"—Strong. All this agrees with the prediction made by Noah in 9: 25. The various branches of these Canaanites or descendants of Ham through Canaan are named in 10: 15-20. These inferior peoples occupied the main part of that region where Abram made his entrance to the land of his commandment.

Verse 7. Here another promise is added to the ones already given to Abram. We may now group the three outstanding promises made to Abram and afterwards made to his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob. Those three promises are: 1. "I will make of thee a great nation" (12: 2); 2. "Unto thy



seed will I give this land" (12: 7); and 3. "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (12: 3). Mention is made also in this verse of an altar. This will be so often in evidence as the student pursues his study of the Bible that it is worth-while to be impressed with its importance. This is because the only form of religion now given from God to human beings is what is known as the Patriarchal. This term means a system based on the Patriarch which means the chief father. The term is not found in the Bible but the idea contained in it is seen clearly by the various references to the chief item of family worship which was the altar on which animals were offered in sacrifice. Useful information along the line of importance of the head of the family in this period may be obtained at 6: 8, 9; 18: 19; Job 1: 5.

Verses 8, 9. Here the town of Bethel is mentioned although it did not get its name as such until the events in 28: 19. But this method of naming places is explained above at verse 5. Note also here again mention of an altar. This was the only visible showing as the established presence of God in the worship of the family.

Verse 10. It is remarkable to observe that about the first thing Abram found when he arrived at the place to which he was directed was a famine. This was not reassuring to a man who had left his native land upon the commandment of God and with the understanding that his was to become a great nation. But such is the working of faith. It does not require faith to accept or perform a duty when the reason for it is apparent. Or where the results are sure of being favorable. But when the appearances seem to be adverse, then the servant of God is called upon to show whether he really has faith. So in the present case. There is no indication, now or at a later time, that Abram thought he was being forsaken by the Lord. Instead, when he was evidently directed to go on down into Egypt by the Lord he did not question as to why but went. It is well to observe here that during famine this country would be a logical place to go. There were no famines in that country except that brought on by miracle. It was not dependent on rainfall for moisture which would have been irregular. But the melting of the snows on the mountains at the head of the Nile River assured an overflow of water which supplied the

country for the crops. And because of this unflinching support of crops the country is popularity referred to as "the granary of the world." The famine that came in the days of Joseph was a miraculous one. See Psa. 105: 16. Here it says, "He called for a famine upon the land." This shows this famine to have been brought on by the specific decree of God. And it also harmonizes with the fact that the famine was of an exact number of years and was preceded by a like exact number of years of plenty. And this famine in the days of Abraham does not contradict the statement in Gen. 8: 22. See comments at that place in this work. *Sojourn*. This is from *gwb* and defined "a primitive root; properly to turn aside from the road (for a lodging or any other purpose), i. e., sojourn (as a guest)"—Strong. Since the word rendered "sojourn" here means a temporary stay in a place the passage shows that Abram was not preparing to change the plan of God here as to the country which was to become inheritance of his seed. Thus we have the wholesome thought that in spite of the unfavorable condition occasioned by a famine, Abram still persisted in his obedience to the divine commands.

Verse 11. *Fair*. This is from *yapheh* and defined "beautiful (literally or figuratively)"—Strong. *Look*. This is from *mareh* and defined as follows: "A view (the act of seeing); also an appearance (the thing seen), whether (real) a *shape* (especially if handsome, comeliness; often plural, the looks), or (mental) a vision"—Strong. This definition is filled with significant information. The Hebrew word under consideration has been translated by "look" in the A. V. six times and five of them are concerning a woman. And in each case the context shows that the form or personal appearance of the woman is in mind. Note the word *shape* as part of the definition. So that the passage means that Abram meant his wife had a beautiful form. A familiar expression would truly be suited to the case, that of sex appeal. And notice, too, that the definition has the idea of "mental vision." This agrees with the thoughts set forth in this work at chapter 3: 16, which see. All in all, the general appearance of Sarai was one that was appealing to the opposite sex. And this would lead to the "mental vision" mentioned in the definition here, and which agrees with the idea of the imagination and

its part in causing the male sex to seek intimacy with the female.

Verses 12, 13. In this passage are seen three of the commandments that later were given to God's people. They are those against coveting a neighbor's wife, adultery, and murder. Abram feared the Egyptians would commit two of them in order to avoid the third. That is, they would covet his wife and also murder him so as to have Sarai without committing adultery. He preferred having them commit a different two of the evils, coveting and adultery so as to preserve his own life. It is difficult to explain all of this. Yet we may remember that Abram is still new in the service of the God of heaven, having been surrounded with idolatry in his former years of life. Also, while the Egyptians would be doing wrong in taking another man's wife, yet they would be in ignorance of the fact and he could have concluded that their sin would not be as great from the fact of their ignorance. Again, if they killed him they could not bring him back even after discovering their mistake. While they could correct the mistake of having taken another man's wife, which thing they actually did. So the whole transaction may be summed up by saying that Abraham acted on the principle "of two evils choose the less." This would not entirely justify him, perhaps, but would somewhat lessen the guilt.

Verse 14. The Egyptians did the very thing Abram predicted they would. For it is the inspired writer of the book who is telling us that they beheld the woman that she was very fair. The same word for "fair" as in verse 11. So that Abram's estimate of his wife's beautiful form was not solely because of his relation to her, but the form and appeal of the woman was so pronounced as to be an evident fact and calculated to arouse the imagination and sensuousness of those who saw her.

Verse 15. *Princes*. This is from SAR and defined "a head person (of any rank or class)"—Strong. *Commended*. This is from HALAK and part of Strong's definition of the word is "to boast; and thus to be (clamorously) foolish; to rave." These princes were important persons in the service of the king and doubtless were supposed to be interested in the things that would make for his pleasure. Hence when they saw a woman whom they considered to be adapted to his bodily pleasure they communicated the fact

to him. And the definition of the word "commended" indicates that they were very much impressed themselves by the appearance of Sarai. As a result of their recommendation she was taken into Pharaoh's house. The word *house* is from a word that has a wide variety of meanings. But Strong says its special meaning is "family." Thus we would get the idea that Sarai was taken into Pharaoh's family and he was planning to make her a permanent member. That kings at that time made free to have a plurality of wives need not surprise us. Even God's people at that early date and for some time after, had such. Not that God was pleased with it nor that he "permitted" it as is sometimes said. God never permitted anything that he disapproved. To permit is the same as to sanction. But God has suffered many things in the immature age of the world that he refused to tolerate after the world had stood long enough to be able for stronger teaching. Please see Acts 17: 30. And in this case now before us we see that God did not chastise the king for having more than one wife. But, for taking a woman who was the wife of another man, as will be seen in a paragraph below.

Verse 16. Since up to this time Pharaoh is unaware that Sarai is Abram's wife, and being clear in mind as to the lawfulness of his act, we cannot interpret his conduct here toward Abram as an attempt at pacifying him. Rather, it is his way of showing his appreciation for the new addition to his harem by bestowing these attentions on her brother. With this in mind we see that the second "he" in the verse is Abram.

Verse 17. The plagues referred to here were some kind of physical affliction. And in thus punishing Pharaoh and his house (or family. See at v. 15) God fulfilled one of the promises he had made to Abram recorded in verse 3, that "I will curse him that curseth thee." To curse means either to wish or to bestow an affliction.

Verses 18-20. *I might have taken her to me to wife*. This language indicates that while the woman had been taken into Pharaoh's family with the purpose of making her a part of his collection of wives, yet he had not yet begun such relationship. Of course we may conclude that God prevented him from doing so. This would not be far-fetched since we have it in the text that he did that very thing under like circumstances. For this information

see 20: 6. And thus the plagues brought upon Pharaoh and his house opened his eyes to the truth of the situation. Upon this he complained to Abraham and sent him away from his midst. He also had charged his men concerning the woman. One thing that claims our admiration of Pharaoh. He regarded the sanctity of marriage more highly than is often shown by people professing great claims to morality now.

### GENESIS 13

Verses 1, 2. The riches here mentioned as being the possession of Abram are to be explained by the 16th verse of previous chapter. Not that he was poverty stricken at the time he went down to Egypt, for verse 5 of preceding chapter speaks of "all their substance" which they took with them from Haran. But that which was added to Abram's possessions by Pharaoh contributed to make him a rich man.

Verse 3. Here we again see Bethel mentioned by name although it did not get such name until chapter 28. Hai here is the same as Ai in other places.

Verse 4. Mention again made of the altar which he had built on his way down past this place. The significant thing here is that when he came to the altar he "called on the name of the Lord." This would not merely mean that he prayed to the Lord here for that act of worship was lawful at any place. But use of the statement in direct connection with the altar signifies that calling on the name of the Lord does now and ever afterward also require some specific act of visible worship. As an example of this in the New Testament see Acts 22: 16. During the Patriarchal Dispensation the only material symbol of a meeting place with God was the altar on which sacrifices were made. Later, under the Mosiac religion the tabernacle and temple were the places where the Jews could meet with God formally.

Verses 5, 6. Nothing is said about gifts being bestowed on Lot at the time Pharaoh was entreating Abram. But in verse 5 of 12th chapter, after mentioning Lot whom Abram took to go into the land of Canaan it mentions "their" substance. This indicates that Lot was in possession of such things before entering Egypt. And they increased naturally while in Egypt under the favorable circumstances of Abram. Bear. This is from

a word that has a literal and figurative meaning. The context here would give it the figurative meaning. That is, the land was not able to support all their animals with food and shelter. For this reason their respective interests began to crowd in upon each other. Since a man possessing as many beasts as Abraham or Lot would not be in direct charge of their care, they naturally had herdmen for that purpose and that brought up the situation that is described in next verse.

Verse 7. *Herdmen*. This word might seem to be confined to one who tends sheep. While that would be its first meaning, yet it also is used in the general sense of one who grazes. This is evidently the range of its meaning here for the word *cattle* in this verse is from *MIQNEH* and defined "live stock"—Strong. Of course the *strife* between the two groups of herdmen was at first a more formal one. The word is from *RIB* and defined "a contest (personal or legal)"—Strong. *Canaanite* and *Perizzite*. See comments at 12: 6.

Verse 8. The contest mentioned in previous verse caused Abram to fear that it might grow into a more personal affair as will be seen in the word he used. The word *strife* in this verse is from *MERYBAH* and defined "quarrel"—Strong. The highest motive that could be assigned, of a human nature, would be the fact that they were brethren. That is, they were near of kin, which is the general meaning of the original word. In the previous verse the Canaanitish people are mentioned as being in that land then. It might be expected that such people would manifest no great degree of fine temperament, but people in the rank of Abram, the man with the great promises of God on his head, and his near of kin, should certainly be above the petty conduct of quarreling over the material subject of grazing land. This same kind of motive is presented in the New Testament. See 1 Tim. 6: 2.

Verse 9. The reader is especially requested to note that Abram was unselfish enough to let Lot have the choice of pasture land. And he did not say that if he chose the part that would be right to dwell in then he would leave the community and seek pasture in another locality. But he distinguished the "whole land" by just one division, namely, the left or the right. And Abram agreed to take whatever was left. So that, if any

criticism could be based on occupying any part of this "whole land" then Abram was as much at fault for agreeing to take it as he would be to actually occupy it. This point will be considered again below.

Verse 10. *Well watered everywhere.* These words clearly state the motive Lot had in the choice he here made of the land. Since the occasion of the controversy was the need for pasturage for cattle this motive was not only a logical one, but a righteous one. Mention of the "garden of the Lord" evidently refers to the garden named in 2: 8 which garden is described as being well watered also since it had the river with its four "heads." Also the reference to Egypt is for the same purpose since that country was perpetually blessed with moisture. *Before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.* At the time this narrative was being written the destruction of the mentioned cities was history. But at the time of which the account took place they had not yet been burned. And mention here of the insignificant city of Zoar is due to the fact that the Lord did not destroy that place when the city of Sodom was burned. See 19: 22.

Verse 11. Since the statement was made in verse 6 that the land would not bear for Abram and Lot to dwell together, and since they had come to a conclusion by Lot's having chosen the watered land, it was logical that they "separated themselves the one from the other." Also, this would mean that he would travel in an eastwardly direction. All this was understood and included in the offer that Abram made in verse 9.

Verse 12. This verse has been erroneously interpreted by many to the criticism of Lot. It is a popular phrase to see "tenting toward Sodom" when some one wishes to speak about the evil tendencies of another. Especially if he is considering one's interest in financial or other temporal gain. If the person under consideration has not exactly entered into the practice of that which is wrongfully carnal, yet if it is thought that he is "headed that way" it will be said that he is "tenting toward Sodom." This casts a reflection on Lot that is unjust because untrue. If it be said that Lot was "tenting toward Sodom" right at the time that he made his choice before Abram, then what must we conclude about the latter when we recall that he agreed to take this very side had Lot chosen the

other. And here is where the reader is referred to verse 9 and the comments thereon. Critics of Lot in this affair seem not to have realized that all of their remarks apply with equal force against Abram. Yet not one has ever dared to accuse him in connection with it. In the forepart of the verse now considered the statement is made that Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan while Lot in the cities of the plain. If we were to stop here we might imagine some criticism of Abram since the name Canaan did not have a very dignified reputation, while, at the time of this movement of the men we have no account of the condition of those cities. But more than once we have observed that inspired writers will go some years ahead of the events of which they are directly writing and mention a condition then future but known to the inspired writer. And in the present case, the inspired writer foresaw an outcome of Lot's movements that he could not have seen at the time he made this choice being here considered. A proper rendering of the significant words employed will dispel the false accusation made against Lot. *Pitched \* \* \* toward.* These are the words that are misunderstood. They are taken to mean that Lot here and now faced his tent in the direction of Sodom. The implication is that he had a "leaning" toward that wicked city is the reason he thus faced his tent. This is contrary to all the facts in the case and also against the common sense view of it. We have just been told (verse 10) that Lot made his choice in view of the favorable condition for pasturage. Now why inject the idea that he was interested in Sodom? What would the condition of Sodom, even granting that it was at this time as wicked as we know it to have become, have had to do with his interest in his livestock? Besides, when we come to the time of his residence in that city he was considered so righteous a man that God took care to provide for his safety before he destroyed the city. And the New Testament also tells us that he was a righteous man and was grieved over the wickedness of the city. See 2 Pe. 2: 7, 8. But now the correct rendering of these words will be given which will make the whole passage clear. The first one of the words in italic type is from *AHAL* and is explained by both Young and Strong to mean to remove one's tent. It is from the same word as "removed" in verse 18 below. The second word is



from AD and both above mentioned authorities define it as meaning "up to, as far as." Now with the proper rendering of the passage it would read "and removed his tent as far as Sodom." This form of expression shows the writer has gone "ahead of his story" to tell the reader what finally came to pass. But he does not tell us how long it was until Lot got as far as Sodom. Neither are we told what circumstances finally induced him to enter the city. But the statements as to his righteousness at the very last, cited above, disproves the charge that he was prompted by the wrong motives.

Verse 13. This verse is a simple statement of the condition of Sodom at the time of Lot's residence there when the events took place that are about to be recorded. But bear no connection with the fact of Lot's having become a resident of the city as was shown in preceding paragraph.

Verses 14-17. Attention has been called to the fact that the promises so often referred to throughout the Bible generally mean those first made to Abram and then to his next two lineal generations. Here we see God repeating two of the promises, the ones first recorded in 12: 2, 7. Since Abram and his immediate descendants were the ones to whom the promises were specially applicable it was appropriate that God would make this repetition of the promises now after his separation from his nephew. He had just performed the noble part of an unselfish man and thus acted in keeping with the characteristics ever afterward attributed to him. It is thus very well that he be given another assurance that God was to be with him. *For ever*. This expression here made in connection with the promise of holding the land has been the cause of confusion. It is often asked, "Does forever really mean forever?" Of course we would answer yes. But that would not be any approach to the explanation sought. And then in such a case as here it is natural to inquire whether God intended the descendants of Abram to be in the possession of Canaan unendingly or even "into eternity." The word ever is from the Hebrew word OLAM and defined "concealed, i. e., the vanishing point; generally, time out of mind," etc.—Strong. The real meaning of the expression as it was to be understood by Abram was that his seed was to possess that land for a longer time than he would be

able to see. That no certain date, as to year or epoch, was to be named to him as the time when they would cease to possess it. With our later knowledge of language we see the idea of "age lasting" or "to the end of the age" as being a practical definition of the term "for ever." The proper meaning of it is "age lasting." This means further that when the term is used with reference to the continuation of a thing it intends to convey the thought that it will last through to the end of the particular age to which it pertains. In other words, it does not mean that the thing or condition spoken of is to be endless unless it is pertaining to an age that is endless. And since the age that is to come after the judgment day, popularly called the age of "eternity," is admitted to be endless by all parties, it follows that if an inspired writer mentions a condition or experience that pertains to the age after the judgment day, then that condition or experience will be endless.

Verse 18. *Removed*. This is from the same word as "pitched" in verse 12. See the comments at that place. *Hebron*. This place is about 25 miles south of Jerusalem and was the dwelling place of Abram for many years. It is significant that he here built an altar unto the Lord. A righteous man like him would not be content to reside in any place without having the Lord represented by the only formal method so far given to him. It should be remembered that Abram is a worshiper of God under the Patriarchal Dispensation and in that system the family altar was the legal representation.

#### GENESIS 14

Verse 1. The four kings mentioned in this verse were confederates in the present conflict and each had his own jurisdiction. Shinar is the place which afterward was known as the location of the famous Babylonian Empire. Elam is the same as Persia. While Tidal is here mentioned as king of *nations*. This is from the word *cor* and means the people generally not under the direct jurisdiction of the other three mentioned.

Verse 2. To avoid any confusion as to the existence of these cities let it be observed that the miraculous destruction of these cities had not yet taken place.

Verse 3. The writer says that the place of junction of the nine kings was the vale of Siddim. But what might

be a poser is that he immediately says that this vale is the salt sea. Now we cannot understand why or how a military group of land forces could have a battle at a place that is called a sea. But again we have an instance where the writer identifies the location of an action of time past by calling it by the name it has at the time of his writing. At the time of this battle the vicinity was a vale but afterwards became a place covered with water known here as the salt sea. The same place is known in secular history and geography as the Lake Asphaltites. This is because that substance was a prevailing one in that body of water. And this fact is partially explained from natural grounds since at the time of the battle we are now considering it was full of slime pits (verse 10). The word for "slime" is one which means asphaltites and this substance existed in other localities also. See comments at 11: 3. Thus the apparent difficulty as to facts in this verse is made clear by remembering that at the time the writer is recording the fact the place of the battle had become a lake with asphaltites appearing through it. While at the time of the battle the water had not come yet the source of supply for this slime or asphaltites, the slimepits of verse 10, was there and was the cause of the stranding of the defeated kings by running into it and sinking therein. It is interesting and significant to know that the body of water that has been so noted for years is the site of this first recorded battle. And that the various names, Salt Sea, Dead Sea, Lake Asphaltites, are appropriate since the original condition of that region was one where this substance was already predominant. And the fact that one does not see the definite sites of the cities named in this chapter on the maps is explained by the circumstance that said cities were destroyed by the great burning recorded in Ch. 19. And while the dropping of the fire to destroy these cities was miraculous, yet the condition that remained after the fire should not be questioned even from a logical standpoint. It is well known that such substance as asphalt is inflammable and would continue to burn for a long time. This has been illustrated by a similar occurrence in certain places in our own southland. The soil is so nearly all composed of combustible matter that when a pond of water is desired in some particular spot the fire is started and kept within the desired limits. It will burn until

it consumes this material down to the water which is always within a few feet of the surface. After this the water rises to the level of the open space and thus a pool of water is produced. I do not mean that asphalt is the material that is burned in the last named circumstance. The comparison is made only to the fact of there being combustible material over which is the substance afterward appearing in the pool produced. And since so much is made of this famous place it will be well to quote a description of it as given by the Jewish historian. "The nature of Lake Asphaltites is also worth describing. It is, as I have said already, bitter and unfruitful. It is so light or thick that it bears up the heaviest things that are thrown into it; nor is it easy for any one to make things sink therein to the bottom, if he had a mind so to do. Accordingly, when Vespasian went to see it, he commanded that some who could not swim, should have their hands tied behind them, and be thrown into the deep, when it so happened that they all swam as if a wind had forced them upward. Moreover, the change of the color of this lake is wonderful, for it changes its appearance twice every day; and as the rays of the sun fall differently upon it, the light is variously reflected. However, it casts up black clods of bitumen in many parts of it; these swim at the top of it and resemble both in shape and bigness headless bulls; and when the laborers that belong to the lake come to it, and catch hold of it as it hangs together, they draw it into their ships; but when the ship is full, it is not easy to cut off the rest, for it is so tenacious as to make the ship hang upon its clods till they let it loose with the menstrual blood of women, and with urine, to which alone it yields." —Josephus, Wars, 4:8-4.

Verse 4. Mention of Chedorlaomer as being the one they served indicates that he was the leader of the confederacy against the five kings of Palestine. They had come under the dominance of the Elamite king and continued in that servitude for twelve years. But in the next year they fomented a rebellion which induced their overruler to prepare an invasion which took place the fourteenth year, as seen in next paragraph.

Verses 5-9. Mention is made in this paragraph of some not named in beginning of the chapter. But we are to understand them to be inferior allies

of the five already named. Then in verse 8 the leading five kings, the ones that had previously been tributaries of Chedorlaomer and his allies, went out in their defence against the invaders. But they were repulsed and fled as following verses will show.

Verse 10. This is treated at length with verse 3, which see.

Verses 11, 12. Mention of Lot's capture here reminds us of the information about him in previous chapter. Some time between events of that chapter and the present one Lot had reached the city of Sodom. Just when we do not know.

Verse 13. We have already seen that Abram had taken up his abode at Hebron which is not far from the site of this battle. Certain friends of his who escaped from the battle and knowing the interest Abram had in Lot, went and told him of what had happened. He is here called a *Hebrew*. The word for this in the Hebrew language is *EBRY* and is defined thus: "An Eberite (i. e., Hebrew) or descendant of Eber"—Strong. But since this name becomes so important afterwards in connection with God's great people, it will be well to quote here the information given in the Greek lexicon which is as follows: "A Hebrew, a name first given to Abraham, Gen. 14: 13, afterwards transferred to his posterity descended from Isaac and Jacob; by it in the O. T. the Israelites are both distinguished from and designated by foreigners, as afterward by \* \* \* The name is now generally derived from \* \* \* i. e., of the region beyond the Euphrates, whence \* \* \* equivalent to one who comes from the region beyond the Euphrates, Gen. 14: 13"—Thayer.

Verse 14. *Armed*. This is from *RUWQ* and defined "to pour out (literally or figuratively), i. e., empty"—Strong. This definition justifies the marginal reading we have here which says "led forth" which is better. The word "servants" is not in the original as the form of type indicates, but the next word is. *Trained*. This is from *CHANNIX* and defined "initiated; i. e., practiced"—Strong. This gives us a more general view of the word. It indicates that Abram had a group of men so instructed and under discipline that he could use them for any necessary work, including military. And they were not slaves or servants, that he had bought with his money, but persons who had been "born in his own

house." And since his present movement was to recapture persons and things that were related to him it can be truly said the action was one of defense and thus fully justified. *Dan*. Here is another instance where the name of a place as given was that given to it long after the events immediately under consideration. This place was renamed in Judges 18: 29.

Verses 15, 16. *Divided himself*. This means that he distributed his forces so as to be in position to attack his enemy with system and thus showed good generalship. It also teaches us the lesson that even when a man is depending on the favor of God, as Abram evidently did, yet it is expected that he will use his own ability. And that God did lend his aid to this battle is declared by the priest-king personage of whom we are to learn soon. The success of this battle is shown by the fact that he recovered all the goods and also the people. Also that he slew his enemies, which is stated in a general way. Specifications on that item will be given in next verse.

Verse 17. Here it is specified that Chedorlaomer and the kings with him were slain. Also we here learn that the king of Sodom had escaped from the slimepit into which he had fallen in the beginning, and went out to meet Abram on his victorious return. That this meeting of the king of Sodom with Abram was out of gratitude for the service rendered him is evident from a verse later on in this chapter.

Verse 18. *Melchizedek*. This is from *MALKIYZEDEQ* and the simple definition that Strong gives of it is "king of right; an early king in Palestine." It might be wondered why the lexicographer gave us so little information concerning this noted person. The most apt answer is that very little was known about him by anybody. And this was not an accident. God knew how to prepare his types for the support of his final arrangements of man's salvation. A priest would some day be presented to the people of God who was to be so different from the kind that will have been in use for many centuries that various items of identification would be needed. There was to be a priest finally who would stand alone in his priesthood. Unlike the priests with whom the people had been acquainted for so long, this last priest was to have his priesthood in his own right independent of all predecessors, and who would not relinquish his of-

fice in favor of any other. Thus, all accounts of the previous or subsequent family history of this king were purposely kept out of the records. This will present him to the world as a priest without ancestors or descendants in office as far as the public could see. And so this *apparent* condition of having no descendants would be a type of a man who actually had no descendants. Outside of these considerations, Melchizedek was a normal man, "an early king in Palestine." More information will be found on this subject at Heb. 7 in the New Testament part of this Commentary. But for the present instance, we shall further note that he was a priest with certain functions that are not described, only that bread and wine were brought forth by him. This was not for any fleshly use since in the sequel of this meeting the temporal materials passed the other direction between them. And while the presence and use of an altar which was so evident under the Patriarchal Dispensation would imply that the father was a priest, yet in this case the writer expressly states that he was the priest of the most high God. This is indicative of the special importance this man was to have in God's plan of types. It is also stated that he was a king. This was never true of the priests under the system of religion issuing forth from Sinai. Salem mentioned here was an abbreviated form of Jerusalem and the definition of the word by Strong is "peaceful."

Verse 19. *Blessed him.* According to Heb. 7: 7, Melchizedek was a greater person than Abram. And since the blessing here mentioned could not have been the bestowal of temporal benefits, as seen in preceding paragraph, we must conclude that the blessing here was a spiritual kind. This would be in keeping with the various instances in the Old Testament where God empowered men to bestow miraculous and spiritual benefits on certain deserved ones. This is further proved from the fact that in the verse to come he used the same word for "bless" that he used here and we know he did not bestow any personal benefits on God. So the whole matter rests on the idea of some benediction.

Verse 20. Here is where Melchizedek attributed Abram's victory in his battle to the most high God. Here also we learn that Abram gave to Melchizedek

tithes of all. This means that Abram had recovered the goods taken from his people by Chedorlaomer and of these he gave to this priest a tenth. These things could have been of no use to any kind of a person other than a human. One who could consume temporal articles the same as other human beings. But the significant fact here is that Abraham was the giver of these goods while Melchizedek was the recipient. And since the latter was not in a needy condition as is evident, the giving of the goods can be understood only on the basis that Abram recognized a superiority of some kind in Melchizedek. But this very fact of his recognition, even whether he understood what it would mean, came to be one of the vital arguments of Paul in his labors with the Hebrew brethren who were being disturbed by those who would lead them back under the worship of the Aaronic order.

Verse 21. The offer here made by the king of Sodom shows his gratitude for the deliverance which Abram had brought to him. And since this virtue is one of the leading ones required of God it is praiseworthy to see it manifested in this heathen king.

Verses 22-24. *Made Abram rich.* Since Abram has already been said to be very rich it would be unreasonable to suppose the things which he recovered and brought back with him could have exceeded his present possessions. The expression should be understood as meaning that he did not want to be under obligation at all to this heathen king. *Thread, shoelatchet.* The first word refers to the thong or shoe lace and the second means a shoe's tongue. These things of such nominal value are used by Abram to indicate how averse he was to being put under any obligation of financial gratitude. The exception he made for the young men was in justice to them and not in any way to affect his purpose of personal independence. In other words the slogan "to the victor belongs the spoils" was justification for the young men to take their share since they had been faithful in the discharge of duty for their master.

## GENESIS 15

Verse 1. It is a frequent thing for God to reaffirm his blessing intended toward Abram. The original promises are often repeated and now in a general way he is given assurance of God's protection.



Verses 2, 3. The renewed assurance of favor just spoken to Abram encouraged him to complain of what he feared was an infringement upon his personal rights. This Eliezer was not his own body offspring but he was born in his household and evidently of some persons near enough to arouse the questioning stated.

Verses 4, 5. Here the Lord wishes to quiet the fears of Abram by repeating the promise first made to him when he was called out from his native home. *Tell, number.* Each of these words is from CAPHAR and defined thus: "A primitive root; properly to score with a mark as a tally or record, i. e., (by implication) to inscribe, and also to enumerate"—Strong. Thus, while the exact number of Abram's descendants would be a fact and known to God, yet they would be so numerous that Abram would not be able to make a specific account or record of them.

Verse 6. The doctrine of "faith alone" is not supported by this verse. Abram has never yet even hesitated about doing what God had told him to do. And since the divine mind could see the sincerity of Abram's mind he could attribute the quality of righteousness to him upon his going as far as he was required to do. It should be borne in mind that as yet no specific date for the accomplishment of the birth promised has been set. Hence no overt act upon the part of Abram and his wife has been required. The time will come when that will be required. When that time comes, then the faith of Abram and his wife will need to be proved by their willingness to cooperate with God to the extent of performing with each the natural act usually needed for reproduction. For this subject compare 18: 9-15; Rom. 4: 18-22 and Heb. 11: 11.

Verse 7. While the Lord here tells Abram what land was intended to be his when he was called out from his home land, yet at that time the patriarch was informed only that he was to journey to a land that was to be shown him afterward. That constituted one important feature of his manifestation of faith.

Verse 8. The principle on which God has always dealt with his created beings is to furnish him evidence. And since Abram has already demonstrated in more than one instance that he has faith in God, the present request is not to be interpreted as any weakening of his faith. Rather, it is an indi-

cation of his growing interest in the plans of the Lord.

Verse 9. While nothing is here recorded as to the significance of these creatures nominated by the Lord for the present demonstration, it is interesting to note it. The same were afterward a prominent and frequently required offering of the system of religion in practice under the Mosaic Dispensation. Especially would the reader be asked to observe the degree of worth of these creatures. There are three of them, beginning with the greatest, the large animal, and concluding with the smallest creature, the birds. When these finally become an established part of the altar service of the nation in Palestine, they will be designated for use according to the financial ability of the contributor.

Verse 10. It should be remembered that Abram asked for a sign touching the great promise God had made. Just why these symbols were selected is not stated. But we do know that when the Mosaic system of animal sacrifices was put into effect, much of the same procedure was followed as here regarding the preparation of the creatures. For this information the reader is referred to Lev. 1: 6, 8, 12 and other passages near these. Later in the chapter now being studied the opening provided by the dividing of the parts of the animals afforded a place for the miraculous demonstration of the presence of the Lord to pass. See verse 17.

Verse 11. That it was necessary to guard these animals from the birds shows that use of them was not immediate. But Abram showed no sign of impatience for this but is calmly obedient to the Lord's directions. Furthermore, the protection thus given to these animals against the birds that would have preyed on them is an indication that Abram did not consider it proper that articles being devoted to special use of the Lord should be allowed to become the food of common use.

Verse 12. Simultaneous with the going down of the sun Abram fell into a trance, which is Strong's definition of the words for "deep sleep." At the same time a horror, defined by Strong as a "fright" in the form of darkness enveloped him. With this condition surrounding him, Abram is about to have communicated to him a detailed group of predictions concerning his posterity. These predictions will follow. And with them will be

cited their fulfillment as recorded in later portions of the Bible.

Verses 13-15. *Stranger*. This is from GEYER and defined by Strong as "foreigner." This was fulfilled by the fact that the Israelites belonged in Palestine and thus were foreigners in Egypt. *Shall serve them*. This was fulfilled by their service to the Egyptians. See Ex. 1: 13. *Four hundred years*. This was fulfilled by the length of time the Israelites were in Egypt. A contrary theory is sometimes heard concerning the length of this sojourn, claiming the actual sojourn in Egypt to have been only 215 years. In order not to seem to contradict the mathematical statements of the scripture, that the sojourn was 430 years, it is offered for support of the shorter term the idea that the sojourn was to start with Abram's time. But the specific language of holy writ forbids such suggestion. If that had been the meaning God had in mind he would have included Abram in the statement. This he did when speaking of another prediction. For instance, when speaking of the possession of the land of Canaan he said, "To thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever" (13: 15). This was true for Abram actually lived in the land. But the prediction now being considered does not include Abram in person. Instead it says "thy seed shall be," etc. Again in Ex. 12: 40 this 430 years of sojourn was made of the "children of Israel." But the name Israel was not known in Abram's day and not until the day of Jacob and that was about the time of their entering therein, or at least in the same generation. It will not be amiss here to quote a statement from an eminent historian from the secular field. Since this subject is of the nature of historical background the testimony of a man who has made such subject a special study would be valuable. I shall here quote. "According to the Hebrew text of Ex. 12: 40, 41, a space of nearly four centuries and a half intervened between the entrance of the children of Israel into Egypt and their exodus under the leadership of Moses; and, although the real duration of the period is disputed, the balance of probability is in favor of this long term rather than of a shorter one. The growth of a tribe, numbering even three thousand persons, into a nation of above two millions, abnormal and remarkable if it took place within a period of four hundred and thirty years, would be still more strange and astonishing if the

space of time were seriously curtailed.

The ten generations between Jacob and Joshua (1 Chron. 7: 22-27), who was a grown man at the time of the Exodus, require a term of four centuries rather than one or two. Egyptian chronology also favors the longer period"—Rawlinson, *Moses, His Life and Times*, page 6. But aside from all these reasonings, it is too much like presumption to even call in question the exact and positive declaration of the inspired writer. No matter how impossible the statement might seem to our view, the declaration as to the length of the sojourn should be taken just as it is stated. *Will I judge*. The fulfillment of this prediction is seen in the book of Exodus, chapters 7 to 14. Here see the many plagues sent upon the Egyptians, ending with the complete destruction of their king and his chosen military forces. The various plagues imposed upon them included judgments upon their gods. It was their national practice to worship all creatures that had life as well as inanimate things such as the great river Nile. And so in the plagues that came upon the nation in regard to these objects they were humiliated to a great degree. *Great substance*. The fulfillment of this prediction is seen in the matter of getting the valuables in the form of gold and silver and costly raiment. See Ex. 11: 2; 12: 35. Critics have complained about this transaction as being an act of fraud on the part of the Israelites. That since they had no intention of repaying the articles it was dishonest for them to borrow them. But the word "borrow" is properly rendered "to demand" according to Strong and it is so rendered in four places in the Old Testament in other places. The Israelites had been serving the Egyptians for many years without sufficient pay. Now it was no more than right that they demand these things as payment. And since they demanded them the Egyptians had no reason to expect the return of the articles. And thus no injustice has been done. *In peace . . . good old age*. This means he would live to a ripe age and die without violent cause. His death is recorded in chapter 25: 7, 8. The account shows him to have ended his days as predicted.

