

# STUDIES IN GENESIS

## LESSON NUMBER 1

### THE INANIMATE CREATION

Gen. 1:1-10, 14-19

#### INTRODUCTION

Again we find ourselves beginning the study of the Old Testament. Too many people do not appreciate the value of Old Testament study. Since we do not learn from the study of the Old Testament what to do to be saved or how to worship God acceptably in this Christian dispensation, many brethren fail to realize the important place which the Old Testament fills in the study of God. The New Testament is written on the basis of the knowledge of the character of God which is given in the Old Testament, and people who never read anything but the New Testament do not have the proper background with reference to the character of God. Paul indicates that the Old Testament was written for our learning that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope. (Rom. 15:4.) Many of the essential attributes of God which are rather fully developed in the Old Testament are merely referred to in the New Testament. So that if one fully appreciates New Testament statements with reference to God he must have the Old Testament picture of God as a background.

The first aim of the studies of the lessons of this last quarter is to understand and appreciate the teaching of Genesis with reference to God. As we proceed with the lessons these essential attributes of God will be pointed out and emphasized.

The second aim of this quarter is to understand and appreciate the outstanding personalities mentioned in Genesis. Some of the greatest characters of history are pictured on the pages of Genesis. Enoch, the man who walked with God and had the testimony that he pleased God; Noah, the man perfect in his generations and who alone was counted worthy to repopulate the earth after humanity's first failure both are found in Genesis. Abraham, the father of the faithful who believed God in spite of seemingly impossible circumstances and whose faith was counted for righteousness is introduced to us in this book. The growth of Abraham's family into twelve tribes of about three million people is given to us in this book. Moses is introduced as the deliverer, lawgiver, and mediator between God and the children of Abraham, and his patient dealings with a rebellious people are spread before us in the pages of the Old Testament. No one can lay claim to being a Bible student who is not familiar with these great characters. Principles in the New Testament are illustrated by the use of these great men, and the full significance of these New Testament principles cannot be appreciated by those who are ignorant of what the Old Testament says of these men.

The third aim of these studies is to establish moral and social standards. To do this it will be necessary for us to know the things which God approved and the things which He disapproved in the lives of the people whom we meet in the book of Genesis.

These are worthy aims and to the accomplishment of these purposes each student should dedicate

himself and be willing to give sufficient time and effort to do the job in a way which is worthy of the material studied.

## I. KEY SCRIPTURE

*“For He spoke and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.”* (Psa 33:9).

**1. God’s Power.** In our text David refers to the creation of matter when he said God spoke and it was done. There is nothing with which man is acquainted that illustrates the omnipotence of God with greater force than the creation of the universe. All that man can see, and doubtless many things beyond the limit of his vision, were called into existence by the naked word of God. The writer of Hebrews says, *“By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen has not been made out of things which appear.”* (Heb. 11:3.) There is a philosophy which says that both spirit and matter are eternal, and that spirit simply arranged matter in its present form. But inspiration says that the things which are seen were not made out of things which appear. Without any tools to work with, without any substance to work upon God spoke into existence that which before had no existence. Modern scientists are inclined to the position that matter is responsible for all that is in the world. Materialists of all classes give matter the preeminent place in the universe. They must either believe that matter has always existed and that it produced mind, or they must believe that there was a time when absolutely nothing, neither spirit nor matter, existed. If they believe in the eternity of matter, they make a god out of matter. If they believe there was a time when absolutely nothing existed, they must take the position that nothing got busy and became something. With such a conclusion the thoughtful mind refuses to rest. The only other alternative is to believe in the eternity of mind, which mind is God. Mind now controls and uses matter at its will, but matter never controls mind. Hence it is easier to believe that mind is eternally existent and is the source of all matter. Hence, we believe that David was right when he said that God spoke and it was done.

**2. God’s Purpose.** We read often of God’s eternal purpose. (Eph. 3:11.) We also read of God doing certain things *“according to the good pleasure of His will”* (Eph. 1:5) and *“to the praise of the glory”* (Eph. 1:6). David said that men *“shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and talk of Your power; to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glory of the majesty of His kingdom.”* (Psalm 145:11,12.) Undoubtedly one purpose God had in the creation of the universe was for His own glory. It was also a part of the purpose of God in the creation that His Son might have the pre-eminence, and that He might have rule over all things upon the earth and in heaven. (Col. 1:15-20.) The happiness of man also finds a place in the purpose of God in the creation of the universe. Man is the crowning act of God’s work of creation. He was given dominion over a portion of that creation that he might be happy in his relationship with God, and that he might live and serve to the glory of God. And had man been true to God’s original aims and purpose, his happiness would have been complete and the glory of God that which God had a right to expect.

**3. God’s Praise.** David pictures the earth as trembling and the foundations of the mountains as quaking. He pictures the rivers and the seas as giving praise unto God. *“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.”* All inanimate creation is pictured as singing the praises of God. *“Ascribe ye strength unto God: His excellency is over Israel, and His strength is in the skies. O God, You are terrible out of Your holy places: the God of Israel, He gives strength and power unto His people. Blessed be God”* (Psalm 68:34,35.) In this connection the student should read our psalm of devotion, Psalm 148. In this Psalm all the heavenly bodies, the waters, and even the seas,

the mountains, and the rivers, beasts, cattle, and creeping things are calling upon God to praise Him. Kings and princes, young men and maidens, old people and children alike are calling upon God to praise Him for His power, His majesty, and His greatness.

## **II. A COMMENTARY ON GENESIS 1:1-10, 14-19**

### **1. In the Beginning (Gen 1:1)**

The creation of matter is said to have taken place "*in the beginning.*" The word beginning suggests time, but this time has reference only to created things. It cannot have reference to God. Certainly no one would think that Moses meant to say that things were created in the beginning of God. There is an endless eternity back of the time referred to by this expression. But to locate the time to which it refers is impossible. There are those who believe that the beginning referred to is the first day of the week of creation in the first chapter of Genesis. There are others who believe that matter was called into existence a long time before the first day mentioned in Genesis 1:3-5. Brother Milligan in his Scheme of Redemption suggests that there was an order of creatures on the earth before it became waste and void, the condition described in verse two. His position seems to be a mere conjecture, and it would be foolish to argue that it is true, or that it is false. But that matter was called into existence by the creative power of God some time before the period described in verse two is most probable.

Even the careless reader can hardly read this first verse of inspiration without being struck by the person mentioned in it. In the beginning God. This places God back of all matter as well as distinguishing Him from matter. One philosophy (Pantheism) claims that the totality of existing things equals God, so that if every material atom in the universe should be destroyed God would be destroyed. But the first author of inspiration distinguishes God from creation and declares Him to be transcendent to creation.

The next word in this statement that catches our attention is the word created. Moses used a Hebrew word which is consistently used to mean, not the arranging, making, or assembling of matter already in existence, but the word implying the original production of matter where there was none before. It signifies calling into existence that which, previously had no existence. Making the things which are seen out of the things which did not appear. (Heb. 11:3.) In this first chapter of Genesis, Moses used two words which are generally translated by our word create. One is used in the first verse, the twenty-first verse, and the twenty-seventh verse, and means the calling into existence that which did not previously exist. The other is used as in verse seven where it is said God made the firmament. This word made implies the arranging or assembling into new forms that which already had an existence. These words are used not only in Genesis but through-out all the Old Testament in a consistent manner. Their Greek equivalents in the New Testament are just as consistently used so that we conclude God created (called into existence that which previously had no existence) the heavens and the earth, but that in the six days of the first chapter of Genesis God made (arranged or assembled) the firmament, the lights in the firmament, and the vegetation.

### **2. A Period of Waste (Gen. 1:2)**

Moses says that the earth was waste and void, but Isaiah says, "*The God that formed the earth and made it, that established it and created it not a waste, that formed it to be inhabited*" (Isa. 45:18.) Surely Isaiah believed what Moses said about the condition of the earth at the time of its creation.

Since Isaiah says it was not created a waste we should look carefully into the language of Moses to see whether he intended to affirm that the earth was waste and void at the time of creation. The Septuagint Version (a Greek translation of the Hebrew) translates this second verse in these words, "*But the earth had become waste and void.*" Harry Rimmer, an outstanding scholar of the present generation, says a literal translation of the verse should read, "But the earth had become desolate, ruined, and unfurnished, covered with water and shrouded with darkness. And the spirit of God brooded over the face of the waters." (Modern Science and the Genesis Record, p. 26.) Perhaps no better statement of this theory can be given than that which is given by Rimmer which is as follows: "The original creation of the heaven and the earth, then, is covered in the first verse of Genesis. Only God knows how many ages rolled by before the ruin wrought by Lucifer fell upon the earth, but it may have been an incalculable span of time. Nor can any student say how long the period of chaos lasted; there is not even a hint given. But let us clearly recognize in these studies, that Moses, in the record of the first week of creation, is telling the story of God's reconstruction; rather than the story of an original creation. Therefore Moses uses the word '*asah*' to manufacture, to form, to release from restraint, or to make, rather than the word '*bara*,' to create, until he reaches that part of his narrative where life appears, and he then turns to the latter word. It is natural that if life had previously existed it would have perished in this great upheaval when the earth was made 'waste and empty,' and the new orders God produced must come from pure creative action. It has been suggested that the manifold fossils the rocks contain may be a relic of that pre-Adamic age; but of this no man can know definitely." (Modern Science and the Genesis Record, p. 28.) [Of course we recognize that the word Lucifer in the book of Isaiah chapter 14, should be more accurately translated morning star, and refers to the fall of Babylon, not Satan].

### **3. Days of Creation (Gen. 1:3-10, 14-19)**

*God said, Let there be light.* The creation of light is one of the most wonderful phenomena of creation. That light existed as a creature independent of the sun is now an admitted fact but one that is difficult, maybe impossible, for us to understand. Some sources of light other than the sun are the aurora borealis, the phosphorus from the glowing bodies of myriads of marine creatures in semitropical waters, the luminiferous ether known to surround the earth, to say nothing of the lowly lightning bug. Critics of the Bible have thought they had some proof of the mistakes of Moses in the fact that he spoke of light existing before any mention was made of the sun. However, real scientists have dropped that contention.

*God saw the light, that it was good.* The divine approval is in similar language placed upon all the works of creation. But that light is good is easy for us to comprehend. Several reasons have been suggested why light is good. First, it is absolutely pure. There seems to be no way to dilute or adulterate light. There is no such thing as dirty light. Perhaps this characteristic of light is the reason why God is likened unto light. Next, light is good because it is useful and absolutely necessary to life. Neither man nor animal nor vegetation can get along without light. Light is good because it contributes to our protection and instruction. Darkness encourages and protects evil, and evil men love darkness. But light arrests evil, makes hope manifest, and contributes to our instruction. Science has made its advances because men have had the light as their servant.

*There was morning and evening the first day.* The old question of the length of time covered by the word day comes up again and again and will perhaps never be settled to the satisfaction of all. There are those who contend that the six days of creation were long geological ages and that we are still in

the seventh day. Others contend that the word day is to be taken in its usual meaning of approximately twenty-four hours. According to Harry Rimmer, the Hebrew word here translated day (*yom*) occurs 1,480 different times and is translated into the English by 54 different words. It is translated by our word day 1,181 times. However, our English word day does not always mean a period of approximately twenty-four hours. We read that today is the day of salvation. Jesus said that Abraham rejoiced to see his day. (John 8:56.) So proper translation will not enable us to determine its meaning. However, there are certain seemingly insurmountable difficulties encountered by those who claim these days were long periods. First, when a numeral is used in connection with the word, as one day, or first day, the word refers to a twenty-four hour period. If there is an exception to this rule the writer does not know of it. Next, vegetation appeared on the earth on the third day. If this were a long geological age, vegetation would have existed during the darkness as well as the light of that period, but it is a known fact that vegetation cannot exist for so long a time without sunlight. Since the theory of geological periods was not known in the days of Moses, it must be admitted that Moses used the word day to mean twenty-four hours. Hence Moses had the idea that this day was simply the period of twenty-four hours. Last, if the sixth day was a long period of time and Adam was created about midday, he would be considerably older than Methuselah by the end of the day. Since his age is given at the time of his death as 930 years (Gen. 5:5), we conclude that he did not live a half million years during a part of a long geological age.

*God said, Let there be a firmament.* This refers to the space above us sometimes called the heavens. It is said that God divided the waters above the firmament from the waters below the firmament. What is the nature of the waters above the firmament is difficult to decide. Whether they are atmospheric vapors is not certain but probable. This firmament between the waters God called heaven.

*God said, Let the waters be gathered unto one place.* This was a part of the work of the third day. The waters under the heaven were gathered together and called oceans or seas. When this was done the dry land appeared. Here again it is said that God saw that this was good. It is easy to see that this was good because the different types of life demand different spheres in which to live. Some types of life demand water; others, dry land and atmosphere. Hence the necessity of the separation of the water from the land. Again, the beauty of the earth depends upon the separation. If the earth were completely shrouded in water or vapors there would be little beauty. But still if there were no waters on the earth, the earth would be unbearably dry and barren. Also the division of water from the land was necessary for the cultivation of food necessary to man and animals. Hence the goodness of God in the separation.

*God said, Let there be lights in the firmament.* In verse three, God created light. In verse fourteen he speaks in a similar way of lights as if there were two separate creations of light. But it should be pointed out that different words are used in these verses. In verse three we have a word which signifies that light is itself a creature. In verse fourteen we have a word that signifies a light holder. These light holders are the sun, moon, stars and other heavenly bodies. They are not primary sources of light; they are but the holders and reflectors of light.