Verses 16. *Fourth generation*. The reader is asked to consult Ex. 6: 16-20. In that place the line from Levi to Aaron is shown. Levi, Kohath, Amram, Aaron. As is well known, the entrance into Egypt was in the days of

Levi and their coming out was in the days of Aaron, which is the "fourth generation." Moreover, the ages of the first three are stated which add up to 407 years. Add to this the age of Aaron at the time of the Exodus (83, Ex. 7: 7), and we have 490. But this is 60 years more than the 430 which was the length of time the Israelites were to be in Egypt. The reader is to note that in the passage cited about the ages of the first three, it is their entire life that is given without any reference to their age at the time of birth of their first born. Hence the 60 years of the seeming discrepancy will be easily accounted for by spreading them out among the periods elapsing between the births of the fathers to that of their sons. And it is interesting also to note that this circumstance confirms the conclusion treated in preceding paragraph that the sojourn in Egypt was 430, as also is affirmed in the New Testament (Acts 7: 6). *Iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.* Much light is thrown on the last word by the definition of Young: "The iniquity of the tribe (as the representative of the Canaanites generally) was not yet full (Gen. 15: 16, 21)." There was a particular tribe of people called Amorites. But they were so generally evil that their name was sometimes used to refer to the heathen in general.

Verse 17. The words "went down" here and "going down" in verse 12 are from the same original. But the progress of the events here being reported indicated that at this verse the darkness had deepened. The furnace mentioned here was a portable thing since it is defined as "a fire pot." Thus far no special use had been made of the creatures which God commanded Abram to bring. But the presence of these articles at the latter part of this trance indicated God's acceptance of Abram and his offering. These would indicate the necessary provision for consuming of the sacrifices.

Verse 18. This verse states the ultimate boundaries of the promised land. This will be helpful information in considering other places. For instance, when later the two and half tribes wished to settle on the east side of Jordan it is sometimes asked why God would bless them. They should have been appreciative of God's providence over them and been glad to settle in the land promised. But this passage now under consideration shows that we must make a distinction between the terms "Canaan" and "the promised

land." It is true that Canaan was the headquarters of the promised land and the conquest of the territory could not be accomplished until this head land was taken. That is why the army was required to pass over Jordan and fight those then occupying the land. They were intruders since this land had long since been given to the descendants of Abram. But the extent of the promised land is here stated as reaching from the river of Egypt to Euphrates. This "river of Egypt" was a small stream flowing into the Sea in a northwesterly direction, and was the southern boundary of the promised land. The only man ever to possess all this territory was Solomon (1 Ki. 4: 21). But it was because of the disobedience of the people, since all promises of God are based on conditions.

Verses 19, 20. These are heathen peoples then occupying this territory that God had given to Abram's seed. Thus the invasion of God's armies into their midst was a defensive warfare. It was for the purpose of overthrowing the enemies of God and the occupying of the land by the rightful heirs.

## GENESIS 16

Verse 1. *Handmaid.* This is from SHIPHCHAH and defined, "A female slave (as a member of the household)."—Strong. These female slaves were much used in ancient times as personal or body servants for women of rank or other privilege. Because of the intimate nature of their services they became much attached to their mistresses and in some figurative way were considered largely a part of their same person. And because of this close relationship a child born of them would be thought of in the light of being the offspring of the mistress. Let it be noted that this handmaid was an Egyptian which will account for the choice she made later of her son's wife.

Verse 2. *Go in.* This expression is one frequently used in the olden times to refer to the relation of a man with a woman in intimate relation. It has the same meaning as the expression "know" when used with reference to this relation. *It may be.* There was no doubt as to whether Abram would be permitted by Hagar to have this relation with her. But the uncertainty would lie in the question of whether the act would result in conception. And this uncertainty was also shared by Hagar as may be seen from the implied surprise she had as indicated in verse 4.

Verse 3. Here is where the term "ten years" should be marked as being one of the informative dates relied on at various times of computation. *Wife*. This occurs in two instances in this verse, once in reference to Sarai and the other to Hagar. And since we know that the relation of these two women to Abram was altogether different from each other we must know that some common definition applies to the word. It is from *ISHSHAH* in both cases. And the definition is "a woman."—Strong. Hence we could as correctly word it "to be his woman." And with this information in mind we will not be confused by any questions of what was to constitute the relation of "wife" in those days. The simple thought is that in that particular transaction Hagar was to be Abram's woman for this reproductive arrangement. The term "wife" as a social distinction and as is universally used is a designation brought about by the laws and customs of man and no part of the original scheme of God as to the relation of the sexes. Of course, since man has adopted such designation and incorporated it into the laws of nations, then God respects it and requires his people to respect it.

Verse 4. *When she saw*. This is the expression of surprise or uncertainty referred to in verse 2 above. *Despised*. This is from *QALAL* and means "to make light." The natural thing occurred. Here is a girl who had been only a servant to her mistress and a mistress, too, who had been unable to become a mother. Now she is expectant by the husband of her mistress and hence is led to think of her as being much inferior to her. And not only does she have this feeling of superiority toward her mistress, but she must have manifested it because Sarai knows about it as will be seen next.

Verse 5. *Wrong*. This is not a confession that Sarai had done wrong. It is from *CHAMAC* and defined "violence \* \* \* unjust gain."—Strong. Thus she charges that the satisfaction which Hagar has obtained through the situation is unjust and she is blaming it on Abram. We recall that in chapter 3: 12 the man blamed his misfortune on the woman. Now the woman does a like thing against man. See comment at that place.

Verse 6. *Dealt hardly*. This is from *ANAH* and defined "looking down or brow-beating; to depress, literally or figuratively, transitively or intransitively."—Strong. Thus we see that

Sarai did not mistreat her physically. That might have caused a loss that even she did not wish to come. But she so overawed her, with a possible threat of personal violence for the purpose of humiliation, that the girl was induced to flee.

Verse 7. *Angel*. This is the second recorded instance of these celestial beings appearing on the earth. The first is in the case of the cherubim placed to guard the highway leading to the garden of Eden. Here it is to a runaway slave. The use of angels in carrying out God's many great plans is to be seen all through the Bible. Frequently these angels are spoken of as being God himself. But that is because they are personal representatives of God. The fact that even Moses was not permitted to see the face of God shows that all instances where it is said that God appeared or said certain things to people means that it was done through the angels. *Wilderness*. The fact that just previous to this word it mentions a fountain of water would prove that a wilderness is not necessarily a place without any moisture or vegetable life as the popular idea is.

Verses 8, 9. Appearances do not always agree with the best interests of a person. The natural impulse was for Hagar to escape unpleasant experience by running from her mistress. But had she gone on, her child would have been born in the wilderness and had no provision for so young a child. But instead, it is better for her to return and retain the protection and provision of the home of her master for the time.

Verses 10, 11. The promise that Hagar's seed was to be very numerous was fulfilled in the production of the Arabian nation which descended from her son. His name in the Hebrew is *YISHMAEL* and defined "God will hear."—Strong.

Verse 12. *Wild*. This is from *PEREH* and defined "in the secondary sense of running wild; the onager."—Strong. It is akin to another word which carries the idea of bearing fruit in the wilderness and not under tamed cultivation. And this description agrees with the roaming nature of the Arabs. *Against*. This is from *QIRAH* and defined "an encountering, accidental, friendly or hostile (also adv. opposite)."—Strong. This shows that the descendants of Hagar's son would not necessarily be always hostile to whomsoever they met, but that on account of being loose in the wilderness,



with no certain dwelling place, they would come in contact with various tribes. *Dwell in the presence of all his brethren.* In Gen. 25: 18 the statement is that "he died in the presence of all his brethren." If that was so then he necessarily had dwelt in their presence which fulfills the prediction of the angel.

Verses 13, 14. *Thou God seest me.* How true are these words. And the significance of them here is the fact that apparently this woman was in a forsaken plight with no one to care for her. Yet she acknowledges the presence of God in that her affliction has been recognized and comforting words have been said to her. A good principle for all people to bear in mind is the fact that God sees all that is going on. He will not overlook the slightest creature that needs his attention.

Verses 15, 16. Hagar was in the wilderness away from her master when the angel told her the name to be given to her child when born. Yet in the verse before us we are told that Abram called the son by the name of Ishmael. This concludes that Hagar told her master the conversation of the angel with her. Moreover, since there is no recorded indication that he knew from any other source what the Lord wanted to have the son called, he had confidence in the truthfulness of the report which his slave gave him, and also he had the respect for the Lord's will to name his son accordingly. And let it be noted here that another number is recorded. Abram was 86 years old now.

### GENESIS 17

Verse 1. Thirteen years have gone by since the close of the previous chapter. God appears to Abram here and states his identity and renews his exhortation for him to continue in his walk of righteousness. The time is drawing near for the more visible signs of the promise made when God first appeared to him.

Verse 2. There were three prominent promises which God had made with Abram and one of them concerned the numerous strength of his descendants. This one is here repeated in this verse and then again a little later on in the chapter.

Verse 3. This posture of the body was one used by the people of the East when they wished to indicate great respect for another. Strong says the word is used in a great variety of

senses and that the falling on the face is a statement that means the subjection of the person and not necessarily a literal falling with face on ground.

Verse 4. The significant thought in this verse is that Abram is to be the father of many nations. At this time, however, he has but one son and he was not the one of the original promise. But in chapter 25: the sons from his second marriage are named and they became founders of various nations.

Verse 5. This is the event of changing the name to Abraham. And this change was made so that his name would correspond with one of the predictions given him and that was to become a father of many nations. The name in the Hebrew is the same form as the English and defined, "To be populous; father of a multitude."—Strong. We must not lose sight of the plan that while many nations were to come from his body, yet only one would be recognized as God's peculiar line, and that it is to come from a son not yet born and of whom a reminder of the promise will be given a little later.

Verse 6. *Kings shall come out of thee.* This was fulfilled as seen in the books of Samuel and Kings. The long line of kings that reigned from Saul to the carrying off into Babylonian captivity came from Abraham. It is true that when the nation of the Israelites became dissatisfied with God's existing rule and wanted a king it was displeasing to God. But when he decided to let them have a king it was stipulated that they should set up the king "whom the Lord thy God shall choose" (Deut. 17: 15). This, of course, was in deference to this prediction made to Abraham. And still more interesting is the fact that at the last, when God himself determined to have a king over his spiritual people he decreed that said king was to come into the world through the blood line of Abraham. Hence the significant circumstance that the accounts of both Matthew, in his first chapter, and Luke, in his third chapter, of the genealogy of Christ, show that he came down through Abraham. This was true on the side of both Mary and Joseph, since the fountain head of the two families was a lineal descendant of Abraham. Solomon, the ancestor of Joseph and Nathan the ancestor of Mary were both sons of David and by the same mother (1 Chr. 3: 5).

Verses 7, 8. *Everlasting covenant—everlasting possession.* Critics stumble at these expressions and state that if everlasting means endless then God did not mean what he said here. That according to the other parts of the Bible God never intended that Abraham's descendants should possess that land endlessly. Therefore, everlasting does not mean endless. But no one who understands the meaning of the word will say that "everlasting" always means endless. It depends on the thing spoken about whether it has the force of endless. The fundamental meaning of the word is "age lasting." This definition may properly be given to the word in any place it is used. Then, if the age in which the thing being spoken of is endless the word also means endless. But no one acquainted with the plan of the Bible will say that the age of man on this earth was to be endless. So that, whether we consider this subject from the standpoint of the age of the Jewish nation as a separate people, or the age of those people individually as human beings, such age was not claimed to be endless. And had the Israelite nation always been true to God's laws, then they would never have lost their national existence. Even after the religion of Christ was brought into the world, thus putting an end to all other forms of religion, they still could have retained their national existence and regulation by the law of Moses as a political law. And they could thus have retained their possession of the Canaan land throughout their national age which would have ended with the end of this world. Hence, the promise of an "everlasting possession" meant the possession of it to the end of the age of man on this earth, at the longest.

Verse 9. *Generations.* This here means their posterity. That not only was Abraham to keep this covenant but the generations or posterity to follow were to keep it. That it was not to pass out of use with the death of Abraham.

Verses 10-12. Circumcision was to be a token of the covenant. The word is from *owr* and defined "a signal (literal or figurative), as a flag, beacon, monument, omen, prodigy, evidence, etc."—Strong. The mark of circumcision was decided upon long after Abraham was considered a righteous man (Rom. 4: 11). And to perpetuate the memory of Abraham as a righteous man, God decreed that this

fleshly mark should adhere to his descendants throughout this earthly span. This accounts for the ability of Pharaoh's daughter to recognize the child Moses as a Hebrew (Ex. 2: 6). And it should here be noted that the child was to be circumcised at age of eight days. This rite made the child a one hundred per cent member of that covenant, and later of the Jewish citizenship, regardless of the fact that the infant was irresponsible.

Verse 13. The two classes of persons that were subject to circumcision were those born in Abraham's house or the ones bought with his money. Of course it will be understood that this is independent of the requirement for the rite as enforced under the law of Moses. Only during the lifetime of Abraham and his immediate family would original application hold. But there would be infants born in the posterity of Abraham long after his immediate family had passed away and also his money had ceased to be available. The everlasting covenant is again mentioned which is explained at verses 7, 8 above.

Verse 14. It is obvious that an infant could not be held responsible for any neglect of duty. Hence the threat of negligence mentioned in this verse would apply very logically to the parent or parents in charge of the infant. This will account for the near escape from death that Moses made, recorded in Ex. 4: 24. Notwithstanding the importance of Moses as a person and of the mission on which he was now setting, yet the covenant made with Abraham was so precious that God would have destroyed Moses had he not seen to it that his son was circumcised here. More will be said on this case at the place of occurrence.

Verses 15, 16. *Sarai, Sarah.* The first of these words means "dominative" according to Strong, while the second one he defines as "to abound; resources." Thus the reason for the change is plain to be seen. While she would not cease to dominate to some extent, and which will be discovered later, yet the importance of her as the maternal ancestor of nations and kings entitled her to this second name. That nations were to come from her is seen in chapter 25: 23 and also that kings were to come agrees with what is said of Abraham in verse 6.

Verse 17. *Laughed.* This is from *tsachaq* and defined "to laugh outright (in merriment or scorn); by

implication to sport."—Strong. Hence the word may mean one of criticism or one of "too-good-to-be-true" significance. This latter is evidently the sense in which the writer uses it of Abraham. He had never doubted the promises of God and had acted promptly at the divine command. Hence we must not conclude that he was scorning the promise here. But it seemed so wonderful for a man one hundred years old with a wife ninety years old to have a child. Not that he considered himself as too old to perform the marriage act for it had been only thirteen years since he had begotten Ishmael. But the wonderful nature of the whole proposition stunned him.

Verse 18. There is no evidence here or elsewhere that Abraham was discounting the validity of God's arrangement to have the promise descend through the son of Sarah. But his father love for his own son beamed forth in this verse. He does not ask God to set aside the plan to wait for the son to be born to Sarah, but only asks that some consideration be given to this his own fleshly son. And the request was not displeasing to God as will be seen soon.

Verse 19. This is a repetition of the promise already mentioned. Not only was Abraham to have another son but he was to be the offspring of the wife who had been all her lifetime a barren woman. And the everlasting covenant as mentioned here has already been explained in verses 7, 8 above.

Verse 20. God's love for faithful Abraham was so strong that he promises to bless this son of his also. The twelve princes that he was to beget are named in Chapter 25: 12-16. And he indeed did become a great nation as here promised. The Arabian people came from him and it is well known that they are a great nation.

Verses 21, 22. *Set time next year.* While miracle was necessary to enable Sarah to conceive, yet God allowed nature to take its usual course in the growing of the unborn child. As this part of Sarah's nature was not defective there was no call to resort to miracle here although God could have caused the child to be born immediately after conception. And so we find various instances where childless women were given power to conceive but then waited the usual period for the birth.

Verses 23, 24. We should observe

and admire the promptness of Abraham in carrying out the ordinance of God in this matter. As he is now ninety and nine years of age, and since he is thus 24 years older than he was when first counted faithful and righteous, the argument is that circumcision was not what constituted him the man of faith that he is reputed to be in sacred history. But the ordinance of this fleshly mark was given to him much on the same principle that a soldier is decorated with medals in honor of his services.

Verses 25-27. The statement is made here that Ishmael was thirteen years old when circumcised. The reader has been told also that he was the founder of the nation of Arabians. Some testimony from secular history will be interesting and in order at this point. Following is on the subject. "But as for the Arabians, they circumcise after the 13th year, because Ishmael, the founder of their nation, who was born to Abraham by the concubine, was circumcised at that age," Josephus, Ant. 1-12-2. It might be considered a mere whim for those people governed by the exact age of their founder in attending to the rite of circumcision. But the fact that they do so is another of the corroborating circumstances that point to the truthfulness of the sacred record. And this mark being one of the flesh and yet not inherited, its continuance for the centuries proclaims its origin to have been as divinely declared.

## GENESIS 18

Verse 1. Here, as in other places, we must understand that the Lord appeared to Abraham in the person of the angel, but in the form of man. He was dwelling at this time in the place where he went after giving the choice of locations to Lot. As it was in the heat of the day, about noon or not long after, we understand why he was sitting in the door of the tent. This was the most comfortable place to be at this time. The tent would furnish shade and at the same time, being in the door, there would be some ventilation.

Verse 2. Let it be noticed that three persons are here by Abraham. The statement that they were "by" him is relative and not that they were immediately at his side. This is evident from the fact that he "ran to meet them." The act of bowing himself to the ground was just another instance of his courtesy as practiced by people

of the east. Abraham did not know they were other than men for he offered them the literal comforts of this material life. And, while they are angels, yet when posing in the form of men they can participate in the ordinary habits of men. In short, nothing should confuse us in the way of miracle when performed by celestial beings for all such are under the power and privilege of God.

Verse 3. Notwithstanding he calls them lord yet his offer of material hospitality shows he thinks them human in their real personality. And offering to serve them in this way furnishes an occasion like that referred to in Heb. 13: 1.

Verse 4. *Wash your feet.* Since this subject will often have occasion to be considered in course of this work it will be well here to insert a quotation from a well authenticated work on the same. "*Washing the hands and feet.* As knives and forks were not used in the East, in Scripture times, in eating, it was necessary that the hand, which was thrust into the common dish, should be scrupulously clean; and again, as sandals were ineffectual against the dust and heat of the climate, washing the feet on entering a house was an act both of respect to the company and of refreshment to the traveler. The former of these usages was transformed by the Pharisees of the New Testament age into a matter of ritual observance, Mark 7: 3, and special rules were laid down as to the time and manner of its performance. Washing the feet did not rise to the dignity of a ritual observance except in connection with the service of the sanctuary, Ex. 30: 19, 21. It held a high place, however, among the rites of *hospitality*. Immediately that a guest presented himself at the tent door, it was usual to offer the necessary materials for washing the feet. Gen. 18: 4; 19: 2; 24: 32; 43: 24; Judg. 19: 21. It was a yet more complimentary act, betokening equally humility and affection, if the host himself performed the office for his guest. 1 Sam. 25: 41; 1 Tim. 5: 10. Such a token of hospitality is still occasionally exhibited in the East." — *Smith's Bible Dictionary*, revised edition, p. 736.

Verse 5. *Comfort ye your hearts.* This is largely figurative. That is, while the refreshments offered were literal, yet by partaking of them after a journey on foot, and having had the previous satisfaction of a bath for the

travel-wearied feet, the result would be a comforting of their feelings. *For therefore.* This expression is from a word of various meanings, but its most evident one is as if it said here, "since ye have come, and properly so, to your servant." In other words, Abraham means that as they had for just reason come to him, their servant, he felt inclined to treat them in a manner befitting the occasion. The men gave him their consent to proceed with his acts of hospitality which he does in the following paragraph.

Verses 6-8. The young man was told to "dress" the calf. This is from a word that includes all things necessary to get the article ready for eating. This in the meantime that Sarah was preparing the bread. All this would require some time even though the item of haste is indicated. And thus we are to see that the stay of the men was of some duration. It being in the heat of the day we may see the reason for their eating their meal under the tree.

Verses 9, 10. *According to the time of life.* Read again the remarks on this subject in 17: 21.

Verse 11. This verse means that Sarah had passed the ordinary child-bearing period of life. So that two natural impediments appeared to be against her having any children. She had been barren all her life, to the extent at least that she had not yet been able to conceive. But sometimes a woman appears to be barren for years even though she might experience the usual functioning of the period of life. And it does sometimes occur that a woman will go for years with this kind of experience and then become able to conceive. But even this dim prospect was now denied Sarah since she had passed that age of her life. Therefore, there are now two reasons from a natural viewpoint that make it impossible for her to have children.

Verse 12. *Sarah laughed.* This is from the same word as in 17: 17 at which place the reader should now look for the definition. But since we see below that she denied having laughed we must take the unfavorable part of the definition which is to scorn. The "pleasure" here referred to is evidently that of being a mother; for, contrary to a prevalent sentiment in the world today, being childless was considered a misfortune.

Verses 13, 14. *Is anything too hard for the Lord?* The Bible teaches there are some things God cannot do. But



It is not because they are too hard. It is because it is not right. Since it would be right for a barren woman to be given a child, it would be within the power of God to give it to her. For comments on the time of life see 17: 21.

Verse 15. *Afraid*. One meaning of the original word here is "to revere." It is evident that she was awed by the presence of these honored guests and the fact that she had manifested the attitude she did in her laughing. This respect for them is shown in that she did not deny it the second time.

Verse 16. The meeting and its business having come to a close Abraham continues his respects for his guests by accompanying them part way on their journey. As such an act of friendliness is common even in our day we can see that human nature has long been the same as it is today. In fact, human nature has never changed.

Verse 17. Let it be borne in mind that while God sent three angels in form of men to Abraham, yet one angel alone would represent him. And now, since it has been determined to impart to Abraham some information in addition to what was given him at his tent home, the Lord retains one of the "men" for this purpose while the other two go on toward the next mission which will be seen in next chapter.

Verses 18, 19. God is still formulating his purposes regarding the situation and has not yet broken the word to Abraham. But the basis on which he proposes to confide in him concerning the impending transaction is being made known to the inspired writer of this book. *Command his children and his household after him*. Abraham was living under the Patriarchal Dispensation in which the father was also priest and ruler of the religious conduct of the family.

Verses 20, 21. We believe that God knows everything at all times. Yet, he deals with man on a principle of justice. He will not give credit for well-doing until he sees the evidence of it in man's conduct. Neither will he charge man with misconduct without examining the evidence. See comments on this idea at 11: 5, 6. Hence he will send two of these angels on down to Sodom to make the investigation while the third remains to impart the information referred to in verse 17.

Verse 22. *The men* here refer to the two angels delegated to visit Sodom while *the Lord* refers to the third one remaining to give further information to Abraham.

Verses 23-33. It is not advisable to "read between the lines," especially on matters pertaining to the divine record. But there are some things of which we are sure. Abraham has before this shown concern and love for Lot. This was seen in his unselfish offer as to the choice of pasture land in chapter 13. He showed it further when he followed after the invaders in chapter 14 and recovered Lot and his goods. Now, that the city in which his nephew is residing is to be destroyed he pleads in behalf of his salvation. We have no way of knowing why he ceased to plead at the number ten. However, we may make a few remarks safely. He had been descending in his number of righteous souls by tens. After arriving at the number of ten and the Lord said he would not destroy the city if that many righteous were there, he had reached his limit. The next drop would have come to zero which would have been equivalent to asking the Lord not to destroy the city at all. This he would not do as it would have been a case of putting his own judgment against that of God. Therefore, he merely submits to the will of the Lord and returns to his home. And we may further conclude safely that as God said he would not destroy the city if ten righteous were there, yet did destroy it, not that many righteous were there. But Lot was there with his own family and they were considered righteous since the Lord made provision for their escape from the wicked city. This again being a testimony that Lot should not have been charged with wrong in chapter 13.

### GENESIS 19

Verse 1. Note that two angels are here mentioned as coming to Sodom, while in the previous chapter three came to Abraham. Also, in the previous instance they were called "men" and here are called "angels." This is because the angels of God appear in the form of men thus furnishing the opportunity to entertain angels unawares as stated in Heb. 13: 1. *Gate*. This is from *SHAHAR* and defined "an opening, i. e., door or gate." Thus the word would not be restricted to a movable piece to be closed although it could mean that. But its significance

in this case is that these angels were approaching the city at the usual place of entry. Just why Lot was at this time sitting at this place is not made clear. However, it was often the case that men of some standing were allowed to occupy a position at this place. Lot accorded these persons the usual courtesy in practice in the east by bowing with his face toward the ground.

Verse 2. Lot offers hospitality to them. They make as if they will go on. This, no doubt, to bring out further the evidence of his earnestness for we know that it was their mission to this city to bring Lot out of it. Among the items of hospitality we again notice mention of feet washing. For a treatment of this subject see comments at 18: 4. Lot thinks their mission is one that merely calls for them to pass through the city for he states that they may arise early in the morning to resume their journey.

Verse 3. Eating was one of the prominent items of social recognition in olden times. It was not for the purpose of satisfying the needs of the body only, but to betoken the social fellowship. The student is reminded of the advantage to take note, as he goes on through the study of the Bible, that this eating together will often be given prominent place in the courtesies of people coming together. *Baked unleavened bread.* This is significant. The word means "sweet or unsour through fermentation." Since it was then in the close of the day and Lot thought they were to leave early in the morning he would reasonably conclude he did not have time to wait for leavened bread. The angels (in the form of men) partook of the food Lot offered them.

Verses 4, 5. *Know them.* See the references and comments at chapter 4: 1 on the meaning of this expression. Except that in this case now before us the men wanted to commit immorality with these men, as they thought them to be. In this place we have the subject of sodomy introduced by the scriptures. Today the word "sodomy" means the unnatural act of immorality between men. But the reason such name is applied to that subject is not through any particular meaning of the word. But since the most outstanding instance of this evil was in the city of Sodom, it came to have that name. Had the most prominent city with that evil been some other one and had Lot been in some other city than Sodom,

then that evil would have taken a name based on the name of whatever city that had been.

Verses 6, 7. Lot's anxiety for the safety and respect of his invited guests can be seen by his going out to the men and closing the door after him. He calls them by the name of brethren evidently because they were fellow citizens of the city.

Verse 8. *Have not known man.* Again this refers to the intimacy between sexes so that they are virgins at this time. The offer of his daughters to these fiends can be explained only on the principle that "of two evils, choose the less." As it appears now, something terrible is about to happen. If these citizens of Sodom are so moved by carnal desire as to make the demand they just expressed then they will commit an act of violence if not satisfied in some way. As Lot sees the situation there is no alternative but to give them either his daughters or the guests. He feels under a special obligation to protect them because he had invited them to come; yea, had urged them to do so when it appeared they were about to go on. But they were guests of this home and by his invitation. This is what he meant by the words *for therefore came they.* See comments on this form of expression at 18: 5. That is, they have come under his roof very properly and therefore are entitled to proper treatment.

Verse 9. *Stand back.* This was said to Lot. Then *This one fellow came in to sojourn and he will needs be a judge.* These words they said among themselves by way of angry consultation. Their reasoning was that Lot was supposed to be only a sojourner or temporary dweller among them, and yet now he presumes to be a judge over them. This incensed them so that they next address themselves to Lot thus, *now will we deal worse with thee than with them.* Then they tried to attack him. They were disappointed at not being able to satisfy their unnatural lust on these visitors. And disappointed lust produces the worst kind of revenge. Witness the case of the wife of Potiphar in her wickedness against Joseph in 39: 7-20.

Verses 10, 11. Instead of needing protection the angels now become protectors of their host. Being celestial beings they possessed supernatural power. Thus they not only rescued Lot from the hands of the men but smote them with blindness so that they could

not find the door to further their wicked design.

Verse 12. Again we see in the form of language used in this verse that God often speaks to man as if he were a man also. This inquiry about the family members of Lot does not imply that he had all of the relations named. Neither does it mean that the angels could not have known the facts. But in order to make the order of the occasion so complete that no item could be overlooked this complete list of possible members is named. We know from what follows that Lot had no sons although they are suggested here. And as to sons-in-law, that will be discussed below.

Verse 13. Since the fire that finally did destroy the city came down from heaven after the angels had gone away we are to take their statement on this point to mean that they had been sent to announce the destruction of the city. See a similar use of such an expression in Ezk. 43: 3 with the marginal reading.

Verse 14. *Married his daughters.* All of the facts pertaining to the family of Lot show that he had just two children, daughters, and they at this time had never "known" men, which means they were never married in the usual sense of that word. But this is a good place to offer some facts on the subject of marriage in its relation to engagement or espousal. In Biblical times an espousal was considered so binding upon the parties involved that the agreement was often referred to as a marriage, and the parties thus engaged were often spoken of as husbands and wives. As a specific instance, consider the case of Joseph and Mary. In Matt. 1: 18 we read that Mary was espoused to Joseph but had not yet come to him. While in this state of virginity she was found with child. Joseph did not understand it and thought her to have been unfaithful to him and was preparing to "put her away." But the angel of the Lord appeared to him and told him to take unto him his "wife." And this expression although they had never had any relations. So that we are to conclude that an espoused person was under such strong moral obligation that the term husband or wife was used freely. A further consideration here is that Joseph was preparing to "put her away" which is a term used in case of married persons. All of which adds up to the conclusion that an engaged person in Bible times was as much bound morally as one ac-

tually married. And all this further agrees with the situation in case of Lot and his plea with these sons-in-law. For it would be very unnatural for a man to be so concerned about the men who were living with his daughters that he would urge them to flee the danger of the city and say nothing to the daughters themselves. But the record tells us that these men regarded the warning of Lot as mockery. This again indicates that they had not yet taken the daughters into intimate relationship, else they would have listened.

Verse 15. *Which are here.* This might mislead some to conclude that Lot might have daughters that were not "here" and thus contradict the statements of preceding paragraph. But the word "here" is from MATSA and one of the words that Strong uses to define it is "acquire." This expression then could properly be made to read "thy two daughters which are acquired." It would refer merely to the fact that Lot had acquired two daughters since starting a family.

Verse 16. *Lingered.* This means to be reluctant, not that he questioned the necessity of leaving. But he had lived in the city for a while and it was but natural to be thus hesitant about leaving. Besides, he could not realize as fully as they, how urgent the case was. As the statement was made that the Lord was merciful to him at this time we would conclude that no grievous fault is to be found with him.

Verse 17. Here is a four-fold commandment in the form of details. There can be no mistaking the order. Not only are they to leave the city, but pass beyond the plain. Also, keep on going till they have reached the mountain and while doing so they are not to give way to curiosity to the extent of looking back.

Verses 18-21. If Abraham was permitted to "argue" with the Lord about the city of Sodom and yet not be entirely rejected, it is no great thing if Lot makes a plea like this. He does not make any request regarding the wicked city nor its punishment. But is concerned about his own comfort and safety outside the city. And since the city he requests privilege of entering is a little one he feels that not much would be left existing even if God were to permit it to survive. Not only was the city a little one but was not far away. So the Lord permits him to have that exception and go to the little city nearer than the mountain.

Verse 22. While God would not promise Abraham to spare the city if less than ten righteous souls were in it, yet neither would he destroy it while four souls were in it. Hence the angel tells Lot that nothing can be done until he leaves.

Verse 23. The two angels came to Sodom in the evening. (Verse 1.) They remained in Lot's house over night. (Verse 15.) Then some time the day following they got Lot started on his way to safety. And it was sunrise when Lot entered Zoar, which means that he had been traveling all the day and night. This indicates the statement of Lot that Zoar was "near to flee unto" is a relative one.

Verse 24. *Brimstone*. This is from COPHRITH and defined "properly, cypress-resin." It is the exudation of a tree similar to the gopher and the material is highly inflammable. And then the fire that was sent down at the same time would ignite this resin and produce a very high tempered combustion. Stating that it was rained down out of heaven means simply that it came down from the sky as a boy would call it when speaking of his kite in the sky. The same word for sky is often translated heaven in the Bible. There was nothing supernatural in the qualities of these materials rained down on the wicked cities. The thing that was supernatural was the fact of producing them in such great quantities and bringing them from the sky. It is therefore a miraculous fire.

Verse 25. Such a devastating fire would leave a country in the condition here described whether brought about miraculously or otherwise. But the significant thing in this case is that no natural resources could have produced the amount of said materials as used here. Hence the Lord sent them from above.

Verse 26. *Pillar*. From NETSIB and defined "something stationary, i. e., a prefect, military post, a statue."—Strong. Since a statue is usually a form of some person, we should conclude that Lot's wife retained her form and size after being cursed as she was here. Salt has been used and referred to in various places and in many kinds of significations. When used in connection with judgments against some person or place or thing it designates desolation. Nothing grows where salt exists. But also, it has the significance of perpetuity, so that in the case of Lot's wife, turning her into a pillar of salt would denote that her folly was

to be perpetuated in the memory of the world. Hence we have our Lord telling us to "remember Lot's wife." (Luke 17: 32.) We do not know why she looked back and any attempt to state why must be speculation. What we do know is that she disobeyed one of the four commands uttered by the angels and was punished. And we may also observe that the material into which she was turned was the same as that which became a permanent condition of the region previously occupied by the wicked cities.

Verses 27, 28. In this passage we can learn that Abraham had gone with the angels as near the site of the impending destruction as to make the smoke thereof visible. The fire and brimstone came down from heaven but the smoke came up from the earth. So we see that the materials composing the cities, with the houses and people and all that pertained to them, were set on fire and continued to burn until they were completely consumed. Furthermore, as this community was also naturally infested with the material known as slimepits or asphaltitis, a highly inflammable substance, we can see why there would be this rising of the smoke so high. See notes on 14: 3.

Verse 29. Here God's care and love for Abraham can be observed by his sending his nephew Lot out of the destruction.

Verse 30. It is interesting to note that Lot did the very thing that the angels at first told him to do. However, the fright of the coming fire is not present here as it was before. Another thing to be considered is this. Zoar was one of the cities in the region that should have been destroyed, or near it. And doubtless the people of that city were wicked like the ones in Sodom. That being so, they would have made the very existence of Lot in the city a continual uneasiness. He had seen what the men of Sodom wished to do unto the newcomers, and they might do the same to him. So he became fearful and fled the place and became a cave dweller in the mountains.

Verses 31-36. The sincerity of these women in their statement about there being no man in the earth to come in unto them should not be questioned. It would be almost necessary to conclude there were some human beings in the city of Zoar from whence they had fled because it is stated that Lot was afraid to remain there. That could not have been because of the wildness



of the country for the same would have been true of the mountain and the cave. Besides, a city would not be called such without people living in it. But such character of men as would have been in that place would not encourage the idea of association with them. Furthermore, their father was with Abraham when he was instructed to separate from all people except the ones pertaining to the promise of becoming a great nation. Hence these daughters would not consider the men of Zoar as proper to be admitted into their family tree. Another thing to be considered is that even if there were men in Zoar, they would not be any relation to the family and hence to have children by them would not be "preserving seed of their father." And so, as the situation appears to them the only way to perpetuate the blood line of their father was to obtain children by him. And the desire to reproduce must be commended in them, since that is often scoffed at today. But it was in keeping with the will of God. We should conclude therefore that the motive these girls had for their act was a pure one and not from lasciviousness. A further observation we may make here is that in order to get their father into this plan they thought they would have to get him under the influence of wine. This is a concession from them to the righteous principles of life which they had previously seen in him. Also, the whole transaction shows that when a man is drunk he does not realize the nature of his conduct. Since God ever afterward manifested a kindly regard for the descendants of this occurrence it would show that he was not too critical of it. However, we need not conclude that any miracle was performed in order to have it turn out as the girls planned. It was their own doing and the time for carrying it out was set by them. They would certainly know something about the time considered most favorable for conception and would choose said time. There is no record of the life of these girls after this so that we cannot charge them with having started a life of loose conduct by this experience. In fact this is the last we will read of the direct personal life of Lot. He here passes out of the picture except when referred to historically.