*God made two great lights.* Moses says the greater light was given to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night. The words greater and lesser most probably refer to size. We can see why the sun is called the greater light when we remember that its diameter is 886,473 miles, while the diameter of the moon is only 2,172 miles. The purpose of these lights is said to be (1) to divide the day from the night; (2) to be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and (3) to give light upon the earth and in the firmament. Scientists have learned many things even in recent years about the relation of

these heavenly bodies to the earth. Until comparatively recent times men thought the earth was the center of the universe and that the sun travelling around the earth caused day and night. The scientist who discovered that the sun is the center of the universe and that day and night are caused by the revolutions of the earth was severely punished by the pope of the Catholic church for teaching the theory. There is likely much more to be learned about these matters than scientists know today. Hence, we ought to approach these subjects with reverential care.

### **III. SOME APPLICATIONS**

1. In the story of creation many of the necessary attributes of God are manifest. His omnipotence is clearly demonstrated. His omniscience is as clearly seen since nothing less than an all-wise Being could plan and bring such a universe into being. His goodness is seen in the provisions which He has made for His creatures. His unchangeableness is demonstrated in the unvarying laws He has set in operation in nature.

2. Man's ignorance of the universe should cause him to bow in reverence before such an all-wise, almighty, and immutable Creator. Nothing less than colossal pride and arrogance could cause a man to deny God's own statement with reference to His marvellous works of creation.

3. The goodness of God in providing for man's happiness lays on humanity, eternal obligations to serve and worship God in whatever way He demands. If man cannot create and maintain a universe, he ought to admit his weakness and ignorance and bow in reverent submission before that Being who not only has given him an existence but who continually provides for his happiness.

## QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 1

# THE INANIMATE CREATION

1. Why do some fail to realize the importance of Old Testament study? \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. What important lessons with reference to God does one fail to learn who never reads the Old Testament? \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. What does Paul say of the importance of the Old Testament? \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. What is the aim of the first lesson of this quarter? \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. What is the second aim? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Discuss the benefits to be derived from the third aim. \_\_\_\_\_  
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7. What attributes of God does the creation emphasize? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Through what instrument was the power of God exerted in creation? \_\_\_\_\_  
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9. State and discuss the difference between the materialists and the believer in God on the subject of creation. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Was there a time when absolutely nothing existed? Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. What purpose did God have in creation? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. What place did God's Son have in God's purpose? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. What place did man have in God's purpose? \_\_\_\_\_  
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14. Why has man failed to realize that purpose? \_\_\_\_\_  
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15. What did David say of the praise which is due to God in creation? \_\_\_\_\_

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16. What is the meaning of the word beginning? \_\_\_\_\_

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17. Contrast the Bible view of God and creation with that of Pantheism. \_\_\_\_\_

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18. Contrast the meaning of the word “created” and “made” as used in our text. \_\_\_\_\_

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19. Discuss the statements made by Moses and Isaiah as to the condition of the earth. \_\_\_\_\_

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20. Discuss Rimmer’s statement regarding creation. \_\_\_\_\_

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21. Is it possible for light to exist apart from Sun? \_\_\_\_\_

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22. Name and discuss reasons why light is good. \_\_\_\_\_

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23. What is your view as regard the length of the days of creation? \_\_\_\_\_

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24. What distinction is made between light and light holders in our lesson? \_\_\_\_\_

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25. What do you know of the relative size and work of the two great lights? \_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON NUMBER TWO

# THE ANIMATE CREATION

Gen. 1:11-13, 20-28

### INTRODUCTION

The order of creation is interesting. There is an ascending order in the different things created on the successive days of creation. With only slight difficulties there seem to be two divisions of the days of creation with some correspondence between the things created in these two divisions. The following table will help the student of God's word to remember the things created on each day and to see this correspondence:

1. Light	4. Lights
2. Air	5. Fowl
Water	Fish
3. Dry land	6. Animals
Plants	Man

From this arrangement it will be seen that light as a creature appeared on the first day and that the light holders, the sun, moon, and stars, were created on the fourth day. The Hebrew words justify making the distinction between light as a creature and these light holders as suggested in our former lesson. We have been accustomed to saying that the firmament was created on the second day but mention is made of a division of the waters above the firmament from the waters under the firmament and hence justifies the use of water in this outline. In the second division it will be seen that fowl and fish were created on the fifth day. There is a correspondence between the air of the second day and the fowl of the fifth day since fowls move in the air. And there is a correspondence between the fish mentioned as created on the fifth day and the water in which they move as mentioned in the second period. Dry land was made on the third day when the water was gathered in one place and formed the seas. On this same third day plant life had its beginning. Separation of land and water precede the appearance of plant life as was natural. In the second division animals and man are said to have been created on the sixth day. The correspondence here is that both animals and man inhabit the dry land and at that time both fed upon plants. One difficulty with this arrangement is that the water mentioned as being under the firmament on the second day may, or may not, mean that which on the third day was gathered into the seas and oceans. If it does refer to this, the arrangement seems most logical and will help us to remember when each thing was created by associating the two divisions with each other.

### I. KEY SCRIPTURE

*“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” (Gen. 2:7).*

**1. Man's Lowly Origin.** Our key scripture says that Jehovah formed man of the dust of the ground. Surely there is intended an indication here of the lowly origin of man. When speaking of the origin of

animals God said, *“Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind, cattle, and creeping things, and beasts of the earth after their kind: and it was so.”* (Gen. 1:24.) Hence the body of man has something in common with all animals in that both came from the dust of the earth. Another thing suggested in this statement is the frailty of man. Someone has represented man as few particles of dust held together in the hand of God. If God should release His hold upon man, he would immediately crumble back to the dust. David suggests the frailty of man when he said, *“For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.”* (Psalm 103:14.) Again the frailty of man is suggested in this statement: *“And He remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passes away, and comes not again.”* (Psalm 78:39.) Nothing could be more suggestive of man’s weak and temporal nature than to liken him to a puff of wind which is felt but for an instant and is forever gone. Another gust of wind may come, but that which has passed can never return. James raises the question, *“What is your life? For you are a vapor that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away.”* (James 4:14.) Peter says, *“All flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass.”* (1 Pet. 1:24.) Both David and Job spoke of the lowliness of man by referring to him as a worm. (Psalm 22:6; Job 25:6.) Solomon referred to the lowly origin of man by saying that he came from the dust and to dust is destined to return. (Eccles. 12:7.) If one is tempted to be vain and proud, he may with profit meditate upon the fact that God has likened him to these various things which are calculated to destroy, or at least discourage, pride.

**2. The Dignity of Man.** This is suggested by the fact that when God created animals He said, *“Let the earth bring forth”*; but with reference to man He said, *“Let Us make man,”* and as in our text, *“Jehovah God formed man of the dust.”* With reference to this David said, *“I am fearfully and wonderfully made: wonderful are Your works; and that my soul knows right well.”* (Psalm 139:14.) Another thing that suggests the dignity of the body of man is the fact that it has been made the tabernacle of the offspring of God. Our text says that God *“breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”* Paul speaks of man being the offspring of God. (Acts 17:28,29.) Surely no one would think of the body of man as being the offspring of God. Hence it must be the inner man who uses the body as a tabernacle. If the temple of old was glorified by the presence of God, we may conclude that the presence of God’s offspring in this body dignifies the body. Again the dignity of the body is suggested in the fact that it is to have a part in the redemption of man. And last, its dignity is suggested in that it is to be resurrected on the last day and may be glorified, made immortal and incorruptible, fitted to dwell in the presence of God forever.

## II. A COMMENTARY ON GENESIS 1:11-13, 20-28

### 1. Life in the Vegetable Kingdom (Gen. 1:11-13)

*Let the earth put forth grass.* Again we see a demonstration of the power of God’s word. When there was no light, God said let there be light. And when there was no firmament God spoke one into existence. All things that exist were spoken into existence. *“By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen has not been made out of things which appear.”* (Heb. 11:3.) God did not need a workshop equipped with tools to bring into existence this marvellous universe in which we live. He spoke and it was done. This should cause men to have a healthy respect for God’s word. Some, it seems, have concluded that the written word of God has not the power of His spoken word. But if we judge from human affairs, the written word is even more powerful than the spoken. A man’s written word witnessed by his signature is considered more binding than his spoken word. Hence it is foolish to suppose that God’s written word is less powerful than His spoken word.

*Fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind.* Here is announced a law to which there is no exception. Seed may degenerate, but they cannot in one season produce anything other than that from which they came. If this law were to be repealed, a state of confusion would result. But because there is no exception to this law, farmers may plant in hope of reaping what they sow. We might learn a lesson, too, about seed-sowing in the spiritual realm. Jesus said the word of God is the seed of the kingdom. (Luke 8:11.) When this spiritual seed is sown it will produce after its kind; it produces children of the kingdom, members of the church of our Lord. Never in all the experiences of the apostles did they sow the seed of the kingdom and reap members of any denomination. If nothing but the seed of the kingdom had ever been sown, there would never have been a denomination in existence. In order to produce a denomination, something other than the seed of the kingdom had to be sown.

*And God saw, that it was good.* This statement is made with reference to all the works of God. The work of this third day was good in that it has contributed to the pleasure of mankind. Think what a dreary place this earth would be without grass and trees. It would be a bleak, barren, shadowless land, a naked form without adornment. Next, the work of this third day was good because it furnishes much of the food for man and animals. For a time the fruit and herbs furnished man all his food, and even now much of our table delight is taken from the vegetable world. And last, the work of this day was good in that it has provided work for man. In the garden of Eden man's work consisted of dressing and keeping the vegetation.

## **2. Creatures for Sea and Air (Gen. 1:20-23)**

*Let the water swarm with swarms of living creatures.* First, it is worth while to note something of the order of creation. God did not create fish before the creation of water and find Himself with no suitable place to put them. But we are not necessarily to conclude from this that the fish evolved from the water, or that higher forms of life are evolved from lower forms in the water. If the fact that these living creatures came from the water proves that they evolved from the water, we would be obligated to say that the birds which were made for the firmament evolved from the firmament. But so far, no one has been foolish enough to try to prove that birds had such origin. It should also be noticed that prior to this time there were no living creatures in the water. We might as well argue that there was light before God said let there be light as to argue that there were living creatures in the water before God said let there be living creatures in the water. The wisdom of God is seen in the fact that He created the various creatures to correspond with the elements in which they were to live. The variety in marine life as well as in the animal kingdom is another indication of the wisdom and power of God. "The Creator's wisdom and power is as admirable in an ant as in an elephant. The curious formation of the bodies of animals, their different sizes, shapes and natures, with the admirable power of the sensitive life with which they are indued, when duly considered, serve not only to silence and shame the objections of atheists and infidels, but to raise high thoughts and high praises of God in pious and devout souls." (Matthew Henry.)

*God created the great sea monsters.* The King James Version has whales instead of sea monsters. Adam Clarke says that the original word here "must be understood rather as general than a particular term comprising all the great aquatic animals." God's power, as has been suggested, is seen in both the large and small creatures. There are some "so minute that thirty thousand may be contained in one drop of water," and others so large that men marvel at their ponderous size.

*And every living creature that moves.* Here the evolutionist comes in direct conflict with the word of God. Moses said God created every living creature. The evolutionist says that all these living creatures

evolved from one little creature.

*Wherewith the waters swarmed.* This expression is strikingly true. Few people, unacquainted with the ability of marine life to multiply, can have any conception of its meaning. According to men who have studied in this field, the fish we call a carp may lay as many as twenty thousand eggs, and an ordinary cod will lay nine and one-third million. This will help us to understand God's meaning when He said that the waters swarmed with fish. Again, if one drop of water may contain as many as thirty thousand of the minute forms of life, we can see why it is said that the waters swarmed with this life.

*After their kind.* It is said both of the fishes that swarmed in the sea and the winged birds of the air that they brought forth after their kind. If it is true that each life created brought forth after its kind, the evolutionist must deny God's word. He believes that every kind of life known to man came from one form. It is admitted that there have been variations within species, but that one specie of life brought forth an entirely different specie has never yet been demonstrated. If God's rule that each produces its kind is true, there are no more species in existence today than there were in the day of creation. And if time goes on for a million years, not one more specie will be added to the list. Every one brings forth after its own kind.

*Be fruitful and multiply.* God gave His blessing to the creatures of sea and air by telling them to be fruitful, to multiply, to fill the waters in the sea and the air. A law was set in operation to continue that which began by miracle. This is a rule common to all of Gods creation. God created one pair of the human race and then set in operation the law of procreation. God started the church by miracle, but he does not maintain it by miracle. He set in motion a law by which the church perpetuates itself. As the vegetation has within itself the seed which perpetuates its life, and as the animal kingdom perpetuates itself similarly, so the church has the seed, the word of God, by which its life is perpetuated. God has ordained that the church shall live from generation to generation by the preaching of the gospel. This generation is to plant the seed in the hearts of the children who will be the church tomorrow. They in turn will plant the seed in the hearts of their children and so on as long as time shall last. Those who expect God to perpetuate the life of the church by miracle may well expect the human race or vegetation to be perpetuated miraculously.