Verses 37, 38. The Moabites and Ammonites will figure much in the history of later years. They became great nations but very evil. And, while at times certain leniency was shown them for the sake of their common head, Lot,

yet as a people they were opposed by the Lord and at times had severe punishment meted out as will be seen.

## GENESIS 20

Verse 1. This region mentioned as the place where Abraham journeyed is in the direction toward Egypt. Gerar was a city of the Philistines, so we will learn that he was among that people. They were destined to play a long and important part in the history of God's people. They descended from Ham as will be seen in chapter 10:6-14.

Verse 2. Here Abraham used the same plan he did in Egypt concerning his wife. See comments at 12:11-15 on this matter. *Took Sarah*. This is a word of wide application and must be interpreted in all given cases by the immediate context. In the one at hand it could mean only that he selected her with a view of finally making her his own. But he had not yet formally "taken" her since we see later that he had not used her as his wife.

Verse 3. *Dead man*. The word is defined as being both literal and figurative. As the person of the king had not been touched we are left with the conclusion that it is used figuratively here. But it also means that if he continues in the plan that he has started then he will become literally a dead man. One of the principles on which God would cause this is expressed in his promise to Abraham to "bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee." (Chapter 12:3.) *Man's wife*. These words are respectively from BAHAL, BAWAL. They are defined, also respectively, "a master; hence a husband, or (figuratively) owner (often used with another noun in modifications of this latter sense)" "a primitive root; to be master; hence to marry."—Strong. This is the only place where "wife" is from this Hebrew word. It is a stronger or more specific word than is generally used and translated "wife." Generally the original word would not apply to a married woman any more than to an unmarried one. Thus ownership is the outstanding idea in the original word. But the motive for owning or wanting to own a woman in all cases must be indicated by the context and cannot be determined by the dictionary definition of the word. But the Hebrew word used in this single case at hand is one which carries the idea of intimate relation.

Verse 4. *Slay a righteous nation!* The king could have used the word

"righteous" only as regards this present case of this strange woman. He knew he had not knowingly done wrong to this man and his wife and therefore was righteous as to that. And also, since he personally would have been the only guilty one, the mentioning of slaying a nation could have been only on the basis that destroying an important person in it, its king, would be to destroy the nation.

Verse 5. Both Abraham and his wife told the same story to the king. This was in accordance with an agreement they had made when they left their home land. As to why it was thought necessary to use this plan see Chapter 12: 11. Even if Abimelech had a wife or wives already, his claim of innocence here could be allowed on the basis of the accepted practice in those days with regard to marriage. In other words, neither in this case nor the one in chapter 12 was any accusation made against the king on the ground that he already was married. But it was for taking another man's wife.

Verse 6. In preventing the king from intimacy with Sarah God said it was from sinning "against me." Since Abraham was a chosen man of God, any sin against him would be counted as against God. This is the same principle Christ taught concerning treatment of his disciples. (Matt. 25: 40, 45.)

Verse 7. *For he is a prophet.* Mention of Abraham's being a prophet was to show why his prayer for the king would avail and not as a reason why Sarah should be restored. Had she been the wife of any other man it would have been wrong for the king to take her. But the prayer of a prophet would avail more than that of another. This is a principle taught in James 5: 16. And God here threatens that if the man's wife is not restored both he and all his would be destroyed. But this threat had not been made previous to this. Therefore the comments about the "nation" in verse 4 still hold.

Verse 8. Abimelech proceeds to make the necessary adjustment. He first gives instructions to his people since he feels responsible for their actions and safety.

Verses 9, 10, 11. He next complains to Abraham and calls for explanation. In his answer he states that he did not think the people of that place feared God and would therefore slay him. As much as to say that when people com-

mit murder it is because they do not fear God. And yet, while they would not refrain from murder if they had not the fear of God, they would not take a man's wife unless he were out of the way. See comments on this idea in Chapter 12: 12, 13.

Verse 12. Sometimes a smile is made over this "quibble" of Abraham. But there is something more than just an excuse in his explanation. As they had a common father they would be considered nearer than if it were the other way because the family line always descended through the father's side.

Verse 13. This is the mutual understanding between them referred to above. Let it be noted here that Abraham refers to his first experience with God that he was caused to "wander." This word is from TAWAN and defined "a primitive root; to vacillate, i. e., reel or stray (literally or figuratively); also causative of both."—Strong. Now when one vacillates or strays we generally think of him as being a man with no fixed purpose and thus as one to be censured. But in this case it is stated that "God caused" this wandering to be done. And the fact that God caused Abraham to vacillate or stray or go about in an apparent aimless manner it would be evidence of still more faith in God for him to stick to God then than if he could see a fixed objective. And the motive which Abraham presents to his wife for following this arrangement is that it will be a kindness to him. This is a high motive for a wife to feel toward her husband.

Verses 14, 15. The conduct of Abimelech here shows that he was sincere in his expressions of regret over this sad affair. He makes up to Abraham for the injury that he had unwittingly done by a material payment. Also by offer of continued hospitality as a dweller in the land. No resentment or spitefulness is manifested.

Verse 16. In speaking to Sarah Abimelech uses the same word concerning Abraham that she had used at the first, and calls him her brother. He ignores the truth that he had recently learned, that Abraham was her husband. But, being her brother, she must look to him for protection from the gaze of men and thus be a covering (figurative) for her eyes as a shield from the populace as they would wish to look upon her. And in this ironic language to her she was "reproved."

Verses 17, 18. In this passage we see

that God does at times bring punishment on a king's subjects in reprisal for the wrong act of their sovereign. And here we also see the thing fulfilled that God promised Abimelech, that Abraham was to pray for him and that the prayer would be effective.

### GENESIS 21

Verses 1, 2. The word "visit" as used here means to make some practical contact with the person for the purpose of bestowing either a favorable or unfavorable result. And the connection here shows it to have the favorable meaning. Since Sarah was unable naturally to conceive, God would need to visit her to overcome that defect. Then after the conception had taken place the usual process of nature for nourishing the unborn child would be used. For this subject see comments at chapter 17: 21, 22.

Verse 3. Notice how particular the writer is to tell us which one of his sons is being considered. It was the one whom Sarah bore, not the one born of Hagar. And we are reminded that he called this particular son by the name of Isaac. This was to let us know that it was in fulfillment of the announcement made at chapter 17: 19.

Verse 4. True to his wonted obedience to God he circumcised his son. Not only so, but observed the minute detail of having it done on the right day, the eighth. That was considered an important feature of the ordinance. Not all circumcised persons could claim that. The son of Moses could not, but that was through neglect. And the great number of men crossing the Jordan into Canaan could not claim it but that was on account of things they could not control. (Josh. 5: 5, 6.) But Paul could claim it. (Phil. 3: 5.)

Verse 5. For purpose of easily locating it this verse should be marked since it tells us the age of Abraham when his son Isaac was born.

Verse 6. *Laugh*. This is from *tsachaq* and defined "to laugh outright (in merriment or scorn); by implication to sport."—Strong. The context indicates the favorable part of the definition hence it means that Sarah will be merry and that her friends will be merry with her.

Verse 7. There is no evidence that any miracle was performed on Sarah after she had conceived. Therefore her ability to give suck to her child shows further that her general female functions were normal.

Verse 8. The feast was in celebration of the fact that the child had reached the age when he could live on solid food. So a meal of this kind would be appropriate as betokening the glad day when this unexpected child had lunched out successfully on the sea of life. All indications point to the idea that an atmosphere of exultation was prevailing on this occasion, and that Isaac was the occasion for the joy, shared of course by his mother who had been so unfortunate all her life.

Verse 9. *Mocking*. This is from the same word as "laugh" in verse 6 above. And of course the connection shows that the unfavorable part of the definition is to be applied. So that it means that Sarah saw this son of Hagar laughing in scorn. It is not hard to understand why he would be inclined to do this. He is 14 years old and has been the only and thus favored son of his father all these years. Selfishness would now induce him to resent this rival for the affection of the father. But it is as easy to understand the reaction of Sarah on seeing this conduct of Ishmael. She had on the former occasion resented the attitude of Hagar toward her at the time she realized she was to be a mother by Abraham. But that had been somewhat patched up and now it is all stirred up again. That was too much. And in her resentment over the situation she makes the famous statement to follow.

Verse 10. This is the circumstance and the statement cited by Paul in Gal. 4: 30 in his discussion of the subject of the new covenant. There is no indication that Sarah knew anything about what this declaration of hers would mean some day. But it is another one of the many interesting instances recorded in the Bible where God made use of some statement or action of man. Whether he always caused the statement or action to come we do not know. But that would not prevent him from making use of it in his later dealing with his people. At present this seems to be a very natural occurrence of a natural mother in her jealousy for her child. But it proved to be the basis for one of the most unique arguments of the apostle Paul regarding the religion of Christ coming to displace the Sinaite one.

Verse 11. Abraham was a natural and loving father. Ishmael was just as near to him from a fleshly view point as any son could be. Now it is

demanding that he cast him out from his home. Had he been left entirely to his own inclination, we could not say what he would have done as to Sarah's demands. But he was not left thus.

Verse 12. Thus we see that his natural impulse will not be the guiding factor in this situation. God tells him to hearken to the voice of Sarah. And a motive that is more important than mere affection is presented and that is the fact that his seed was to pass down through the line of Isaac.

Verse 13. But he is now left out in the cold as far as consolation is concerned over Ishmael. God here repeats what he had already promised, that the son of the bond woman was to become a great nation. And the endearing idea is added that because he is Abraham's seed this promise is made and will be kept.

Verse 14. Still acting under the impulse of a father, Abraham makes provision for the comfort of the child and obeys the command of God to send Hagar out of his home. *Bottle*. This is from CHEMETH and means "a skin bottle (as tied up)." Bottles as known today were not known then and vessels composed of skins of animals and drawn together were as nearly tight as they knew how to make them in ancient times. That this contained a considerable amount of drinking water is indicated by the statement that Abraham put it on her shoulder. He caused her and the lad to leave him and become a wanderer. It is a pathetic scene but will be finally overruled by the Lord for the improvement of the divine plan.

Verse 15. The word "cast" here is defined to have both a literal and figurative meaning. Since this boy was 14 years old we would not make the literal application of the word. But rather, that she caused the child to repose under the shrub. He is doubtless becoming weak from want of water and the shade will provide a little comfort to him during his hours of decline and death as she now is certain will come to pass.

Verse 16. To the mind of the writer this is one of the most touching scenes in history. Let all the background and accompanying facts he woven into the picture. A slave was once asked to admit her master into her intimacy for the purpose of bearing him a child. The joy of finding herself an expectant, and that, too, by her master, was

so great that she was unthoughtful enough to incur the mistreatment of her mistress. Her joy was then turned to sadness by being driven from her home. But that sadness was reversed and she was induced to return to that home and accept what might be her lot there. She was also given the promise that her son was to become a great nation. The years rolled on after the birth of the child. Finally there came an unexpected (to her) change in circumstances. Her barren mistress became with child and at the proper time gave birth to a son. Naturally this son of the slave was pushed aside and finally now cast out together with his mother. The wide wilderness is her only home and its uncertain products her only sustenance. Moreover, the child who is her only possession now is dying of thirst and she is helpless. She cannot endure the immediate sight of the pangs to accompany his final hours. She goes away out of sight. But not too far, some beast might disturb him in his agonies and make the closing scene more fearful than only the famishing for water would. So she goes the distance of a bowshot. The distance one could shoot a bow would be far enough that she could not hear his cries, yet near enough to watch. And in this situation she sits down and weeps.

Verse 17. The lad had been crying from anguish and God heard it. He intervenes and calls to Hagar. She is given the consolation that the Lord recognizes where the lad is. Not that God only knows "where" he is in the sense of mere physical location. The Lord knows all locations at all times in that sense. But he fully realizes where he is as regards to his plight, and intends to meet the emergency.

Verse 18. When she is told to lift up the lad and hold him in her hand we are to understand that weakness had overcome him from the want of water. A lad of 14 years would be able to stand and handle himself if in a normal condition. But now she is told to hold him up and in direct connection with posture God repeats the promise he had already made to her that he was to become a great nation. Thus in emergency God often comes with his words of cheer to offset the gloom of the occasion. It is better to permit one to have the experience of suffering or unpleasantness and then accompany it with a sustaining grace than to favor him by entire freedom. So we are told of the experience of



Paul as recorded in 2 Cor. 12: 8, 9. Instead of removing the thorn God gave him the support of his grace.

Verse 19. *Opened*. This is from a word meaning "to be observant." Thus the well was in seeing distance and range all the time but she had not observed it until God called her attention to it. The anguish of mind would be enough for this mother here to overlook all else than what was in line with her son who was dying yonder.

Verse 20. Becoming an archer would fit in appropriately with the wilderness in which he lived with his mother. And this kind of dwelling place was in keeping with the prediction that had been made of him before he was born.

Verse 21. It was very natural for his mother to select an Egyptian for a wife for him since she was of that nation herself. See Chapter 16: 3.

Verses 22-24. Our story now comes back to Abraham who is dwelling in the land of Abimelech, and by his invitation as seen in previous chapter. The prestige that Abraham has with the king of Gerar is such that he wishes to assure himself of his own satisfaction in the future. So he requests some formal stipulation touching their mutual relations. Abraham agrees and joins him with an oath that was to bind each to the welfare and peace of the other.

Verses 25, 26. But it was not long until Abraham thought the agreement between them had been violated. He complained that a well of his had been taken possession of by his servants through violence. But Abimelech explains that he knew nothing about the circumstance. He also makes a mild complaint that Abraham had not informed him about this sooner, implying that he would have made proper adjustment had he known it.

Verses 27-32. A strengthening of the peace ties between them is now sought in a more formal act than had been used before. And to give visible indication that the well belonged to Abraham he devotes things of value, sheep and oxen, to the possession of Abimelech. In other words, Abraham is willing to go "more than half way" in his willingness to make all things right and to show that he is not wanting to obtain something for nothing. And the extra seven lambs set apart to themselves constituted merely an additional formal ceremony to make the covenant binding. The whole ac-

tion gives us a lesson of unselfishness on the part of Abraham. It teaches that in matters of material interest and where no moral principle is involved, it is better to give the other fellow the benefit of the doubt, even if it makes me the loser. This kind of principle is what Paul taught in 1 Cor. 6: 7.

Verses 33, 34. The text says that Abraham planted a grove. But the margin says "tree." The lexicon gives us for "grove" the word *ESHEL* which is defined "a tamarisk tree."—Strong. The word has been rendered in the A.V. in various places by both tree and grove. The context would need to be considered in each case. But we know that in the Patriarchal Dispensation the only visible headquarters to represent God in worship was an altar. See chapter 8: 20; 12: 7; 13: 18; 22: 9 and many others. It is necessary to infer that this tree was as a location and shelter for the altar and thus that a single tree is meant in this place. Later on, when God's people came into their promised land and found it infested with idolaters and that they had their groves planted and arranged for the purpose of this heathen worship, God told them to destroy these groves. But the only formal calling on the name of God in those times was in connection with an altar, and that could be built in any convenient place, whether under a tree, on a hill or some other place. Abraham's sojourn was continued in the Philistine land many days. This was in accordance with the invitation which the king of the land gave him. (Chapter 20: 15.)

## GENESIS 22

Verse 1. *Tempt*. This is from *NACAH* and defined "a primitive root; to test; by implication to attempt."—Strong. The word has been rendered elsewhere in the Old Testament by, adventure, essay, prove, try. All this agrees with the way Paul words it as given in Heb. 11: 17. He says he was "tried." James says that God cannot be tempted "with evil." (1: 13.) Then adds "neither tempteth he any man." But the connection shows it means neither tempts he any man with evil. But here is a case where God is going to try Abraham's faith.

Verse 2. The wording of this verse is in keeping with the thought just discussed in the preceding verse. Many things are said here that could not have been said as a matter of information only. Abraham knew he had

only one son of promise. He already knew the name of that son. And he did not need to be told that he loved him. Yet all these expressions are made to him. It thus cannot be said that Abraham plunged into obedience at the command of God before he realized the enormity of it. The critic might have said that after receiving the command and even after the instant of starting to obey, on second thought he was sure to reconsider and hesitate. But all these endearing thoughts are placed before him at the same time of the command. So that all the while he was making his preparations he was aware of the fact that the command involved this beloved son of his. That it was his only son as far as the great promise is concerned. That a miracle had been performed in the first place to make this son possible. That although he had a son by his slave, yet God had already stipulated that the promise is to be fulfilled through this only son. Therefore, the only way to account for his unswerving obedience here is in his abiding faith in God and his power to perform any promise he should make. And thus his actions here cannot be laid to any lack of love for his son nor to any underrating of the value of the same. And the strain of going through with the ordeal of slaying his son, even while firmly believing that he would again immediately be restored to him again must be considered as great. But all of the exaggerating speeches that have been made by speculators in describing the awful anguish that this father must have suffered at the thought of having to give up his only son and also be a disappointed and fatherless man the rest of his life—all such is to imply that Abraham did not believe that his son was to be restored to him again. *Land of Moriah*. This would seem to be an indefinite location. But the name is found in only one other place besides this and the lexicon defines the word as being a specific mount. But from the view point of Abraham's location now the particular point at which the offering was to be made would be designated to him later on. And the offering was not to be one that merely would separate him from his son, but it was to be a "burnt" offering. This would require that his son be slain. Not only so, but he must do the slaying himself, all of which makes this test a complete one.

Verse 3. But he is going to stand the test. He does not delay unneces-

sarily. He arises early in the morning and prepares for the journey. All things needed for the service are taken as they journey.

Verse 4. Somewhere along the journey God told him his destination, for it says he saw the place afar off.

Verse 5. They are now as near the scene of the service as the servants need to be. They are commanded to tarry at that place with the beast. And here is the statement that expresses Abraham's faith in the restoration of his son to him. Not only that he will live again, but it will not be any great length of time, for he expects these servants to be waiting when they return. Notice carefully the wording. He says "I and the lad" when mentioning the ones to go and worship and does not change the subject of his sentence when he says "come again" to you. All this shows he believed that his son would return with him. This faith as to the restoration of his son was what made him proceed as described at verse 2 above. *Worship*. This is from SHACHAH and defined "a primitive root; to depress, i. e., prostrate (especially reflexively in homage to royalty or God):"—Strong. This definition of the word certainly is appropriate in its various parts. The service will undoubtedly be one of natural depression and yet one of respect to God else it would not be offered.

Verse 6. We do not know how old Isaac was at this time. But we know he was old enough to carry the wood necessary for the amount of fire used in burning a body. As an additional clew we may consider that in previous chapter Ishmael is old enough to be given a wife. It is true that he was 14 years older than Isaac. But at that, he would still have been enough older that it would leave enough years to give Isaac and make him a lad of some years. Furthermore, he is old enough to reason on matters before him as will be seen in next verse. And yet with all this, we have not the slightest intimation that he resisted his father's attempts to make a sacrifice of him. Sometimes a reply to this is attempted by saying he must have resisted since his father had to bind him. But this is an unthoughtful quibble. The strength he would have needed to bind him would have been enough for him to slay him.

Verse 7. Of course Isaac had often seen his father perform the service of the altar and knew there must be the

victim. At present all things are at hand except the beast. Thus the question he asked his father in this verse is a logical one.

Verse 8. When the conversation of this verse took place Abraham did not yet know that he was not to slay his son. And we must not explain his answer to Isaac as in the nature of evasion or "stalling" for that would be entirely out of harmony with his wonted frankness and he would also have known that the evasion would soon be known. The statement therefore must be understood, when considered on the basis of elimination, as follows. He expected to slay his son and burn him. Next he expected to see him raised out of the ashes alive and both of them return to the men and to their home. But all this would be possible only through the miraculous intervention of God. And by doing all this which would retain the plan to make a great nation of Abraham through this particular son, at the same time allow the use of that son for the present occasion, it would literally be God who was literally providing himself a living body for a sacrifice. The only feature of the remark that might be considered not literal is in calling Isaac a lamb. And yet, since a lamb was a young of the animal, Isaac could be called a lamb without too much of a strain on the meaning of the word. It has been suggested by some expositors that Abraham was speaking by inspiration and that he really looked forward to the offering of God's son as a sacrifice. But this is a speculation. Nothing of that sort is ever afterward attributed to him. We may be permitted to say that the words of Abraham were fulfilled in the sacrifice of Christ. But that would be our observation without any specific statement of the inspired writing for a basis. All moralizers on the things of the scriptures should be careful not to confuse their own comparisons drawn from circumstances striking their interests with the ones authorized by the scriptures themselves. Neither may we explain this verse by supposing that Abraham was inspired as a prophet and saw beforehand the ram caught in the thicket. For in that case he would have known that his son was not actually to be slain. And that would have prevented an inspired man from saying what we read in Heb. 11: 19.

Verse 9. Why did Abraham bind his son if he was not resisting? Well, we

might ask why men are bound when they are about to be executed? The rope or gun or current would produce death just as certainly without the binding. But decency and the feeling calling for as little disorder as possible suggests the binding. After the death stroke would have been delivered the body would involuntarily resist death and put up a struggle that would have interrupted the procedure of the sacrifice. Hence it was the decent thing to do. And of course so far no fire has been applied to the wood. That would be done after the victim was dead.

Verse 10. As far as Abraham was permitted to go was to reach for the knife and take it. Just how much motion toward his son had taken place we do not know.

Verses 11, 12. Here again we see an angel comes to represent the Lord. He is near enough that he can be heard from the sky and intercedes to stay the slaying. The reason given why he will not be required to go farther is that *now I know*, etc. This expression must be understood in the light of God's usual dealing with man. In the physical sense of knowledge God knows everything. But as it regards man's credit with God, he does not know anything until we show him. We must show it by our works. This is the same principle taught in James 2: 18. In fact that writer refers to the very instance we here have under consideration as illustration of his point.

Verse 13. This verse was referred to briefly above. We can see many items in this case that make comparisons; and we may go ahead and make such comparisons. But no inspired writer has referred to this circumstance in that sense and we should be slow to make more out of it than the inspired writers have made.

Verse 14. The name of the place where this service was performed is Moriah. But Abraham gave it a symbolical name and the margin says the word means "the Lord will provide." The lexicon gives about the same definition. If that is the true meaning of the word it can easily be seen why he gave it this name. An unexpected provision has here been made for the situation and this suggests a name with an appropriate meaning. But again let not the reader conclude that Abraham had this in mind when he made the answer he did to his son's inquiry. See again comments at verse 8.

Verse 15. This calling to Abraham the second time out of heaven means as regards the service in this mount, for he had spoken to him many more times than two.

Verses 16-18. Here are two of the original promises repeated to Abraham, that of becoming a numerous nation and of the seed that was to bless the whole world. *Heaven*. This is the second heaven and referred to in chapter 1: 20. You may see 1 Kings 8: 30 for the third. *Possess the gate of his enemies*. This prediction was fulfilled in the book of Joshua. Referring to the "gate" of the enemy is in view of the fact that most important cities were walled and had to be occupied by entering through the gate. And of course that could not be done without military victory.

Verse 19. The original party now returns and Abraham takes up his residence at Beer-sheba. This word means "the well of the oath" and has been rendered noted by some pacts formed in connection with it. See chapter 21: 24-31.

Verses 20-23. Just a little family record that is of interest to us because of two names that will be brought before us more prominently after this. They are Bethuel and Rebekah. In this group we can see the blood kinship of the ones connected with the later history of Abraham's descendants.

Verse 24. Here is the first mention of a concubine. It is sometimes thought that a concubine must be thought of as an immoral mistress. But in those olden times when plurality of wives was tolerated as lawful this view of a concubine cannot be correct. Therefore we must conclude that the principal difference between a concubine and a "wife" is one of temporal or property difference. Their property rights were not equal to those of a wife. In fact, so close to the wife in meaning is the word that they are sometimes spoken of as a man's wives. As an instance, in 2 Sam. 16: 22 we read that Absalom went in to his father's concubines. But in 20: 3 of that book, when David came to punish them it says they were left to live in "widowhood." That term could apply only in the sense of having been a wife.

### GENESIS 23

Verses 1, 2. The age of Sarah at death is the principal fact to mark at this passage. It had been 62 years

since she left her native land. See 12: 4 and 17: 17.

Verse 3. These sons of Heth were some of the early inhabitants of Canaan and descended from Ham.

Verse 4. This land rightfully belongs to Abraham since it was appropriated to him in the Lord's mind when he told him to leave his native land for a land that he would show him. But God intends that the people of the patriarch shall possess it after a military struggle. And pending that event he will allow these invaders to hold a form of possession in it. And as long as that is the case Abraham will not be satisfied to have permanent use of it without due compensation. Hence he proposes to buy it. And notice the statement that he wishes to bury his dead out of his sight. There is no indication that God intended for human beings to be disposed of after death other than by some form of burial, not by cremation.

Verses 5, 6. The conversation here shows that Abraham had a good standing among these heathen people. They recognized his greatness and willingly offered the use of their burying places for his dead. Even would allow him to take his choice. This recommends him to our consideration as a man of such righteous principles as to produce a good influence among the people.

Verses 7-9. Abraham avails himself of their offer to the extent of making his choice of places he wishes to use. It is the cave of Machpelah. But he still insists that it is to be transferred to him upon a set price. He does not ask any concession from the actual value of the place. In other words, he will not abuse his standing among them by even seeking to obtain the land at some "reduction" of price. Instead, he says he wants it to be made over to him for as much "as it is worth."

Verses 10, 11. The present holder of the property still insists on giving it to him. There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of his motives. But Abraham is taking a practical view of the matter. He knows that time will bring changes in the personnel of the ownership of this land. That future proprietors might not have the same feeling of friendship for him as the present ones have and then a difficulty might arise that would be very embarrassing if not damaging. So the wise thing, even for all concerned, would be to have a clear understanding now and to place that in such a



position that it would be fixed. Hence he is going to insist further on his plan.

Verses 12, 13. But while he so insists, he is very courteous and bows himself to the people according to eastern custom. And let it be also observed that he makes his proposition "in the audience of the people." To have witnesses of an important transaction is always best and Abraham here takes care to have this in this case.

Verses 14, 15. Ephron finally names the amount the land is worth and the text says it was "current" money. This word is from ABAR and defined "to cross over; used very widely of any transition \* \* \* specifically, to cover."—Strong. The meaning is that it was legal money and that in common circulation at the time and with merchants. In other words, Ephron does not take any advantage of Abraham's urgent need of the place, or make use of that popular, but vicious basis for setting a price namely, "the law of supply and demand." But honestly states the commercial "worth" of the property, not what he might be able to get for it. And he only does this at Abraham's insistence since he would willingly have given it to him without cost. *What is that betwixt me and thee.* This means that he thinks such a thing as the commercial worth of the land is a small matter to stand between such good friends as they. So therefore he plans for Abraham to obtain his wishes in this case and to be able to bury his dead.

Verse 16. There is no complaint at the price for it is that which the land is worth. And the payment is made in the audience of the people. This means in their hearing and so that not only could they see what was being done but they heard the words of the contract. This is just a continuation of the principle on which Abraham has been dealing throughout this whole procedure.

Verses 17-20. The same form of dealing continues to the end of this action and the writer tells us twice that the property was made "sure" unto Abraham. We do not know of any formal courts of record nor other recording establishments among those ancient people. Hence the items of permanency available were the fact that it was done "in the presence of the children of Heth" and also "before all that went in at the gate of his city." An important fact in this entire trans-

action is that property was made "sure" unto Abraham. This means that its title passed from one owner to another. And this contradicts a theory often expressed in the political world in regards to ownership of property. It would be out of place in a work such as the present one to mention a matter that is supposed to be a political one did not its advocates claim the Bible as a supporting document for them. They contend that the Bible does not endorse the practice of title or private ownership to property. But the present case disproves their contention for Abraham, the father of the faithful, the beginning head of a great people of God, was careful to obtain title to private ownership and the inspired writer says the land was made "sure" to him.

## GENESIS 24

Verse 1. While Abraham is now in the years of old age (stricken in age merely means he had entered into old age) yet the writer tells us he was in the blessing of God. So we see that no intention is present to make us have the impression he is infirm with his age. The fact that later he remarries and begets six sons would show us that his physical forces are not yet denied him. But even at that, he knows that it is time for him to be making some of his plans come to maturity.

Verse 2. The act of putting the hand under the thigh is a custom of that time and is a figurative expression of a willingness to support one in his desires. And the business at hand is so important that he selects the most trustworthy of his servants, one that had already proved himself in that he had been caring for all of the household affairs of his master.

Verses 3, 4. The inhabitants of the land among whom Abraham is dwelling were of a different stock from that of the pure line which God would use in making the great nation he had promised to the patriarch. And while it is the Lord's direction that he is not to live in his native land, yet he is to continue the same line of blood. So it will be necessary to get in contact with his former people. But to do this he must not go there in person nor permit his son to do so. That would be disobeying the spirit of the first command for him to get out of his country and away from his people. The contact must be made by one not personally involved in the command.

This is why he now brings his most trusted servant into the arrangement.

Verse 5. It has been charged against the Bible that it teaches and favors the idea that woman is a mere tool of man. That she is treated without any consideration for her own wishes in the matter of marriage and personal service to man. But we see in this language of the servant that such was not the prevailing impression with him. Had such been the case he would never have thought of mentioning the woman's attitude with regard to the plan. Whether she were willing or not would not have been taken into consideration at all according to this false charge mentioned above. It is true that the woman was made for the man as Paul so teaches (1 Tim. 2: 13), and man is to be the aggressor in their relations with each other. But that does not mean that she is to be treated as a mere possession of man without being due any consideration.

Verse 6. While Isaac was not born in the original land yet he was born of parents from that country. Hence he must not be brought to that country.

Verse 7. Abraham's faith in God has not abated in all these years. He has gone through many experiences and many which were strong tests of his faith. And in them all he has recognized the presence of the Almighty. And now he is still assured that his obedience to the divine plan will bring the angelic assistance needed. Thus he tells the servant that he will be successful in his mission.

Verse 8. Here again Abraham charges his servant not to take his son to that land. Marriage is important and he is eager to have it attended to for his son. Yet it is not important enough to justify setting aside another part of the divine plan. If the woman is unwilling to come with the servant then his duty will have been performed and his oath cleared. But under no circumstances may he take Isaac back to that place. Just why this was the restriction in this case but not in that of Jacob later we do not know. But it is a fact that at the time now being considered the family had not yet been enlarged much from what it was when Abraham left his native land. While in the time of Jacob it had done so. But further than this suggestion we are not certain why God suffered some things at one time that he would not at another.

Verse 9. The servant makes the gesture of good will and places his hand

under the thigh of his master and gives the oath.

Verse 10. In making such a long journey as was here contemplated and of such uncertain duration, it was wise to make ample provision for the journey, both ways. Thus the servant is provided with a sufficient train of beasts of burden as well as with goods that might be needed for the mission. It is stated that he went to the city of Nahor in Mesopotamia. This agrees with the statement in Acts 7: 2 and therefore we are to understand that the Ur of the Chaldees, the place named as Abraham's native home, was in this land and not the city of a similar name and shown located in the more southern part of the region.

Verse 11. Mention of the fact that it was the time when women went forth to draw or bail water was to explain how it "happened" that the servant met the woman on his arrival at the place. Of course the believers in divine providence for those times will readily see how that it was not a happen-so as that term is popularly used. But as it would appear outwardly it would seem to be a piece of good fortune.

Verses 12-14. The minuteness of the stipulations expressed by the servant in this prayer is characteristic of providential situations. And this must not be interpreted as a wild guess of the servant as to whether he might properly appeal to God. For his master had told him that God would send his angel before him to direct his way. He has faith in the reliability of his master's instructions. This is another proof of the good influence the patriarch had exerted over his servants or any who had come into contact with him. And the servant does not want to make any mistake. He will not trust his own judgment in the selection of a wife for Isaac. He might put his choice on a well favored woman, from all outward appearances, and yet not get the one that would meet with the approval of God. He thus places his success in this matter on the wisdom of his master's God. And by making so many items in his description or by naming so many "clews" it will be more certain that he will not make any mistake in his acceptance of a woman. It is interesting to note the unselfishness of the servant in this prayer. He is not concerned much as to whether he receives personal satisfaction in the outcome but asks for kindness for his master Abraham. And

if the signs which he names are carried out it means to him that the damsel is the one that "thou hast appointed." Thus his belief that the God of his master is to have a hand in the selection of a wife for Isaac.

Verses 15, 16. No time was lost. The damsel of whom we read in chapter 22: 22, 23 came out to where he was. *Fair*. This is from *romē* and defined by the simple word "good." But since the text adds the words "to look upon" we have the idea that she was good to look at, or, using a common expression, she was "goodlooking." No man had "known" her which we already have learned means that she was a virgin.

Verses 17-21. She proceeds to carry out the exact program that the servant had stipulated in his prayer just as if she were a party to the whole transaction, knowingly. Of course we know she was wholly unaware of the significance of what she was now doing. On her part it was purely an act of courtesy and hospitality. But it exhibits the traits of a very sweet tempered girl. This was no small service that she performed here. She drew for all the camels and as we know, there were ten of them. Moreover, a camel takes large drinks of water. And all the while this oriental maiden was doing this kindly service the man stood wondering. He was filled with amazement at what was taking place. The word *wondering* is from *SHAAH* and defined "to stun, i. e., be astonished."—Strong. Of course it was altogether along lines of common courtesy for her to show some form of assistance. But to see it being carried out down to the very details of his prayer was what stunned him. *Towit*. This means "to know." That is, he was to observe her actions to the end to see if it would finally demonstrate that his master is to have his favor bestowed for which the servant had made this trip.

Verse 22. We would look upon the gift of these jewels about in the same sense as we would think of a "tip" performed for good service, because there had not yet been any conversation between them that would justify the bestowal of these articles as coming from her intended husband.

Verses 23, 24. To confirm the conclusion that the events of the last few moments had already been arrived at he asked her identity. And her answer did so confirm it. Of course that would determine the servant to make her father's house the place for his lodging so as to carry out to completion

his mission. He therefore is emboldened to ask for room with her father.

Verse 25. Her answer was favorable. And she made further offer besides what had been specified in his inquiry, and informed him there would be provender or feed for his camels. Many of the lodging places in the East were a combination of residence for people and stable for beasts and hence this combined offer of hers. This sort of combined lodging place was the kind in which Joseph and Mary found themselves at the time their child was to be born. That explains how it was possible to lay the babe in the manger at the time.

Verse 26. The man worshipped. This is from a word that means he prostrated himself in an attitude that indicated he was worshipping the Lord.

Verse 27. In this verse he gives God the credit for all his good fortune in finding a maid for his master's son. We are here informed that he "said" certain words, so that the damsel must have been a hearer of this prayer of thanksgiving.

Verse 28. Upon hearing the words of the stranger and having seen all the things that had occurred between them, she runs and tells the people of her mother's house. Of course the man is still at the well for he thus far has only the kindly invitation of the damsel. Or rather, the information she imparted to him which might not be construed as an authoritative invitation as she could not thus speak for her father.

Verse 29. But upon the information brought by Rebekah her brother Laban goes out to where the man is at the well. Another item of eastern hospitality.