### **3. Animal Life Created (Gen. 1:24- 28)**

*Let the earth bring forth living creatures.* Attention has been called to the two words which are used in this first chapter, one meaning the creation of something out of nothing, and the other the arrangement of existing substance into new forms. The first word, "bara," which indicates absolute creation, is used in verse one while the second word is used with reference to all other things made in this first chapter until we come to this part of our lesson. The living creatures, or beasts of the earth, were created, not merely a new arrangement of existing matter.

*God saw, that it was good.* First, this animal creation was good in that it afforded man the opportunity to exercise his God-given dominion. In verse 28 we read that man was to have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, and every living thing that moves upon the earth. Next, it was good for man's happiness. Being created to have dominion, man finds his greatest happiness in the exercise of this dominion. Hence the creation of the animal kingdom and man's dominion over it contributed to his happiness. Last, the creation of this lower animal life was good for man in that it supplies food. It seems that man's food was intended to be vegetable. In verse 29 God told man he had given him every herb and every fruit tree to be food both for man and beast and bird. It is very

probable that if man had never sinned, that would have been his only food. But knowing that man would sin, God gave man a digestive system suited for the consumption of meat, and much of man's food now consists of meat.

*Let Us make man in Our image.* The first lesson for us in this statement is the suggestion of the Trinity. The plural form "Us" suggests the Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) though if that were the only proof it would not be sufficient on which to base a doctrine. However, from other scripture we learn that both the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit had a part in the creation of the universe. The writer of Hebrews says, "*The Father made the worlds through the Son.*" And Job suggests the part the Spirit had when he said, "*By his Spirit the heavens are garnished.*" (Job 26:13.) We would notice also that man is made in the image of God. We should not make the mistake of thinking that our bodies are created in God's image. If that were so, the idolater would make a likeness of God from wood or stone. But Paul says, "*Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man.*" (Acts 17:29.) The image consists in, (1) Man has an intellect akin to that of God; (2) holiness, and; (3) consciousness, both of self and of God. The animal has not the power of self-consciousness, much less a consciousness of his Creator. But man has the power to distinguish between self and others as well as the power of evaluating his actions to feel good when he has done good and to smart under the sting of conscience when he has done wrong. In these matters, the materialistic scientists contradict the Bible. The Bible reports man as beginning at the height of his capabilities but through sin descending, sunk to the lowest depths of which man is capable. The scientist has man beginning at the lowest depths of animal life and ascending through millenniums of physical and mental progress to perfection.

*Be fruitful and multiply.* It should be noticed that this command was given while Adam and Eve were still in the garden. The old idea that man's sin consisted of the act which brought children into the world is clearly false since they were given the command to multiply before they sinned. The responsibility and inconvenience and considerable labor involved in the bearing and rearing of children cause some in this modern age to refuse to comply with this commandment. People make their greatest contribution to God and society, however, in obedience to this commandment.

### III. SOME APPLICATIONS

1. The bigness of the universe impresses us with the power of God. But the life of this animate creation and the power to perpetuate that life impresses us with the wisdom of God. Man can make that which resembles an egg, but he cannot put within it the power to hatch out a life. Only the wisdom and power of God are able to do that.
2. The fact that God gave life to this animate creation raises it in the scale of creatures above the inanimate; so the gift of His spirit to man raises man above the level of the brute creation. Those who deny the existence of a never-dying soul tabernacled in this body have a difficulty in proving that they are any better than a pig or a cow.
3. Man was made to have dominion over God's creation, but his voluntary servitude to Satan has robbed him of that dominion. In Christ, through our submission to Him, is our only hope of recovering that dominion which we lost to Satan.

## QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 2

# THE ANIMATE CREATION

1. What suggests the lowly origin of man? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What other characteristic of man is suggested? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Name and discuss a number of terms used in the Bible to teach the frailty of man. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How does the Bible suggest the dignity of man? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What did God place in man's body that dignifies it? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How is the dignity of man suggested by redemption? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. How does the resurrection suggest the dignity of man's body? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. How is the power of God's word suggested in this lesson? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What attitude should this instill in us toward God's word? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Is God's written word as powerful as His spoken word, and why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. What common law of nature is suggested in the vegetable kingdom? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. What would be the result of this law if it were to be repealed? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. How does this law apply in the spiritual realm? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. Give three reasons why the work of the third day was good in God's sight. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. When God made the creatures of the sea, what is suggested as to the order of creation? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

16. What proof do we have of immediate creation of marine life? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

17. In what way is the wisdom of God manifested in the creation of fish and birds? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

18. What is suggested as to the variation in size of marine life? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

19. How does the evolutionist come into direct conflict with God's word as to creation? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

20. What is the ability of marine life to multiply? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

21. If animals bring forth after their kind, can the theory of evolution be true? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

22. What command did God give all of His creatures? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

23. Show how this law of reproduction works in the spiritual realm? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

24. Name and suggest three ways in which animal creation was good. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

25. What proof is there of the Trinity? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

26. What part did each person of the Trinity have in creation? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

27. What part of man is made in the image of God? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

28. In what does this image consist? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

29. What power does man have that is not in the lower animals? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

30. How do people make their greatest contribution to God and society? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON NUMBER 3

# MAN'S FIRST HOME

Gen. 2:8-17

### INTRODUCTION

This lesson is on a subject which should be of interest to every individual. Everyone is connected with a home, and practically everyone will sooner or later occupy a principal place in a home. Hence, all of us should be interested in what God has to say about the home. Like the beginning of everything else, the home was built according to God's idea. When God built His church He made it as nearly perfect as the beings involved in it would permit. As the first church serves in many respects as an example for all succeeding congregations, likewise the first home built serves in many respects as an example of what God wants a home to be.

In the first place, the first home was monogamous. By this we mean one wife for one man and one husband for one woman. This was not accidental on the part of God. He did it because He willed that it should be so. With reference to this a prophet once said, *"And did He not make one, although He had the residue of the Spirit? And wherefore one? He sought a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth."* (Mal. 2:15.) In this passage the prophet indicates that God could have made more than one wife for Adam, but He did not do so because he sought a godly seed. Hence, God intended this to be an example for all to follow. Next, polygamy was unknown in the world until the fifth generation after Adam, and then it came in the line of Cain who was evil instead of the line of righteous Seth. (Gen. 4:19.) Cain showed a disposition to be rebellious against the will of God and do his own will when he made an offering contrary to God's will. We are not surprised therefore, when his descendants soon make sufficient departure to practice polygamy.

The home may be considered a fairly safe barometer of the nation. When people have a high regard for the sanctity of the home, the morals of a nation are good. But when people cease to have respect for the home and laws which safeguard the home, you may expect the morals of the nation to be at a low ebb. Nations of antiquity have not been able to continue long after they lost due regard for the sanctity of the home. This nation has gone a long way toward losing its respect for the home and the standards of righteousness which safeguard the home. Nearly three out of every five marriages end in the divorce court. Second marriages are made without any regard for God's law. Parents refuse to suffer inconvenience, choosing rather to put that burden upon their children. How long these conditions can continue without a complete breakdown in the morals of the nation no one can predict. But obviously we are dangerously near that breaking point.

### I. KEY SCRIPTURE

*"Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it".* (Gen. 2:15).

**1. The First Home Was Made by the Lord.** It has already been suggested that the Lord made the first home and intended that it should be in many respects a pattern for all others. The emphasis here is on the fact that the home was made by the Lord. It is the Lord's institution. There are but three institutions which can claim the Lord as their maker--the home, the government, and the church. Since the home was made by the Lord, we would naturally expect the Lord to make laws governing the home. In the first place, the Lord joins the principals of the home, the husband and wife, in matrimony. In the next place, children are looked upon as gifts from the Lord. David said, "*Lo, children are a heritage of Jehovah; and the fruit of the womb is His reward. As arrows in the hand of a mighty man, so are the children of youth. Happy is the man that has his quiver full of them: they shall not be put to shame, when they speak with their enemies in the gate.*" (Psalm 127:3-5.) Again, "*He makes the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children.*" (Psalm 113:9.) Next, God has made laws by which (1) the home is to be formed, and (2) by which the home is to be governed. A union between husband and wife which is not in harmony with God's law is an unlawful and adulterous union. (Matt. 5:31,32; Matt. 19:9; Rom. 7:1-3.) The New Testament abounds in teaching with reference to maintaining proper relationship between the principals of the home. The husband is taught how to treat his wife; the wife is taught due regard for her husband. Parents are taught how to rear their children, and children are taught proper respect for their parents. (Eph. 5:22-31; 6:1-4; 1 Pet. 3:1-7.) If the teaching of Jesus and His apostles were followed, homes would be happier, society purer, the nation stronger, and the church would not have so many problems of discipline.

**2. The Activities of the First Home Were Determined and Directed by the Lord.** Our text says that God "*took the man, and put him into the garden.*" The place where this home should be was determined by the Lord. Next, the number of people who comprised the home was determined by the Lord. The home was then directed to be self-perpetuating in that man was told to multiply and replenish the earth. Not only was man to replenish the earth, but he was to subdue it. He was also to have dominion over the fish, of the sea, the birds of the heaven, and over every living thing that moved upon the earth. (Gen. 1:28.) Next, he was directed to dress and to keep the garden in which he lived. In all of this we see God determining and directing the activities of man. Had man never gone beyond that determined by the Lord and that in which he followed the directions of the Lord, he would have been eternally happy. It was when man departed from, or went beyond the directions of the Lord that he brought shame and sorrow upon him and his posterity. So today if people will build their homes in harmony with the will of the Lord and conduct those homes in harmony with His will, they will have happy homes. But those who despise the regulations and limitations that God has placed about the home, or who simply have no interest in the Lord's will concerning the home, will most certainly come to grief. Homes are not built according to the Lord's pattern by accident. Hence, everyone should acquaint himself, through a study of the Bible, with God's laws concerning building and maintaining a Christian home.

## **II. A COMMENTARY ON GENESIS 2:8-17**

### **1. Abundant Provisions for Man (Gen. 2:8,9)**

*Jehovah God planted a garden eastward, in Eden.* There are two things suggested with reference to the provisions which God made for man. First, there were those things which appealed to the outward man. The word garden itself indicates a place of beauty, and the word Eden signifies pleasure or delight. "We may well suppose this garden to have been the most accomplished place the sun ever saw; when the all-sufficient God Himself designed it to be the present happiness of His creature, man,

in innocency and the type and figure of the happiness of the chosen remnant in glory.” (Matthew Henry.)

Second, there were those things that appealed to the inward man. In this home God was a frequent visitor. Adam and Eve communed with their maker until sin rendered them unfit. It is still true that God provides the necessities of life and that He is a frequent visitor in the homes of His people. Everyone should seek to build a home in which the Lord may be a visitor. But to do this, people must know and follow His will in the building of their homes.

*Every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food.* “In the peace of man’s pristine abode respect was had to ornamentation as well as utility. Every specie of vegetation that could minister to his corporeal necessities was provided. Flowers, trees, and shrubs regaled his senses with their fragrance, pleased his eye, with their exquisite forms and enchanting colors, and gratified his palate with their luscious fruits. Hence the garden of the Lord became the highest ideal of earthly excellence.” (Pulpit Commentary.)

*The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.* What kind of trees are here referred to we do not know, and it would be folly to speculate. The fruit of the tree of life must, however, have had some life-perpetuating qualities. When man had sinned, God drove him out of the garden lest he should put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever. (Gen. 3:22.) If the fruit of this tree had such qualities, it is obvious that we have no such fruit tree now. It is commonly suggested that the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was an apple. It may or it may not have been. Nothing is indicated with reference to the qualities of that fruit as is indicated with reference to the fruit of the tree of life. It was the action of eating the fruit in disobedience to God which brought a knowledge of sin to our first parents. Some test of man’s obedience had to be made. If it had been impossible for man to sin it would not have been possible for him to do right. Hence some positive law requiring man to do something or to refrain from doing something had to be given. In no other way could man manifest his submission to God.

## **2. Location of the Garden (Gen. 2:10-14)**

*A river went out of Eden.* Of the location of the garden of Eden there is less exact knowledge and more wild speculation than on nearly any other subject. Adam Clarke lists more than a dozen different locations which have been suggested by various authors. Such places as the third heaven, the moon, the middle regions of the air, the North Pole, and the South Pole, to mention a few of the wildest guesses, have been suggested. But more conservative guesses locate the garden somewhere between the Black Sea and the Persian Gulf along the courses of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.

*And became four heads.* This river which went out of Eden is said to have divided into four. The names of these four heads or streams are given. The name of the first is Pishon, which borders on the land of Havilah. But no one knows for sure where the land of Havilah is and hence cannot be certain to what river the name Pishon refers. The most conservative scholars seem to think this river is one now known as Phasis, which empties into the Black Sea.

*The name of the second river is Gihon.* This is supposed to be the Araxes which empties into the Caspian Sea. Since it is said that this river compasses the whole land of Cush, and since the King James Version has the word Ethiopia instead of Cush, some have thought the Nile River was intended.

But there is good reason for assigning the term to a land nearer the general locality of the three rivers fairly well identified.

*The name of the third is Hiddekel.* This river is said to go in front of Assyria and is admitted by all to refer to the Tigris.

*The fourth river is the Euphrates.* If we had no other rivers mentioned we would be compelled to locate the garden somewhere along the course of this river. There are four rivers which rise in the same general vicinity just south of the eastern extremity of the Black Sea, and some believe this to be the location of the garden. However, others think the garden to be located farther south where the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers come closest together. In this vicinity there are a number of streams connecting the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers, and some of these branches are long enough to be given separate names. On some maps two of these rivers are given the names Gihon and Pishon. The land of Cush and the land of Havilah are by some scholars located in this vicinity. But after all, the location of the garden is of minor importance compared with the events which transpired there.

### **3. Restrictions Placed on Man (Gen. 2:15-17)**

*To dress and to keep it.* There are many who think that work is a part of the curse which came on man as a consequence of his sin. But man had the duty of cultivating the garden of Eden before his transgression. Hence work is not a curse. Work is good for man first, for his health. Man enjoys his best health when he is actively engaged in physical labor. Those who work in offices will readily agree with this statement. Next, work is good for the mind of man. Work speeds up the circulation of blood and keeps the mind physically healthy. But more important still, work furnishes the mind with activity and keeps it free from corruption. The old statement, "An idle mind is the devil's workshop" is true, A mind which is not used in honorable and constructive activities will most likely be filled with evil.

*Jehovah God commanded man.* Without looking at this specific command it is good to take a general view of this statement. First, God has a right to command man since God is the Creator of man. Those who despise the commandments of God, who refuse to be submissive to any higher power, should reflect upon their relationship to God. It ill becomes the creature to despise his Creator--more so than for a child to despise his parents. Next, God has a right to command man because He preserves the life of man. If God were to withdraw His preserving or unholding powers from man he would immediately cease to exist. It is a mark of ingratitude for a man to refuse to obey Him on whom his life depends. We despise the man who hates the government which guarantees him life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. How much more despicable is that man who refuses to be submissive to his Creator and Preserver?

*Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat.* God gave man dominion over the earth and all the creatures connected with it. But man needed to be reminded that he was only a creature, and as such had to be obedient unto his Lord. Hence, some duty had to be imposed; some restriction placed upon his activities. Without this positive commandment no test could be made of his loyalty unto his Lord. It is not in ourselves to question the wisdom of placing man on probation to see whether or not he would prove loyal and obedient. For good and wise reasons God saw fit to do so, and the creature is out of place who questions God's wisdom in this matter. How long man lived in obedience to God's law we have no way of knowing. But it seems that it was not a long time. Another matter has been suggested which is worthy of our thought. That man was placed in the garden

on probation is obvious. How long his term of probation was to be cannot be known; or whether there was any time limit set it is impossible to know. Some have gone so far as to say that if man had lived out his time of probation without sin he would have been confirmed forever in righteousness. Here again it is foolish to speculate. Another suggestion of interest in this connection is that the world was created in the light of what man would actually become. The garden of Eden was prepared for the home of the sinless man. But the world was made as the home of the sinful man. This suggests the foreknowledge of God and His wisdom in the preparation of things in the light of that foreknowledge.

*In the day you eat you shall surely die.* Critics of the Bible have said that the penalty was not inflicted since Adam did not die that day. But from one point of view Adam died that day. He died spiritually; he was separated from God. He was driven from the garden where he had communion with God into the world where he was denied this intimate fellowship. Being separated from God, he was dead. Next, man was sentenced to die that day, but in the wisdom and mercy of God the sentence was deferred. If man had died physically that day, God would either have had to abandon His project or started anew. Since God's works are perfect, He could not have made a better man, so it would have been unwise to destroy Adam and start again. We should notice next the fearful consequences of sin. First, there was separation from God. Sin makes one unfit for communion with God. Sin disinclines one for communion with God. Next, man was rendered mortal by sin. Disease and all its train of misery came as a result of sin. Death came not only upon Adam, but upon all his posterity as a consequence of sin. Paul says all die in Adam. (1 Cor. 15:22.) Again, *"Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned."* (Rom. 5:12.) In this passage we are informed as to the origin of sin, and next, as to the origin of death. We are also told that all die because all sinned. It is one thing to sin personally and another to sin representatively. In Adam, the federal head of the race, all mankind sinned representatively. Representative sin does not carry with it guilt, but it does carry consequences. We bear the consequences of Adam's sin because of our relation to him as the head of the race. We do not bear the guilt of his sin because we were not personally involved in it.

### III. SOME APPLICATIONS

1. The goodness of God has been abundantly manifested from the very beginning of the human race. The home which He gave our first parents is evidence of His goodness. The fact that we receive blessings beyond number is proof of His continued goodness to the human race.
2. The sin of Adam was an indication of a lack of appreciation of the goodness of God. Our sins today are proof of the same in us. Paul uses the mercy of God (Rom. 12:1) to cause us to give our bodies as living sacrifices to God. In another place he says the goodness of God leads man to repent. (Rom. 2:4.) The supreme manifestation of His goodness is the central fact and the drawing power of the gospel of Christ.
3. Rulers have always found it difficult to obey; those who exercise dominion find it difficult to be submissive. As ruler over the lower creation, Adam found it difficult to live in submission to His ruler. Those in high places, both in the church and the state, would do well to remember Adam's mistake and the misery that followed as a consequence.

## QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 3

### MAN'S FIRST HOME

1. Why should every one have an interest in man's first home? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Why was the first home monogamous? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. When was polygamy introduced and by whom? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What is said to be a safe moral barometer of the nation? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What indications do you see of the moral decline of a nation? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What three institutions have been ordained by God? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Why should we respect God's law concerning the home? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What does David say of children in the home? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Name two divisions of God's laws concerning the home. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What is the nature of a union between man and wife which is contrary to the law of God? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. What home relationships does the gospel regulate? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. What did God determine with respect to the first home? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. Was the home to be perpetuated by a miracle or by natural law? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. Make an application of this principle to the perpetuation of the church. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
15. What was there about the first home to appeal to the inward man? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
16. What was there about the first home that appealed to the outward man? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

17. What did the Lord provide to please the sight and taste of man? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
18. Name two particular trees in the garden? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
19. Did Adam and Eve have access to the tree of life while they were in the garden? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
20. What brought a knowledge of sin to our first parents? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
21. Why was a positive prohibition necessary? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
22. Along what rivers may we safely locate the garden? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
23. Name the four rivers mentioned and give their present locations. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
24. Is work a part of the curse brought upon man by sin? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
25. Why is work good for man's health? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
26. Why is work good for man's mind? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
27. Why was man forbidden to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
28. For what kind of man was the garden of Eden prepared? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
29. For what kind of man was the world prepared? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
30. Did man die the day that he sinned? If so what kind of death? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
31. Discuss the mercy and the wisdom of God in deferring the physical death of man. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
32. Discuss the fearful consequences of sin. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
33. Discuss the difference between personal and representative sin. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON NUMBER 4

# MAN'S FIRST HELP MEET

Gen. 2:18-25; 1 Cor. 11:8,9

### INTRODUCTION

Our lesson today deals with woman as man's helper. She is said to be a help meet, not a helpmate. Though she is man's mate, this passage represents her to be meet, that is fit or suitable, for man, a help which corresponded to his every physical and social need. There are several words used in the Bible to describe a woman in this capacity. Solomon says, "*A worthy woman is the crown of her husband; but she that makes ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.*" (Prov. 12:4.) The word worthy here is the same word found in Proverbs 31 where Solomon described at length the "*worthy woman.*" The expression means one of power either in mind or body, or both. The same expression is used with reference to Ruth. (Ruth 3:11.) Such a woman is said to be the crown of her husband. This means that she is the most valuable possession a man has, the cause of his greatest happiness and honor. "Such a woman is not simply loving and modest and loyal, but is a crown to her husband; is an honor to him, adores and beautifies his life, making, as it were, a joyous festival (Pulpit Commentary.)"

Again Solomon says, "*Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers; but a prudent wife is from Jehovah.*" (Prov. 19:14.) A prudent woman is one able to regulate and discipline herself through the exercise of reason; one who is skilled in the management of her affairs for practical ends; one who is cautious, circumspect, and discreet in the conduct of her affairs. Such a one Solomon says is a gift from Jehovah. This is true because a woman of such qualities does not just happen. She is the product not of nature, but of gospel teaching.

The third characteristic of man's help meet is graciousness. "*A gracious woman obtains honor.*" (Prov. 11:16.) A gracious person is one who is full of grace or charm; one who is attractive and pleasing in her manners; one who is courteous, kindly, affable, and benevolent. If we put these three characteristics together, we can see why such woman would be a help meet or worthy, of man. In fact, a man who is not Christian in every sense of the term would not be worthy of such a helper. Only when a man measures up to the Christian standard is he worthy of such a helper and only when a woman's steps are ordered of the Lord is she a help meet for man.

### I. KEY SCRIPTURE

*"For Adam was formed first, then Eve."* (1 Tim 2:13)

**1. Man's Headship Over Woman Is Based on Priority in Creation.** Our key scripture is given by Paul as a reason why woman is not to exercise dominion over the man. While Paul was regulating the conduct of worship it is still a fact that man is head of the home for the same reason that he is to be in charge of the public worship of the church. If God had intended for woman to exercise dominion over the man, He would have made woman first instead of man. We may not be able to see the strength of this argument, but the fact that the Holy Spirit directed Paul to give this as a reason for the headship of man should cause us to accept it whether we are convinced by his argument or not. Man's

headship is demonstrated in that men are the shepherds or overseers of the church. The Holy Spirit does not allow women to rule in the church. Again, it is seen in the fact that the public proclamation of the gospel is entrusted to men. Women may assist in the program of teaching, as long as she is not usurping authority over the man, but they may not be preachers of the gospel. (1 Cor. 14:34ff.)

**2. The Headship of Man Is Based on the Fact That Woman Was Taken Out of Man.** She not only was created second to man, but she was made of a portion of man's body. Again we have the authority of Paul for saying that woman is of the man and because of this she should recognize him as her head. (1 Cor. 11:3,10) Here again we may not be able to see why the fact that woman was made from the rib of man should cause her to be subject to the authority of man, but whether we see clearly or not, we can accept it by faith. This inferiority is not mental or moral, but rather applied to her station in life. Woman is said to be the weaker vessel. (1 Pet. 3:7.) But surely no one thinks she is inferior to man either mentally, morally, or socially. She is weaker physically and she is second in authority in the home, and so may be said in these ways to be inferior to man.

**3. Woman Is to Recognize the Headship of Man by Being His Helper Rather Than a Dictator.** God saw that it was not good for man to be alone, so He gave him woman as a helper. Hence woman's position as helper is ordained of God. When she leaves this realm and begins to give orders, she is out of her God-given place. Another reason why woman should recognize her place as helper is the fact that she was first in the transgression. (1 Tim. 2:14.) When she presumed to take the lead she involved herself and her posterity in the fearful consequences of sin. She ought, therefore, to keep within the sphere which God has given her. We have no proof that Adam would not have fallen to the tempter, but it is clearly implied that Satan felt that woman was an easier victim and hence made his approach to the human family through her. Some women have thought there was unfair discrimination in the arrangement revealed by the apostles. But if the woman fulfills her mission in her place, she will be rewarded as much as the man who does the work God gave him to do. She might also take consolation from the fact that she does not have certain heavy responsibilities which go with the headship of the home and the church. It will be better for all of us, both men and women, to accept God's arrangement as a matter of the highest wisdom and be pleased to do His will in all these matters and leave the results and the rewards with him.

## **II. A COMMENTARY ON GENESIS 2:18-25; 1 CORINTHIANS 11:8,9**

### **1. God's Concern for Man (Gen. 1:18-20)**

*It is not good that the man should be alone.* Some critics profess to see a contradiction between this statement and that made in the first chapter when God looked upon His creation, including man, and said it was very good. Man as a creature was good. But that it was not well for this good creature to dwell alone our text affirms. (1) It was not good socially for man to be alone. All other creatures were made male and female. Only man stood alone. Even the Godhead has its social aspect. The Father was never alone even before the creation of angels, and has as the object of His love His son. But man before the creation of woman was the loneliest creature in the universe. His social inclinations and desires must be satisfied if he is to be happy. (2) It was not good for man to be alone if the race was to be propagated. (3) It was not possible for God to be glorified in man if he existed alone as He would be glorified in the multiplication of man. Though sin might never have entered the world, man could never have glorified God as He is now glorified through the scheme of redemption. Had Adam remained alone Jesus Christ would never have manifested the Father on earth, nor would heaven ever

have resounded with the shouts of angels over the redemption and glorification of man through the redeeming love of God.

*Out of the ground.* Moses says that all the beasts and birds were made from the ground. Man himself was made of the dust of the earth, but when a help meet for man was to be made, a purer, higher grade of substance was used. This may or may not be an indication of woman's higher, finer sense of morals than is usually found in man.

*Man gave names to all cattle, birds, and beasts.* God brought one of every specie of creation before Adam and whatever Adam called that creature was made the name thereof. This is an indication of the mental ability of Adam. Possibly there is not a university professor who can give the correct name of anything like all of the different species in existence today. So Adam was not only created full grown physically, but very mature mentally.

*There was not found a help meet for man.* Of all the creatures brought before Adam, there was not one his equal. There was not one fit for him from a mental and social point of view. In the creation of Adam he was given a spiritual nature which no other creature received. Hence they fail to measure up to his requirements spiritually and intellectually. Man's need of intellectual and spiritual companionship demanded a partner of equal powers to satisfy man's need. And in man's need and woman's power to satisfy that need is laid the foundation for the divine institution of marriage. And today when a man selects a woman who is not near his equal in these respects, his marriage will be unhappy and will likely fail. And it is just as true when a woman selects a man who is far her inferior intellectually and spiritually. It is as necessary for people today to select partners which are meet for them as it was in the day of creation for God to give Adam a helper who was meet for him.