Verse 30, 31. What a reception here! The brother has already acted upon the word of the sister and prepared to care for the visitor. He only knows what she has told him, and she knows only what she has heard so far. As to the relation all this had to bear to her has not been made known. Hence we know that the motives for all this hospitality are purely unselfish. Even though she heard his praise of the Lord God of his master Abraham, she would not know what that had to do with her. That fact will be made known to her and all the rest of the house later.

Verse 32. *Straw and provender*. There is little difference in the meaning between these words, but the for-

mer is somewhat coarser feed for beasts than the latter. Again an occasion of providing water to wash their feet. See the comments on this subject at chapter 18: 4. Mention also is made of these additional men at the time he started out on this journey yet it is not strange that such should be present. There were the ten camels to care for and other needs for assistance that such an important mission might bring about.

Verse 33. A meal was offered to the visitor as befitting the coming of a stranger. Not only because such was doubtless to be relished after such a journey. But it was likewise one of the customs of social recognition of those times. See Chapter 19: 3. But the man considers the subject of his errand of more importance than satisfying his hunger. Not only so, but his journey has been so successful so far and his hopes have been raised so high that something makes him feel that the conclusion of the whole thing should be brought about before relaxing to his own personal enjoyment. Besides, if he has this great matter settled satisfactorily he can enjoy the meal more. Hence he informs his hosts that he would not eat until he had told his errand. They bid him go ahead with his story.

Verses 34-49. Since the passage of these verses is virtually a rehearsal of what we have already read and considered it will not be necessary to make itemized comments on it here. But attention will be called to some of the outstanding parts of it. He begins by saying that he is a servant—Abraham's servant. Then describes the fortunate situation of his master. He also imparts the information that his master had a son born to him after his wife was old and that all his estate had been given to this son. He then describes the scene at the well and brings in the name of Rebekah. It would have been interesting to be present and observe the reaction, as expressed in the countenance of Rebekah, to this speech. Of course the part that is new is that which pertains to the purpose of this man's journey, that it was to obtain a wife for his master's son. And under the nature of the conversation Rebekah knows that she is the prospective heroine of the romance. And viewing it now in the light of her response below, we must know that her feelings through this astonishing speech of the man to her father's house were those of delicacy,

surprise and pleasure. As he concludes his speech he puts the proposition up to them and intimates that if their answer is unfavorable he will go on to other parts.

Verse 50. Upon such a recitation the father and brother of the damsel recognize the hand of the Lord as being the guiding one and express an attitude of agreement.

Verse 51. They here give their consent for the match. But it must not be taken as final because later in the conversation the damsel is to be consulted also. This is according to the idea set forth at verse 5, which see.

Verse 52. Again we observe that the servant worships the Lord for the good news. This indicates that he believes the God of his master is the source from whence his success is to come, which is true always.

Verse 53. Once more we see him bestowing gifts. These are not in the form of dowry alone, but it was another custom in olden times to indicate a feeling of friendship and recognition of dignity to make gifts. This will be noted at various places.

Verses 54, 55. After tarrying over night the servant expresses a wish to go on his journey. The family members are reluctant to see them go at once. Natural ties prompt them to plead for the postponement of the departure. They set a time of ten days and wish this to be the minimum of the delay.

Verse 56. The most natural thing in the world is for the servant to be unwilling to delay. He has been so fortunate thus far that the bare possibility of there coming some kind of "hitch" in the program urges him on. So he begs them to "hinder" him not. This word is not from one that means to actually frustrate or oppose his plan. They have been so good to him and everything thus far has been with only one indication, that of favoring his mission, that he does not consider they are trying to oppose him in that sense. But the word is from a Hebrew term that merely means to loiter or lag or procrastinate. He has no doubt as to their ultimate intention of letting him go with the damsel. But he cannot bear the thought of waiting longer and insists on going and being sent away to his master.

Verses 57, 58. These verses indicate that some time in course of the morning Rebekah had retired from the group and hence the occasion of call-



ing her. And also, this is the specific place that shows the error of the charge mentioned before as to the women of olden times having nothing to say as to their husbands. They put their reply to the plea of the servant on the condition of the word of the damsel. Accordingly they call and ask her decision. How beautiful is her answer. "I will go." Could Isaac have heard that answer he surely would have been thrilled. Here is a fair young woman asked to make a journey into a faraway land to meet a man whom she has never seen and with the purpose of becoming his wife. But we must not picture it as an act of wild adventure or a dash for romance on her part. There is not that much uncertainty in the case. She has already seen and heard enough since this servant came under her observation to be convinced that he is no fraud. That he truly represents a great master whose only son seeks her for a wife. It is to be an honor bestowed on her and in the spirit of sweet femininity and respectful cooperation in a divine plan that she is willing to leave father and mother and be joined to her husband. And in this spirit of attitude she makes the simple but complete answer "I will go."

Verses 59, 60. And with a family blessing and with appropriate provisions they send her away with the triumphant missionary, who, unlike the poet's character, was true to his friend, his master's father and son. The wish expressed by the family that Rebekkah become the mother of millions and that they possess the gate of their enemy is characteristic of those people and times. But is also prophetic of actual events to come whether they realized it or not.

Verse 61. Mention is made of Rebekah's damsels. This is from NAHARAH and is defined "a girl (from infancy to adolescence)" — Strong. Doubtless these young girls are to accompany her as her attendants or body servants. Mention is again made of the men. Thus explaining the plural pronoun used at the beginning; also accounting for the plan of taking ten camels for the journey.

Verses 62, 63. It would be unreasonable to conclude Isaac had not been informed of the departure of the servant nor of his mission. And likewise it would be unthinkable to say he had no interest in the affair. Hence we can accept the marginal reading on the word "meditate" which says "to

pray." A man usually prays on the subject in which he is the most interested. And it is significant that he went out into the field and that he went there toward evening. What an interesting situation. His father's servant has gone away to obtain for him a wife. He has been gone now long enough to be returning. Out there, all alone with his thoughts and with God, he prays. Will his prayer be answered? Look! He lifts his eyes and yonder comes a caravan of camels. They could be none other than those of his father's servant. Of course that is correct, for Rebekah recognizes Isaac from a previous word from the servant. And if they are that near of course Isaac can also recognize the retinue that belongs to his father. But see, there are additional persons in the group, for there is a beautiful young woman and some young girls. They can be meant for him without question. Yes, he is so certain of all this that he starts walking toward them.

Verse 64, 65. When Rebekah recognizes Isaac from a previous information received from the servant she gets down from the camel. Then she covers her face with a veil which was another custom in the East as a token of modesty and deference.

Verse 66. Nothing here said about Abraham. Isaac is the one who is most directly concerned in the situation at present. So the servant relates to him all that had taken place since leaving on this mission.

Verse 67. Sarah has been dead some years but her tent is now available. Isaac accepts Rebekah for his companion. He is forty years old (chapter 25: 20). He takes her into his mother's tent and "she became his wife." No ceremony, no formality. Just the carrying out of the original law of marriage as God had designated. See chapter 2: 23, 24 and notes at that place. And after she became his wife through the fleshly relation which was God's only ceremony of marriage, it says he loved her. Also that he was comforted after his mother's death. A sublime conclusion to a beautiful story.

## GENESIS 25

Verse 1. We do not know exactly how old Abraham was the time he married this woman. However, since Sarah was 127 at death (chapter 23: 1), and he was ten years older (chapter 17: 17), we know he was not a young man. And yet, he was still a

vigorous man which was in keeping with the general promises of God concerning him, that he was to come to his life's end in peace. For that would not only mean that he would not be beset with enemies but also that he would not be tortured with the ills of old age that often come to men in declining years.

Verses 2-4. The chief item in this passage is the name of Midian. He will be a prominent figure in the history of God's people as we will see later. But it is well to mark the place where the ancestor of that people is first mentioned. Let it be observed that the Midianites are related by blood to the descendants of Abraham, and yet they will always be considered as aliens from the line and as persistent enemies to the nation. This is in line with the idea that when God decided to have a people of his own he selected one acceptable individual, Abraham, and then restricted those who were to be recognized as that special people to the ones who were not only descendants of Abraham, but the ones coming through a particular son of his who was Isaac. And that would constitute all others, however near to him, as aliens.

Verse 5. On the basis of what is set forth in preceding paragraph, Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. Of course this means his main estate and not that he cut his other offspring out entirely. He made personal gifts to them as will be seen soon.

Verse 6. This is the circumstance referred to above. And this is a good place to see an example of the difference between a woman who was regarded in the sense of "wife" and one who was a concubine. Morally they were the same in those days, for the concubine was not in the class of women who were classed as harlots and to whom a man would go for that purpose only. In that case he would give her money as payment or hire for her service. While a concubine was a woman whom the man kept or maintained from time to time and thus who did not receive money from her master as a specific wage for her service of intimacy to him. And yet on the other hand, she was not equal to the wife as to property rights as may be seen here in that he gave only "gifts" to the sons of these women while he gave "all that he had" to Isaac. And a further distinction is seen between Isaac and the sons of the second legal wife from this very fact of giving all

to Isaac. But that is easily understood when we remember that Isaac was his first son by promise and the one whom God chose to be his heir both as to property and in the fulfillment of the great promises of the far-off future. Attention is called to the statement here that Abraham gave these gifts to the sons "while he yet lived." We may consider this as a sure way of seeing that they get this benefit by not waiting for a will to give it to them after his death.

Verses 7, 8. Here is the place to mark the age of Abraham. *Full of years*. The reader will see the words "of years" are in italics and thus are not in the original. The first word in italics is from SABA and defined "satiated (in a pleasant or disagreeable sense)."—Strong. Of course the context will require the favorable part of the definition. Therefore the expression merely means that Abraham's life had been full and satisfactory, all of which again coincides with the promise to him. *Was gathered to his people*. This is simply an ancient way of saying that a person had joined his relation who had gone on before. It would sometimes have a specific reference to the place of burial which doubtless may be applied in this case.

Verses 9, 10. Abraham now had many sons, but the writer lets us know which of his sons took charge of the body of their father, Isaac and Ishmael. The last named would be nearer than any of the others after him because he was born through the plan of his father's first legal wife. And it is noteworthy that the burial took place in the grave that Abraham had secured by the contract recorded in Chapter 23: 18-20.

Verse 11. Mention that God blessed Isaac after the death of Abraham must not be construed to mean that he had not been blessed before, for he had. But all the way down the years it will be noted that God kept a tender memory of the patriarch and did many things to his descendants for his sake. And that memory was finally crystallized around the three first fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Verse 12. *Generations*. This is from a word that has as one of its meanings "a family history." The writer is careful here to tell us which of Abraham's many sons he is considering. It is the son of the handmaid. Also he lets us know that she was an Egyptian. We are to understand, therefore, that the nation descending from this son

will be aliens as to the main line, and yet near enough not to be considered in the same sense as others.

Verses 13-16. After telling us the names of the sons of Ishmael the writer sums up by saying "twelve princes." This was in fulfillment of the promise the Lord had made to Hagar in chapter 17:20. To be a prince in those days did not necessarily have any political or official significance. Its central meaning was that of any kind of exaltation. *According to their nations.* The last word in italics is from UMMAH and defined "a collection, i. e., community of persons."—Strong. So the word is different from the one from which the word "nation" usually comes. Here it is more restricted and has the idea that these twelve sons were each outstanding men in their respective communities. And this agrees also with one of the characteristics predicted of their common parent, Ishmael, that he was to be separate from the people in general. So that while the descendants of Ishmael became very numerous yet they were known as people without a fixed habitation and were a roaming people.

Verse 17. Take note of the death of Ishmael and his age at the time. Also the statement that he was gathered to his people. See comments at verses 7, 8.

Verse 18. The most prominent part of this verse is the statement as to the place where Ishmael died. In chapter 16:12 it was predicted that he was to dwell in the presence of all his brethren. Now if he died in the presence of all his brethren it is evident that he had dwelled there which fulfills the prediction.

Verses 19, 20. Some more family history, this time of Isaac. The age he had reached, forty, when married is worthy of noting. Since we know he was born when his mother was ninety years of age (chapter 17:17) and as his mother was 127 at death (chapter 23:1) we can here conclude that his mother had been dead three years when he was married. And he had been occupying his mother's tent after her death as a mourner. But when Rebekah came to be his wife he took her into that same tent and was comforted as is said in chapter 24:67. Isaac's father-in-law, Laban, is here said to be a Syrian. Sometimes people carelessly think and speak of Abraham as a native Jew, whereas he was a Syrian as we here observe. But we

must not confuse this term with the one of which we hear so much in later history of the Bible. This is really a short word for Assyria and referred to the country pertaining to Mesopotamia. While Syria proper embraced a larger territory including first that north of Palestine with Damascus as capital, and later all the country including Palestine. See Rawlinson, *Origin of Nations*, p. 234.

Verse 21. Isaac and Rebekah had been married about twenty years and no children had come to them. He then prayed to God on the matter and his prayer was heard. It is interesting to recall that Sarah, the mother of Isaac, was also barren and required a miracle from the Lord to enable her to conceive. In those days it was generally considered a reproach not to be able to have children and in such circumstances the ones thus unfortunate would appeal to God.

Verse 22. We know not how much knowledge Rebekah had on the experience of being an expectant. The ordinary "quickening" that is present in all cases might have been nothing strange to her mind. But that movement in this case was greater and of a different violence than was to be expected. The original word for "struggle" is defined "to crack, literally or figuratively." Hence we will have the conclusion that a very unusual movement, even for twins, was going on in her body. This caused her to become concerned and decided to enquire of the Lord as to "why am I thus?"

Verse 23. Here one of the famous predictions of the Bible is made, one that will be referred to in later places or dates. *Elder, younger.* The original words for these, both in the Old Testament and the New, have as their fundamental meaning that of more or greater as contrasted with less or smaller. But the dictionary admits the idea of greater or less in years or other terms of age. Thus the context in this present case gives us the idea that it means the one to be born first will serve the other. And this was fulfilled in at least one specific instance recorded in 2 Sam. 8:14. No reason is here assigned for this choice. And even in the New Testament (Rom. 9:11) where this circumstance is discussed by Paul the reason for the choice is not given. Only that he gives us to understand that it was not based on their conduct since the decision was made before they could have done either good or evil.

Verse 24. *Days to be delivered.* See note on this expression at Chapter 17: 21.

Verse 25. *Esau.* The original word is defined "rough (i. e., sensibly felt)." The meaning is that he was rough to the touch and this was caused by the hairy condition of his body.

Verse 26. *Jacob.* The original of this is defined "heel-catcher (i. e., supplanter)." Of course we know this circumstance was not usual and neither was it a mere accident. But God had already decreed that Jacob should supplant Esau and this physical signal would be brought about as a beginning of the fulfillment. The age of Isaac when his twin sons were born is here given which should be marked.

Verse 27. *Cunning.* This is from YADAH and defined "to know (properly to ascertain by seeing)." It is a word with a wide variety of meanings but the idea as used here is that Esau understood his business as a hunter. *Plain.* This is from TAM and defined "complete; usually (morally) pious; specifically, gentle, dear."—Strong. As a general thing we think of the word "plain" as meaning the very thing that Esau was here; a man of rugged habits such as those of the field. But here it is Jacob who is said to be a plain man. But the original word explains it. He was content to dwell indoors and do house work such as cooking.

Verse 28. But while Esau did not make a practice of cooking and other domestic work, yet being a hunter he had occasion to do enough of such work to take care of the product of his occupation. The reason given here why Isaac loved Esau is that he ate of his venison. But we are not told the reason for Rebekah's preference. But whatever the cause might have been, this partiality between the parents for the sons will be the occasion of serious trouble.

Verse 29. *Sod pottage.* This expression merely means that he boiled articles in a pot. This may have been soup or other articles adapted for such cooking. Esau came in one day very faint, so much so that he thought he was going to die. He asked Jacob for some of his pottage. It was evidently not the first time he had ever eaten of it for he makes the expression below "*that same red pottage.*" But this time, as Jacob sees the almost helpless condition of his brother he

takes advantage of it. This is another instance where the principle of "supply and demand" is resorted to and, as always, is seen to be an unrighteous principle.

Verse 30. Here is where Esau makes the pitiful request for his brother to feed him. The word "pottage" in this verse is not in the original but the word "red" is. Jacob had been in the habit of making various kinds of red soup or other preparations that were acceptable to a hungry man, especially when very weak. Hence he asks for some of the same red food he had served him before. And because he expressed strong preference for that particular diet this time he was given a name with accompanying meaning which was Edom. The definition of this word in the lexicon is "red." Popular notion has it that the elder brother of Jacob was called Edom because he was covered with red hair when born. But the text says he was called that because of his request for this red food at the time he was so faint. And since this red material was the occasion for his act in transferring his birthright, which also was a most important subject of history, it seemed appropriate to have the name Edom, meaning red, to be with him throughout the history. Whether God had all these facts in mind and caused the babe to be born with such colored hair as another significant feature of the whole situation we cannot say without speculation. But we are given the direct statement of the inspired writer that after Esau had called for the red food that "therefore" was his name called Edom.

Verse 31. *Birthright.* Reversing the form of this word we may get the meaning of the word, and that is, the right of birth. And that further means the right a person has by reason of being the firstborn in the family. He would have first right to his father's property. And in those times, it placed him first in the family tree in relation to whatever spiritual advantages that were in store for the family. And therefore it was an important possession. Jacob sees the plight of his brother and decides to take advantage of it.

Verse 32. Jacob did not reckon amiss. Esau figures that it is a situation where he has nothing to lose by selling the birthright. He believes that without food he is going to die soon and he would lose all that he possessed anyway. With this view of the situa-



tion in mind he makes the deal and sells his birthright.

Verse 33. Making oaths was an established practice in those times and thus the transaction on hand here was sealed in that way. And with that kind of formality the writer tells us that Edom sold his birthright to Jacob.

Verse 34. *Lentils*. This English word occurs only four times in the A.V. and the original word is not rendered otherwise in any other place. Hence we are left to the English definition for its meaning. It refers to any podded plant or tree whose seeds are suitable for human food. *Despised his birthright*. The first word is from BAZAH and defined "to disesteem." The word is elsewhere rendered disdain, contemn. In other words, it means that he underestimated the birthright. It was a divine possession in that it entitled him not only to the possession of his father's estate, but it would have put him in line to be an ancestor of the promised seed of Abraham. This is why Paul tells us Esau was a profane person. (Heb. 12: 16.) To make a common or temporal use of a sacred thing is to profane it. That is what Esau did, hence Paul refers to him as a profane person.

## GENESIS 26

Verse 1. Isaac had been dwelling in Lahairoi which is a place in the desert. (Chapter 24: 62; 25: 11.) But when this famine came upon the land he went over to the land of the Philistines, the place where his father had been once. He might have gone on down into Egypt since that country was always able to nourish in time when dearth struck other countries. But he did not go as we will see next.

Verse 2. Here the Lord tells him not to go down to Egypt. Of course this will mean that the famine is not to become general and that some country other than Egypt will be productive in this instance. So he first tells him he will direct him as to what land he is to dwell in.

Verses 3, 4. In this passage the Lord repeats the promise that had been made before and that had first been made to his father Abraham. He not only repeats to him this promise but assures him that he will be prosperous as to the present state.

Verse 5. The specific reason God is so mindful of Isaac is that his father had been so obedient to the divine

laws. And for his sake he would bless his son Isaac.

Verses 6, 7. Gerar was an important Philistine city and it was at this place that Isaac was dwelling. Here the men of the place asked him about his wife. The answer which he gave them indicates they had inquired as to her relation to him, for he told them she was his sister. The lexicon says the original word here has a wide range of meanings. But the context here shows that Isaac used it as having a meaning of near blood relation. And indeed they were blood relation. According to chapter 22: 20-23 they were a degree of cousins. Isaac gave them the answer for the same reason his father had done so with his wife previously. It is said that Rebekah was fair to look upon. This is from the same word as that used in reference to Sarah. See the explanation of the word at Chapter 12: 11. Being thus a woman with much sex appeal he feared they would kill him so as to give access to her. They considering murder as less a crime than adultery.

Verse 8. This story was believed for a long time. We do not know how much longer it would have been received had the men not been witness to what they considered as a contradiction of the story. The text says that the king saw Isaac *sporting* with Rebekah. The word is from TSACHAQ and is the same word as rendered "laughed" at chapter 17: 17. Please turn to that place and read the definition and apply the favorable part of the definition since the context shows that Isaac was in a favorable attitude toward Rebekah. The context further indicates that the conduct was such as would be expected only between husband and wife and we must conclude that the proper rules of social conduct had been observed in those times and even among those people, else they would not have reasoned as they did. Also, this conduct of Isaac was in a rather exposed place, for the king saw it as he "looked out at a window." Therefore, if a man would be sporting with a woman in a way becoming only with his wife, and that too in such an exposed way, she must be his wife since he would not have been guilty of such a breach of etiquette with a woman who was his blood relation.

Verse 9. The explanation Isaac gave of his action, like that of Abraham, is a little hard to understand. It seems that he wanted to save his life at the

possible expense of his wife's virtue. See remarks along this line at Chapter 12: 12, 13.

Verses 10, 11. *Lightly*. This is from MEHAT and defined "a little or few (often adverbially or comparatively)." —Strong. This word has been rendered in the A.V. by "little" 51 times and by "few" 24. And since the king spoke of only one of his people as likely to have been involved, and taking the definition as well as the various uses made of it, we should conclude the king meant that one of his men might have taken the liberty to be intimate with the newcomer's sister a few times. But even though it were only a few times, yet the heathen king's sentiments on the subject are such that he would have considered it as guilt upon the nation. How different all this is from the lax conduct and attitude of mankind in modern times.

Verse 11. To make sure about such unfortunate circumstance as described in this paragraph above he gives all his people serious warning and threat concerning it.

Verses 12-14. The prosperous faring of Isaac here fulfilled the promise God made to him in verse 3 above. But the Philistines envied him this success. This is one of the human weaknesses, to envy the good fortune of others. One of the principal definitions of the word in the English dictionary is "Chagrin or discontent at the excellence or good fortune (Of another); resentful, begrudging."—Webster.

Verse 15. The previous passage made mention of Isaac's livestock of which his riches consisted. This would account for the actions of the Philistines in filling up the wells that had been digged by his father's servants. Water being an indispensable article in the keeping of cattle, his riches would wane if this were cut off.

Verse 16. The outward attitude of the king seemed a little more gentle than that of his servants. However, he had some fears of the outcome if Isaac were allowed to remain in their midst hence the request recorded here.

Verses 17-19. Isaac makes a removal but not entirely away, for mention is made of the wells referred to above and in which the Philistines took such an active but unfavorable interest. He not only reopened the wells his father had digged and had been filled by Abimelech's servants, but his servants digged a new well in the valley and

found a well there of "springing water." The margin correctly gives us here the word "living." The original word has elsewhere been rendered "running water" a number of times. The idea is that while most wells are filled with water seeping from the ground, these others are supplied with a vein of running water and would be preferred.

Verses 20-22. This new fortune of Isaac's was too much for the envious Philistines, so they had a strife over it. But Isaac was very kind to them and moved from place to place until they ceased to strive. The name Isaac gave to this last well was one that corresponded with the circumstances. Since they did not strive for this well it indicated they decided there was room for all of them now, so the name of Rehoboth was given to the place. This is from a Hebrew word that means "avenue or area."

Verses 23, 24. *Beersheba*. This name means "well of the oath" and was made noted by the covenants formed here by Abraham and Isaac. (Chapter 21: 31; verse 33 here.) The Lord now appears to Isaac again and repeats the famous promise and adds the thought that he will bless him for the sake of his father Abraham.

Verse 25. Calling upon the name of the Lord is usually associated with the fact of building an altar. There were no general headquarters as a meeting place for God's people in this Dispensation. The family was the largest unit and its headquarters could be found wherever the family altar was erected.

Verses 26-29. Isaac continues to be prosperous in spite of the opposition of the Philistines. They now conclude that it would be better to have him for a friend than an enemy and their chief men came to him and made a proposition. At first Isaac chided them upon their past treatment of him and now are coming to him for friendship. The motive they gave for their move was a respectful one, seeing that the Lord was with him. If the desire for association with another were always based on such observation as this the world would be happier. They wish now to form a pact of mutual friendship and non-aggression.

Verses 30-33. Isaac is unresentful and makes for the group a feast. This is in keeping with the ancient custom of using the meal as a signal of friendship and social recognition. *Betimes*. This is from a word that means

"early." When they arose early in the morning they repeated their oath then departed in peace. *Therefore.* This expression has been used and explained before. See chapter 18: 5. It is an odd form of expression but the gist of it is to say "very properly, or with good reason." Thus in the present instance. At first reading we might get the impression the verse means that the place was so named because these servants just now came and informed Isaac of the water. But we know that this name had been given to it before this as seen in the place referred to. But the sense of the language in the present verse is as if it said "this place is Sheba, from the meaning of the word which is oath. And very properly, therefore, is it so called ever since."

Verses 34, 35. Judith and Basemath were Hittites and thus were Canaanites. It was not agreeable to Isaac and Rebekah for their son to marry into such blood, hence they were grieved over it. The significance of the mention made of it at this place will be more apparent in the next chapter.

# GENESIS 27

Verses 1, 2. Doubtless Isaac had often eaten of the meat which his son took in hunting. He considers himself as so enfeebled with years that death may come without warning. Nevertheless he wishes to have one more enjoyment of this relished dish of his son and so makes the request following.

Verse 3. *Quiver and bow.* These mean the bow and the case for carrying the arrows. *Venison.* This is from a word that means anything taken in the chase and that might be prepared for relished food.

Verse 4. *Savoury meat.* This means a delicacy for food. It refers to the way it was prepared and not specially as to the animal used, for Isaac said "make me," etc. The expression "such as I love" is what shows that he had eaten of this before since Esau was supposed to know this favorite food of his father. The promise to bless his son carried more weight than a mere good wish. Of course a good wish is one of the meanings of the word but when a Patriarch in those times pronounced a blessing it was official and not to be changed. This again is one of the characteristics of the Patriarchal Dispensation.

Verse 5. We remember the partiality

that had come between the parents over their two sons. That sentiment will soon bring about some sad experiences. She overhears what her husband had said and Rebekah resolves to defeat the plan and secure the favor for her own beloved son.

Verses 6-8. Calling her favorite to her she relates what she overheard and makes known to him that she has a plan to work out and urges before hand for him to obey her voice. That scheme of hers will be seen in next paragraph.

Verse 9. Rebekah proposes to make "savoury meat" of the flesh of the kids that Jacob is to bring to her. This shows that the form of the dish which Isaac requested refers to the manner of preparation and not to the kind of animal used, as said in verse 4 above. And it also is shown by the language here that Rebekah had previously known what it was that Isaac relished or else she could not have spoken about making the kind "such as he loved."

Verse 10. She only proposes now that he is to take this food to his father and receive the blessing. Nothing said about Isaac's physical condition and nothing about how she proposes to evade that. But the general condition of helplessness must have been very obvious since the language soon to follow indicates Jacob saw the situation.

Verses 11, 12. Jacob here refers to the difference between him and Esau as to their outward condition. And Isaac's blindness is recognized also for Jacob senses the probability that his father will depend on his sense of touch in place of his sight. This very circumstance presents a pathetic picture. Here is an aged father who is blind and must depend on another sense for his guidance. And here are his wife and son plotting to take advantage of his condition to deceive him and obtain a favor he did not intend to bestow. Not realizing the fixed nature of a Patriarchal blessing, Jacob fears that after the deception is discovered the intended blessing will be turned into a curse. Ordinarily this might have been the case.

Verse 13. Rebekah is so persistent that she even agrees to take the curse upon herself if only he will obey her voice and bring the beasts to her. A natural sentiment for us to have in this situation is one of sympathy for Jacob as we see what happens to be

an attempt on her part to take advantage of his inexperience and play upon his confidence in his mother. We are apt to think of him as being a youth, perhaps, and not hardened to the ways of the world and that she should be loath to impose on him in this way. But instead of a youth Jacob was at this time a man 77 years old. The basis for this statement is in the comment at chapter 30: 25 which see. Thus there is no excuse for Jacob's actions here on the ground of his "youth."

Verses 14-17. Jacob brought the kids as his mother had directed. She uses the bodies for making the savory dish. And as a deception she clothed him with the goodly raiment of Esau. This means the desirable or choice garments. As Isaac was blind, this could not have been for the appearance. But since it was the desirable garments, or, as we would express it, the clothes he had for his "good" ones, he most likely wore them more frequently. Also, this would make them more likely to retain the odor of his body which, as we shall see, was one of the items that helped deceive Isaac. She further planned her deception by placing the fur of the kids on the parts of Jacob's body that would be exposed to the touch. And, provided with this outfit Jacob goes into the presence of his father.

Verses 18, 19. He comes to his father and speaks to him. His father asks him who it was and he deliberately makes false statement both as to his identity and as to what he had done. That is, he had not really taken the game with his quiver and bow as Esau had been requested to do, but had gone to the flock and procured them. But he bids his father sit and eat of the food and bless him.

Verse 20. Something in the situation arouses the suspicions of Isaac and he asks how it came that he had this at hand so quickly. The answer of Jacob is not only false, but it is a very vile use of the providence of God. Of course it is known that God does often bring unexpected and superhuman help to his servants at times and thus it would not be unreasonable to say that such was the case here. But it was a cowardly abuse of the favor of God. Especially is this so in view of the fact that the whole transaction is an envious and lying plot of Jacob through the help of his mother. And to take advantage of Isaac's faith in the Lord to bring into effect this wickedness is one of the most deplor-

able circumstances on record. It is sometimes claimed that she was only bringing about the very thing that God had predicted, that Jacob was to supplant his brother. But this manner of bringing it to pass was not any part of God's plan. He does not need the crooked actions of man to help him carry out his plans, when those plans do not essentially include some such actions. The setting aside of Esau for the favor of Jacob was predicted it is true, but it was not necessary to resort to this terrible trick to bring it about. And Jacob will have many unpleasant experiences from this as we shall see.

Verse 21. The very thing happened that Jacob predicted and which Rebekah had provided for. The old man being blind it was necessary to depend on another sense, that of touch, and he requests his son to come near enough for this.

Verses 22, 23. It all came out as planned and predicted by the artful woman. Isaac felt of him and said it was the hands of Esau although the voice was that of Jacob. The sense of touch is here seen to be more impressive than that of the ear. So we have the sad picture of an old Patriarch, deprived of his sight and dependent on other senses. But the sense of hearing is still good and discerns the truth. But the sense of touch is misled by the artificial arrangement and the whole scene is one of general misleading and tricks Isaac into doing what he had not intended on doing.

Verse 24. The old man is still somewhat doubtful so he makes one more attempt to assure himself. Perhaps he had not heard distinctly the other time; perhaps something in the situation has been overlooked and that he has not made sufficient inquiry into the matter, so once more he asks, "Art thou my very son Esau?" It is difficult to understand how the son can persist in his awful plot with his envious mother upon such an anxious and endearing speech of his father. But he persists in the lie.

Verse 25. The unseeing Patriarch calls for the food to be brought near him. He is not in condition to appropriate the dish to himself without assistance, thus he asks his son to bring it near to him. But Jacob was not satisfied with the plot for the deception. He had made the statement at the first that his father might find him a deceiver and give him a curse instead of a blessing. He seems still to be uneasy about the matter, for the



record states that he brought his father wine. This had not been requested as far as we know. Moreover, the English word "wine" does not always mean the fermented juice although it could be that. But the word used in this case is from YAYIN and defined "from an unused root meaning to effervesce; wine (as fermented); by implication intoxication."—Strong. We do not know that the judgment was affected by this intoxicating drink. But evidently it was the motive of Jacob to insure further his success in deceiving his father. It is the same word for wine in the case of Lot's daughters (chapter 19: 32-35) where we know the purpose was to render the judgment defective. So we are satisfied that Jacob added this article to the arrangement his mother had made and thus his own personal guilt is made still more apparent.

Verses 26, 27. The plot moves on. The aged man wishes a more affectionate embrace and asks him to come nearer and kiss him. In doing so he smelled the odor of his raiment as mentioned at verse 15 above. In recognizing this odor Isaac connects it with the occupation his son Esau had followed, that of being out in the open and roaming the fields for game. He even connects it with the blessing of the Lord.

Verses 28, 29. The deception was complete. And we will remember that it is a Patriarch who is pronouncing the following blessing. Much of it is repetition of predictions already made to his father Abraham and to him, but some added features of the blessing pertain more personally to the relations between him and his brother. Thus far doubtless Isaac thinks all things have turned out as he desired and planned. He knows his days are few and now he has been given the benediction of the final favor of his beloved son. This has brought him to the sacred work of pronouncing the blessing of a father; father not only from ordinary standpoint of flesh and blood offspring, but father in his religious capacity as head of the only unit of religious services under that Dispensation. How happily the aged man of God will now be able to pass his few remaining days or weeks. Alas!

Verses 30, 31. He is aroused from his state of joy by an intruder upon the happy scene. Esau, still unaware of what has taken place comes into the presence of his father with the real article that had been requested.

He must have been glad to be now ready to deliver to his father the cherished and requested dish and then to have his blessing pronounced on him. He bids his father eat of the venison.

Verse 32. There should be no reason for him to fail to recognize the voice of Esau under ordinary circumstances. He had been with him recently and was also very familiar with his voice. But the previous deception was carried out so completely that he is thrown into some confusion. He asks who it was speaking to him and was told that it was his son; yes, his firstborn Esau.

Verse 33. *Trembled*. This is from CHARAD and defined "a primitive root; to shudder with terror; hence to fear; also to hasten (with anxiety)."—Strong. We are impressed with the terrible feelings Isaac must have experienced now. As a great flood the whole scene of the past few moments comes rushing upon his mind and he now sees as a reality what he had suspected at times while the plot was being carried out. When he asks "who?" it is not to be taken as meaning an actual inquiry. He knows the true identity of both persons who have been acting out a plot with him as the victim. But under the spell of the shock he involuntarily exclaims "who?" He then announces that another had come before him and given him food. He calls it venison. We know it was the meal prepared from the kids. But we also have learned that the savory meat could be prepared from various animals so that no mistake is made here by Isaac on that point. But thus far nothing is said about whether Isaac doubts the statement of Jacob that the Lord had helped him get the meat. If he has, yet his son has made a deceptive use of it and has secured the blessing. And the stern part of the situation is the fact that when a Patriarch pronounces a blessing on a person, the blessing is sure. Especially when the blessing is itself a righteous one and the person receiving it is the right one. The thing that is not right in this instance is the manner in which the man received it even though it was divinely intended that he should ultimately have that kind of priority. But he will suffer for it even though he is permitted to go on with the possessing of it. The fixed assurance of the blessing here pronounced is indicated by the words of Isaac "yea, and he shall be blessed."

Verse 34. Even in his shaken state of mind Esau does not at first manifest any concern over the fortune of his brother, only concern about himself. He does not ask that the blessing be taken from his brother but that he "also" receives a blessing. The word "cried" is from a word that means "shrieked." The passage would properly be rendered "shrieked with a great and bitter shriek."

Verse 35. *Subtily*. This is from MIRMAM and defined "in the sense of deceiving; fraud."—Strong. The English word "subtily" does not necessarily require fraud or falsehood. It rather carries the sense of being acutely alert and of the ability to make fine discriminations. It might be possible to use the quality without dishonesty. But according to the lexicon's definition of the Hebrew word here it requires fraud. And since we know the means which Jacob and his mother used to accomplish their purpose we would understand the word here to have the sense of fraud.