## **2. God's Provision for Man (Gen. 2:21-25)**

*He took one of his ribs.* Moses said that God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam. This was not the sleep of exhaustion from work, nor was it ordinary sleep, but a supernatural sleep. Had it not been supernatural, the operation which followed would surely have wakened him. It is idle to speculate on whether Adam was created with an extra rib; whether he went through life with one less than the average man, or whether one grew back in the place of the one taken. But we should not go so far as the modernist who makes this merely a dream of Adam. If God saw fit to use dust from which to begin His creation of Adam, it is not unreasonable that He should use some tangible material from which to create Eve. Matthew Henry observes that woman was taken "not out of his head to top (command) him, not out of his feet to be trampled on by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected and near his heart to be beloved." Others see in this the likeness of Christ and the church. As the rib was taken from Adam's side to make the woman so the blood was shed from the side of our Lord to purchase the church which is His bride. There is a similarity here, but perhaps the former is not prophetic of the latter.

*This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.* There is a relationship in this union more intimate than would have been possible if woman had been created from dust as was Adam. On the order of creation and the source of the material from which woman was made, depend some very important doctrines. Woman's subordination to man and her subjection to his authority both in the home and in the church are founded upon this.

*She shall be called woman.* The word woman is the feminine form of the word for man. This name was given to her because she was taken out of man. Again we see implied man's authority over woman in the fact that he gave her this name. His dominion over the animal creation gave him the right to give them their names. Hence it is implied that he has authority over the woman because he gave her this name.

*A man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife.* Here is the record of the founding of the institution of marriage. That this statement is to be given a general application is obvious from the fact that it was not strictly true of Adam. Adam certainly did not leave his father and mother to cleave unto Eve. A practical suggestion is in order here. It is good for a man to leave his parents and for the woman to leave her parents and build their home on their own. A young man who is still tied to his mother's apron will not make a very good husband. A young woman who has to run to mother before she can make up her mind about what she ought to do in the home will never make a very good wife. And a couple who has not the courage to get out on their own have little hope of making a very great success.

*They shall be one flesh.* Jesus referred to this when teaching on the subject of divorce and remarriage (Matt. 19:1-9), and He added this conclusion, "so that they are no more two, but one flesh." Our respect for the Lord's teaching on this subject is important because (1) the safety of the family and society in general depend upon it. The institution of marriage is in grave danger of being destroyed on account of a disregard for the teaching of God on this point. (2) The purity of the church is involved in this matter. When people divorce for trivial causes and remarry, it is almost impossible, certainly improbable, that they will cease to live in that adulterous union. They seek to be accepted in the church and expect to be used in the public functions of the church; If this condition continues, the moral standards of the church will be so low that the world will have little respect for it.

*They were not ashamed.* This statement is made as a comment concerning the nakedness of Adam and Eve. But when sin entered the world, God clothed them both. As long as sin is in the world, modest clothing is imperative. Modesty and nudeness do not keep company. Purity and nudeness do not keep company. Those who think they can disregard God's will in this matter will do well to remember that man has never proved smarter than God on any question.

### **3. Relation of Man and Woman. (1 Cor. 11:8, 9)**

*Man is not of the woman.* In the verses preceding our text, Paul teaches that the head of the woman is the man. As Christ is the head of the man he lays down an ascending order going from woman to man to Christ and to God. God is the head of Christ, Christ is the head of man and man is the head of woman. On this doctrine Paul bases the subjection of woman to man and the sign of this which she is to wear on her head. In our text Paul obviously refers to the creation. His statement is that man was not taken out of woman, that is, made from the rib of woman, but that the woman was taken out of man, being made from his rib. This he uses as an argument to prove that man is the head of the woman and that the woman is to be in subjection to man

*Neither was the man created for the woman.* This is the second argument used by Paul to prove that woman should be in subjection to the man. The woman was created for the man. "The woman was made for the comfort and happiness of the man. Not to be a slave, but to be a helpmeet; not to be the minister of his pleasures, but to be his aid and comforter in life; not to be regarded as of inferior nature

and rank, but to be his friend, to divide his sorrows, and to multiply and extend his joys; yet still to be in a station subordinate to him ... she was created to aid him in his duties, to comfort him in his afflictions, to partake with him in his pleasures. Her rank is therefore honorable, though it is subordinate.” (Albert Barnes.)

### **III. SOME APPLICATIONS**

1. The father’s place in a home is a challenge to any man regardless of how capable he may be. As the head, protector, provider, and example, he has grave responsibilities, and woe to that man who either refuses to accept these responsibilities or treats them lightly.

2. Woman’s place in the home as a companion to her husband and mother to his children involves her in her greatest duties and brings her the greatest rewards of this life.

3. The child’s place in the home is one of dependence and co-operation. Obedience and appreciation should be paramount characteristics of every Christian boy and girl.

## QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 4

### MAN'S FIRST HELP MEET

1. What is the difference between help meet and a help mate? \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. Discuss the word worthy as applied to woman. \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. What is a prudent wife, and from whom is she said to come? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What is the third characteristic of man's help meet? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the meaning of the word gracious as applied to a wife? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. On what is Man's headship over woman based? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Does man's headship extend to all phases of life? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. How does this affect the work of men and women in the church? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Give the second reason for man's headship over woman. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. In what ways is woman the weaker vessel? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. How should a woman recognize the headship of man? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. In what did the woman involve the world when she first took the lead? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. Do we have an indication that Satan thought woman the weaker vessel? \_\_\_\_\_  
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14. Is this arrangement of authority unfair to woman? \_\_\_\_\_  
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15. Name and discuss three reasons why it is not good for man to be alone. \_\_\_\_\_

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16. What indicates the extent of Adam's store of information? \_\_\_\_\_

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17. Why could Adam not find a help meet for him in the lower creation? \_\_\_\_\_

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18. In what is laid the foundation for the divine institution of marriage? \_\_\_\_\_

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19. In what kind of sleep did God place Adam? \_\_\_\_\_

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20. What is the significance of woman being created from the rib of man rather than any other bone? \_\_\_\_\_

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21. What is there in Adam's experience which is similar to the experience of Christ in the purchase of the church? \_\_\_\_\_

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22. What doctrine does Paul base on the order of creation of Adam and Eve? \_\_\_\_\_

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23. What is said of young people leaving their parents to form a family? \_\_\_\_\_

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24. In what sense is the safety of the family and society endangered today? \_\_\_\_\_

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25. How is the purity of the church involved in this matter? \_\_\_\_\_

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26. How does Paul prove that man is the head of woman? \_\_\_\_\_

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27. Give the second argument Paul makes to prove that woman should be in subjection to man? \_\_\_\_\_

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## LESSON NUMBER 5

# MAN'S FIRST SIN

Gen. 3:1-8, 16-18, 24.

### INTRODUCTION

Our lesson this week deals with a subject of universal interest. Paul says *“all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God”* (Rom. 3:23). John says *“if we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and the truth is not in us”* (1 John 1:10). Since the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23), and the soul that sins shall die (Ezek. 18:20), and the death is described as a lake of fire and brimstone (Rev. 21:8), each individual should be supremely interested to know what sin is, how it may be overcome in his life, and how to be saved from the penalty thereof. John gives the following definition of sin: *“Every one that does sin does also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.”* (1 John 3:4.) A lawless character is one who lives as he pleases regardless of what the law says. Those who live as they please regardless of the law of the Lord are religious criminals. Again John says, *“All unrighteousness is sin.”* (1 John 5:17.) The prefix “un” denotes a lack of the quality signified in the word to which it is attached. The word unhappy means a lack of happiness; unmerciful denotes a lack of mercy. So unrighteous denotes the lack of the quality of righteousness. Any word or deed which is lacking in the quality of righteousness is sin. Since David says that the commandments of God are righteousness (Psalm 119:172), we conclude that anything contrary to the commandments of God is unrighteous and therefore sinful. James teaches us that we sin if we fail to do that which we know to be good (James 4:17.) And Paul teaches that whatever is not of faith is sin. (Rom. 14:23.)

For convenience sins may be classified as (1) sins of ignorance; (2) sins of weakness; (3) sins of rebellion. By sins of ignorance we mean doing things wrong which are not known to us to be wrong and failing to do right for a lack of knowledge. God did not excuse sins of ignorance under the law (Lev. 5:17-19), nor does he excuse them now (1 Tim. 1:13). By sins of weakness we mean going contrary to God's will through the influence of others, or by giving way to our own desires. By sins of rebellion we mean those sins done not only in spite of our knowledge, but with an utter unconcern for God's will. (Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-31.) Space will permit only the suggestion of a further classification as follows: (1) unscriptural in morals; (2) unscriptural in doctrine; (3) unscriptural in religious practices.

### I. KEY SCRIPTURE

*“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin.”* (Rom 5:12).

**1. Entrance of Sin.** Our key scripture is a part of one of the most difficult passages in all the Bible. But there are some easy, practical lessons suggested in it. The first has to do with the entrance of sin into the world. Paul takes it for granted that his readers know how sin entered into the world, so he only makes reference to it to teach another lesson. He says sin entered through one man and that man was Adam. There are two things we should notice about this sin of Adam. First, it was an act. God made a law restraining or limiting Adam's activities. Satan tempted man to transgress that law. He

succeeded in inducing man to violate God's law. This act of man was a sin. That sin is the thing to which Paul refers when he said, "*Through one man sin entered into the world.*" Second, we do not inherit sin. Since sin is an act in violation of God's law, it is not of such nature as can be inherited. Prominent denominations include in their creeds the idea that man has inherited the sin of Adam. One might as well think he can inherit the sin of stealing chickens from his grandfather as to think he can inherit the sin of Adam.

**2. Death the Penalty for Sin.** Paul not only tells us how sin entered the world, but he also tells us how death came to be in the world. Sin is the act of Adam; and death is the penalty for his sin. The word death here means nothing more nor less than physical death. In verse 14 Paul says, "*Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression.*" (Rom. 5:14.) This verse being immediately after our text, the word death used in it is obviously the same as the word death in our text. The death that reigned from Adam until Moses can be nothing more or less than physical death. Hence, the word death in our text can mean no more than that. Next, we should notice that death is here used as the penalty for sin and not the effect of sin. The effect of robbery is one thing and the penalty prescribed by law is quite a different thing. So we need not look upon the presence of death in the world as the effect of one transgression, but as the penalty which in the wisdom of God, Adam and his posterity must suffer. Next, we, as the posterity of Adam, suffer the penalty of his sin. Paul continues in the same verse with our text saying, "*So death passed unto all men, for that all sinned.*" Since all sinned, all must suffer the penalty. But the question naturally arises, how can Paul truthfully say all sinned? The answer is all Adam's posterity sinned in him as their federal head. Adam was the federal head and representative of all humanity. In him all humanity sinned. This principle is illustrated in Paul's treatment of Levi paying tithes to Melchizedek. (Heb. 7:4-10.) Levi did not pay tithes personally, but he did pay tithes representatively. Abraham was the federal head and representative of all Jews, including Levi. Hence, through Abraham Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek. So Adam was the federal head and representative of all humanity and in his disobedience all humanity sinned. We do not inherit the guilt of Adam's sin, but we do fall heir to the penalty of Adam's sin on account of our relationship to him. This is Paul's way of accounting for the presence of sin in the world and for the fact that death reigns over all. Having laid this groundwork, he goes on to the conclusion that by the obedience of one man, Jesus Christ, humanity is to be redeemed from the death which came upon all men through Adam's disobedience.

## **II. A COMMENTARY ON GENESIS 3:1-8, 16-18, 24**

### **1. The Tempter and His Devices (Gen. 3:1-5)**

*The serpent was more subtle than any beast.* There has been much speculation as to the serpent in this temptation. Adam Clarke argues that the creature used was an ape for the following reasons: (1) he stood at the head of inferior animals for wisdom and understanding; (2) he walked erect; (3) he had the power of speech; (4) he had the gift of reason, and (5) these things were common to this creature since Eve showed no surprise when this creature approached her. But since the identity of the creature is not of primary importance, we leave the subject with this observation that Satan made use of one of God's creatures to bring about the downfall of another.

*Has God said?* Satan started his temptation by raising a question in the mind of Eve. It should be noticed at the same time that Satan approached Eve instead of Adam. This was a part of the subtlety of Satan. It is also worthy of mention that Satan tempted Eve when she was alone. Had she been with

Adam, she no doubt through his help would not have fallen. In the next place, it seems that Satan waited until he found her near the forbidden tree. In this question which Satan raised, there is an implication of unfair treatment. The implication is “Surely God has not placed such an unfair restriction.” One of the quickest ways to plant doubt and dissatisfaction in the mind of a person is to cause that one to think some imposition has been worked on him.

*And the woman said to the serpent.* From what Eve said we know that she had a clear understanding of her duty. She said she was at liberty to eat of any of the trees of the garden except the one which grew in the midst of the garden. It is equally clear that she understood the penalty for violation of the law. Eve’s first mistake was made in discussing the matter. Her safety lay in refusing to give the matter any consideration. Whether we shall do or not do what God commanded, or whether we shall refrain from, or not refrain from, what God has forbidden is not a matter of study or reason. The person who begins to reason about such things will, like Eve, soon be found going contrary to God’s will. Man’s safety lies in complete submission to the will of the Lord without any argument. This is not blind, servile subjection, it is rather complete surrender in the belief that whatever the Lord wills is best for us. The gift of His Son to die for us while we were yet His enemies is sufficient proof that His supreme interest is in our welfare. We ought therefore to believe that all His restrictions and limitations of our activities are for our good.

*And the serpent said to the woman.* That which follows is the first recorded lie in the Bible. Satan told the woman that she would not die. Eve should have known this statement to be false, for it flatly contradicted God’s statement. Satan knew that it was false because in his experience he had learned that those who disobey God are separated from him. In the next place, this was a malignant falsehood, told for the purpose of bringing about the ruin of humanity.

*Then your eyes shall be opened.* This suggests that God was withholding something good from Eve. Satan promised that she would be as God, knowing good and evil. This suggests that she would be on equality with God, at least so far as her knowledge was concerned. The opening of her eyes did not refer to physical sight but to an increase of intellectual powers. And to know good and evil suggests an experimental knowledge. Next, Satan promises speedy blessings for he said, “*In the day you eat thereof*” these blessings will come. Satan represented God as knowing these things but withholding them from Eve. He not only excited her curiosity, but gave her the impression that God was being unfair in withholding something good from her.

## **2. Transgression and Its Fruit (Gen. 3:6-8)**

*When the woman saw that the tree was good.* This suggests that Eve was convinced by the arguments of Satan. Satan attempted to prove three things. First, that the fruit was good for food. In this he made an appeal to her physical senses. John says, “*all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*” (1 John 2:16.) The lust of the flesh is the avenue through which Satan appeals to Eve by convincing her that the fruit was good for food; it would satisfy the desire of the flesh. Satan used the same tactics on Jesus when he suggested that the stones be turned into bread. Second, Satan appealed to Eve’s sense of beauty by convincing her that the fruit of this forbidden tree was “*a delight to the eyes.*” This in the language of John is the “*lust of the eyes.*” In the temptation of Jesus, Satan showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them and promised to give them to Him in exchange for His worship. Third, Satan appealed to Eve’s desire to be as wise as God. He told her that she would be as God, knowing

good and evil and then arguing that the fruit of this tree was all that was necessary to make her as wise as God. John speaks of this as the “*pride of life*.” In the temptation of Jesus Satan suggested that He cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple to gain the praise and attention of the people. Since John says that these are all there is in the world, we conclude that he means that these are all the avenues of approach which the devil has to mankind, and since he used these same three approaches on Eve and Jesus, we may be sure that he has no other avenues of approach.

*She took of the fruit thereof.* Notice the order of progress in this temptation. (1) She saw. These words indicate that she looked upon the fruit, that she gave consideration to the arguments made in favor of eating it, and that she reached a conclusion. (2) She took. The deed follows consideration. Had she refused to give favorable consideration to the thought, she would not have been guilty of the deed. (3) She gave also to her husband. Sin is not content with one victory. It likes to spread; it lives by spreading and multiplying. Sin is contagious. It affects those with whom we are associated, and those with whom we are most closely associated are the first to be affected by it.

*The eyes of them both were opened.* This does not refer to their physical eyes but to their understanding and their conscience. They became conscious of sin and of the fact that they had lost their likeness and image of God.

*They sewed fig leaves together.* This was man’s effort to cover his nakedness, the shame of which his sin had made him conscious. But as usual, man’s effort is not adequate, so God provided a better covering. (Gen. 3:21.)

*Hid themselves from the presence of Jehovah.* Prior to this time God came into the garden to commune with man. Man was neither afraid nor ashamed. But when sin came, man was both afraid and ashamed to come into the presence of God. Sin makes one unhappy in the presence of God. We may learn the folly of man (1) by giving consideration to a suggestion contrary to the will of God; (2) in trying to provide for ourselves a covering for sin. Man’s self-righteousness is as inadequate as the fig leaf aprons made by Adam and Eve. (3) Man’s folly is seen in trying to hide from God. We can no more hide our sins or escape the guilt and punishment of our sins than Adam and Eve could hide behind a bush so God could not find them. We think of them as being childish to try to hide, but they were no more so than the person who thinks he can hide his sins from God.

### **3. Sentence Pronounced (Gen. 3:16-18,24)**

*Unto the woman He said.* (1) The first consequence of Eve’s sin was the multiplication of pain in childbearing. God said, “*I will greatly multiply your pain and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children.*” The physical pain connected with childbearing may be all that is intended in this passage, but it is probable that the sorrows incident to the rearing of children are included. Certainly if sin had never entered the world, the sorrows connected with the rearing of children would never have been known. Unruly children are a source of unending sorrow to a mother who has any regard for their welfare. (2) Woman was placed in a state of subjection to man on account of her sin. God said, “*Your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you.*” Paul mentions woman’s sin as a reason for her subjection to man. (1 Tim. 2:11-15). “This sentence amounts only to that command. Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; but sin has made that duty a punishment, which otherwise would not have been. If man had not sinned, had always have ruled with wisdom and love; and had not woman sinned, she would always have obeyed with humility and meekness, and then

the dominion had been no grievance: but our own sin and folly make our yoke heavy; therefore the subjection ought never to be complained of though harsh; but sin must be complained of, they made it so. Wives who do not only despise and disobey their husbands, but domineer over them, do not consider that they not only violate a divine law, but thwart a divine sentence.” (Matthew Henry.)

*Because you have hearkened to the voice of your wife.* From this we learn that Satan did not make a direct approach to Adam. Some have conjectured that Adam reasoning about the matter decided he had rather be outside the garden with his wife than to remain in the garden without her. At any rate Paul says Adam was not beguiled as was Eve. (1 Tim. 2:14.)

*Cursed is the ground for your, sake.* The ground was cursed to that extent: (1) Extra toil, sometimes fruitless toil, was necessary on the part of man to raise crops. (2) The curse upon the ground resulted in thorns and thistles growing to distress man. These thorns and thistles were given the strength to choke that growth which was for man’s food. Hence, man must spend his time and his energy in cultivating the soil to keep the thorns and thistles from making the ground fruitless. Such toil is to continue all the days of the life of man. This suggests that man will never be free from this struggle for food. The next verse suggests that man’s food is to be earned by the sweat of his face. This suggests that so persistent and abundant is the growth of thorns and thistles that man must labor excessively to succeed.

*So He drove out the man.* This concludes the immediate consequences of sin. Man was driven out of the garden and a flaming sword was placed at the gate to keep man away from the tree of life. Man’s spiritual death had been accomplished and now his physical death comes ever and ever nearer.

### **III. SOME APPLICATIONS**

1. The primary cause of sin is unbelief. Satan’s first effort was to create doubt in the mind of Eve. The primary cause of salvation is faith in God. God’s first effort is to cause man to believe in Him and in His Son.

2. In departing from God we see (1) unbelief; (2) disobedience; (3) guilt; (4) exile from God; and (5) death. Man’s return to God is characterized by (1) belief; (2) obedience; (3) forgiveness; (4) union with Lord; and (5) everlasting life. Disbelief alone was not sufficient to separate Adam from God. Not until his disbelief manifested itself in disobedience was he separated from God. So, belief alone is not sufficient to bring man into union with God. Not until his belief is manifested in his obedience to God can he expect to be united with God and enjoy everlasting life.

## QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 5

### MAN'S FIRST SIN

1. Give and discuss several reasons why each person should be interested in the subject of sin? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What is the definition of sin? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Name and define three classifications of sin. \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Name and discuss a second classification of sin? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Through whom does Paul say sin entered the world? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Can you prove that sin is an act on the part of man? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Can you prove that we do not inherit sin? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Distinguish between the penalty for sin and the effect of sin. \_\_\_\_\_

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9. Give proof that we suffer the penalty of Adam's sin. \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Distinguish between personal and representative actions. \_\_\_\_\_

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11. What do you know about the serpent that appealed to Eve? \_\_\_\_\_

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12. How did Satan start the temptation? \_\_\_\_\_

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13. In what ways did Satan take advantage of Eve? \_\_\_\_\_

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14. Did Eve have a clear understanding of her duty? \_\_\_\_\_

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15. In what did Eve's first mistake consist? \_\_\_\_\_

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16. In what does man's safety lie in time of temptation? \_\_\_\_\_

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17. What is the first recorded lie in the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_

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18. What did Satan suggest with reference to Eve's relation to God? \_\_\_\_\_

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19. What blessings did Satan promise? \_\_\_\_\_

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20. What three things did Satan attempt to prove to Eve? \_\_\_\_\_

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21. Point out these same three things with regard to the temptation of Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

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22. What is the order of progress in this temptation? \_\_\_\_\_

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23. What was the first result of their sin? \_\_\_\_\_

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24. What efforts did Adam and Eve make to remedy their situation? \_\_\_\_\_

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25. In what three ways do we learn the folly of man in this incident? \_\_\_\_\_

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26. In what two ways did Eve suffer? \_\_\_\_\_

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27. What sentence was imposed upon man? \_\_\_\_\_

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28. How was the serpent punished? \_\_\_\_\_

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## LESSON NUMBER 6

# CAIN AND ABEL

Gen. 4:1-12

### INTRODUCTION

Our lesson this week has to do with the first persons born into this world. The book of Genesis deals with the beginning of things. The word Genesis means beginnings. Hence we are told of the beginning of the world about us, the beginning of the human race, and the beginning of sin. It is therefore logical that we should be told of the character and activities of the first people born into the world. The names of these first two boys are significant. The word Cain signifies acquisition or possession. Some think the word Lord or Jehovah is a part of the name and that Eve considered Cain to be the fulfilment of the promise that she was to bear a seed which would overcome Satan. However, our accepted texts do not admit of this construction, but report her as saying she had acquired a man from the Lord, or with the help of Jehovah. The word Abel means vanity. Various reasons have been suggested for giving the child this name, but none seem very satisfactory. Practically all commentators deal with the problem as to whether these boys were twins. The conjecture that they are twins is based upon the statement made with reference to their birth as compared with the statements relating to the birth of other men. Of Cain it is said she conceived and bare; of Abel it is said, "*Again she bare his brother Abel.*" If they were not twins, the customary form of mentioning his conception would have been followed. "Whence, as there is not the usual mention of a previous conception, the belief is general among the Jewish, and received by many Christian commentators that Cain and Abel were twins." (Bush.) Adam Clarke makes a more extended argument to prove the same position.

The time of the sacrifice mentioned in our lesson has by some been supposed to be early in the life of these two men. There must have been sufficient time between their birth and this offering for the human family to multiply, for (1) Cain was afraid someone would slay him (Gen. 4:15); (2) Cain went immediately to another land east of Eden to live among other people and build a city (Gen. 4:17). The chronology which we follow in these lessons gives a period of 125 years which according to one eminent scholar would allow time for more than half a million people as descendants of Adam and Eve. Hence we may not be surprised when we learn that Cain went to the land of Nod and built a city.

### I. KEY SCRIPTURE

*"By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain."* (Heb 11:4).

**1. Doing Things by Faith.** Our text says that Abel offered his sacrifice by faith. To do a thing by faith is to do it in harmony with God's commandment. We are told that Noah built his ark by faith. (Heb. 11:7.) From the record given by Moses we read, "*thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.*" (Gen. 6:22.) This is a commentary on doing things by faith. Paul says that faith comes by hearing the word of the Lord. (Rom. 10:17.) So in order to do a thing by faith one must do it according to the instruction given by the Lord. We conclude therefore that God had told Cain and Abel, as well as all other people of their time, how they were to offer their sacrifices. Abel

followed these instructions of the Lord, believing them to be the will of the Lord, and believing that his acceptance with the Lord depended on his following such instructions. In humble submission to the will of the Lord, despising and rejecting his own wisdom, Abel offered his sacrifice as God directed.

**2. Faith Makes Both the Act and the Person Acceptable to the Lord.** It is said that God had respect unto Abel and to his offering. By this it is meant that God accepted or was pleased with Abel and his offering. We reach this general conclusion therefore: (1) that any act done by faith is acceptable to the Lord, and (2) the person offering that act is acceptable to God. Paul says, “*we walk by faith, not by sight.*” (2 Cor. 5:7.) From this we conclude that our Christian worship and service are matters of faith. Remembering that to do a thing by faith is to do it as God directs, we conclude that all our worship and service are to be performed in harmony with God’s will. It follows therefore that the doing of things not commanded is not an act of faith. A thing which is not an act of faith is not a part of the Christian walk. The burning of incense is not taught in the gospel of Christ. Hence one cannot burn incense by faith. The sprinkling of water on people for baptism is not taught in the gospel, therefore is not an act of faith. Those who walk by faith cannot practice a thing not taught by the Lord.

**3. Lack of Faith Characterizes Both the Person and the Act as Evil.** Moses simply says that God did not respect the offering of Cain. This is sufficient for us to conclude that his offering was rejected. But it would be difficult to determine from the Genesis account why his offering was not accepted. However, John tells us that “*we should love one another: not as Cain was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his works were evil, and his brother’s righteous.*” (1 John 3:11, 12.) From this we learn that Cain’s offering was evil and Abel’s offering was righteous. The obvious lesson therefore is (1) that which is not offered by faith is evil, and (2) the person making the offering is rejected. Remembering that to do a thing by faith is to do it in harmony with God’s command, we learn that the person who worships God in any way not specified by the Lord is doing an evil work and is to be rejected. Our Lord taught the Jews this lesson when He condemned them for washing hands as an act of worship to God. The act of washing the hands is obviously good and right, but to wash hands as an act of worship is sinful simply because God has not commanded it. The use of instruments of music in worship falls in the same category. When done for our pleasure or intellectual development, playing instruments is good. But when done as an act of worship to God, it is evil and the one performing the act is rejected on the same ground that Cain was rejected and his offering was evil.