Verse 36. *Jacob*. This is from YAAQOB and defined "heel-catcher (i. e., supplanter)." Esau therefore expresses the conclusion that his brother has a name that is true to his practice. We do not know whether he had learned about the circumstances that took place at the time of their birth. If so, he knew that the immediate position of the twins in course of the birth would accord with the name given to his brother. That is, the name "heel-catcher" would be a literal meaning of the word as exemplified by the incidents at the birth. But that it then meant anything prophetic is not clear as nothing is said about it at that time. But now after the events of the present occasion Esau sees a very appropriate reason why he should have the name Jacob, for he had actually supplanted him twice. He accuses Jacob of taking away his birthright and the writer lets the statement go into the record without censure. We might be inclined to say he made a misstatement since he had himself actually made a bargain with his brother that involved exchange of the birthright. And yet again, as the statement stands in the record without any criticism we look for the justness of it. And we will find it. While it is true that Esau sold his birthright in a plain bargain in which he was fully aware of what was being bartered away, yet it is also true that his brother took unmerciful advantage of the plight of his elder

brother and under this pressure obtained what he could not have done under normal conditions. It should be observed here that any benefit obtained under pressure is obtained unrighteously. Now, after his remarks concerning the action of Jacob he turns to his father with the view of further inquiry. His father is a Patriarch and perhaps he has not exhausted his store of blessings and even yet will be able to bless him.

Verse 37. Isaac then repeats the gist of the blessing he had just pronounced upon Jacob and speaks as if Esau is still seeking for the one given his brother. After naming the principal items of that blessing he asks what he expected could be done for him after all this.

Verse 38. Esau persists but expresses himself in a manner that indicated he was not expecting to have his brother's blessing revoked. But puts the matter clearly up to his father whether a Patriarch is limited to giving one blessing. Then he repeats the pitiful plea he had made at first. Not that Jacob's blessing is to be recalled. Not that he is to have a blessing even like it. But just to have some blessing. Just "bless me also, O my father" and then emphasizes his request with weeping.

Verses 39, 40. Then Isaac is prevailed upon to give a blessing to Esau. But the reader will observe that it will in no way conflict with the one pronounced upon this brother. It will have some relation to his brother but will not set aside that promised to Jacob. *Fatness*. This is from MASHMAN and defined "fat, i. e., (literally and abstractly) fatness; but usually (figuratively and concretely) a rich dish, a fertile field, a robust man."—Strong. The meaning here is that he will be somewhat at large but will have access to the best of the natural products of the earth. *By thy sword shalt thou live*. Since power in those days was enforced by the sword it would indicate some ruling power was to come to him. And this we find fulfilled in Chapter 36: 31. *Shalt serve thy brother*. This was fulfilled in chapter 8: 14 of 2 Sam. *Shalt break his yoke from off thy neck*. This was fulfilled in 2 Kings 8: 20.

Verse 41. The feeling now existing in Esau's heart against Jacob is very evil. He plans to kill Jacob but does not intend to do so while his father lives. Since he has been his father's

favorite son he naturally feels favorably toward him and wishes to spare him the grief that would be brought to him by the violent death of his son. Hence he intends to wait until the death of his father has come and the period of mourning that was customary had passed.

Verse 42. The previous verse says that Esau "said in his heart" that he would slay his brother. But here we see that Rebekah was told the words of Esau. Thus we can see a striking instance of the fruit of the heart. The Bible all along makes much of the thoughts of the heart as being what sooner or later comes out in fruit. Here is a man plotting in his heart to slay his brother. This exactly gives us a case in point that was spoken by Christ in Matt. 15: 20. There the Saviour declares that out of the heart comes murder. While Esau never accomplished his murderous desire and intention it was there in his heart. Finally his heart expressed itself in words and the words were carried to Rebekah. She then calls her favorite son and relates the situation to him. *Comfort*. One meaning Strong gives of this word is "avenge." The thought would be that in planning to take vengeance on his brother he would find comfort.

Verses 43, 44. She advises him to flee from home and go to their homeland and be with her brother. He is to be there until the heat of his brother has subsided. She did not judge amiss when she expected the fury of Esau to pass away for it never was manifested again after this date.

Verse 45. She repeats the statement about the anger of Esau. That it will turn away. When that occurs she promises to send him word and have him return. But she never sent him any such word for, even at the time twenty years later, when Jacob is returning to his former home he is still afraid of him. This indicates that Rebekah never got any information to Jacob. In fact, after this chapter we hear nothing more of the immediate history of Rebekah and she passes from our horizon except as she is referred to by later writers and then only historically. *Why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?* This statement was made in view of the law of capital punishment that God had announced after the flood. (Chapter 9: 6.) The connection there shows that when a person commits murder his life must also be taken in

punishment. Now if Esau kills Jacob she will be deprived of him. Then when Esau is executed for his murder she will be deprived of him, and so would be deprived of both her sons.

Verse 46. Rebekah still makes use of her arts. It is probable that she would truthfully say she did not want her son to marry into the inferior blood of the people near them. Esau had done that (chapter 26: 34, 35) and both she and her husband had grieved over it. So how plausibly she expresses her anxiety to Isaac. Of course we will not overlook the fact that her anxiety concerning her son's marriage had not expressed itself until this other affair of her plotting. Nevertheless, it has such a reasonable basis that it makes the desired impression on her husband as we will see in next chapter. But we will here think of her idea of getting the cooperation of her husband in this matter. Were Jacob to leave home suddenly and without the knowledge and consent of his father it might produce a confused situation that would interfere with her scheme and bring Esau into action. Hence she makes as if she is about worried past endurance. *Weary of my life*. In this she makes the extravagant declaration that she would not care to live longer if Jacob married a woman whom she disapproved.

## GENESIS 28

Verse 1. The speech of Rebekah recorded in the last verse of preceding chapter had the desired effect on Isaac. Of course his wife had not hinted anything to him about her chief motive in getting Jacob away from home and thus Isaac makes no mention of it. But he calls him and directs him not to take a wife of the daughters of that country. It might seem very strong to us to hear a father restricting his son on the subject of his marriage when the son is 77 years of age. (See note at chapter 30: 25.) But we will also remember that this is the Patriarchal Dispensation and the head of a family had much authority in those times.

Verse 2. He instructs his son to go to the house of Bethuel for a wife. It is interesting to note that he gave the same directions to him about this as did his mother. We have no indication that any conversation had taken place between the parents on this subject. So the conclusion is necessary that an understanding had existed between the members of Abraham's descendants that they were to keep the

blood strain true to the original stock; at least until it had become well established. There came a time when the Lord seemed less exacting about this than formerly, but at present it is adhered to pretty much all the time.

Verses 3, 4. This is a repetition of the promise first made to Abraham and has been stated over again and again many times. The occasion for repeating it at this time seems to be one having come through the personal plans of Rebekah and Jacob, but independent of all that, he is the one to whom the Lord had decreed the blessings were to come and thus the statement of the Patriarch is an inspired one.

Verse 5. If one were to read this verse by itself and then close the book he would conclude that Jacob had reached the land sought according to the request of his parents. But a glance at the following verses would show that not to be the case. It is simply one of those instances where a writer has begun the report of an important transaction and touching only the high spots. And while at it jumps ahead and tells the final act. In this case the subject is Jacob's journey to his mother's home land and the writer here tells us in general terms that he accomplished the journey, but does not go into the details. That will follow for he is yet just ready to start on his journey that is to prove so famous and far reaching in its results.

Verses 6-9. We have seen previously that Esau had married into some people that caused a grief to his parents. He learned of their attitude concerning such a matter by overhearing the remarks his father made to Jacob. He then decides to make a move that will be in line with his father's desires. Instead of marrying into the out and out heathen of the stock around them he goes to a near relative, a descendant of their common father, Abraham, and takes a wife from thence. All this shows that he bears no ill feeling toward his father even though he had given his brother the preferred blessing. Now that Jacob is gone he has no immediate occasion for spite work, so he makes this move as a flourish of good will to his father.

Verses 10, 11. Traveling in those days and in that sort of country was not the most convenient nor speedy. The entire area is strange to Jacob. About all he knows is the general direction in which he must travel. The two specific points related to his jour-

ney are the starting point and the destination. But even the destination is not as specific as the beginning. He knows that he is at Beer-sheba to start with, but only knows that the land of Haran is the general place of his objective, thus it is stated that he "went toward Haran." He *lighted* on a certain place. This word is from *PAGAH* and defined "a primitive root; to impinge, by accident or violence, or (fig) by importunity."—Strong. The connection shows the word "accident" is the part of the definition that applies here for Jacob had no motive for selecting this place as far as the particular location was concerned. But the only reason given for his step was that "because the sun was set." Darkness was upon him and traveling would be difficult if not dangerous. Out here all alone and with the wilds around him, he seeks to rest. But we must not have the idea that no settlement of any kind was in this part of the country. In fact, this very location is mentioned in connection with the acts of Abraham on his entrance to this land. However, it is to be considered as not a very inviting place since Abraham built his altar between it and another city. The place had been called Luz previously. But in after times in the Bible it came to be a very noted location, evidently through the important doings that occurred there. At any rate, there was nothing of the modern accommodations for lodging in sight, so Jacob lies down among the stones. As an elevation for the head was desired he used the only object at hand and that was a stone. We know not how much of all this event was caused by the Lord, but we do know that he made use of the occasion for one of the interesting episodes of sacred history.

Verse 12. *And he dreamed.* In Hebrews 1:1 the writer refers to the variety of means which God used in olden times to make known his will. He words it "at sundry times and in divers manners." This fact will be seen all along the record of the Old Testament. One of those manners was the dream. Not that all dreams are inspired. Natural causes will bring dreams but such dreams have no significance. But when God decides on any given occasion to use a dream method then he causes the person to have the kind of dream that suits the occasion. This is one of those "times" when God wishes to make known his further assurance of blessing on the seed of Abraham. Certainly, it is a



very proper time and occasion to give such assurance when we consider what the conditions were surrounding Jacob. Here he is, practically driven from home under threat of death and out in an apparently uncivilized spot. It is true that he helped to bring this condition on himself and also that it is being worked out in the direction of God's plan. Also, it is true, as we have already seen, that he is not a mere youth since he has passed his "three score and ten." But the situation is none the less affecting. *Ladder*. Strong calls this a "stair-case." This sounds more appropriate. We think of an ordinary ladder as an instrument that is generally placed in almost perpendicular position and requiring more or less awkward exertions for moving upon. Of course we realize that nothing is too hard for the Lord nor for his angels, yet we are pleased to have the more graceful impression. *Heaven*. In almost every place where this word is found in the Bible it refers to either the atmospheric area or the place of the planets. It thus must be considered in the present instance. That a material ladder such as a man would see, even in a dream, would be seen to reach to the region where God personally dwells as is sometimes suggested, is a mere fancy. But the familiar expression of a boy is the one the writer prefers as truly illustrating the Biblical term when he says his kite flew up to the sky. The same word he used is also from the word giving us the word "heaven" in the Bible. Whether Jacob's dream permitted him to see up as far as the sky or even as far as the region of the planets we do not know. But the thing that is certain is that it was of great height and indicated an exaltation that was befitting the position of the angels. And to see these celestial beings going up and down on this stair-case as they undoubtedly did very gracefully is in accord with the teaching of the scriptures as to the use which God makes of these servants of his. We are told by Paul (Heb. 1: 14) that angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation. And we are expressly told by the Lord (Luke 13: 28) that Jacob will be in the Kingdom of God. Of course this places him among the heirs of salvation and thus a proper subject for this administration of the angels here.

Verses 13, 14. The famous promise is now repeated to him with some par-

ticulars added. Abraham had been told that he was to inherit the land of Canaan through his seed. But it is specified to Jacob that the very spot on which he is now lying is to become his possession.

Verse 15. General assurances of protection are not only given him but he is assured that he will finally return to this place again. There came a time when he thought of this specific promise and reminded the Lord of it. And also the Lord did not fail to remember it and at last brought him back to the country.

Verse 16. The dream having served its purpose Jacob awakened. *I knew it not*. This expression must be taken to state his mind previous to his sleep. When he came to this place and decided to retire for the night it was only because night had come upon him and not that any particular evidence of the presence of God was there. But after the experience of the night he concludes that God was in the place. This reminds us of the experience of Hagar (chapter 16: 13) when she unexpectedly realized that God was present in a place so unusual.

Verse 17. *Afraid; dreadful*. Both these words are from *yare* and defined as follows. "A primitive root; to fear; morally to revere; causatively, to frighten." Strong. This word is rendered in the A.V. as fear 242 times, terrible 24, dreadful 5. It is the word for "reverend" in Psa. 111: 9. So we see the definition of the word includes the idea of reverence or respect or awe. The thought in the present instance is that Jacob was filled with a feeling of solemnity and reverence or respect for the place because he considered that God was present. And since the stair-case he had seen that was so high had angels on it he would consider the place as the gateway to the abode of those celestial beings.

Verse 18. Jacob had seen his father make use of an altar for the worship of his God. In most instances he would see him offer a burnt sacrifice. But under the circumstances Jacob cannot offer that. Hence he does what he can and pours oil on the stone. This was one of the familiar items in altar and other service to God in the days of ceremonial activities. Oil came from the olive, an article of value and use, and thus was a real sacrifice. It also was a symbol of consecration, hence the propriety of the use Jacob made of it in this case.

Verse 19. *Bethel*. This place was formerly called Luz. But here we see Jacob gives it a name significant of the things occurring in the place. It is a compound word and comes from two Hebrew words. *Beth* means "house" and *El* means "God." Thus the name means "house of God" which Jacob considered a proper name for the place.

Verses 20-22. Abraham was the first man to offer tithes or the tenth (chapter 14: 20) but here Jacob vowed to make it a lifelong practice. And this practice finally became a part of the fixed law of God under Moses. A vow differs from an ordinary promise in that it is a solemn promise to God and not to man. As far as any record shows Jacob kept his promise to the Lord.

### GENESIS 29

Verses 1, 2. Reference to the people of the east merely includes the population in general. Having never been in this country before he is somewhat among them as an inquirer at present. Here he found a well with three flocks of sheep lying there near it. Evidently it was a place for the use of various keepers of sheep and protected in the meantime of waterings with a rock covering.

Verse 3. This more particularly brings out the thought expressed in preceding paragraph that the well was for general use. When a service had been obtained from the well it was the practice to replace the stone and then make further disposition of the sheep. If it were a mid-day time of watering they would do so then take the sheep away for further feeding. If in the evening they would water them and then gather them into the folds for keeping.

Verses 4, 5. Upon inquiry Jacob learns the people now present at the well are from the place familiar to his remembrance as having been spoken of by his parents. Upon this he mentions the man in whom he has so much interest and through whom he was to obtain a wife.

Verse 6. His next inquiry is very general and impersonal. He inquires about his health. We do not know how specific he would have become further on in his conversation had they not volunteered the very information that he was wanting. They told him that the man he was asking about was well. Next they informed him that his daughter was coming with the sheep.

Now his father had charged him to take a wife of the daughters of Laban. That was so general. He might have more than one daughter. But now he is informed that his "daughter" is coming. Not only so, but his daughter Rachel is coming. Of course Jacob did not know the names of any of Laban's daughters. But he has been trusting in God all the while. And did not his father, who is a Patriarch, assure him that God would bless him? And that did not mean only in material things for he had connected the prospect of blessing with the fact that he was to find a wife among the daughters of Laban. And furthermore, in his dreams at Bethel God had expressly repeated the promise made to his father that his seed was to be numerous. This would have to be through the finding of a wife. Surely, God has sent this daughter of Laban's out here at this particular time. How thrilled he must be at this moment.

Verse 7. Who would want the intrusion of disinterested shepherds at the time he is about to meet the woman for whom he has made this dreadful journey? At such times the space should be reserved exclusively for the ones with more important concern. So he reminds them that it is still mid-day. That it is not time for the final watering of the sheep preparatory for the evening gathering into the sheepfolds. If that were the case then it would be logical for them to wait for the common work of the last service for the sheep. But since there will still be a final opportunity for this work they might as well not be losing this good grazing time. Give the sheep some drink then go on and see that they get something to eat out in the pasture. If these people will just do this then Jacob can have the ecstasy of meeting his probable and expected sweetheart in the sacred joy of privacy. But his sentiments hid from him the real situation so they will not grant to him this ruse of Cupid.

Verse 8. They inform him that the use of the well must not be made so incidental but that it must be done in a general action and after some one in charge gets the stone rolled from the well's mouth. But he will not have opportunity for further insistence with them, for here she comes.

Verse 9. Yes, right while he was making the speech recorded in the preceding verse, the girl he is longing to meet arrives with the sheep belonging to her father.

Verse 10. All of these other people now fade from the picture. The writer as well as the reader will not have any further need of them and their activities about the sheep entrusted to their care no longer interest us. But Jacob gallantly assists Rachel by removing the stone from the well's mouth and waters the sheep of Laban.

Verse 11. The salutation of the kiss was not necessarily accompanied with any sentiments other than courtesy or civility since that was the established practice in that country. Hence nothing unusual could be made of this "liberty" of his. But we have the New Testament writers charging that the kiss should be holy. This includes the requirement that it not be accompanied with any motives or sentiments that would be unlawful. Thus a man would not be permitted to kiss another man's wife even in those times with the idea of fleshly satisfaction. Not that such pleasure is necessarily immoral. It would depend on the persons. And a man would not have the right to take fleshly pleasure from the salutation of this kiss if it were the case of another man's wife. But in this case of Jacob, he is a free man and she is a free woman. And while the ordinary social practice would permit him to take the liberty of a kiss, yet also the circumstances belonging to the occasion would cause and permit him to deposit this kiss upon Rachel with all the gusto of a lover. We are sure this took place, for the record says he lifted up his voice and wept. It is inconceivable that he was weeping from fear or unpleasantness of any kind. Not only so, it was after he kissed her that he gave this exhibition of his feelings. And that is easily understood. Being a free man and with the conditions as described in preceding paragraph he doubtless gave her a kiss filled with all the emotion and love that the past years of his loneliness had accumulated. So it was the weeping of joy and satisfied thrill.

Verse 12. The first experience of pleasing sensation abated Jacob tells her of his relation to her. Of course the term "brother" means a near relative in Bible times and not always so near as to be objectionable to this love.

Verses 13, 14. This passage informs us that the report of the meeting of Jacob and Rachel had been brought to Laban. But no one had been told of it but Rachel and thus we have the necessary inference that she had told him. And her manner of relating it

had not made any unfavorable impression on him for he "ran to meet him." Yes, we know that Rachel was the one who told him for the record says so. But we are also sure as to the manner of her telling as here stated. But the present form of recognition which Laban gives him is one of the relationship. Hospitable welcome was accorded him we know for the record states that he abode with him for a month. This is not in the sense that the month is the length of his stay as we know it was not. So the expression must be taken to mean that nothing but social and kinship hospitality was manifested in this time as far as Laban was concerned. But that does not require us to conclude that nothing further was considered by Jacob. It would be unreasonable to think that all that he saw during this month was the hospitality of his host. Here was the girl who first met him and upon whose lips he had pressed a kiss of love so thrilling that it caused him to weep aloud with the effect of pleasure. This close association in the home of this beautiful girl served to strengthen the sentiment that was already manifested. And if any one should venture the criticism that the scene at the well was only a case of "love at first sight" he would have to recall it for a month of close mingling in the family would have exposed it. Also, we must remember that Laban had another daughter. And if the first scene was only love at first sight, surely the month of association in the family with his other daughter present would have brought to him the realization that he had picked the wrong girl. But such was not the case as we shall see and that his love for Rachel was sure and deep.

Verse 15. The language of this verse tells us that Jacob was not an idle leech on the hospitality of his host but served him usefully during this month. But Laban sees how the situation might be misunderstood. Thus far he evidently had not been giving him anything but "room and board." And no indication that Jacob was dissatisfied. Why should he not be satisfied to work for his keeping if it can be daily in the home of the woman he loves. Hence no indication that he had even asked for additional pay. But Laban sees the justice of giving him something more than room and lodging and makes the proposition to do so. That is, if it might be considered not fair to impose upon a man's hospitality even though he is a relative, neither

would it be fair to impose on the other's services even though he is a relative. And with this idea in view Laban asked him what his wages should be.

Verses 16, 17. This is the first mention of Leah. But the full force of the choice of Jacob or of the bargain he proposes would not be as fully appreciated did the reader not know that Laban had another daughter besides Rachel. *Tender*. This is from RAK and defined "Tender (literally or figuratively); by implication, weak."—Strong. Thus the word used to describe Leah has a meaning that might be desirable if applied to a subject where the opposite of ruggedness or coarseness were desired. For instance in Chapter 18: 7 it mentions a calf "tender and good" and the word in the original is the same as here. But the connection shows that the word tender is used as opposed to that which is tough and thus undesirable. But in the case at hand the text does not say that she was tender only, but that she was tender eyed. Then the lexicon definition adds that it implies "weak" which would be very undesirable as regards to a woman's appearance. And especially is this true when the inspired writer immediately adds with a word that indicates an opposite situation and says "but Rachel was beautiful," etc. This means the writer did not consider Leah as beautiful since she had weak eyes. The word *favoured* is from MAREH and defined "a view (the act of seeing); also an appearance (the thing seen) whether (real) a shape (especially if handsome, comeliness; often plural, the looks), or (mental) a vision."—Strong. These qualities are here ascribed to Rachel in addition to the word that said she was beautiful. With all this information at hand we cannot escape the conclusion that Leah was rather uninviting to the eye. Not that she was "hard on the eyes" necessarily, but there was not that in her countenance that appealed to the view of another. While Rachel had a beautiful form and was beautiful in general and had a countenance and gleam in her eye that invited, yea, irresistibly drew another toward her, especially a man, and still more especially a man with a lifetime of unsatisfied love welling up in his whole nature. No wonder then that he offered to serve Laban seven years for the possession of this daughter.

Verse 19. The answer of Laban is just slightly evasive. He did not say

specifically that if he worked for him the seven years that "then" he could have the girl. But all the circumstances indicated that and Jacob so interpreted it. Laban merely makes a comparison between the fact of giving her to another man and giving her to this one. The idea of a father giving his daughter in marriage is again here brought up, but that has already been considered and interpreted in view of the customs of that age and place. The only conclusive thing he says to Jacob is "abide with me."

Verse 20. Here a verse of four lines covers a period of seven years. Nothing is said of the particulars of that period of service. Merely that he served the seven years as he had agreed to do. And the interesting and astonishing part of the story is that "they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her." Viewed from the experience common to men and women we would be inclined to remark that the time would seem as an unending age. Ordinarily that would. But we will bear in mind that Jacob was not separated from her as ordinary lovers are while awaiting the time of their wedding. In such a situation we think of the poetic words "absence makes the heart grow fonder." But the absence is not in this case. His future wife is daily in his sight and doubtless often near his side. If he wishes to follow her as she goes about her own personal tasks he may do so. He is keeping the flocks of Laban, but that does not require all of his time. He will be free much of the time. Rachel can be seen as she moves from place to place on her father's premises. He can observe where she goes and then follow up to the very spot where he has seen her. He can enjoy looking at the footprints that she has made in the earth and muse over the sacred likeness of her feet. The feet of her whom he loves more than his own life and of the woman who will some day be his bosom companion. The sacredness of the betrothal as held by those ancient people assures him that no intruder will endanger his position in her heart and he is permitted continuous and unlimited enjoyment of her charms day after day, restricted only from the intimate relations that are reserved for the final union. No wonder then that the period seemed as only a few days to him.

Verse 21. The period of promised service has ended, his waiting time is



over. Nothing now remains to make his happiness complete but the sublime privilege of the intimacy permitted only between husband and wife. This is what he means by the expression that he may "go in unto her." This is the Biblical expression for designating the fleshly relation of the sexes. Nothing now but that relation remains to be done to make their union complete. Thus he asks for the completion of Laban's contract.

Verse 22. Not a word said by Laban as to changing the contract. No questioning of the quality of the service rendered in the seven years and no hint that any misunderstanding had been entertained. No name was mentioned by Jacob for that is well understood. Just "give me my wife." Then Laban gathers all the men together and makes a feast. This is not to be considered as a wedding feast proper as the sequel will show. Besides, and that also will appear in the sequel, the feast customarily made in connection with weddings was given after the wedding and not before. The only meaning that could have been attached to this feast was one of general celebration of the fact that Laban was going to have a wedding in his family. And there was nothing in the happenings of that occasion that designated, officially, who the bride was to be. That is, nothing that was necessarily connected with the union. Had there been, then a breach of morals would have been practiced unless Rachel were given in the ceremonies of the evening. Or, if Leah had been offered in the exercise then Jacob would have protested. So the whole circumstance proves that no marriage ceremony was used in those days. The only "rite" that was necessary to make a man and woman one was the fleshly one and that was in accordance with Chapter 2: 23, 24. Any discussions of the subject of marriage that ignore this basic principle of the institution as set forth in such instances as the one now in hand are a confusion of the subject. Nothing at that time makes a man and woman husband and wife but the fleshly relation. Therefore, until such relation has taken place no union has been formed and no fleshly obligation created. This accounts for the actions of Laban.

Verses 23, 24. The festivities of the evening are over. The guests have departed and the time has come for the actual union. According to another custom, when the moment arrives La-

ban conducts his daughter to the bed of Jacob, but not the one he had promised. It is night and no one is clearly visible. A woman is put into Jacob's bed and he "goes in unto her" and they become one flesh. Of course we have to conclude that Leah became a party to her father's deception else she would have revealed her identity to Jacob. *Maid; handmaid*. These are both from the same word and defined "a female slave (as a member of the household)." Thus she would have been Laban's slave before but now a personal slave to be at hand for service to his daughter.

Verse 25. Note that not one hint of anything unlawful from a moral standpoint is charged by Jacob. Had there been any law requiring some ceremony to make a marriage proper then that ceremony would have exposed to Jacob the cheat of Laban and he would have protested. Or, had the said ceremony been used for Rachel then he could not have taken Leah to Jacob's bed without violation of the moral law and Jacob would not have been slow in complaining so. But nothing of the kind is said, hence we must conclude that no marriage ceremony was used in Biblical times except the fleshly act. Jacob accuses Laban of having beguiled him. This means to betray or deceive.

Verse 26. Then Laban explains his action. That it is not allowed in that country to give the younger in marriage before the elder. Of course, had he told Jacob this beforehand he did not know what Jacob would have done. Neither do we know.

Verse 27. *Fulfill her week*. This refers to the feast of seven days that was customarily given in honor of a bride in those times. An instance of such a feast is recorded in Judges 14: 10. It there says that Samson made a feast "for so used the young men to do." And the 12th verse of the same chapter tells us the feast was seven days. Now then, what Laban means is for Jacob to honor his bride with the customary week's feast and then he will receive Rachel also. But it is with the proviso that he serve Laban seven more years to pay for her.

Verse 28, 29. It is easy to conceive why Jacob would endure the fraud of his father-in-law, for it is the only way of actually enjoying the woman he loves. Therefore he goes ahead with the feast of seven days. Then Laban gives him Rachel for wife. And so Jacob marries the two sisters a week

apart. The one is paid for and the other is yet to be paid for. And the fact that even after he gets his beloved wife and might have escaped with her, yet he has more respect for his contract than did Laban, and so continues his service as agreed. And Rachel also receives a female slave as a marriage gift of her father.

Verse 30. "Went in also unto Rachel" of course means that he had the fleshly relation with her that made her his wife. The expression "loved also Rachel" might leave us with the idea that love for Rachel was as yet an unannounced fact. But the thought is that notwithstanding that Leah had been imposed off on him and he had had fleshly relations with her, yet his greater love for Rachel was unimpaired. Now we are sure that his love was not just "love at first sight."

Verses 31-35. Now begins a contest of very extraordinary character. The wife of Jacob first taken was *hated*. This is from *SANEY* and defined "To hate (personally)." It is understandable. Whether we approve of his attitude, Jacob had been imposed upon. He had fallen in love with a beautiful woman and worked, according to contract for her seven years. Now when the term of his service had been completed he is cheated and has the unattractive and unloved woman put off onto him. The whole thing is an unfortunate affair and the woman is to be pitied. Therefore the Lord is the one to show the pity. This was done by giving her ability to bear children while her more fortunate sister, as to the affections of her husband, is barren. And as it was in those days considered a great reproach not to be able to have children, this indeed constituted an important factor in the family relations of this house. After the birth of each of the four sons recorded in this paragraph she gives the Lord the praise and expresses anxiety and hope for the affection of her husband. After the birth of the four sons here mentioned Leah ceased bearing children for the time being.

### GENESIS 30

Verse 1. The reproach of being childless is felt by Rachel and she expresses it in earnest terms to her husband. "Give me children or else I die" could have but one meaning. She did not suppose that her barren condition was from any voluntary acts of her husband. But it is her way of saying that if she cannot have children she would

not wish to live. Her husband is a man of God and surely he can do something to help the situation besides just being her fleshly companion. But she counted too much on the power of her husband.

Verse 2. Jacob became angry. But it was not the anger of malice or evil intent. The original word here has the outstanding idea of great and heated excitement and of a feeling more like provocation than one of malice. His wife had asked too much from him as if he were endowed with the power of God. He evidently realizes her plight but is not able to help it.

Verse 3. The plan of giving a slave into the bosom of one's husband for the purpose of a child is difficult to understand. About the nearest explanation is in the idea that being childless was considered as more unfortunate than it would even be to lose the affection of the husband or than of seeing him become intimate with any other woman. And especially a slave. And yet, perhaps it would be easier to see one's husband being intimate with a slave than with another woman of his equal. In the latter case his affections might be transferred to the woman of standing while in the former only the physical pleasure would be experienced. At any rate Rachel makes the request that Jacob go in unto her maid. Her expression is that she "shall bear upon my knees." This is to be understood as referring to the manner of conducting childbirth in those days. Instead of using a bed, a stool so arranged for the purpose was used. This posture of the mother assisted the delivery and was used at that time. It will be well here to quote from an authority on this subject since this is an unusual matter. "Obstetrics. The suffering of child-birth is the penalty for the sin of Eve (Gen. 3: 16). Midwives in the Near East from the earliest time, have conducted deliveries upon the obstetric chair (Ex. 1: 16), and continue to do so today. The obstetric chair is mentioned by ancient Greek writers. Rachel offers the use of her knees in lieu of an obstetric chair, as a symbol that the child borne by her maid is her own."—*Standard Bible Dictionary*, Funk & Wagnalls, Disease and Medicine, No. 8. If Rachel's maid takes a position on her knees instead of the chair and gives birth to the child, it will be as near to having the child come "from between her own knees" as could be done under the circumstances.

Verses 4, 5. Jacob complied with the request of his wife. But the record says that the maid bore Jacob a son. It was true in spite of all the planning of Rachel, she could not claim the child except as a thing of possession. And that is not the main reason the statement is made. In those times the blood line in any important family was always accounted on the father's side and often not any record was kept of even his own daughters. And after this when the twelve sons of Jacob are referred to there will be no distinction made between his sons through his wives and those of his wives' maids. Of course, after he had formed the intimacy brought about by begetting sons through them, all other men were to regard them in the same light as his wives, under the tolerance in use at that period of the world's history.

Verses 6-8. The words of Rachel indicate that it was considered in the light of contest with her sister that she wished to have children. Unlike the case of Leah who connected her good fortune of motherhood with the prospects of winning her husband's affections, she only connects it with God. She already had the affections of her husband and so that was not one of the motives for her present contest.

Verses 9-13. The period of child bearing for Leah seemed to have taken a pause. And the doings of Rachel with her maids rouses the spirit of rivalry in her and she uses the same plans adopted by her sister. She gives her maid into the bosom of her husband in two instances and two additional sons are born.

Verse 14. *Mandrakes*. This is from *DUWDAY* and defined "a boiler or basket; also the mandrake (as aphrodisiac):"—Strong. The second word in parenthesis is defined by Webster as "exciting to sexual desire." This fruit is the same as the common May apple in America. The belief was held by people that eating of this fruit had effect on the reproductive functions. And in a situation where love and reproduction are running a contest this article would be considered desirable. With this notion being in existence we can see the significance in Rachel's request that Leah divide these pieces of fruit with her.

Verse 15. Leah thinks she sees the motive of the request. In protest she tells Rachel that she has the affections of their husband already. This reply shows she understands Rachel's pur-

pose of the mandrakes is to assist her in her contest for the supremacy. But after such a complaint Rachel counters with an offer to submit the company of their common husband to Leah that night. Rachel can afford to make this apparent sacrifice since she will now have the mandrakes and can soon instigate a like experience with him and possibly have better success finally. *Therefore*. This word has been explained previously but will be again here. It has the idea of something that is appropriate or just or right. It is as if Rachel said "it will be proper for you to have his company tonight." Since Leah seems to think that Rachel wants the mandrakes for the sole purpose of outsmarting her sister, she is willing to give her the present priority to see whether, even with the use of the mandrakes, she can have success. As to the agreement about who has to accompany with the common husband on any particular occasion, doubtless that was a conversation that occurred often. It is plain that a man with more than one wife could not accompany with each of them at the same time. Therefore it would be a frequent question "which of us this time?" And in the present instance Rachel unselfishly gives way to her sister.

Verse 16. *Hired*. This is from *CAKAR* and defined "the idea of temporary purchase; to hire."—Strong. Especially note the word of temporary purchase. All this agrees with the remarks in the preceding paragraph. The question of which was to have the pleasure of the husband's conjugal company on any given night would necessarily come up in the family life. The husband would not always be the sole judge. The attitude of the wives would naturally often figure in it. And in the present instance Leah informs Jacob that a bargain has been made between her and her sister and that he is to give her his company that night in the intimate relation. With this situation placed before him Jacob complies with the invitation or request of his wife that night.

Verse 17. *God hearkened unto Leah*. Under the circumstances we know what was the prayer of Leah. Her ability to live in the relation of wife to Jacob had already been demonstrated, so that was not the subject of her prayer. And she knew she was not permanently unable to conceive since she already had four sons. But for some reason she had not been success-

ful for a period. Her prayer therefore had to be one for a counteracting of whatever was causing the stoppage in her conception.

Verses 18-21. In this whole passage we see the same accounting for her success we saw at the start. That God had been her helper and also that it might have the effect of bringing the affections of her husband more in her favor. And in reasoning as she did as to her child bearing being a cause for the respect and attentions of her husband, it is in keeping with the general state of things in those times. Children were universally desired and not to be able to have them was considered a reproach. Thus in this passage, as in most other places, the success in the way of children is treasured and interpreted as a favor from God, but also as a means of strengthening the ties between herself and her husband. It should always be that way. The unnatural customs of society and other causes have interfered with the laws of God and nature and many means have been resorted to in order to thwart the very first commandment that God gave to the first pair. We see that Leah uses the circumstances in the way just remarked, that they indicate favor of God. If people are unable to have children it is a misfortune. If they are able to and refuse it is a sin.

Verses 22-24. *Hearkened to her.* This is the same thought as in verse 17. It shows that Rachel also had prayed for a child and when the child was given she says that God had taken away her reproach. Her attitude toward children was the righteous one as shown in preceding paragraph. And we can see a finer motive in her case than in that of Leah. In the case of Leah she seemed to be concerned principally with procuring the love of her husband by way of her children. Rachel does not need that assistance. She knows she already has his preferential love. Hence her desire for children is motivated by one based on the fixed laws of nature, that which requires and inclines living beings toward reproducing their kind. The name Joseph is from a Hebrew word that means "let him add" according to Strong and "he shall add" according to Webster. Whether Rachel had received any divine information of a future son which led her to name her firstborn as she did, we do not know. However, the name was predictive of that fact although she did not live to enjoy the second son.

Verse 25. Beginning with the 23rd verse of previous chapter and ending with the one of this paragraph we have covered seven years of the family life of Jacob. This will appear more clearly later. By consulting chapter 31: 41 with the present verse we will learn that Joseph was born at the end of the fourteen years of Jacob's service for his two wives. When Jacob came to Egypt he was 130 years old. (Chapter 47: 9.) The famine had then been going two years. (Chapter 45: 6.) These had been preceded with seven years of plenty. (Chapter 41: 29.) Just before the years of plenty started Joseph was 30 years old. (Chapter 41: 46.) Now then, Joseph was 30 when he stood before Pharaoh and predicted the years, seven of them passed with plenty at which time Joseph would be 37. Then two years of the famine had passed when his father came, and that would make him 39. So, if Joseph was 39 when his father was 130, it follows that Jacob was 130 less 39, namely, 91, when Joseph was born. And Joseph was born 7 years after his father was married so that Jacob was 91 less 7, namely, 84, when married. And he was married seven years after leaving home so that he was 84 less 7, namely, 77 when he left home and had the vision of the staircase.

Verse 26. Jacob's term of service for his wives has been faithfully kept and he asks to be released from further service to go to his own home.

Verses 27, 28. Here Laban not only makes no complaint against the quality of service Jacob has rendered but admits that the presence of Jacob has meant blessing for him. This reminds us of the promise of God to Abraham that he would bless others if they blessed him. And no hint is made that Jacob owed anything further on his debt. That is all settled now. But if he will continue with him he will receive wages.

Verses 29, 30. Jacob lays the foundation for the proposition he will make later. He is not going to claim any certain price in money. So now he reminds Laban that his livestock had increased much since his coming to him, but had nothing of his own to show for it or to appropriate specifically to his own family.

Verses 31, 32. Laban sees the point and again asks Jacob to name his price. But again he will not name any specific amount. Instead, he makes a very unusual proposition. It involves



the matter of "scientific breeding." Jacob proposes to accept for his pay all of certain animals with defects. We will observe that the defects of the contract are external and have no necessary connection with the general physical state of the creature. Of course this makes it easy to distinguish which is which among the cattle afterward.

Verses 33. So settled and satisfactory would this condition be with Jacob that he agrees beforehand that if any animal should be found among his group that did not have any of these defects on it then it was to be considered as theft on his part.

Verses 34-36. Laban agrees with the proposition. It is sometimes charged that Jacob took advantage of Laban but this is not the case. That is, he did not take any unjust advantage, only he took advantage of the favor of God. Later we have the statement that God gave to Jacob the cattle of Laban. Also, Jacob was very patient with Laban and tried to please his changing whims as many as ten times. We know from usual observation that while certain "prenatal" influences may account for certain results, yet not all the things that happened in the experience of Jacob could have been accomplished merely through manipulation of breeding. Therefore we must conclude that God wished Jacob to have the cattle that he did acquire. And if God so willed it we dare not say it was wrong. In this paragraph Laban was the one who separated the defective animals from the flocks. The statement is made that he gave them into the "hand of his sons." Some quibbling has been done here as to whose sons are meant. But that should not be difficult to solve. The oldest son Jacob had at this time was not more than six or seven. They could not be entrusted with the handling of the herds of animals. And whether we suggest that he called upon his sons to do this as a measure against fraud on part of Jacob, that would be far-fetched also. He has already admitted that God had blessed him on account of Jacob and thus could not believe that any injustice would be done by him. But this was no more than a fair way to start out the term of the new contract for his own forces to lend some assistance. And the three days journey distance between the two groups would only be a businesslike precaution against unfair mingling of the groups of animals.

Verse 37. *Pilled*. This word means "peeled." Jacob took poles of green growths. This was because he wanted to take advantage of the sap that would be flowing between the bark and the body of the rods or poles. This would enable him to first cut the bark in places and then peel off the part between the cuts, leaving a stripped condition similar to the stripes of a barber's pole. This arrangement was for the effect on the impression of the animals while mating.

Verses 38-40. These rods with the impressive stripes were kept near the place where the animals came to drink. They were conveniently arranged so that when desired they could be placed in sight or removed, according to the wish of the owner.

Verses 41-43. Jacob would be acquainted with the breeding season of his various charges. He would watch, and if the time for any particular animal had come that was the fertile period, if it happened to be one of the stronger individuals he would place the striped rods in their sight. While if the weaker ones were about to breed he would leave the rods out of sight. The result was that when a sheep or goat was born of the stronger kind it would have some marks on it and thus would be Jacob's. This scheme would not have been so universally successful had God not helped. We will see finally that God took quite an important part in the whole manipulation of the scheme and thus we are not to accuse Jacob of taking undue advantage.

### GENESIS 31

Verses 1, 2. In spite of the fairness of Jacob's contract the monster of envy began to work. The sons of Laban noticed Jacob's success and told their father. The statement is made that Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban that it was changed. It thus indicates that he was so well acquainted with the fairness of the whole contract that he could not make any specific charge of fraud. All that he could do was to act in a sullen manner. But the same God who had caused the proposition of Jacob to be a success will take further interest in him and direct his activities.

Verse 3. Upon the situation arising from the complaint of Laban's sons and of his own attitude toward Jacob, God bids him return to the land of his fathers with the promise he would be with him.

Verses 4-13. Upon this Jacob calls his wives to him in the field for consultation. He reports to them the changed attitude of their father, further reminding them of his faithful service to their father. He details much of the carrying out of the plan agreed upon between them at the start of this last contract. He states to them that their father was changeable and inclined to be dissatisfied even though matters were going according to the contract. When he thought that a little minor change in the manipulation of the scheme might be to his advantage he asked it and Jacob always agreed to the change. Then if Laban decided that change was not so good and wanted to change back Jacob agreed to that also. In the 12th verse in this paragraph is where we see God as taking direct part in the scheme of the breeding. Also that the reason for this direct intervention of God was the unfair treatment that Laban had been giving to Jacob. He tells his wives that in all the unfair treatment of their father towards him, God suffered no harm to come to him. He then makes mention of the God of Bethel as having spoken to him and now bids Jacob to return to the land of his people.

Verses 14-16. How blessed it would be if all wives would take the attitude that Rachel and Leah took, and thus prefer their husband to their father. This is as it should be. When God first gave the law of marriage he decreed that a man should leave his father and mother, etc. Of course this does not mean that one must necessarily desert his parents. But in all cases where the interests of the parents conflict with the just interests of the married child, then the latter must prevail.

Verses 17, 18. Jacob prepared to leave and take with him his own possessions only.

Verse 19. Laban was away from home at the time that Jacob left. Since he was told by the Lord to leave and also since he is not breaking any contract, it is only a wise thing for him to take his leave in the absence of Laban so as to avoid the unpleasant hindrance that might occur were he present. Mention is made that Rachel had stolen her father's images. These were small portable objects of worship. It should be observed that all of the people of that country were idolaters. (Josh. 24: 2, 15.) Rachel had not yet been in any other land nor under any

other system of worship but that of her father's people. And Josephus tells us (Ant. 18-9-5) that the people of this country worshipped such gods that were images of the gods of the land. Also, that when they traveled they carried them with them in their journey. We might suppose they carried them as a sort of amulet. At any rate, Rachel wanted the benefit of these articles, and evidently had none of her own. This is a silent tribute to the purity of Jacob's religious life through these years he has been in this country.

Verse 20. Again we have the word Syrian. See comment at Chapter 25: 20 on this. Jacob would steal away as here stated for the reasons shown in verse 19 above.

Verses 21-23. The river that Jacob is here said to have crossed is the Euphrates since that is the stream between the country of Laban and the vast spread of land that he must pass over before reaching his home land. It was told Laban of the departure of Jacob, but he did not hear of it till Jacob had been gone three days. He had to travel seven days before he overtook him. That means that in seven days he had traveled fast enough to gain the three days that Jacob already had made and the other distance besides. He overtook him at mount Gilead.

Verse 24. Before coming in contact with Jacob God appeared to Laban and gave him charge concerning his treatment of Jacob, that he was to let him alone as far as interfering with his business.

Verses 25-29. After overtaking him and getting their encampment arranged Laban addresses himself to Jacob. He pretends that his grievance consists in having his daughters taken from his presence without the privilege of telling them good-bye. That he might have sent them away in connection with rites of mirth. But it is doubtful if that would have been done. He further claims the power to injure Jacob but reports that the God of his (Jacob's) father had appeared and warned him not to hurt him.

Verse 30. Then admitting that Jacob was induced to leave because of homesickness, yet why should he steal his gods in his departure. This shows that Laban had missed them and he concludes that Jacob had taken them. The fact that Rachel wanted to take these images along shows they had none of their own. And the fact that they had none of their own is evidence that

Jacob and his family had not been practicing that form of religious service while in the land of Laban. It should be a matter of knowledge to Laban that Jacob was not in the habit of using these articles. But he is anxious to have some basis for making a complaint and this is what he falls upon.

Verses 31, 32. Jacob first answers the question of why he left as he did. That it was because he was fearful lest his wives be taken from him by force. Next he answers about the charge of theft. Being innocent of the facts in the case he is very positive and makes a strong, if not rash statement. That if the gods are found in the possession of any of his people, such guilty person should die.

Verse 33. Laban then begins his search for the gods. Mention is made of the tents of the different members of his family indicating that the husbands and wives had their separate tents. This would account for the various expressions found along through the ancient literature about the husbands visiting certain of their wives. And the speech of Leah in chapter 30: 16 may be understood in this light.

Verses 34, 35. *Furniture*. This is a camel's saddle. They were made in the form of an enlarged and soft pad and very suitable for sitting upon for comfort. Also, being fluffy and of some size they would furnish an opportunity for secreting small articles about in the same manner that one could use a modern pillow. Somewhere in this article Rachel had hid the images of her father. *Searched*. This is from MASHASH and defined "to feel of; by implication to grope."—Strong. This indicates the effective manner Laban took in trying to find his images. Of course as they were small things he would not expect to see them in plain view, especially as he suspected them to have been stolen. Thus he feels of all the places where he thinks they might be. No wonder then that Rachel does not want to expose the saddle on which she is sitting. Since he had felt of all the other things in the tent, if she should rise up before him, as was the rule then for younger persons to do when an older one entered, he would at once see the article and feel of it too. Thus she must devise some reason as apology for not rising. *Custom of women*. The first word is from DEREK and one part of the definition is "a course of life or mode of action." She means to say that the

course of life for women is upon her. Of course Rachel is still in the child-bearing age of her life and thus is subject to the functioning coming upon them periodically. Some women are very much indisposed at such a time and find it inconvenient if not detrimental to exert themselves at that time, especially to assume a standing posture. Hence the plausibility of her excuse. He looked in the other things but found not the images.

Verses 36, 37. The deception was effective completely. At this Jacob becomes very positive and chides Laban. He specifies certain things that now have been proven to be false. Triumphant and defiantly he bids Laban set forth all the stolen articles as accusing witnesses and then leave the verdict to the judgment of the brethren.

Verse 38. He makes reference to his score of years of service. He affirms that he had not used any of his stock. Also he had taken such good care of the mothers that they had not cast their young. Cast here means to miscarry.

Verse 39. If one of Laban's animals was damaged by wild beasts he took it for his own and replaced it to his flock with a good one of his. Or if one of the beasts were stolen, Jacob made it good even though it was not his fault.

Verse 40. This verse recounts the hours of sleeplessness and other wearisome experiences he had for the sake of his master's interests.

Verse 41. This verse should be marked as useful in determining certain other inquiries of dates and periods. See the note at chapter 30: 25.

Verse 42. The verse in general means that God had been his protector. The term "fear of Isaac" could mean only the fear or reverence for God that his father Isaac had. He believes that even God would not have been with him had he not been true to the faith of his fathers.

Verses 43-45. Of course Laban has never learned the truth about his gods. He is at the end of his resources for further complaints, except to become a whiner. Since he is not going to be able to win in his expectations against Jacob he now wants him for a future friend. He then proposes a pact of friendship. It was a custom to set some kind of visible mark of any important agreement and in this case Jacob sets up a stone for a pillar.

Verse 46. This pillar was reinforced

with a pile of stones. It was of some considerable size for they were able to eat on it. And here is another instance where the eating is mentioned in connection with an important occasion. Let this custom be noted along the journey of study through the Bible.

Verses 47, 48. Both the words that Laban and Jacob gave to the monument they had here set up mean the same. Thus it was merely a matter of each choosing a word of the available vocabulary that answered the purpose. The meaning is "a heap as witness."

Verse 49. The meaning of Mizpah is given in the text and is justified by the critical meaning of the original word which is "an observatory." And indeed the Lord is the most gracious watchtower or observatory for all who will rely on him. As a watchman on the top of an observatory can see the enemies and dangers unseen to the ones below and thus can warn of the same, thus the Lord, from his eminence of infinity can see and will warn us of dangers we cannot see if we will listen to his instructions.

Verses 50-53. The agreement is again gone over and Laban adds a few words that constitute the covenant one of non-aggression. If the specific terms of the pact are violated then the whole covenant is void. Laban refers to the God of Abraham and of Nahor. This is significant. Abraham is the grandfather of Jacob and Nahor is the grandfather of Laban. (Chapter 22: 20-23.) He hereby acknowledges God as common to both.

Verses 54, 55. Jacob prepared beasts for food and again they did eat and tarried together in friendly association all night. When the morning was come they had a friendly parting and Laban returned to his own home. Laban now disappears from our story and will be heard of only historically by later writers.

### GENESIS 32

Verses 1, 2. Again we have the mention of angels. See note on this subject at chapter 16: 7. The angels of God play an important part in the providence for man.

Verses 3-5. Jacob has never forgotten the circumstances that drove him away from home over twenty years ago. He knows the dwelling place of his brother. As a mark of respect and also precaution he sends messengers before him to Esau. He wants him informed as to where his brother has

been spending the years of their absence. He has not been roving over strange ground or among objectionable people. Neither is he an object of charity that he might be thought as seeking help from him. He possesses livestock and servants and humbly wishes to tell his lord this and bids for friendship.

Verse 6. The messengers return with the announcement that Esau is coming his way with four hundred men. Nothing is said about the class of men nor of any other circumstances of the retinue. The simple fact that Esau is coming with that much force is related to Jacob.

Verses 7, 8. With nothing but the guilty remembrance of his past treatment of his brother as accuser Jacob becomes frightened. He concludes that Esau is coming on a hostile mission. Thus he is beginning to reap additional punishment for his actions. As a matter of strategy he divides his people and property into two groups with the plan of letting one escape while the other is being attacked.

Verses 9-12. Jacob now makes an earnest plea to God. He reminds him of his past promises. Also makes a humble acknowledgment of his own unworthiness. But withal, he prays to be delivered from the hand of his brother.

Verse 13. *Present*. One meaning in the definition of this word is "a tribute." It will be seen all along in the history of ancient people that an outstanding custom of recognizing royalty or other dignity was to make a present. It did not necessarily indicate that the recipient was in need. The queen of Sheba gave Solomon presents, but surely not to help him financially. The wise men presented gifts to the babe, but not as a "shower" to cover his needs. It was in recognition of his importance. And so, as an overture to Esau to obtain his friendship Jacob resorts to the custom.

Verses 14-18. The instructions are delivered to the servants so that Esau will understand the purpose of the articles in the present. And as a further gesture of humility and to acknowledge Esau as his equal if not superior in the present situation, they are to inform him that Jacob is following in the rear. We are bound to observe the altered condition of Jacob with his brother from what it was before he left home.

Verses 19, 20. Several different ser-



vants were instructed to address Esau, one after the other, on the pleading mission of Jacob. This will give Esau an impression as to the eagerness of his brother to recognize his greatness and to gain for him his favor. It is further understood that unless the favor of Esau is secured he will not presume to see his face.

Verses 21-23. The "present" is sent in the forefront of the march. That is very appropriate. Unless the favor of Esau is obtained there is no use for the rest of the group to go on. But the time is too near night to complete the journey. After a brief rest he cares for the families and his goods and passes over the brook Jabbok. However, he personally remains on the other side and spends the night in a very unusual manner and in a way that becomes significant in history as we shall see.

Verse 24. Being left alone as to his company he had a wrestling contest that lasted throughout the night. The record here says he wrestled with a "man" but the prophet Hosea (chapter 12: 4) says it was an angel. All of which is understood by the fact that the angels come to human beings in the form of men. Otherwise they could not be seen and heard with the natural organs nor be able to partake of temporal food as they sometimes do. For another case of this kind see that of Abraham and Lot. When they came to Abraham (chapter 18: 2) they are called men and when to Lot (Chapter 19: 1) called angels. An angel is a messenger and thus a messenger from heaven is an angel.

Verse 25. As long as the angel conducted his wrestling match as a man only he was losing. He then invoked his supernatural powers and produced an impediment in Jacob. He touched his thigh and caused it to get out of joint and then he was able to put Jacob on the defensive. However we may think of the motive of all this circumstance, we should observe that lesson shown. As long as we depend on the ability of man only we will fail. But if we rely on the help of God we will accomplish what is right.

Verses 26, 27. The angel requests to be released as it is day. But Jacob will not consent unless the angel blessed him. Upon this the angel asked Jacob his name and it was told him.

Verse 28. This is where the additional name was bestowed, that of Israel. The meaning of the name in

Hebrew is "he will rule as God." This name is here given to him in token of the success he just had over the angel of God. And it should be noted now that the term Israelites originated at this time and place and became one of the familiar names of the descendants of Abraham.

Verse 29. Then Jacob asked the angel his name but was chided for doing so. It was a natural curiosity for Jacob to wish for this information. But we can get the lesson here that heavenly messengers have more authority and rights than mere human beings. There was a practical object in view in discussing the name of Jacob. But nothing except curiosity would have been satisfied had Jacob's question been answered. But while the angel would not tell his name yet he blessed Jacob. This was something that would really benefit him while the knowing of the angel's name would not.

Verse 30. Since no man can see the personal face of God and live (Ex. 33: 20) we must conclude that Jacob considered the face of the angel with such great awe that he thought of him as of God. There would be no final authority in the statement he made further than to accept the statement as a true record of the writer in telling us of the impressions of Jacob at this time.

Verses 31, 32. *Penuel* This is the same as "Peniel" in previous verse. It is so named by Jacob because of his impression of the face of God. And the statement in the present passage merely meant that, as Jacob started to leave this place where he had the unusual experience and where the angel had touched his thigh, he halted upon his thigh. That is, he limped. Therefore, true to their inclination for superstition, the children of Israel will not eat that part of their food animals that corresponds to this of Jacob's thigh.

### GENESIS 33

Verse 1. Jacob now gets a look at the forces of Esau and seems to be still more unfavorably impressed than he was when he first heard about it. He now makes a further arrangement of the ones in his own company. He makes a special distribution of the children and places them in the personal care of his four women.

Verse 2. It is interesting to observe that he placed them in the relation

as to danger so as to favor them in the order of his preferences. Hence we see that the handmaids were placed first, as being in the most dangerous place, Leah comes next, while Rachel and her only child come last.

Verse 3. But we must admire the gallantry of Jacob in that he preceded all of them on this expedition, which he considered to be dangerous. He not only observes the usual custom of courteous salutation by bowing but does it seven times. That is, as soon as he is in immediate sight of Esau he begins his bowing. Then repeats it at intervals until he is in the presence of his brother. Doubtless all the remembrance of those events of long ago are crowding into his mind. He has never learned of any change, if any, that has come in Esau's feelings toward him. This is what makes us know that his mother never carried out the promise to send him word if any such change did come.

Verse 4. But the whole situation is opposite what Jacob expected. His brother ran to meet him and they engaged in an intimate embrace. *Fell on his neck*. This is a common expression found in the scriptures meaning a very close and affectionate contact of two people as a symbol of some common interest.

Verses 5-7. Esau next observed the people coming up in the same order that Jacob had arranged. As they approached they all bow themselves in token of respect as was the custom in use at that time and in that country. Jacob gives God the credit for all his blessings in the form of children and that they are graciously given him. But we should observe the expressions of humility and subjection used by Jacob. In speaking of himself in relation to Esau he calls himself a servant. We are not to understand this as at variance with the prediction made previously that "the elder shall serve the younger." That prediction never was repealed and applied to the permanent position in the world of the two peoples. But the instance at hand here is that which pertains to the men personally only and is a reflection back to the past deception which Jacob had practiced.

Verse 8. Upon inquiry Jacob informed Esau of the purpose of the drove of cattle present. That it was to find grace or favor in his sight. This not only was to assure him that he was wishing to make the usual

gesture of friendly recognition in the form of a "present" but that he also acknowledged his indebtedness to his brother. That if Esau should grant to Jacob his good will it would be a favor that might not have been justly expected. In short, it was a sort of apology for the past injustices done him.

Verses 9-11. Esau protested such a large present but Jacob insisted. He said for "therefore" have I seen thy face, etc. We have already learned the meaning of this word, that it is the sense of "properly or appropriately." So that it is very proper that Esau accept the present as a symbol of common friendship since that friendship has just now been demonstrated. The friendship is finally sealed and formally acknowledged, for the record says he took the present.

Verse 12. Esau then proposed a joint journey and that he would lead the way.

Verses 13, 14. The proposal of Esau is favorable to Jacob but he suggests that the mass of his group could not travel as fast as such a journey might cause. He will not ask Esau to be delayed in his journey to his own home community by the encumbrance of the large gathering connected with him. He then very respectfully suggested that Esau go on to his home and he would follow after with the women and children.

Verse 15. Esau accepts Jacob's suggestion about the order of their traveling. And as an indication of the friendship that has just been formed proposes to leave some of his folks with Jacob to make the journey with him. *What needeth it?* This is a somewhat awkward expression as the A. V. translators have given it to us. The second word in the expression is not in the original at all. The first one is from MEN and defined "properly interrogatively. What? (including how? why? when?)" — Strong. This shows the statement of Jacob merely meant he did not consider that necessary. And yet, he is glad to accept the suggestion because he wishes to find grace in the sight of Esau.

Verses 16, 17. The word Succoth as used here is descriptive and means a place where booths were made. The paragraph means that Jacob carried out his agreement to follow his brother to his own home community. And yet he did not want to impose all his own cattle as an encumbrance on him

so he built places for their sheltering. But he did not intend this as a permanent dwelling place as the word "booth" has the meaning of a temporary shelter. After the friendly journey of the two brothers had been carried out as agreed then Jacob sought other territory.

Verses 18, 19. The area mentioned in the paragraph is farther north and is in the land of Palestine proper. Here is where Jacob purchased some ground on which to pitch his tent. This would indicate a more extended stay than would the building of booths as mentioned in preceding paragraphs.

Verse 20. *El-elohe-Israel*. The lexicon justifies the marginal definition as found here for this word. *El* is Hebrew for God. This word then signifies God. But not only that. There might be other so-called gods. So it is distinctly specified in this place that it is a certain God; yea, the God of Israel. Since this was the name lately acquired by Jacob through his unusual experience with the angel it is easy to see why he would wish to give such a name to this newly erected altar. The nations which had come under the observation of Jacob worshipped so many kinds of strange gods that he would logically be impressed with the superiority of the God that he worshipped over all these other Gods. Hence this expressive name.

### GENESIS 34

Verse 1. Jacob is now dwelling in the community mentioned in close of preceding chapter and surrounded with people of foreign blood. His only daughter goes out on a sort of social adventure to mingle with the other girls of the country. This brought her into contact with society.

Verse 2. She was not mingling with what we might consider the "slummy" parts of the country for the man here brought into the story was a prince or at least his father was one. The simple statement is made that this young man lay with Dinah. Of course he was out of his bounds even under the unceremonial atmosphere of the marriage institution of those times for he was of a different nation than she. And there is nothing in the account that indicates violence for had that been the case she would have revolted against him. But no evidence that she did. And further indication of such conclusion will be seen in the next paragraph.

Verse 3. The writer expressly states that Shechem loved the damsel. This meant more than the mere fleshly pleasure involved for that was often experienced where there was no sentimental love. For instance, the case of Amnon and Tamar. (2 Sam. 13: 15) In the case here we are told that his soul, not merely his flesh, clave unto Dinah. Not only so, but he made love to her. It says he spake kindly to her. The word "kindly" is from *LES* and defined "the heart" by Strong. This justifies the marginal reading here that he spake "to her heart." Altogether different from the conduct of a man who merely commits criminal assault.

Verse 4. As further evidence that the attachment which Shechem has formed for Dinah is pure and not base passion, he desires to make her his own legally and thus give her all the protection that an honorable marriage would bring. He requests his father to bring about such an arrangement.

Verse 5. Jacob heard of the affair and kept still till his sons returned from the field where they had been tending the cattle.

Verses 6, 7. In compliance with his son's wish Hamor contacts Jacob on the matter. In the meantime the sons of Jacob have returned from the field and were grieved. It is noteworthy that what is outstanding is that the folly had been wrought in Israel. The moral question involved is not all there is, but it is the additional fact that it has been done in Israel. This is God's people and these other people are aliens. We will not forget that the subject of marriage in original times was largely one of the fleshly relation. The mere fact that a man had become intimate with a woman might not constitute a breach of etiquette. It would depend upon the circumstances and the persons involved.

Verses 8-10. Hamor makes an earnest plea for mutual friendship. Not only in the matter of marriages between their respective sons and daughters, but also of property. He invites them to trade with them and secure land and possessions with them.

Verses 11, 12. Then the would-be husband adds his plea to that of his father. It was customary to give a dowry on behalf of the woman to become one's wife. Shechem is willing to go the limit in this also if only he can have the woman for wife. We

can have no reasons to doubt the sincerity of his statements whether we approve of it or not.

Verses 13-17. The rite of circumcision had been the distinctive mark of the people of God from the days of Abraham. Now it is proposed that the Shechemites may be recognized if they will adopt circumcision. But they were not sincere when they made the offer as the inspired writer states. Besides, circumcision was to be observed with those either born in Abraham's house or bought with his money. These Shechemites did not come under either of these qualifications and the sons of Jacob surely knew it.

Verses 18, 19. The proposition was agreeable to the young man and his father and no delay was had in making the arrangements.

Verses 20-24. Hamor and his son took the proposition to the people of the city and insisted on their complying with it. The matter was agreed on and the men were all circumcised. Again we can have no doubt as to the sincerity of these people.

Verse 25. Surgery was not as scientific then as now and the work of circumcision was naturally a greater shock to the physical system than now. Besides, in the ordinary observance of that rite it was performed on infants eight days old and thus attended with less shock than with mature men. As a consequence there would follow naturally a period of enforced inactivity. Besides, note the record states they waited till the third day. That would doubtless be when the incapacity would be at its height and the men would be the less able to resist. Besides, since they had been sincere in all of the transaction they had no occasion to be armed nor suspicious. And under these conditions, two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, armed their servants and came upon the city and slew all these circumcised men. It says they came upon the city "boldly." This is from a word that means "with safety." Since the Shechemites had no hint of anything fraudulent about the situation they were not prepared. So that the sons of Jacob were not only guilty of murder, but that after taking advantage of their victims, and still further, doing it on the pretense of a divine institution.

Verses 26-29. The sons of Jacob did not stop at the wholesale murder

but took all their property that was in the house and in the field. They also took their wives and children captive and made general havoc of the place. All this because they said that Shechem had defiled their sister. Now the crime of criminal assault was punishable with death and was so instituted when God gave the national law through Moses. But this was not a case of that kind. Had that been so they would not have even pretended to accept the situation on condition of their adopting the rite of circumcision. But the only argument they made at the start was that it would be against their national policy to grant their request unless they adopt circumcision. But now, when they have them in their vengeance they lay it all to the so-called misdeed of defilement.

Verses 30, 31. Jacob protests their action. *Make me to stink.* This means they would make him to be abhorred of the surrounding people. At the present he seems to be interested in the immediate effect the tragedy might have on him more than on the great wrong that was done. But later, when he was speaking as an inspired Patriarch, he will lay more serious charge against them. (Chapter 49:5-7.) The only reply his sons made to their father's protests was that Shechem dealt with their sister as with a harlot. But this was insincere for they made no such complaint against the young man in the beginning. They only made an objection of national policy.

## GENESIS 35

Verse 1. Bethel has become an established location geographically but not from the standpoint of any permanent buildings there. So Jacob is told to go up there and make an altar. That had been done before more than once. But these altars in the Patriarchal Dispensation were not always fixed objects, but had to be provided on occasion and for immediate use. He is reminded that God had appeared to him here at the time he was fleeing from the face of Esau.

Verses 2, 3. Jacob had dwelt for a score of years in the country of his wives' people where they were accustomed to idol worship. And they had brought some of them along with them. Now he commands his people to put them away and be clean. All this was preparatory to their going up to Bethel where they will meet



with the living God. Yes, the God that heard Jacob there in the day of his distress.

Verses 4, 5. His people obeyed him and he disposed of all the objects they had among them that had been used for worship. After that they journeyed toward Bethel. The surrounding people did not pursue them because the terror of God was upon them. Since the pursuit if attempted would have been unfriendly but was prevented by the terror of God, we would be left with that phase of the term fear or terror that is unfavorable. That is, something caused them to be afraid of the punishment of God should they attempt to interfere with the actions of his people.

Verses 6, 7. The original name of Luz is mentioned here again which was what it had before the time of Jacob's dream. And after building the altar he added a syllable to the name in honor of the special providence that had been his at this place. The simple word Bethel means house of God. But Jacob wishes to combine it with the idea that not only does God have a house but that the God of that house was present there.

Verse 8. We have long ago lost trace of Rebekah. But her nurse was still living at the time we now have reached. In some way she seems to have got into the company of Jacob and his people. At this place she died and was buried near Bethel.

Verses 9, 10. This passage does not contain any new thoughts. But it was a common thing for God to repeat his promises and other important statements.

Verses 11, 12. The famous promise is here repeated. *Loins*. This is from the Hebrew word *CHALATS* and defined "(in the sense of *strength*); only in the dual; the loins (as the seat of vigor)" — Strong. This gives us a clearer view of this term that is frequently used in the scriptures regarding the offspring of men. Since it is known that a child is the product of a man's whole nature we would pause and wonder when it so often speaks as if it were from the loins especially. But the strength of a man is contributed to bring about his offspring. And since the loins of a man are the place of most bodily strength physically it is very properly used as a figure in this place.

Verses 14, 15. A drink offering simply means that he used an article

otherwise used for drink. This would indicate the sacrifice or giving up of something that could have been used personally. And olive oil being the only kind of oil they had in those days it likewise indicated a sacrifice of an article of value. Also, oil came to be used in consecration ceremonies. In this place Jacob is consecrating the altar to God. Jacob called the place Bethel. This does not mean that the present was the occasion that the place received that name for we know that was not the case. But the word means "house of God." And just as Christians repeatedly speak of the assembly as God's assembly without implying they are then giving it the name, only recognizing it again, so Jacob recognizes this place as the house of God.

Verses 16-20. The sad event of the death of Rachel occurred at this time. Jacob had taken up his journey southward and had reached a place near Ephrath which is another name for Bethlehem. At this place the time came for Rachel to be delivered of her second child. But the ordeal was too much for her physical strength. We are not told whether her strength had been run down by the perils of journeying, only that she had hard labor and died at the time. However, she lived long enough to know that it was another boy. She could have recalled that when Joseph was born she named him so from the belief that she was to have another son. At least she was conscious long enough and near enough to the delivery that the midwife could assure her that the child was to be born successfully and that it was a son. She named him even, before she died, and the name was in token of her sorrow. While that was appropriate from her view point, yet she was to be gone soon and he would remain. Hence his father gave him another name, one more in keeping with the success of the future. Jacob marked the place of her grave which is a Biblical example for grave-stones. Before leaving this paragraph it is well to notice the expression "soul was in departing." Materialists of various kinds deny that anything lives after the death of the body. That all there is of a human being dies at one time and thus nothing leaves. But here is the plain statement of an inspired writer that her soul departed. This upsets the doctrine of materialism.

Verses 21, 22. Bilhah was previously the handmaid of his wife Rachel.

But after the union he formed with her at Rachel's request she had the position of concubine to him. As already explained, in those days of plural marriages, a concubine was as legally a wife as the other, but had inferior property rights. And thus when Reuben was intimate with her he thereby defiled his father's bed.

Verses 23-26. This paragraph is a tabulation of Jacob's twelve sons, showing by which wife or concubine each was born to him.

Verse 27. By this we learn that Isaac had been dwelling in the original location used by his father, in Mamre or Hebron. Jacob thus gets back from his absence from his father, an absence of a quarter of a century. We are glad to know that he got to see his father again although he never saw his mother after his flight from home.

Verses 28, 29. The age of Isaac should be marked here for convenient and useful reference. In relating his death the writer uses the expression "give up the ghost" which is the same in thought as used with reference to the death of Rachel in 18th verse. If materialism is true then a man at death does not give up anything. He would retain everything that had ever been a part of him. But the statement that he did give up something disproves materialism. And what a satisfying thought comes to us from the fact that the sons of Issac, Esau and Jacob buried him. All past enmities are over with them and they unitedly render their loving services at the last scenes of their father. Furthermore, by consulting chapter 49: 31 we learn that they buried him in the burial place that had been provided for that purpose by their grandfather, Abraham. It was in the cave of Machpelah. This became the last resting place for the bodies of the great Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

### GENESIS 36

Verse 1. *Generations*. It will be remembered this word means "family history." The chapter will give the history of Esau's family, as it concerns the marriages and various ones born to the family tree.

Verse 2. This verse relates names of the Canaanitish women Esau married, the thing that had grieved his parents. He then made a different selection as follows.

Verse 3. This is the woman he married after seeing that the daughters of Canaan displeased his father and mother (chapter 28: 8, 9).

Verses 4-8. Here is another instance that shows the rather friendly feeling Esau had for Jacob in that he was willing to give way to him in the matter of land for their cattle. In this connection it is stated that he dwelled in Mt. Seir or Edom.

Verses 9-14. This paragraph is somewhat repetitious of some former statements of the family history of Esau. Particular attention is called to the name of Amalek in verse 12. He will figure prominently in a later history of God's people.

Verses 15-19. *Dukes*. This is from ALLUPH and defined "familiar; a friend, also gentle \* \* \* and so a chieftain."—Strong. We can appreciate the value of Esau's rank among the people of the earth when we recall his past indignities.

Verses 20-30. *Sons of Seir the Horite*. This is to be understood as meaning the sons or inhabitants of Mt. Seir related to the Horites. These were people who had possession of this place prior to Esau's taking it. Read chapter 14: 6; also Deut. 2: 12, 22. Since the valor of Esau in supplanting these original inhabitants of Seir would be an important item, the history of these people is also recorded here. That is, it was to show that they were no weak or insignificant people. *Mutes*. This is from YEM and defined "a warm spring."—Strong. I do not know why we have the strange translation as it is in the A. V. This original word is not used in any other place in the Bible. And also, there is a true word for "mule" used a number of times, and thus it is not clear what led the translators to give us such an odd rendering here.