## II. A COMMENTARY ON GENESIS 4:1-12

### 1. Family and Occupations. (Gen 4:1,2).

*I have gotten a man.* This was Eve’s statement when her first son was born. There was a note of joy and satisfaction in the statement which leads many to believe that Eve thought the promise of Genesis 3:15 was fulfilled in this son. If Eve had such a thought, we may be sure it was not from the Lord, because Cain grew to be a wicked man, and the Redeemer came through Seth. (Gen. 5:25.) This is but a reminder that children often turn out to be a disappointment to their parents.

*With the help of Jehovah.* The words *the help of* are in italics in our text indicating that they are not in the original, but are supplied by the translators to make the sense clear. Those scholars who hold to the idea that Eve thought Cain was the fulfilment of the promise reject these words in italics and

make the word from Jehovah a part of Cain's name. The King James Version inserts the word *from*, making Eve say she had gotten a man from the Lord.

*Again she bare his brother Abel.* As mentioned above, the failure to mention his conception in connection with his birth in this verse has led many to believe that the boys were twins. These two are usually considered the first children of Adam and Eve, but there is no positive proof for this conclusion.

*Abel was a keeper of sheep.* How many different occupations there were at this time we have no way of knowing. But the human race had developed sufficiently that a distinction is made between a keeper of sheep and a tiller of the ground, between the shepherd and a farmer. It is probably an indication of progress in that a man devoted all of his time either to a shepherd's life or that of the farmer instead of combining the two.

*Cain was a tiller of the ground.* From the beginning of time animal husbandry and agriculture have been primary occupations. It was not long until the descendants of Cain branched out into other occupations such as musicians and forgers of brass and iron. (Gen. 4:20-22.)

## **2. Cain and Abel Worship God (Gen. 4:3-7)**

*Cain brought of the fruit of the ground.* The offering which Cain brought seems not to have been commanded by the Lord. If not commanded, it was not of faith. It was of the nature of a thank offering.

*Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock.* By some scholars it is thought that the word also indicates that Abel brought a thank offering similar to that of Cain, but in addition brought the firstlings of his flock. Bringing the animal sacrifice indicated (1) a conviction of sin on the part of the offerer; (2) a belief that God would forgive; (3) the belief that life is forfeited by sin; and (4) that God would accept a substitute for man, the sinner. These are important lessons for humanity to learn and lessons which God continually held before His people until these texts were fulfilled in Christ. Cain's refusal to bring a blood sacrifice implied his denial of (1) a guilty conscience, (2) his need of a Savior, and (3) his lack of faith in a substitutionary offering. In this disbelief--and rebellion we find the ground of the rejection of his person and sacrifice. This is the proof of his lack of faith. Hence it could not be said of him as it was of Abel that he made his offering by faith.

*Jehovah had respect unto Abel and to his offering.* The writer of Hebrews says that God bore witness in respect of his gifts, meaning that God gave some outward demonstration to indicate His acceptance of the offering. What this outward demonstration was it is impossible for us to know. However, it was such that Cain could see and appreciate. Some have suggested that the offering was consumed by fire as in the case of Elijah. (1 Kings 18:38.) But this is hardly probable since there is no reason for this offering to be so consumed while all such later offerings were not consumed in this manner.

*Unto Cain and his offering he had not respect.* In whatever way God manifested His acceptance of Abel and his offering we are told that Cain did not receive such an indication of God's pleasure. Notice that God had, or had not, respect (1) to the offerer and (2) to the offering. There is no such thing as God respecting the offerer but rejecting his offering. The two stand or fall together. Men sometimes vainly hope that though their worship is not authorized and consequently not acceptable to God, that

their persons will be acceptable to Him. This lesson of Cain and Abel should teach them that if their offerings are not of faith, neither the offering nor the person is acceptable to God.

*Cain was very wroth and his countenance fell.* The rejected worshipper became angry and, as usual, his anger did not find its proper object. The reasonable object would have been himself for not making a proper offering, or if he considered his offering proper he should have been angry with God for not accepting it. But anger and reason seem not to dwell in the same heart, so Cain directed his anger to his more fortunate brother. The same thing is seen today when two men aspire to be elders of a congregation and one is chosen; the other is not. Usually the one who is not chosen fails to see any fault in himself and rarely becomes angry at the church for not selecting him, but makes his fortunate brother the target of angry words and deeds.

*If you do well, shall it not be lifted up?* This is the lesson of God directed to Cain. These words are capable of three interpretations. (1) If you were innocent and sinless in your offering; (2) if your offering was made in the right spirit (this being held by Luther and Calvin); or (3) if you repent and make the proper offering. The words *shall it not be lifted up* likely refer to his guilt and so imply forgiveness. The statement would then read, if you do right in this matter, it shall be forgiven you.

*If you do not well, sin couches at the door.* The word sin here some take to mean a sin offering while others take it to mean a guilty conscience. If the word is to be taken in the sense of a sin offering, the meaning is, if you realize you did not make a proper offering, there is even now a proper offering at your door which may yet be offered and the acceptance of the Lord obtained thereby. If this be the true meaning, Cain's refusal to make the offering confirms his rebellious nature and is proof of his lack of faith in God as well as a lack of the realization of his need of a Savior.

*Unto you shall be its desire.* This is a very difficult statement. The difficulty lies in not being able to locate the antecedent of its. There are three possible antecedents: (1) Abel, (2) sin, and (3) the sin offering. If Abel is the antecedent, the meaning is that Cain's right as the first born would not be taken away from him, and Abel would as the younger be subject to him. If sin is the antecedent, the meaning is that sin would ever be following Cain, that he would never be able to rid himself of it. If the sin offering is the antecedent, the meaning is that the sin offering is near, seemingly desiring to be offered in the place of Cain. But whatever is selected as the antecedent, one lesson is that Cain is being warned against the danger of yielding to sin. The last words of the verse *do you rule over it* indicate that Cain's most important duty will be to exercise due care with reference to sin.

### **3. Cain's Sin and Curse (Gen. 4:8-12)**

*Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.* This wicked deed followed a conversation between the brothers. The verse opens with the statement that Cain told Abel of the visit of Jehovah. There is an indication in this that Cain's deed was not premeditated. As they talked about their sacrifices, the acceptance of Abel and the rejection of Cain, Cain's wrath was again stirred and in the heat of his passion he took his brother's life. John says that he slew his brother because his works were evil and his brother's righteous. This implies envy and jealousy on the part of Cain. He envied Abel because of his acceptance with God. He was jealous because God had preferred his brother. We are told that "*where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed.*" (James 3:16.) This does not mean that a jealous person is guilty of every vile deed, for such is not the truth. But it does mean that if one allows jealousy to rule in his heart he will soon become capable of any vile deed.

There is no deed so vile or wicked that a jealous person will not do. Few things are worse than murdering one's brother, but Cain's jealousy made him capable of doing it.

*Where is Abel your brother?* This is the language of Jehovah. It is a question intended to bring a feeling of guilt to the heart of Cain.

*I know not: am I my brother's keeper?* In the first part of this statement Cain lied; in the second part he denies his responsibility to his brother. This shows what men will do to cover their sins, and, too, we have evidence of Satan's influence on Cain. Satan is said to be a liar and the father of lies. (John 8:44.) No one can doubt that Cain's deliberate lie was uttered under the influence of Satan. A refusal to accept any responsibility for the welfare of others is also of the devil. People today who refuse to recognize their responsibility for the welfare of the poor or the lost are walking in the steps of Cain. One writer sums up the matter by saying, "He shows himself a liar in saying I know not; wicked and profane in thinking he could hide his sin from God; unjust in denying himself to be his brother's keeper; obstinate and desperate in not confessing his sin." (Pulpit Commentary.)

*The voice of your brother's blood cries.* Blood is here spoken of as having a voice and of crying for justice. Adam Clarke thinks that the words indicate that Cain had buried his brother to escape detection and that the blood was crying for justice.

*Cursed are you from the ground.* The form of the curse here is different from that in the case of Adam. The ground was cursed for Adam's sake, but here the curse is directed at Cain, and the ground, which he was to till was to have a part in executing the sentence. The curse was to come from the ground, and from what follows it seems that the curse was to come from the ground because Abel's blood had been taken up in the ground.

*It shall not henceforth yield, unto you its strength.* The land was to become partially barren. It would not yield as much per acre as it had yielded before. Whether that was intended for Cain alone or was intended to be the case with all tillers of the soil is not known. But it is known that soil tends to lose its strength when continuously cultivated.

*A fugitive and a wanderer shall you be in the earth.* This is a part of the punishment placed upon Cain for his sin. The curse seems to be threefold. (1) A curse upon him personally; (2) a curse upon his labor in that it would not be rewarded with as great a yield as before; and (3) no permanent abiding place.

### III. SOME APPLICATIONS

1. Sins grow in clusters. A little analysis shows unbelief, disobedience, envy, anger, falsehood, and murder in Cain's heart. Sin refuses to live alone in the human heart.
2. Adam and Eve experienced that bitterest punishment which parents undergo when they see their own defects and infirmities and evil passions repeated in their children and leading them astray as they once led themselves.
3. There are evils and sorrows enfolded in sin beyond what men can conceive of before they commit the sin. If Adam and Eve could have seen clearly all the evil which would come from their sin, surely they would not have sinned

## QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 6

### CAIN AND ABEL

1. What is the meaning of the word Genesis? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. We are told of the beginning of what things in Genesis? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the meaning of the names Cain and Abel? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. On what is the idea based that Cain and Abel were twins? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. About how old were Cain and Abel at the time of our lesson? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What has been suggested as the population of the earth at that time? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What is meant by doing things by faith? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Illustrate this principle as suggested in the work of Noah? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. On this basis what was wrong with Cain's sacrifice? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What is implied by the statement that God had respect unto the offering of Abel? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. By what rule does Paul suggest that we walk? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. Give two or three illustrations of religious acts which cannot be done by faith. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. What does John teach us about the offering of Cain and Abel? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. According to this lesson, what is an evil work, and what is a righteous work? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
15. What did Eve say at the birth of her first born, and what is its meaning? \_\_\_\_\_  
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16. Do we have proof that Cain and Abel were the first children of Adam and Eve? \_\_\_\_\_

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17. What is said about different occupations at the time of our lesson? \_\_\_\_\_

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18. What was the nature of Cain's offering? \_\_\_\_\_

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19. What is suggested with reference to the offering of Abel? \_\_\_\_\_

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20. Name and discuss the four lessons suggested by the bringing of animal sacrifice? \_\_\_\_\_

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21. What is meant by God bearing witness in respect of Abel's gift? \_\_\_\_\_

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22. Does God respect the one who offers a sacrifice which is not an acceptable sacrifice? \_\_\_\_\_

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23. What effect did God's rejection of Cain have upon him? \_\_\_\_\_

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24. What is meant by "if you do well, shall it not be lifted up?" \_\_\_\_\_

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25. What is meant by sin couching at the door? \_\_\_\_\_

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26. What is meant by "unto you shall be its desire?" \_\_\_\_\_

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27. Why did Cain slay Abel, and what dispositions are implied? \_\_\_\_\_

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28. What does James teach on this question? \_\_\_\_\_

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29. What is said of the character of Cain? \_\_\_\_\_

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30. What is said of the curse placed upon Cain? \_\_\_\_\_

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## LESSON NUMBER 7

# NOAH AND THE ARK

Gen. 6:9-22

### INTRODUCTION

About 1,556 years have elapsed since the time of our last lesson. During this time two distinct lines of people developed. One was the line of Cain who had a definite tendency toward evil, and the other was the line of Seth, generally regarded as a righteous man. Only a few verses of scripture are devoted to the line of Cain. (Gen. 4:16-24.) Chapter 5 is devoted to the line of Seth from Adam to Noah. Chapter 6 begins with a statement which must be applied to a considerable portion of this period from Adam to Noah and not simply to the last few years of the period. It was during this portion of time that *“the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all that they chose ..the Nephilim were in the earth in those days, and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them: the same were the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown.”* (Gen. 6:2-4.) The sons of God were descendants of Seth while the daughters of men refer to descendants of Cain. There are some difficulties in connection with this interpretation, but no other interpretation has as few as this one. Some think that the angels spoken of in Jude 6 are the sons of God and that their offspring were the Nephilim, or giants. But (1) the interpretation is most unnatural and has nothing in fact to support it. (2) A little closer reading of the verse will show that the Nephilim were not descendants of the sons of God and the daughters of men. Notice the expression *“also after that”* which means that the connection between the sons of God and the daughters of men progressed after the days of Nephilim.

People generally have had the idea that it took Noah 120 years to build the ark and that conclusion was based on Gen. 6:3 where we read, *“Yet shall his days be a hundred and twenty years.”* This 120 years was the time given to see whether or not the human race would repent and improve. It is probable that Noah preached during this entire time, but there is no passage which indicates that he was building on the ark during all this time. The first record we have of God’s direction concerning the ark included Noah’s sons and their wives. Hence the boys must have been married at the time Noah was told to build the ark. But Noah was 500 years old before either son was born. (Gen. 5:32.) Shem was only 92 years old at the time of the flood. (Gen. 11:10.) Noah was 600 years old at the time of the flood. From these figures it will be seen that the building of the ark required less than 100 years.