Verses 31-43. We are not specially interested in the family history of Esau any further than to observe that he did not dwindle out as an unimportant person. Verse at the beginning of this paragraph states that Edom had kings before Israel. This would be no detriment to reputation of Israel from the viewpoint of God since it was not his desire that his people have kings. But from the standpoint of worldly importance it is a significant fact that Esau or Edom, the man who was pushed from his possessions by fraud, was blessed much in the way as described here.

## GENESIS 37

Verse 1. *Stranger*. This means that he was a temporary resident. Not that he expected to move out in a short time, but that Isaac was lately a native of another country and at the time of our story was a newcomer. But Jacob has now been in this land at least for 17 years so that he could be rightfully called a dweller. Hence the text says he "dwelt" in the land where his father was a newcomer.

Verse 2. Again we read of the generations of a man which means here his family history. This is the verse that gives us the age of Joseph at one time of his life and it should be noted carefully. Joseph is here said to be feeding his father's flocks and doing this "with" his brethren. However, he was specially grouped with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah. These were younger than the sons of Leah. Yet the others were out in the work also as we will hear from them in the story. *Evil report*. This is from RAH and DIBRAH and together as used here means that the brothers were living a dishonest life in some way and thus acting slanderously. But in spite of their attempts at stealth, Joseph detected their evil life and reported it to their father. We do not endorse the spirit of the ordinary "tattle-tale" but the circumstances here are to be considered. The good name of the father of these men is about to be disgraced through the misconduct of the sons and it is proper that Joseph inform him of it. He did not spread the report generally as a gossip would, but brought the report to his father, the man who was most vitally concerned and thus who had a perfect right to know what was going on. Joseph thus did the right thing in reporting this matter.

Verse 3. There is no reason for speculating on the cause why Jacob favored Joseph since the text plainly tells us it was because he was the son of his old age. He was born when his father was 91. See note at chapter 30: 25. What other reasons that may be assigned to this would be guess work. *Colors*. The margin here gives us "pieces" and the lexicon justifies it. However, the definition in the lexicon also suggests the idea of many widths and that the writer is conveying to us that the father made him this coat with ample provision as to size. He is yet a lad of not more than 17 when he gave him the coat. Since he is not yet fully matured he will

wish him not to "outgrow" the coat, hence makes it generous in size. And this would not be objectionable from the standpoint of appearance since the definition indicates the coat was in the nature of a tunic and thus would be expected to be loose.

Verse 4. This is the old story of envy and shows the violence of that feeling which is born of regret at another's good fortune. They at first get their revenge on Joseph and later will get it on the aged father.

Verses 5-8. There is nothing in this story that says anything about what Joseph thought of the dreams. Whether he thought they meant any prominence of him over his brethren we do not know. He merely told them his dream. But they correctly interpreted it as the sequel will show. But it was very illogical and thus cruel for them to blame him for the dream. Had he pretended to be a prophet and ventured upon a prediction of his preeminence over them they might have laid it to his personal ambition and would have had some ground for feeling against him. But he simply told them his dream.

Verses 9-11. This dream is more extensive than the first one in that it included others besides his brethren. He does not offer any solution of the dream but tells it to his father and brethren. His father made the application this time and interpreted it to apply to the subjection of the whole family to him or before him. We know that the personal mother of Joseph was not living at this time (chapter 35: 18). But since the Lord selected the family set-up as the scene of the present dream he would name one complete. The trend of the dream is that the entire family will some day be brought to dependence upon him. The difference in the attitude of the father and the brethren toward the dream is to be noted. The brethren envied him while the father observed it. That means that he kept it in mind and did not try to pass it off as of nothing.

Verses 12-14. When his father wished him to go look after the welfare of the brethren he was ready. Evidently by this time something had caused Joseph to remain at home instead of working with the brethren in caring for the sheep as he did at the first. The fact that he reported their conduct to his father would make his presence objectionable to them and that suggests the only plausible ex-

planation we can have at present. But it is interesting to notice that he is free from resentment or even fear of them. When requested to go in the interests of his brethren he said, "here I am."

Verses 15-17. Joseph got astray and was found by a man as he was wandering. Upon inquiry he told the man for whom he was seeking and was put on their trail from the remark the man had overheard them make. He found the brethren at Dothan.

Verses 18-20. Instead of being filled with appreciation and love for their brother upon seeing him coming to them, it was opposite. They knew that he could not have been coming for any purpose but one of good to them. Yet their old envy is so strong that they decide this is the time for them to "get even." But while their hatred is wicked enough to plot murder against him, it is cowardly enough to want to evade the guilt. Hence they plan a deception. At first they word their story as a deliberate lie to their father but we will see how the wording was changed in form although not in meaning.

Verses 21, 22. It is plain that not all of the brothers were directly included in the plot, or at least not to the same extent. For it says that when Reuben "heard" it. He then plots an escape for Joseph by suggesting casting him into the pit and not slay him outright. Then the writer tells us his purpose was to deliver Joseph free again.

Verses 23, 24. The suggestion of Reuben was accepted for they took Joseph and after robbing him of his coat that had been the gift of his father, they cast him into a pit. There was no water in the pit. Just what they intended further we do not know. But it was necessary for the writer to tell us the pit was dry that we could understand how Joseph would be available alive when they get ready for another disposition of him.

Verse 25. While their further actions were pending the brothers sit down to have a meal. While they were eating they saw a group of traders on their way to Egypt to sell their wares. Egypt was a market for the products of the east and always had money because their country was always productive.

Verse 26, 27. Judah makes a plea that sounds very sympathetic for Joseph. Why slay their brother and be

guilty of his blood? But I fear his motive is not wholly one based on his love for the brother. He asks "what profit" will it be. This would be part of the motive, that of profit. If they sell him they will get him away from the father, get revenge on him and his father, too, and will be the gainers financially from the deal. To this they agreed.

Verse 28. This verse, as well as others in this chapter refers to the Midianites and Ishmaelites interchangeably. This does not mean that they were the same people for they were not. The Midianites descended from a son of Abraham through his last marriage while the Ishmaelites descended from Abraham through his son by Hagar. But the two peoples were more or less wild in their habits and traveled as a common group. We cannot even conclude that one was mentioned incidentally as traveling with the group that bought Joseph for both of them are mentioned as having had him. Hence the first explanation made here is the correct one.

Verses 29, 30. Reuben was the one who suggested placing Joseph in the pit and it was for the purpose of delivering him to his father. We therefore know he would not have consented to having him sold. But the statement in this paragraph explains that he was away when the deal was made and as far as we know never learned the full truth. They calmly let him grieve over the matter, at least for the present.

Verses 31, 32. In those days there was no knowledge of chemistry that enabled one to discover whether blood were human or not. Hence they can use the blood of a kid for their purpose. Notice how different their actual statement to their father from what they said they would tell him. In the proper meaning of "finding" a thing they lied to their father about the coat for they did not find it. But they let the old man come to his own conclusion about the situation.

Verses 33, 34. It had the desired effect. Jacob recognized the coat. He concluded that Joseph had been torn with wild beasts. This circumstance proves that a lie if believed has the same effect on a man's mind that the story would, were it true. And if that is true of an unfavorable lie the same would hold in that of a favorable one. So that if a person were to claim a certain impression of good from a



story, the fact of that good impression would be no evidence of the truth of the story.

Verse 35. It says *all* his sons rose to comfort Jacob. This gives us one of the blackest instances of hypocrisy we have on record. This must include the brothers who caused all this sorrow. They know they have sold the brother into slavery and yet allow the aged father to mourn his son as if dead. They pretend to want to comfort him which can be nothing but pretense. Had they not wanted to acknowledge their guilt at this time, it would have been bad enough to have been silent and let the father suffer alone. But instead of that they pretend they know of the death of the brother and wish to console the father from day to day.

Verse 36. By some inattention to the text people often entertain the wrong idea of Joseph's master. Note here it is not Pharaoh but an officer of his. But we will notice that it is an important officer for he had charge of Pharaoh's guard forces.

### GENESIS 38

Verse 1. This chapter is a break into the history of the more direct story of Joseph. But the facts recorded therein will have a direct bearing on the history as a whole. This verse merely records a little episode in the life of Judah that would not seem to be very important at first.

Verse 2. While here in the community of Hirah Judah saw a woman of the Canaanites who attracted him and he "went in unto her" which is one of the Biblical expressions meaning the intimacy between the sexes. We have previously observed that God was very particular to have the blood strain kept in line with the original stock for a period. Just why he relaxed on this regulation we are not told. But we do know that a number of instances will be found in the record where strangers were admitted into the line and became connected with the ancestry of Christ. But with all this variation we should not forget that the line on the male side was not thus changed. So that when we get to Christ we have two lines of blood on the male side that come down to him.

Verses 3-5. In this paragraph take notice of the three sons born to Judah and the order of their birth. This will account for the transactions soon to follow.

Verses 6, 7. The usual custom for the father to select a wife for the son is here observed and the firstborn son is thus provided for. We are not informed what the wickedness was of which Er was guilty. But it must have been serious for the Lord punished him with death. On this circumstance we likewise observe that God is taking a hand in this situation or else he would not have been active to the extent of slaying the man. This idea will be still more evident in the events soon to follow.

Verse 8. Here Judah gives a command that later became one of the ordinances of the law of Moses. If a man dies without offspring his brother or nearest relative is to take the widow and beget children by her. But the seed thus begotten was to be placed in the records under the name of the dead brother.

Verses 9, 10. Quack doctors and medicine venders have exposed their ignorance of the very words of this passage in their desire to find some scripture for their fake merchandise. Reference to the perversion of nature artificially that is supposed to be a common practice among men and even women (but called masturbation in women) lately, is usually termed "onanism." This implies that God punished Onan because of his perversion of nature here. But the very wording of the text contradicts such a conclusion. Had Onan consummated the act in a perfectly natural manner, but had done anything else that would have prevented the result of conception he would have been punished just the same. The sin for which he was punished was "birth control." This is a vice that is practiced commonly today by many people who have never once suspected that they are committing a grave sin. The intimate relation of the sexes is God's plan for replenishing the earth with human kind. As an inducement for man to co-operate with Him in this result he has made that relationship a pleasureable one. But when human beings proceed with the pleasureable feature of the relationship and yet use means to prevent conception, that constitutes cheating God out of his part of the transaction while securing the human part.

Verse 11. Judah's remaining son was not of marriageable age; he tells Tamar to remain a widow until he is grown. She obeys his directions and waits faithfully.

Verse 12. Judah now lost his wife by death. After the period of mourning was over he decides to look after his property interests and see how the men were getting along in the business of sheepshearing. He invites his friend to go with him. This takes him away from the immediate vicinity of his home and indicated he had forgotten about his promise to Tamar. She had been waiting patiently all these years.

Verses 13, 14. The fact that Tamar had continued wearing widow's garments up to this time proves she had been true to the directions of Judah. For had she planned on taking in a stranger she would have been compelled to lay aside her garments of widowhood else no man would have received her. This is proved by the events about to happen. *Veil* and *wrapped* are from the same and merely mean that she put a covering over herself. This alone would not identify herself as a harlot as such posture was often used by very modest women. But she does not want to be recognized by the man whom she plans to decoy. The thing that led him to take her to be a harlot was the place where she was sitting. The text says an "open place." The margin says "the door of eyes" and the lexicon justifies that rendering. It means that she selected a very prominent place, a place where many people were passing and sat down there. A woman with no legitimate reason for remaining in such a public place would be suspected, at least, of being a public woman. Not that it was a specific advertisement of such character, but would be open to such conclusion. Another consideration of this covering that might lead to the conclusion she wished to cause, would be that a woman who desires to lead that kind of life might not want her acquaintances to recognize her and so she would hide her identity by putting a veil over her face.

Verse 15. It had the desired effect. Judah noticed her and took her for a harlot.

Verse 16. Judah proposes intimacy with her but she gives him the information that she must obtain some profit from the transaction and asks for a bid. A professional harlot would probably not have asked any such question as she would already have her "price" and would promptly tell him so. But this is not to be a simple matter of intimacy for money on her

side. Hence she asks the question. And the fact that she did so would indicate that she would require something worthwhile. But Judah did not come away from home with anything like this experience in mind and was not prepared to pay her any great price.

Verse 17. He proposed to send her a kid from the flock. But of course that, too, was not present, so she would have nothing but his word for it. Hence she asks for a pledge that would bind him to it.

Verse 18. He told her to name the pledge. Of course she is going to name something whose personal ownership could not be questioned afterward. So she asks for his body ornaments and walking cane. He delivered them to her and went in unto her.

Verse 19. Having accomplished her purpose she returned to her home and resumed the garments of her widowhood. Of course, since Judah is away temporarily looking after his sheep he has had no opportunity of missing her from her accustomed place even if he were in the habit of seeing her there. The inspired writer tells us that she conceived in this first act of intimacy. That does not mean that she knew it then, of course. But she is going to bide her time until nature tells the story. Should the required period of time pass with no signs of pregnancy she can still have recourse to the pledge in her possession and confront him with it.

Verses 20-23. Judah will be true to his pledge to a harlot but was indifferent about his promise to his daughter-in-law. He sent his pledge by the hand of his friend who was unable to find the woman after inquiry. Judah's concern in the matter is not the most refined. He fears he will be held in contempt by the people of the community if it is reported that he did not fulfill his pledge to a woman, even though she is a harlot. But nothing could be done about it.

Verse 24. It was true, as often said, that "time will tell." At the usual time the evidence was visible that Tamar was an expectant. And since she is not a married woman it means that she has been playing the harlot. And as the penalty for that evil was death, Judah gave commandment that it be done in this case.

Verse 25. Tamar has the articles of the pledge still in her possession. Of course he would expect to conclude

that the woman to whom he gave those articles still had them, but who was she? She presents the evidence to him.

Verse 26. Not only does Judah acknowledge the justice of her claim but also the justice of her actions. He says she has been more righteous than he. But the record further states that he knew her again no more which means that he did not wish to take advantage of the woman whom he had neglected.

Verses 27-30. The point of interest to us in this passage is that of the birth of one of the men in the line of Christ's pedigree. There is nothing especially irregular in this whole circumstance as far as affecting the legitimacy of the line of blood of Christ. It is clearly in keeping with the status of the marriage relation that was suffered through those years. Tamar was a pure woman in her general life and also Judah did the right thing by her after learning her identity. He knew her no more.

### GENESIS 39

Verse 1. The inspired writer now takes up the story broken off at the last verse of chapter 37. The importance of the purchaser of Joseph should be noted. Not only was he an officer of Pharaoh's. But he was connected with the guard. Not only was he connected with the guard but he was captain of this service. Foreign men were sometimes employed by kings for important services, but this particular one was of the same blood as his master, so that his general importance should be recognized.

Verse 2. The Lord was with Joseph and again we see God's remembrance of Abraham in that he is looking after his seed. Joseph not only obtains a service of importance, but one of great confidence since he was taken into the house of his master. This brought a slave into very intimate association with his family and other items of trust.

Verses 3, 4. This confidence of the master in his slave was increased. This was caused by his observation that prosperity had come to his house since his purchase and he attributed it to his God. And if that be the case it would be folly to overlook or mistreat this wonderful slave. Therefore he makes him ruler over all that he has.

Verse 5. The Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake. This

again is according to the promise made to Abraham (chapter 12: 3).

Verse 6. Since the food he ate was necessarily brought into contact with him he knew that he had it. Otherwise he would not have known about its presence in the house because he had left all his possessions completely in Joseph's care. This is merely an expression of the writer to impress us with the position which Joseph had. *Goodly, favoured.* These words are from originals that mean he was beautiful both in his countenance and form of body. This is to account for the events following.

Verse 7. The appeal which Joseph's appearance made to the lustful eyes and desires of this woman led her into making this proposal to him.

Verses 8, 9. Joseph does not pretend any physical indifference on this subject. His first protest is made on the thought of betrayal of confidence. He reminds her of the complete dependence his master has shown on him. That he has kept nothing from him that would be right for him to have. But let us observe his significant conclusion of this matter by saying that in yielding to her suggestion he would be sinning against God. Hence we have the wonderful principle portrayed before us here that to betray righteous confidence and use it as a means of obtaining carnal pleasure would constitute a sin against God as well as man.

Verse 10. This wicked woman was not content to let the matter rest after Joseph had refused but continued her solicitations. Josephus says she begged and pleaded with tears in her eyes but to no avail over him. It is worth our while to contemplate the situation. It is often claimed today that certain temptations are so great that even God would not expect one to resist. Men will contend that when the surroundings are of a certain combination it is impossible to resist. But how could a situation ever arise with more "irresistible" features than this one before Joseph? Here he is, away from all his people with no reason to think he will ever see them again. The woman who is soliciting him is his mistress and thus in position to shield him from all others afterward since she would wish to continue this practice. Thus there would be perfect protection against discovery. And she being a married woman would free him from the fear of the consequences of their act. He is in the house daily

by reason of the kind of service that his master assigned to him so that his presence cannot be cause for gossip. Everything in the case was favorable for the yielding to the temptation. If there is such a thing as an "irresistible" temptation, this is one. Yet Joseph makes complete refusal. Not only does he refuse to comply with her request, but refuses to be with her. He is taking no chances.

Verse 11. *Business*. This is from a word that means a higher type of employment than mere servile work. It refers to the more responsible matter of looking after the interests of his master. And this harmonizes with the complete confidence that his master is said to have placed in him. That accounts for the fact that at the time now spoken of there were none of the men there. They were out and engaged in the servile duties of common slaves while Joseph was about the more personal affairs of his master's house. There they are, all of the men gone and Joseph there alone with her!

Verse 12. This wicked woman imagined she could compel him to gratify her since she was his mistress. That she had the right to command him and that it was his duty to obey her. But even all this did not move him to yielding. He protested that he was to be excused from obedience in such matters. Men wore loose garments in those times and in that country. Her attempted contact with him was by this garment. But also the nature of this garment gave him opportunity for escape. He did not try to recover his garment but got out of the house as soon as possible.

Verses 13-15. With the garment in her possession she has a visible evidence of his supposed guilt. Her reference to "he" of course means her husband. But she is low enough to play upon the idea of Joseph's being a foreigner and a slave to give a show of plausibility to her story. And, of course, the fact that the slave has fled without taking his outer garment is apparent proof that he had discarded it at the time of his attempted attack. This is a practical demonstration of the fact that even when appearances seem conclusive we should be careful before coming to decisions. In spite of the appearances we might be deceived.

Verses 16-18. This wicked woman depends on the same "evidence" to convince her husband. There is no question that disappointed lust is a

cause of the most vicious plots of vengeance. This woman has been thus disappointed and now plans to take her spite out on Joseph. With this end in view she makes the same speech she had made to the men and confirmed it by showing the garment in her hand.

Verses 19, 20. The husband did what was the most natural thing. He accepted the speech and evidence of his wife and concluded that this Hebrew slave in whom he had placed so much confidence had deceived him. The secular record of this incident says that the husband praised his wife as being more virtuous than he had previously thought her to be. Thus, this woman with the disappointed lust gnawing at her nerves causes one of the most virtuous of young men to be classed as a would-be ravisher and worthy of punishment. Not only will he be imprisoned, but to make sure that he is in safe keeping he will be put into the prison used by Pharaoh for his prisoners.

Verses 21-23. True to his promise to Abraham and his seed, God remembers Joseph and causes him to be shown favor by the keeper of the prison. He is placed in charge of the prison including the other prisoners. And, as in the case of his former master, he never violated that confidence.

## GENESIS 40

Verse 1-4. When these two servants of Pharaoh offended the king he decided to have them imprisoned. But they were placed with other prisoners where they could be put under the guard of some one else besides being inside a prison. This happened to be the place where Joseph was. But instead of being placed under Joseph in the sense of rank they were placed under the service of Joseph. Of course, since Joseph is a prisoner of Pharaoh's employ, he is logically inferior, even as a prisoner to the prisoners of the king. Hence, he is charged with serving them. That means of course, he is to see after their needs. They were to continue "a season" in this situation. This is from a word that means the arrangement was intended to be temporary. This will accord with the events that are soon to be reported. Whether all this was brought about by the decrees of God we know not. But we do know that the imprisonment of the two servants mentioned was not permanent.

Verse 5. *According to the interpre-*



*tation.* This expression occurs a number of times in the Bible. It is more significant than is usually realized. The ordinary dream may be caused by various conditions and would have no meaning as to the future. But when God wishes to use a dream as one method of revealing something to man, and this is one of the methods he used in olden times, (Heb. 1: 1) he would cause the person to have a dream that would harmonize with the thing already decided upon. That is, if God decrees that a certain thing or things shall happen, he will then cause the party to have a dream to suit the coming events. Therefore, the facts already decided upon by the Lord that are to come to pass would be the explanation of the dream. From this standpoint we would see that the thing for which the dream stands was arranged in the divine mind first, and the dream came afterward. That is why we have the expression in various places that the dream was according to the interpretation. It was according to the thing already determined upon and God is the one who so determined it.

Verses 6-13. The subject matter of this passage is so obvious that detailed comments on particular verses is unnecessary. God had determined that each of these two prisoners was to be taken out of the prison in three days. But one was to be taken out to be executed while the other to be restored to his former service to the king. No one knows why one was executed and the other restored to service. But since God knew all about it, he caused these men to have a dream to fit the facts, which, however, required an inspired interpreter to explain it. And Joseph is the one to do this service. God is still with Joseph and is preparing the groundwork for his future greatness in this country.

Verse 14. This simple, reasonable, logical, plea of Joseph cannot but create in our minds the greatest sympathy and interest. What better opportunity could anyone have for showing his gratitude for favors than by mentioning him to the king. He would need only to state the facts without any special pleading. Just "make mention" of his fellow prisoner to Pharaoh and the facts would do the rest. We are seriously impressed with the solemnity of the occasion.

Verse 15. He does not mean his accusation to be against the people who purchased him, for that was considered

a legitimate business at that time. But his brothers had no personal possession of him that gave them the right to make merchandise of him.

Verses 16-19. The facts of this paragraph are noticed in the one near above and will not need further comments here. However, it should be noticed that the baker asked Joseph for interpretation of his dream when he saw that the other was good. Had that of the butler been unfavorable the indication is that he would have refrained from seeking word from Joseph. This shows another trait of human nature. Men profess to be wanting information but many times they mean to want it provided it is information that will be agreeable to them.

Verses 20-22. Pharaoh made the occasion of his birthday the one for the carrying out of the things already pictured in the dreams and interpreted by Joseph. He thus celebrates the occasion by executing the baker and restoring his butler to the personal service of bringing the wine to his lord upon requirement.

Verse 23. This is a very sad verse. Ingratitude is classed among the worst of weaknesses. After the favor had been done him by his fellow prisoner he forgot his own duty. Not that Joseph had caused his release from prison, but having correctly explained his dream, gratitude should have prompted him to return the kindness as he was requested. And there was no excuse on the ground of the length of time for it all had happened within three days. And we are sure those three days were days of wondering. There was no specific evidence that the interpretations were true. Time alone can tell. For this reason we know the subject was constantly in his mind. But the third day has come, the day he is to be released. Will it come to pass? Yes, the day has come. An officer comes to the prison and leads him forth to the outside and to freedom and leaves his friend, Joseph, in the prison. He is taken into Pharaoh's house to be restored to his former service and to join in the happy festivities of the occasion of the king's birthday. But poor Joseph is forgotten. What a test upon his trust. But no evidence now nor afterward that he faltered in that trust.

#### GENESIS 41

Verse 1. Two years have passed since the events of the previous chapter. It is again time for God to take

a hand in the historic movements and again decides to make use of the dream. Don't lose sight of Heb. 1: 1. The things that are to come to pass in the next 14 years have already been decided upon by the Lord. He is in charge of the universe and manages it according to the counsels of his own will. But he does not propose in this instance to reveal in direct language the predictions. He chooses to do it by the dream method. And of course, he will cause the king to have dreams which, when explained, will coincide with the facts already determined upon. That will make the dream to be "according to the interpretation."

Verses 2-4. The first dream pertained to kine. Since the sequel will show that the thing determined upon was related to the productions of the land, it would be fitting to use objects that would be affected by the products of the same. Hence the use of kine in this dream. The simple narrative is that seven fat fleshed kine came up first out of the river. It is significant that they came up "out of the river" because the land of Egypt depended on this as the source of their fertility. See comments on this at Chapter 12: 10. It is also significant that the other seven kine that were so poor also came up out of the river. This object of their worship and the source of their nourishment. That seven poor kine could come up out of it could mean nothing but that even their chief source of life and one of their gods would be prevented from giving them its accustomed support. *So Pharaoh awoke.* Why not let him have both dreams while asleep? God wants him to be assured that he had two distinct dreams. If he should have them while in the one period of sleep their emphasis might not be as great. So he awoke.

Verses 5-7. Again the objects for the dream are such as depended on the fertility of the land for life and that fertility depended on moisture. But this moisture, while coming primarily from the river, yet it must be spread out over the land. And so in selecting the grain for this dream it would properly be merely stated that there "came up." *One stalk.* This is from a word meaning stem or reed and means the same that we would in speaking of a straw of wheat. Of course also we understand the word "ear" here is the same as we call the head of grain since the small grain was in the Bible called corn. It is the rule of nature

that each stem or straw will have just one head or ear. But here are seven on the same stalk. But this is not the end of the unusual growth. Not only were seven ears made to shoot out from this one stem, but below or after them were seven other ears made to shoot out. But the second set of seven ears were blasted and thin. Not only so, but, as in the case of the kine, the seven impoverished objects consumed the other seven in their group. At the present we are not told what effect, if any, the eating of the seven good objects had for the others. The thing that is likely to be overlooked in this second dream is that the fourteen ears were all on one stalk. That would be as true to nature as could be done without a separate miracle. If there were two stalks of wheat growing separately it would be conceivable that one could have a good ear on it while the other a thin one. But even if such a rare thing should happen that seven ears would show up on each of these two stalks, yet their being on two separate stalks would make them independent of each other. Then if the shriveling of the seven good ones is to come as result of contact with the others an additional miracle would have to be performed to have such contact take place. God did not see fit to burden his narrative with this additional miracle. But if all of the ears are on one stalk so that they have a common source of nourishment, then it could be understandable how the seven blasted ears drew on the sap already having been supplied to the seven good ones and thus cause the seven good ones to become shriveled also. Therefore, from all these considerations we must not be confused and overlook the wonderful circumstance here, that the Lord caused fourteen ears of small grain to grow out of one stalk or stem.

Verse 8. *Magicians.* This is from CHARTOM and defined "a horoscopist." —Strong. These were men who claimed to understand the future that pertained to a human's personal interests by a system of circles. And since the interpretation of such circles might be a matter of uncertainty the king also called for his wise men. This is from a word signifying chiefly men of unusual intelligence and not necessarily supernatural ability. But with the use of these magicians to draw the lines and circles and then the wise men to help interpret them, he hoped to obtain the desired information. But we

are informed that none of them could interpret the dreams to the king.

Verses 9-13. Of course the chief butler has been near his lord ever since he was restored to his service two years ago. And when all this commotion took place about the dreams of Pharaoh he naturally was aware of it and it stirred up his memory of a certain time when he too was confused over a dream. The A.V. gives us the word "faults" for the expression of the butler. But the original word is *chet* and defined by Strong as "a crime or its penalty." This indicates that the butler was guilty of serious neglect of duty. And indeed, ingratitude is a most serious sin. The only redeeming feature about it is that the butler forgot about it and thus we do not have to think about his failure of duty through contempt or cold indifference. And thus, since he has the subject brought to his mind he acknowledges his "faults" and then tells the king the story. We notice the familiar expression "according to the interpretation."

Verse 14. Upon hearing the story of the butler they called for Joseph. The record says they brought him hastily. But not so much so that Joseph did not make the preparation that would make him presentable to the king. It sometimes happens that people make as if they are "just as good" as men in authority and show their attitude toward them by a disrespectful and contemptuous conduct. But Joseph wishes to show his respect to a man in high position. He shaves and changes his raiment. This is a principle that is taught in the New Testament. (1 Peter 2: 17.) This is not all of the fine temperament we here see in Joseph. He has been unjustly imprisoned and has been languishing under a false charge of violent immorality. No one seemed to care about him enough to investigate to see if the accusation against him were true. Now then, when some great authority wishes a favor he calls on him. But there is not the slightest indication of resentment nor revenge. He comes willingly and presents himself before the king.

Verse 15. Pharaoh states the reason of his being called and that he has heard of his ability to interpret a dream.

Verse 16. Here again the humility of Joseph is manifested. How good it would be if all servants of God would give him the glory for whatever good

they might be the means of accomplishing. But too often men love the praise of men and thus are constrained to take the credit of their feats to themselves. But Joseph expressly says it is not in him. Then declares that God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace. The use of this last word would not necessarily mean that the interpretation of the dreams will show coming events to be nothing but desirable ones. But, the answer is going to be so complete and wise that the king will be at perfect peace as to the meaning.

Verses 17-24. The things related in this paragraph are practically the same as in the first part of the chapter except that it mentions the fact that when the poor kine devoured the fat ones it left them still ill favored. But the story is the same so it will not be necessary to say more on it here.

Verse 25. This verse brings out the same thought expressed above, that an inspired dream is always preceded by the determination of God to have a certain thing come to pass, then causes the person involved to have a dream to correspond with the events to come. Here Joseph tells Pharaoh that God has shown him what he is about to do.

Verses 26-31. The seven years of plenty and then the same number of years of famine would be a miraculous occurrence. In the first place it was impossible for Egypt to have a natural famine since the Nile River supplied it with moisture and was never an entire failure. Thus a famine would have to be brought on by divine decree. This is what is taught in Psa. 105: 16-23. Also, the fact that an exact number of years of extreme plenty was foretold and to be followed with the same number of years of famine would be so arbitrary as to prove it to be a miracle. But it is God's method of bringing the descendants of Abraham into Egypt and thus fulfill the predictions he made in Chapter 15: 13, 14.

Verse 32. *Doubled, twice.* This might confuse technical persons who think it means the thing happened four times. But the first word is from *SHANAH* and defined "to fold, i. e., duplicate." The second is from *PAHAMAH* and defined "a stroke."—Strong. The whole sentence therefore means as if it said the dream was given to Pharaoh in a duplicated stroke. And the purpose for so doing is explained as being because the thing is "established" by the Lord. The margin says "prepared" and the

lexicon agrees with that rendering. Also, it agrees with the comments offered previously that an inspired dream is made to fit a determination of God already decided upon.

Verses 33-36. This passage deals merely with the general advice for Pharaoh to take advantage of the seven plentiful years to lay up provisions for the famine to come. He makes no mention of himself as being the proper one for this work. He does not seek any personal honor. He is merely carrying out the instructions that God had enabled him to give and that are to have such far-reaching results.

Verses 37-41. The best part of Pharaoh's speech is that wherein he gives God the credit for the wisdom of Joseph. We are not to conclude that this heathen king knew anything definitely about the God of Abraham. But in his first speech to the king Joseph told him that God would give him an answer of peace. Now this remark of his means only that the God to whom he ascribed the answer of peace was the one truly who had given him this wisdom.

Verses 42, 43. This conduct of the king toward Joseph must be considered in the light of royal and authoritative demonstration and not in the sense of pride. And since Joseph has been voluntarily humble up to now it is proper and just to him and all the rest that his true position of authority be signalized by these decorations from the king. Else there would be no certainty as to the attitude of other men in the country.

Verse 44. Here the specific decree is made and announced that nothing can be done in that land by any of the people except that it must be done through Joseph. That all other persons in the land will be subject to him.

Verse 45. Pharaoh attached to Joseph a name that corresponded with his work of interpreting the dreams. Then further added honor to him by giving him to wife the daughter of an important person, a prince in the city of On. Then Joseph took up his duties as food administrator of Egypt.

Verse 46. This verse should be noted as giving the age of Joseph at another important period of his life.

Verse 47. *Handfuls*. This might give us the impression that the crop was not large whereas the connection we know is that the production was great. But we will remember that the

means of harvesting grain in those days was not the same as now, and a handful of the grain would not be found in any one spot until after it had been cut down and thrust into a pile by the hand sickle. But in this case it will be growing in such rank amounts that a person could thrust his hand down at any one spot and grasp a handful. This would require a very heavy crop.

Verses 48-49. This paragraph will tell us briefly that Joseph did his duty as assigned to him by Pharaoh and laid up the surplus grain through the years of plenty.

Verses 50-53. The birth of the two sons of Joseph took place some time in the seven years of the plenty. His remark that God had made him forget all his toil and his father's house should not be misunderstood. One does not naturally forget his home and family. But with Joseph it is a special situation. He has no idea that he will ever get to see his father again. With this in mind he wishes to forget all about the grief he has had in connection with it. The word "toil" here is from a word that means worry. Not that he has had so much manual labor but has had much worry. The interest he will have in this new source of happiness will help him forget his worry.

Verses 53, 54. True to the determination of God and the predictions interpreted by Joseph, the years of plenty passed and the years of famine came. It was so general that no land was exempt except Egypt. That is, the famine was even in Egypt, but the condition of want was not there because Joseph had prepared for it in the years before.

Verse 55. Very naturally when the people were in want they looked to Pharaoh. But true to his statement to Joseph he would not dispense food to them. He sent them to the man who had been appointed to handle this matter. We might think of Joseph as a material mediator between the people and the king. And when a mediator is appointed it is not permitted for any one to obtain a favor except through the mediator.

Verses 56, 57. Here it is Joseph who opens the storehouses of food for the people. Not only for the ones in Egypt but those of other lands, for it states that all countries came to Egypt to buy bread.



## GENESIS 42

Verses 1, 2. An interesting use of the word "saw" may be found here. After telling us that Jacob saw there was corn in Egypt it says he told his sons he "heard" there was corn there. This is a proper use of the word for we can see with our mental eyes as well as with our fleshly ones. Such use of the word "see" will be found often.

Verses 3, 4. Ten brethren are mentioned here. The reason is obvious. Joseph is gone and Jacob fears to let Benjamin leave home. He is the youngest besides being the only full brother of Joseph. It is but natural for the old man to keep him at home.

Verses 5, 6. The expression that Joseph was governor over Egypt must be understood to mean his jurisdiction over the food administration. The act of bowing down before Joseph by his brethren meant only the usual custom of respectful attitude expected in the East when persons came up with those considered as of dignity. Verily, a man who has charge of the sustenance of life and to whom they have come for food is worthy of this salutation. Hence their homage before him.

Verses 6-8. There are obvious reasons why Joseph knew his brethren while they did not know him. He has now become a man of 39 years whereas he was a lad of 17 the last time they saw him. Also, they believed him dead and were not looking for him. And even had they thought of him as being yet alive, they had sold him to slave traders and would not expect to find him in this position of dignity. And it is easy for him to recognize them. Here are ten men in one group. The family similarity would be significant. Also, since there are the ten together, not all of them would have outgrown his recollection of their features. If one or two or three had materially changed, not all of them would. Another thing, Joseph knew that all lands were compelled to come to Egypt for food and he would expect that his brethren would be among them. He made himself "strange" unto them. This is from a word that means he acted as if he did not know them. Or rather, he assumed an attitude of indifference toward them as far as personal interest in them were concerned. *Spake roughly*. This means he spake in severe language to them. We will bear in mind that God is with Joseph and is bringing some just punishments

upon these brethren for their past wickedness. Therefore we will not censure him for his conduct here. It is just, because being prompted of God.

Verses 9-13. While much punishment will be meted out to these brothers before this affair is finally solved, yet it is with satisfaction that from now on they will always state the truth as far as they understand it. Joseph remembered his dreams when he saw these brethren bowing down to him. And he metes out further punishment to them in the form of severe accusation. It was of the gravest concern to be guilty of being a spy. This accusation he made against them. But this was not only for the present punishment it would mean to them, but it will lay the basis for other demands he will make on them and that will eventually bring the family to Egypt. *One is not*. This could mean merely that one brother is not with his father or that one is not alive. But they said it in the sense of his being dead. (Chapter 44: 20.)

Verses 14-16. Joseph repeated his charge that they are spies. But proposed a test of their sincerity. He will detain them in prison while one brother goes home and brings their youngest brother down to Egypt.

Verse 17. As if he intended to carry out the threat he placed them all in prison for three days. This is a temporary guard house.

Verses 18-20. At the end of the three days he made as if he had changed his mind. He told them he feared God and now instead of sending just one for the other brother, he will keep just one as a hostage and the rest can go to take food back and also to bring the brother. They agreed to this test as being unable to avoid it.

Verses 21, 22. Pending the arrangements agreed to above they have conversation among themselves. Reference to the anguish of their brother many years ago, they now admit they were guilty. This has no indication of present recognition of Joseph. It is merely their conclusion of the reason God is permitting this distress to come upon them. In other words, they regard it as a "judgment" sent upon them for their sin. And Reuben truthfully but severely reminds them of his protest at the time and of their unwillingness to listen to him.

Verse 23. Having spoken to them all this while in the language that was foreign to them they naturally sup-

posed he did not understand the Hebrew language. This caused them to speak freely in his hearing as thinking he would not understand the conversation.

Verse 24. The censure is necessary for the brothers have been guilty. Yet Joseph is a humane being and his sympathy is moved so that he turned from them that he might not be discovered when he gave way to weeping. Then recovering himself he carries out the agreement and binds Simeon before their eyes and prepares for their return journey.

Verses 25, 26. Unknown to the brothers the sacks were filled with corn and also the purchase money placed in the sacks.

Verses 27, 28. On the way home one brother had occasion to feed his beast and in so doing discovered his purchase money. This startled them. It could be the basis for a dangerous accusation. Just why none of the other sacks were opened we are not told. Their surprise and fear could have completely confused them and caused them to hasten on homeward to their father.

Verses 29-34. Arriving home they told their father a true story of what had happened to them in Egypt. No one in the family has any idea of the identity of the man who had sold the corn to them and who had been so severe in his speech to them.

Verse 35. The report the brethren gave to their father must have produced a condition of much unrest in his mind. But when they opened their sacks all of them had the money therein. Of course this increased the fear they already had suffered. Did the man of Egypt intend to charge them with theft in order to prove his claim that they were spies? The presence of this money would certainly be a strong suggestion of their guilt. Hence we can appreciate the state of their minds at this time.

Verse 36. The complaint of the old Patriarch is pitiful. Two of his sons are now away from his sight and still they have told him that Benjamin must go if they are to obtain any more food. He says that all the conditions are against him.

Verses 37, 38. Reuben in vain tries to calm his father to the consent of Benjamin being permitted to go with them for more food. But the old father says "no." He says that his brother is dead. This is what he has now be-

lieved for 22 years upon the deceptive presentation his sons made with the bloody coat. He fears that a sorrowful death would be caused were he to consent for Benjamin to go and possibly never return. Thus we have a further confirmation of the thought offered at chapter 37: 33, 34. Through all these years Jacob has been certain that his son Joseph was dead and that by violence. It will now require more evidence to convince him to the contrary than it did to produce the deception in the beginning.

### GENESIS 43

Verses 1, 2. Having consumed all the food they had brought from Egypt the sons of Jacob were asked to return for more. *Sore*. This means the famine was severe.

Verses 3-5. Judah replied to his father's request by repeating what they had already told him. That they need not go down there without Benjamin for the man will not receive them without him. So it is put up to Jacob to decide this question.

Verse 6. Jacob complained because they had told the man about another brother. Apparently it would seem unnecessary for them to tell such a matter to a stranger when they were only on a mission of business and wanting to buy food.

Verse 7. Upon this they truthfully explained how it came about. That the man had asked them directly about the family and had even specified certain details of the family including their other brother. And then they asked the very reasonable question, if they had any reason to suspect that he would require the brother to come.

Verses 8-10. Judah again becomes the spokesman and binds himself personally to be responsible for the return of Benjamin. He closes his earnest speech by stating that they had now been lingering so long discussing the matter that had they gone on at the first mention of the subject they would have been back by now.

Verses 11-14. Jacob now saw that he must consent or they would perish. He very sadly gives instructions about their journey. Among these is the one of taking to the man a "present." We have already seen the significance of this. Of course we will observe the articles they were to take for this purpose were staples of the land and such as would not be affected by a famine. Also to make sure that no accusation

of fraud could be lodged against them they were to take double money and also the money that had been found in their sacks. The man might claim it was an oversight and they should not leave themselves open to dishon-estry by retaining it. He concludes his speech with a despairing resignation on the possibility of losing his son Benjamin.

Verse 15. With these instructions and provisions the brethren returned to Egypt and were admitted to the presence of Joseph.

Verse 16. Seeing Benjamin Joseph arranges to be in more intimate association than they just now are having. For this purpose he makes command of "eating" together.

Verses 17, 18. Instead of being made happy over this mark of attention they were filled with unrest. They suspected the man of Egypt was seeking an opportunity for close contact so that he might lodge the accusation of fraud against them. When people are under the influence of penitence they put a construction on various appearances that would never be thought of otherwise.

Verses 19-22. With this self-imposed accusation in their minds they approach the door of the steward's house and explain how it all came about that they had the money. And truthfully stated that they did not know who had put the money in the sacks.

Verse 23. The steward assures them that peace is theirs. Then he told them that their God was giving them treasure in their sacks and that through Him the money had reached the hands of its rightful owner again. At this he brought Simeon out to them. He was the brother who had been held as hostage when they were in Egypt before.

Verse 24. They were brought into Joseph's house. Also they were provided with water to wash their feet. See Gen. 18: 4 and note on this subject of feet washing.

Verses 25, 26. The "present" is mentioned again. People who are victims of famine and coming to another country for food would not be thought of as bringing a present on the ordinary ground of making a gift. This action can be understood only in light of the custom which has often been referred to in this work. (See chapter 32: 13.) We also observe that they bowed themselves before Joseph. This was not only another custom of those times but

it was significant of the dreams Joseph had years before and which were referred to so contemptuously by the brothers.

Verses 27, 28. Joseph made as if he were interested impersonally in their family condition. But all this was to keep them at a distance until he was ready to bring the matter to a head. All the while they manifested the attitude of extreme respect toward him. They referred to their father as his servant.

Verses 29, 30. He beheld Benjamin. He is not only his brother, he is his full brother, his mother's son. Of course a full brother would be one's mother's son, but the inspired writer makes the subject more impressive by this detail in the narrative. The show of indifference was overcome by Joseph's affection for his full brother and he is forced to give way to weeping. But not being ready to make the climax of his act he seeks the privacy of his personal room and there weeps.

Verse 31. Weeping affects the countenance; then as now. It is interesting to observe the fact that nature is always the same. The effect of weeping on the face is so pronounced that it is visible. Joseph wants still to be unsuspected in his drama and so we are told he washed his face and gave orders to set the food ready.

Verse 32. A separate service was prepared for Joseph and his brethren. Also for the Egyptians who were to eat with them. This was because of a rule in force in Egypt which will be given explanation later.

Verse 33. How did this stranger know anything about which of the brothers was the oldest? Yet they notice he arranges them at dinner according to their birth. The mystery deepens all the while and the men marveled.

Verse 34. *Messes*. In some places this word would not necessarily mean food or other articles belonging to the table. But in the present connection it has to have such meaning. Its general meaning is an article or token of favor. Here the favor would logically consist in things of food and drink. And the preference Joseph had for Benjamin was again manifested in that he made his tribute to him five times as much as any of the others. This could be only on the basis of his personal feeling for we would know that he gave all of them a sufficient amount for their hunger. And we are

told that they drank and were merry with him. This word "merry" would apply to the effect of much food or drink either. Since all of them had enough to make them be satiated we must conclude the five times to Benjamin was to show his feelings.

### GENESIS 44

Verses 1, 2. The former procedure was repeated regarding the money in the sacks. But in addition the steward was told to put the personal cup of Joseph in the sack of the youngest. The plot is deepening and Joseph is making successful plans for bringing his brothers into complete humility before him. And all this is proper in view of the fact that God is using the situation to punish the brothers for their wickedness.

Verses 3-5. In the early morning the men were started on their homeward journey. But they had only reached the edge of the city until a new sadness came upon them. The steward was told to pursue them and chide them for taking away his drinking cup. That they had rewarded evil for good. Not only had taken valuables not belonging to them but had taken a very important item. That it was an article by which his lord "divineth." This is from a Hebrew word that means to perform some form of magic including the ability to detect mysteries. It would therefore be considered foolish to say the least to steal such an article from a man of prominence.

Verses 6-9. The steward did as he was told. Overtaking the men he made all these charges against them. Of course they denied all and very honestly so. Again they recounted their past dealings with him and protested their innocence and were so sure as to the matter of the cup that they were led to make a very rash proposal. They agreed that the particular man in whose sack the cup should be found was to die for his act. Also that the rest of them would become servants to the lord of the place.

Verse 10. The man accepted their proposal with the exception that the one in whose sack the cup was found was to be his servant and the rest be cleared.

Verses 11-13. So confident were they of their innocence that they "speedily" took down all their sacks and opened them. Of course the mere opening of the sacks would not expose the cup

because the steward had been the one who placed it there and would know how to find it in with the corn. It says *He* searched. That would be according to any situation in which some one was suspected of having goods in his possession that were stolen. And to make the suspense all the greater he began with the sack of the oldest. Having done so they would naturally not expect to have him look in the sack of Benjamin until the last. Each time a sack would be opened and the cup not found would strengthen their feeling of innocence and confidence. Of course the feeling of innocence was complete at the first since they were truly innocent. But also the feeling of confidence that nothing wrong would be discovered became stronger as the sacks were opened one by one and nothing appeared. But at last, the sack of the youngest is reached. Only one more chance for them to have trouble about this. Surely there will not be any now. If any one of them would have taken the cup it would not be the youngest. But it was!! They are in consternation. They "rent their clothes." This was another strange custom of ancient times when one was in unusual distress or anxiety. They had already committed themselves on this subject and now their difficulty is looking grave. Of course all they can do is to return to the city to see what can be done about it.

Verse 14. Since this whole action was by Joseph's direction of course he is looking for the men to return, hence they find him still at his house. They come before him and fall before him on the ground. The usual salutation of respect in those times was to bow before another even to the extent of almost touching the head to the ground. But in very exceptional cases the person fell prostrate on the ground before the other. That was what was done in this case. They not only must know that Joseph is a dignitary but they have gravely offended him, although unintentionally.

Verse 15. Joseph made use of the occasion to deepen his drama. He chided them for the misdeed they had done. Then reminds them of its foolishness even from the standpoint of policy for he asked them if they did not know that such a man as he could certainly "divine"? Of course this means, as seen above, that a man of his standing could detect actions which would escape others.

Verse 16. The men were stunned.



But Judah feels the sting of it especially for he was the one who induced his father to let Benjamin come with them. He confessed they had no way of answering the situation. Then unintentionally admitted what had actually happened, that God had "found out" the iniquity of them. Had Joseph been some other he could not have understood the force of that statement. This "iniquity" did not refer to the affair of the cup for they had not committed any wrong about it and Judah knew that. Therefore we must conclude he had reference to their past treatment of Joseph which he now classes as iniquity. And unknowingly makes the admission in the hearing of the very person who had been the victim of their wickedness. How heavy must be the feeling of guilt when it is brought to one's mind in so helpless a situation. A part of the admission Judah makes before Joseph is that they are now committed to bondage under the man whom they have just now offended.

Verse 17. This is the limit of the stroke. Not only is their "guilt" to be punished but it is to fall on the very one whom they wanted most to shield. Not only would such a thing cause all of them sorrow but it would be too much for the heart of the old father and would result in his death from shock. But Judah was the one who made special guarantee that Benjamin would be brought back and now it is up to him to make intercession.

Verses 18-34. All these are grouped in this one paragraph because I did not wish to interrupt one of the most touching, pleading speeches on record. I will call attention to various parts of it but wish the reader to keep the speech as a whole in mind. Every word of it is pure truth as far as Judah understands it. He carefully sums up the events that began with their first appearance in Egypt for food down to the present moment, and even goes on to the events that will assuredly happen soon if this sentence just pronounced by Joseph is carried into effect. Since the material facts mentioned in this speech are well known and have been repeated in the pages preceding the present it is not necessary to name them here item by item. But the loving unselfishness of Judah is remarkable. He is not praying for the least consideration for him. Not one word of self-pity as far as it would affect him personally. The only distress that he suggests for

himself would be due to his own sympathy for his aged father and on whose account he had bound himself to return the brother. And his proposition at last will be for the sake of his father. He cannot bear to see his father's shock at not seeing his beloved son present when they return. He concludes his speech with the offer to remain in bondage to Joseph if he will let Benjamin go home.

### GENESIS 45

Verse 1. The speech with which the preceding chapter closed brought this tense and most interesting drama to a climax. Stout-hearted indeed would be the man who could carry the performance further after hearing such a speech. Joseph knows that every word is true as far as Judah understands it. Not only so, but his own personal sympathy for his aged father, and who was not responsible for his life of slavery, prompts him to yield. The punishment of the brothers is now complete as far as he is concerned. But the scene of the next act will be too sacred for outside intrusion. Complete privacy is desired and thus all men are ordered out of the group.

Verses 2, 3. Nothing makes it necessary now for him to restrain himself. He gave way to audible weeping that was so loud that the people of Pharaoh's house heard it. What could have been the feelings of the brethren when he said "I am Joseph." He then asked about the only member of his father's immediate family whom he has not seen—his father. Is he yet alive? They are so stunned with the weight of the revelation that they cannot answer his question. The margin says they were terrified at his presence and the lexicon agrees with that rendering. To be in the immediate presence of the brother whom they had so wickedly mistreated years ago and that for money as well as to get revenge for their envy, was enough to make them stand astonished with fright.

Verses 4, 5. Joseph awakened them from their shock by inviting them to come near to him. They obey. He then bade them not be grieved over their past action. The last sentence of verse 5 should not be read too carelessly. It merely states that God sent Joseph before them. It makes no claim that God had anything to do with the wicked act of the brethren that sent him away from home. But after the thing was done God took charge of the

victim to see that he would be conducted to the right place to be of service afterward in bringing about other divine plans.

Verses 6-8. This passage should be noted as the one which gives another important bit of chronology. It is now two years after the famine started. And again notice the word "hither" in 8th verse. This word is what shows God's part in this whole experience of Joseph as to his coming to Egypt. Had that not been done the Ishmaelites might have resold him before they reached Egypt.

Verses 9-15. Hurried instructions are given for their return to their home to get the father. He said for them to tell the father that he was lord over Egypt. That would not be on the basis of pride for Joseph has already proved that he has none of that. But his father might feel hesitant about making such a complete move unless he were assured that Joseph is really in position to take care of him. He then had a personal greeting of affection with Benjamin with tears of joy, followed with a like demonstration with the other brethren. By this time they are sufficiently recovered to talk.

Verses 16-23. In this paragraph we can see the complete cooperation of Pharaoh in the matter of Joseph's family at home. He directs that full provision be made for the conveyance of the members of the family together with their personal belongings, down to the land of Egypt. *Regard not your stuff.* All the context leaves the conclusion here to mean that since there is plenty in the land of Egypt they do not need to be concerned whether they can take all their stuff with them. With these instructions and provisions out of the possessions of Egypt Joseph loads his brethren for the trip.

Verse 24. Joseph is very eager to see his father. All preliminaries have been gone through with. The punishment of the brothers has been ended and mutual good will manifested. All things are ready for the coming of his father to live in that land. No unnecessary delay should be caused. They should make their journey homeward and then back with all possible speed. It is with this in view that he exhorts them not to "fall out by the way." It might be possible we would miss the meaning of this language did we not have the original and its definition in the lexicon. The word "fall" here is from *BAGAZ*. This is defined

"to be angry" by Young, and "a primitive root; to quiver (with any violent emotion, especially anger or fear)."—Strong. We do not know whether Joseph feared they might get into quarrels over their provisions or on the subject of their respective guilt in what had happened, or what. The book does not inform us. But we do know he meant for them not to get into such condition. That would of necessity retard their journey and he wants to see his father as soon as possible.

Verses 25, 26. The brothers arrived home and reported all to the father. The first effect of the report was so unexpected the record says his heart fainted. That means he was stunned. *Believed them not.* This must be understood in the light of a common saying "too good to be true" because he finally responded to the arrangement.

Verses 27, 28. The property in the hands of the sons that bore evidence of having come from Egypt was finally convincing. Jacob said it was enough and he would go to see his son Joseph before he died.

## GENESIS 46

Verse 1. It will be observed that the names Israel and Jacob are used freely as being the same. They are the same as to the person meant hence may be used interchangeably without confusion.

Verses 2-4. This passage is of peculiar importance. It is the final repetition of the promise made first to Abraham, then to Isaac, then to Jacob. Now it comes to the last named in the final statement. One of the items of the promises made to Abraham was that his seed should be a stranger in a land not theirs and serve them four hundred and thirty years. Jacob is now on his way to that land and God has appeared to him at his animal sacrifices and assures him that he will be with him. This is the man and the time in chronology where God "confirmed" his covenant to Abraham. We are not merely presuming this. In Psa. 105: 9, 10 we are expressly told that the covenant was confirmed in Jacob, and this must be considered when Gal. 3: 17 is used in an effort to shorten the term the scriptures say was to be the sojourn in Egypt. See comment on this at chapter 15: 13-15.

Verses 5-7. Not much new information in this paragraph yet we do not wish to lose the trend of the story.

Notice it says not only that they took all their goods but all their seed or people.

Verses 8-25. The subject of this long paragraph is the naming of the people who made up the family of Jacob. But we should be careful not to take some statements too literally when it says that certain souls were born to Jacob. It might mean those born to his near kin and not of his own body begotten. That indefinite method of naming one's descendants in those days was common. Jacob personally had just thirteen children. The others spoken of as having come out of his loins are his near relation.

Verses 26, 27. In this one short passage we are given two different accounts of the number. But one distinction that is brought to our attention is that some of them were born in Egypt and also Joseph and his wife were already there when Jacob came. Such considerations as these will account for the apparent discrepancies in the different accounts of the number. *Loins*. This is from YAREK and defined "From an unused root meaning, to be soft; the thigh (from its fleshy softness); by euphemism, the generative parts."—Strong. The word "euphemism" is a word that means that a less offensive expression to the ear or mind has been used in the place of the literal one. Thus, the word "loins" here is used by the translators in the place of "generative parts."

Verse 28. The text does not tell us why Judah was selected to go on and direct the way. But he had made such strong assurances to his father at the time of their second journey that possibly that is the reason. Joseph had already told them they would dwell in the land of Goshen (chapter 45: 10) hence it is mentioned here.

Verses 29-31. Joseph has his first meeting with his father in the land of Goshen. The meeting was mutually cordial and deeply affectionate. Jacob expressed satisfaction at the reunion and is willing to die. Then Joseph informed them he would inform Pharaoh of their arrival and make plans for introduction.

Verses 32-34. Upon the presentation of Joseph's brethren to Pharaoh he tells them, he will state their possessions. Next it is expected that Pharaoh will enquire as to their occupation. When that is done, they are instructed to reply that it is keeping cattle, which

includes the work of shepherd. The reason for this is that "every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians." A quotation from history will help to explain this attitude toward shepherds or at least toward the occupation in general. "Soon after the bright period of the twelfth dynasty, Egypt again suffered a great eclipse. Nomadic tribes from Asia pressed across the eastern frontier of Egypt and gradually took possession of the inviting pasture lands of the delta, and established there the empire of the Shepherd Kings. These Asiatic intruders were violent and barbarous, and destroyed or mutilated the monuments of the country."—MYERS, A. H., p. 26. This dark period on the history of the Egyptians had led them into a national policy of averseness to the vocation of shepherds in general. And yet, knowing that individual groups might be innocent, they wished to be friendly to these now near them since they are relatives of the man who has done so much for them. Thus they assign them to a separate place in Egypt, this as a "face saving" deal, and yet in the best of the land which shows it was not from any motive of injury to them.

## GENESIS 47

Verses 1, 2. Joseph informed Pharaoh of the presence in Goshen of his people with their possessions. Then he presented five of his brethren to the king. This is a mark of respect for the dignity of the king. To ask him to become a sight-seeing man only upon the general mixture of men and women and slaves as well as women of varying ranks would not be worthy of the king of Egypt. Hence Joseph's respect for his king in making a special selection of his men for purposes of introduction.

Verses 3, 4. True to Joseph's predictions Pharaoh asked them about their occupation. Their reply was according to the instructions Joseph had given them. And in requesting the king that they might dwell in the land of Goshen they relieved him of the embarrassing necessity of assigning them to that place. So the entire matter was understood at once.

Verses 5, 6. Pharaoh authorizes Joseph to assign the best of the land to his people, the land of Goshen. Also, he proposes to employ any of the men who are given to activity to have work with Pharaoh's cattle.

Verse 7. All things are now ready

for the personal presentation of Jacob to the king of Egypt. When this was done Jacob blessed Pharaoh. This was possible and right since Jacob is a Patriarch and Pharaoh is a friendly king and their national host.

Verses 8-10. When people in the Bible were asked their age they did not evade it or make some untruthful answer as many do in our time. When any one is ashamed of his age it is a suggestion of inferiority complex. And this is another mile stone in our record of chronology about the important persons of scripture. Jacob states that his life has not been as pleasant as that of his fathers. He could not but have been including his years of sorrow over the loss of his son Joseph, now restored to him.

Verses 11, 12. It is here stated the brethren of Joseph were placed in the land of Rameses while another places them in Goshen. There is no contradiction. Goshen is the name of the area in general while Rameses is the name of a more central part of the land.

Verses 13, 14. The severe famine continued. Men had money as yet and had to spend it for the corn which Joseph had stored up. He then places the money in Pharaoh's houses and it becomes his capital.

Verses 15-17. But the money finally was spent and still they needed food. Then Joseph exchanged food for their livestock and it became Pharaoh's.

Verses 18-20. The next item of exchange was their land. But not that only. They sold themselves into servitude to Pharaoh. *Give us seed.* It would seem strange in a time of dearth for people to cry for seed. But this is one of the places in the scripture where an item of future application is included with others taking place at the time. See the 12th chapter of Exodus for this idea with reference to the days of unleavened bread. This provision of seed is a case where the writer gets ahead of his story and mentions a feature of the arrangement that can not apply till the present condition of the land has changed.

Verse 21. Since the land is not useable under the dearth it would not be any use to them any way. But also now the land has become Pharaoh's and the people would not have the right to occupy it. Thus the arrangement for cities.

Verse 22. *Priests.* These were not necessarily men of the strictest mean-

ing of that word. It includes any acting official of a community. And because of their importance and need they were exempt from the general subjugation under poverty. They were to be supported out of the king's provisions.

Verse 23. Mention is again made of the seed provided to the people. But it could not mean for immediate use because nothing was growing at that time. But it was simply a statement of the dealings to be used in the future.

Verse 24. The tax of one fifth would be exacted when the time came again when the people could raise grain.

Verses 25, 26. The people gladly agreed to the covenant of taxation. It was only fair that Joseph should exact this from them since he had saved their lives. Now when the days of the famine are over they should show their appreciation by this payment.

Verse 26. The language of this verse verifies the remarks above about the seed. It says Joseph "made it a law" and the writer further states it was a law "unto this day." This shows that the language along in these verses had to do with the general conditions after the famine was passed.

Verses 27, 28. The statement is here made of the prosperity of the children of Israel in Egypt. Not only in wealth but in population. The writer also gives us an advanced announcement of the age of Jacob. The figures stated here agree with what has been said. He stated his age on arrival as 130 and now the length of his residence in Egypt being 17 would make his entire life as 147.

Verses 29-31. Jacob is concerned about his burying place. He resorts to the old custom of placing the hand under the thigh when some important promise or instructions are to be given. With this binding signal he pledges Joseph to bury him in the land where a burying place had been already provided. This service Joseph promised. Upon the promise of Joseph we are told that Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head. This was a gesture of calm and respectful satisfaction.

## GENESIS 48

Verses 1, 2. Jacob is now sick with age and soon to die. Upon hearing it Joseph takes his two sons to visit him. Being informed of his son's coming he exerted himself enough to sit up on the bed.



Verses 3, 4. He referred to his meeting with God at Luz which is Bethel and states the parts of the promise given to him there. It included possession of the land.

Verses 5, 6. Jacob appropriates to himself the two sons of Joseph. He claims them, but explains they are to be his "as Reuben and Simeon." As he then tells him that all children that might be born to him afterward should be his, we are to understand that the two sons of Joseph are to be counted as among the original sons of Jacob. That means they will finally become the heads of full tribes each. Jacob is a Patriarch and speaks by inspiration even if he did not personally know the significance of his speech. But God knew that an extra tribe would some day be necessary and now is preparing for it.

Verse 7. The sad account of the death and burial is next given to Joseph and he is told the location. It is near Bethlehem. That is the death of Rachel.

Verses 8-11. He asked who the persons present were. This shows the things he said about them before were words of inspiration, for he had not as yet seen the boys to realize it. Bringing them near their grandfather he embraced them. Then makes the happy observation that he had not expected to see Joseph's face but lo he has been permitted to see his seed.

Verses 12, 13. Joseph expects his father to bestow the Patriarchal blessing on his sons. That was customarily done accompanied with the placing of hands on the head. In order to have this matter correctly ordered, as he thought it should be, he led the lads toward his father in such a manner that the eldest, Manasseh, would be near the right hand of his father, etc.

Verse 14. But Jacob had a different plan and future for them. Crossing his hands he brought his right hand to be on the head of Ephraim, etc.

Verses 15, 18. Joseph thought his father was making a mistake and tries to adjust his hands. The rule was to prefer the older son of a family. Joseph has no knowledge of why there should be any change in the rule applied to his sons.

Verse 19. Jacob soon informs him he knows what he is doing. That Manasseh will indeed become a great people but that his brother will become greater. If the reader will con-

sult Num. 1: 33, 35 he will see that this was actually fulfilled.

Verses 20, 21. General predictions of favorable estimate to be placed on the two boys are then made to Joseph and also predicts his near death.

Verse 22. This verse is a specific prediction of a double inheritance that Joseph will some day obtain through having two sons who are to become great peoples. This is fulfilled in Deut. 21: 17; Josh. 17: 17; 24: 32; 1 Chr. 5:1.

## GENESIS 49

Verses 1, 2. It should be borne in mind that Patriarchs under that Dispensation were men of God and that predictions were often made by them. When this was done their sayings were as true as those of any other inspired prophets. Thus in this chapter we will have his forecast concerning his twelve sons. However, not all of the statements are predictions. Some are historic references. Also, the historic reason why certain ones of his sons were not permitted to be in the blood line will be shown. And some of the predictions will be nothing more to us than a reference to some incidents in the lives of the people of which we now have no detailed account.

Verses 3, 4. Normally Reuben should be first in the line. But because of his sin in defiling his father's bed, we will not see him in the line. See the record of his sin in chapter 35: 22.

Verses 5-7. The complaint against Simeon and Levi is about the time they betrayed the Shechemites into circumcision then murdered all their males. This is recorded in chapter 34: 26.

Verse 8. Judah will receive more important predictions than any of the sons. The prediction that his hand would be in the neck of his enemies is a figurative way of saying that he would be victorious over his enemies. Since the sword was a common instrument for warfare and was used to behead or otherwise maim the enemy fatally, this expression came to be a common one in olden times.

Verse 9. Some more figurative language referring to Judah's success over his foes.

Verse 10. This is one of the most outstanding passages of scripture in the Bible. It pertains really to Christ, who was the descendant of Judah. The various parts of this famous predic-

tion will be considered now. *Scepter*. This is reference to a rod or stick or gavel that a man of power and authority would wield. To see one being produced by a man indicated his official position of importance. *Depart from*. This means it shall not come out of or be produced by. That Judah will not wield or produce the scepter of law giving and authority until, etc. As illustration of this thought see Num. 24: 17; Isa. 11: 1; Micah 4: 2. *Judah*. He was to be the one from whom the scepter is finally to come. See Heb. 7: 14. *Shiloh*. This is from SHILOH and defined "Tranquil; Shiloh, an epithet of the Messiah."—Strong. *Gathering of the people*. As fulfillment of this see Mark 12: 37; John 12: 32. The thought of the verse as a whole is this. The son of Jacob called Judah will produce a tribe. But that tribe will not produce the law of government for God's people for a while. The tribe of Levi will have that and will be administered through the law of Moses. That will not be changed till this person comes who is here called Shiloh which means rest. And of course it means that the tribe of Levi will continue to be the tribe to produce the authority of law until Shiloh, the Messiah, of the tribe of Judah comes. And when he comes, then the people will gather unto him. The verse is a beautiful prediction of the coming of Christ to become a law giver and ruler and that people will then gather to him and not Moses.

Verses 11, 12. These are more predictions about Christ of the tribe of Judah. Wine when used figuratively refers to blood, either as used in sacrifice or as shed in vengeance. Christ will do both. He will shed his blood for the sins of the world; also he will pour out wine as blood, and blood as wine, in his wrath against those who rebel against him. See Isa. 63: 3; John 19: 34; 2 Thess. 1: 8.

Verses 13-14. Not much can be said further about these verses. We observe however, that the dwelling place of Zebulun is as here stated. See Josh. 19: 10, 11.

Verse 16. In Judges 13: 12 and 15: 20 we see that one of the judges was from the tribe of Dan.

Verses 17, 18. *Serpent by the way*. This is like the saying "snake in the grass." Please consult Judges 18: 27. There read of this unexpected attack the men of Dan made upon these quiet, harmless people, then think of an adder by the way, "snake in the grass."

Verses 19-21. Another passage I do not understand. Hence will not guess.

Verse 22. In the other chapter Jacob had predicted that Joseph would become two peoples through his two sons. Here the same thing is predicted in the picture of a fruitful bough by a well whose branches are so thrifty that they hang over the wall.

Verse 23. This verse is a reference to the mistreatment the brethren gave Joseph. It is compared to people with their bow and arrow and shooting at him.

Verse 24. But he withstood those who attacked him and was able still to wield his own bow. This is accounted for by the fact that the hands of the mighty God of Jacob sustained him. And while in this verse makes another prediction that pertains to Christ. Having mentioned the name of God he says from "thence" is the shepherd, the stone of Israel. Of course this is the Christ. See Psalms 80: 1; Isaiah 28: 16; 1 Peter 2: 4.

Verses 25, 26. More references to the blessings received from God. He here states to Joseph or about Joseph that the blessings of his father (Jacob) had prevailed above the blessings of his progenitors. This might seem to contradict chapter 47: 9. But not. He personally had suffered more than his forefathers but in general blessings he had exceeded the others. And now he predicts that these blessings shall be on the head of him who was "separate from his brethren" which we recognize to be a pathetic reference to his bondage in Egypt.

Verse 27. Very little is said about Benjamin, but what he does say means that he will be successful against his enemies and be able to take much prey.

Verses 28-32. After going through with this picture, past and future, of his twelve sons, Jacob refers again to his approaching death. He further gives directions about his burial place. The cave that Abraham had purchased for that purpose is to be his, and he names over the ones who have been buried there.

Verse 33. Evidently he had mustered all his remaining strength to make the speech set down in this chapter. As soon as it was finished he relaxed, yielded up the ghost.

## GENESIS 50

Verses 1-3. Embalming at this time required 40 days and the period of

mourning by the Egyptians was 70 days. This must be understood as a formal ceremony.

Verses 4-6. When the proper time had come Joseph asked for and was granted leave of Pharaoh to go and bury his father according to his dying request.

Verses 7-9. The respect entertained in Egypt for Joseph is indicated by the fact that many of them accompanied him on the burying mission and made mourning for him.

Verses 10, 11. The exercises must have been impressive for it produced remarks from the Canaanites who witnessed them.

Verses 12, 13. The record states that Jacob's sons did for him as requested and buried him in the cave previously selected as his burial place.

Verse 14. There will be no AWOL charged against Joseph and his brethren. When the burial of their father was completed they returned to Egypt, the place of their sojourn.

Verses 15-18. This passage shows that Jacob had spoken to his sons about the affair of Joseph and predicted the possibility of his taking vengeance on them after his death. They now confess this to him and plead for forgiveness. This caused Joseph to weep. Doubtless it was for sympathy toward them in their distressed frame of mind.

Verses 19-21. But Joseph assures them again that no evil will be done them. And again he makes the statement which we should not overlook, that God meant the affair to turn out for good even though they had thought to do him evil. Then he comforted them and spake kindly to them. He also promised to nourish them in the land of their sojourn.

Verse 22. This is another of the chronological passages and marks the age of Joseph. However, his death is a few verses below.

Verse 23. The joy of seeing one's grandchildren can be appreciated only by those who have experienced it. This joy came to Joseph regarding both his sons.

Verses 24, 25. The death of Joseph is now approaching as he is aware. He states the fact to his brethren and predicts that God will finally visit them in this land and take them out of it as promised to Abraham. And so confident is he that such happy event

will occur that he makes them take an oath that when that time comes they will take his remains with them.

Verse 26. After this Joseph died at the age of 110 years. They embalmed him and put his body in a coffin in Egypt. Here he will remain until Moses leads the Children of Israel out from Egyptian bondage.

## EXODUS 1

Verses 1-4. *Children of Israel.* In this place this term is to be understood as referring to the sons of Jacob directly and not to his descendants generally as is often done. And it will be observed that just eleven of the sons are named here since Joseph was already in Egypt and thus did not come "with" his father. This idea will be mentioned in a verse below. The name "Israel" is explained in Gen. 42: 28.

Verse 5. *Loins.* For an explanation of this word as here used see notes of Gen. 35:11 and 46: 26. *Seventy souls.* On this account of the number that came into Egypt see again the notes at Gen. 46: 26, 27.

Verse 6. This verse should be thought of as belonging in thought and date at the conclusion of the book of Genesis, since the death of Joseph is recorded at that place. Only, the additional fact is recorded here of the death of *all that generation*. Here the last word is from down and defined by Strong "properly, a revolution of time, i. e. an age or generation; also a dwelling." The meaning is that all the people were dead who lived in the time of Joseph. This would give us the idea that no one was living who had been acquainted with Joseph and what he meant to the nation. Of course we must now bear in mind that several hundred years will pass before the events next to be recorded.

Verse 7. This verse shows the fulfillment of God's promises as recorded in Gen. 12: 2; 13: 16; 22: 17.

Verse 8. *Knew not Joseph.* The first of these words is from YADA and defined "A primitive root; to know (properly, to ascertain by seeing); used in a great variety of senses, figuratively, euphemically, and inferentially, (including observation, care, recognition; and causation, designation, punishment,)" — Strong. The word is rendered "acknowledge" 5 times, "regard" once, "familiar friend" once. In the place now being considered it means that the people, and