### I. KEY SCRIPTURE

*“By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household”* (Heb 11:7).

**1. Noah’s Faith Accepted God’s Word as Truth.** Our text suggests that Noah was warned of *“things not seen as yet.”* In spite of the fact that there had never been a flood upon the earth, or rain in such proportion as would enable Noah to accept God’s statement on the basis of reason, Noah believed what God said. This characteristic is an essential of saving faith. People who do not believe

what God says on any and every question have no right to claim saving faith. Those who talk loudest and longest about salvation by “faith only” seem to have the least of that article. When they read “*he that believes and is baptized shall be saved*” or “*repent and be baptized ... for the remission of sins,*” they argue that they can’t see any connection between baptism and salvation. If they had enough of the faith which Noah had, they would not require to see a reason between the thing done and the object to be gained. Naaman probably never saw any connection between dipping seven times in the Jordan and cure for leprosy; Joshua probably never saw any connection between marching around the walls of Jericho thirteen times and the destruction of that city. If people could see a scientific connection between the conditions of salvation and the blessing of salvation, there would be no opportunity for the exercise of faith. The fact that God says a thing is sufficient basis for faith. Those who expect or demand some reasonable or scientific connection are walking by sight and not by faith.

**2. Noah’s Faith Feared God to the Point of Submitting to God’s Way.** Our text says Noah was moved with godly fear. Probably the world needs nothing more than it needs a fear of God. The underlying reason for the apostasy of the Jewish nation is stated in these words, “*There is no fear of God before their eyes.*” (Rom. 3:18.) People need to be afraid to violate God’s law. We need to fear the terrible consequences of sin. We need to have a healthy fear of falling into the hands of God unprepared. (Heb. 10:30,31.) When God says we are “*buried with him in baptism,*” we ought to be afraid to substitute sprinkling. When God teaches us to worship on the first day of the week, we ought to be afraid to do otherwise. Our text indicates that godly fear is an element of the faith by which Noah prepared the ark. People who do not have this godly fear which moves them to submit to God’s way do not have Noah’s faith.

**3. Noah’s Faith Obeyed God’s Word in Spite of Opposition and Ridicule.** Our text says that Noah built the ark by faith. From the Old Testament record we learn “*Noah did according unto all that Jehovah commanded him.*” (Gen. 7:5.) This is simply another way of saying that Noah obeyed God’s commandments. The religious world today teaches that there are two contradictory schemes of salvation. One is salvation by faith; the other salvation by obedience or works. Denominations generally teach salvation by faith only because they think the only alternative is salvation by works. There is a type of work which has always been repulsive to God and has no place in the plan of salvation. Works of man’s wisdom have never been acceptable to God, but God has never in any age of the world offered salvation to anybody without works of obedience. Noah did not build the ark by faith only. Yet his salvation was not of his own works nor of his own wisdom. He had a faith that worked in obedience to God’s commandments and in godly fear. If we expect to be saved today, we must have the same kind of faith. Believing God’s word, moving with godly fear, if we do what God teaches one must do to be saved, we may expect salvation. This is salvation by faith, offered to us by the grace of God.

## **II. A COMMENTARY ON GENESIS 6:9-22**

### **1. Noah and the World of His Day (Gen. 6:9-12).**

*Noah was a righteous man, and perfect in his Generations.* A righteous man is one who does righteousness. (1 John 3:7.) From David we learn that keeping God’s commandments is doing righteousness. (Psalm 119:172.) Hence, when we read that Noah was a righteous man, we know that he was one who obeyed the commandments of God. The statement that he was perfect in his generations does not mean that he had reached the state of sinless perfection. In the margin we have

the word blameless. The original word means complete or whole. It describes “completeness of parts rather than of degrees in the renewed character.” (Bush.) He was not lacking in some quality essential to a righteous man, though some qualities might not be as prominent as some others.

*Noah walked with God.* Enoch is the only other man of that distant past of whom this statement is made. (Gen 5:24.) To walk with God denotes agreement and fellowship. (Amos 3:3.) Walking with God also denotes activity. No one can walk with God without being actively engaged in obeying God’s commandments. “*He that says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk even as he walked.*” (1 John 2:6.)

*Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.* It is difficult to know the order of birth of the sons of Noah. In the King James Version Gen. 10:31 indicates that Japheth was the elder brother of Shem, while the American Standard Version says that Shem was the elder brother of Japheth. Ham was certainly the youngest of the three and seems to have been the worst character. (Gen. 9:20-27.) Adam Clarke thinks that Japheth was older than Shem because he is mentioned first in a genealogy of 1 Chronicles. But if his conclusion is correct, we would also have to conclude that Ham was older than Shem because Ham is mentioned in this same connection before Shem. (1 Chron. 1:1-17).

*The earth was corrupt before God.* The earth was so corrupt that it is said “*every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*” (Gen.6:5.) There are three thoughts suggested in this statement: (1) Every imagination was evil. (2) Every imagination was only evil. This strengthens and emphasizes the first thought. It is difficult to conceive of a heart being so wholly given to evil that every imagination is evil and wholly evil. This suggests that purity had absolutely no place in the thoughts of man. (3) This condition is said to have been continual. It was not for a day or a week, but throughout the whole life of the man. We are led also to believe that this was the condition, if not of every man, of the vast majority of men. Noah and his family are the only exceptions mentioned. Certainly no others were exceptions to the extent that the Lord could save them from the flood.

*God saw the earth.* Wickedness cannot exist without God detecting it. The fact that He is omnipresent and omniscient makes it impossible for the slightest evil to exist without His knowledge. “*The eyes of Jehovah are in every place, keeping watch upon the evil and the good.*” (Prov. 15:3.) Again, “*For the eyes of Jehovah run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him.*” (2 Chron. 16:9)

*All flesh had corrupted their way.* Notice that this extremely corrupt condition is the work of the flesh of man. It was not the work of God, nor in harmony with His will.

## **2. Instructions Concerning the Ark (Gen. 8:13-16)**

*The end of all flesh is come before me.* The term “*all flesh*” includes more than humanity. God justified His change of mind with reference to Nineveh on the ground that there was “*much cattle*” which would have been destroyed with the city. (Jonah 4:11.) But the wickedness in Noah’s day was so great that the lower animals perished with man.

*Make thee an ark of gopherwood.* This ark was to be the means of Noah’s salvation. Gopherwood was very likely cypress. The form of the Hebrew word and its Greek equivalent seem to indicate cypress. Cypress wood abounded in the section where Noah is supposed to have lived; was anciently used for

building ships because it is not liable to rot. Pitch was to be used inside and out. “The substance to be employed was probably bitumen or asphalt” (Pulpit Commentary.)

*This is how you shall make it.* Following this we have the dimensions of the ark as 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high. It is impossible to know the exact length of the cubit. It is generally thought to be eighteen inches. But certain authorities have good grounds for contending that it is nearer twenty inches. Infidels have argued that the ark was not large enough to contain all the Bible says was put in it. Taking the cubit at eighteen inches, there was more than one million and a half cubic feet of space. It should also be remembered that representatives of the various families of animals are all that needed to be included. None of the large sea animals needed to be included as they would not be executed by the flood. Those who are interested in a further study of this question may see an argument in Adam Clarke’s commentary and a treatment by Harry Rimmer.

*A light shall you make to the ark.* The lighting of the ark is admittedly a difficult subject. The margin of our text has the word roof in the place of light, and several other authorities agree with that translation. The size and location of the light is also uncertain. Our text says, “*to a cubit shall you finish it upward.*” Some take this to mean that the opening for light ran the entire length of the ark, a cubit wide, just under the eave.

*The door shall you set at the side thereof.* The fact that the ark had but one door has given about as much trouble to skeptics as the one window. No mention is made of the size nor the location, except to say that it was put in the side of the ark. Whether it was put in the first, second, or third story is not said. Some authorities who are usually counted as conservatives feel that they must help the Lord a little and say that it means one door in each story; Speculation is idle and may easily become a folly. The basic reason for all such speculation is unbelief. Even conservative scholars sometimes feel that they must account for everything on the basis of the natural instead of the miraculous. There seems to be nothing in connection with the building of the ark or taking the animals into it which cannot be accounted for naturally. But if the miraculous is necessary, we should not hesitate to resort to it for an explanation.

### **3. Provisions for Saving Life (Gen. 6:17-22)**

*I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth.* The pronoun I is repeated in our text for sake of emphasis. This was not a natural flood but one brought through divine visitation. The word for flood is never used in the Bible to refer to any other inundation. It is used in Isa. 54:9 and Psalm 29:10, but in each of these places it refers to the flood of Noah’s time. Hence we conclude that this flood was of miraculous proportions and extent.

*Everything that is in the earth shall die.* The only exception to this statement is the marine life. There is no known reason for this exception other than that the means of destruction of man was such that it did not involve marine life. God’s primary purpose was to destroy man, and the means chosen unavoidably destroyed land animals.

*I will establish my covenant with you.* This was His covenant with reference to saving Noah and his family in the flood. The word translated covenant probably signifies, according to Adam Clarke, a purification or purifier because in all covenants made between God and man sin and sinfulness were supposed to be on man’s side and God could not enter into a covenant with him without a purifier.

It is for this reason that a sacrifice on the part of man was always an essential part of a covenant.

*Two of every sort shall you bring into the ark.* Here is another statement which infidels use to prove a contradiction. In Gen. 7:2,3 it is said, “*Of every clean beast you shall take to you seven and seven, the male and his female; and of the beasts that are not clean two, the male and his female: of the birds also of the heavens, seven and seven, male and female, to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth.*” The best explanation seems to be that in chapter six we have the record of the announcement of the flood and of the building of the ark. At that time only a general statement was necessary and this general statement was to the effect that male and female of every sort were to be saved to preserve life. But in chapter seven after the ark had been built and the time had arrived to bring the animals and birds into it, more specific and detailed instruction was necessary. Hence Noah was told to bring a sufficient number of clean birds and animals for food and sacrifice as well as for the two which were necessary to preserve life.

*Take unto you of all food that is eaten.* Included in this command was food not only for human consumption but also food for every kind of creature taken into the ark. Considerable knowledge of animal nature and habits was necessary in order to carry out this command. Whether Noah had any special help from God is not intimated.

*According to all that God commanded, him, so did he.* This is an indication (1) of Noah’s faith, (2) of his godly fear, and (3) his complete obedience. God saves the obedient and punishes the disobedient. No proposition has more scripture to sustain it, and man is extremely foolish to doubt or deny the truthfulness of this statement.

### **III. SOME APPLICATIONS**

1. Man’s life is often characterized as a walk. (1) Enoch and Noah walked with God. (Gen. 5:24; 6:9.) This suggests companionship. (2) Abraham was told to walk before God. (Gen. 17:1.) This denotes God’s inspection of our walk. (3) Israel was told to walk after Jehovah. (Deut. 12:4; Hos. 11:10.) This suggests that man follows an example set by the Lord. Hence our walk should be a fellowship with God under His inspection and after His example.

2. The ark was God’s provision for salvation in Noah’s day. Those who entered it were saved. Those who refused to enter were lost regardless of social, political, or financial standing. God’s mercy did not extend so far as to cover one who refused to enter the ark. The church is God’s provision for salvation in this age of the world. Those who enter and live as God directs are saved. Those who refuse are lost regardless of their prominence in society. Neither money nor morals can make up for one’s refusal to comply with God’s demands.

## QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 7

# NOAH AND THE ARK

1. What two distinct lines of people developed in the time between our last lesson and this? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Who were the sons of God, and who were the daughters of men? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What are the Nephilim and what theory is suggested of their origin? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Did the building of the ark require 120 years? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the first characteristic essential to saving faith? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Give some present day illustrations of faith like Noah's and of faith which differs from his in this respect. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Show the difference between walking by faith and walking by sight. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What is the second essential characteristic of saving faith? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Illustrate this characteristic by present day situations. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What is the third essential characteristic of faith? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Show the difference between works of man's wisdom and works of obedience to God's commandment. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. What is said of the character of Noah? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. What is meant by the word perfect as used in this text? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. What is implied by the statement that Noah walked with God? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
15. Of what other man is this statement made? \_\_\_\_\_
16. What do you know of the respective ages of Shem, Ham and Japheth? \_\_\_\_\_

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17. What is said of the condition of the earth at this time? \_\_\_\_\_

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18. What three thoughts are suggested by this statement? \_\_\_\_\_

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19. What characteristics of God make it impossible for evil to escape His notice? \_\_\_\_\_

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20. Who was responsible for the wickedness existing in the day of Noah? \_\_\_\_\_

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21. What is meant by all flesh? \_\_\_\_\_

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22. What was gopherwood? \_\_\_\_\_

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23. What was pitch? \_\_\_\_\_

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24. What are the dimensions of the ark? \_\_\_\_\_

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25. What do you know of the length of a cubit? \_\_\_\_\_

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26. What do you know of the lighting of the ark? \_\_\_\_\_

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27. What do you know about the door in the ark? \_\_\_\_\_

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28. Why do we conclude that the flood was of a miraculous nature? \_\_\_\_\_

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29. What type of life was exempt from the destruction in the flood? \_\_\_\_\_

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30. What is suggested in the meaning of the word covenant? \_\_\_\_\_

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31. What difficulty is suggested with reference to the number of animals taken into the ark? \_\_\_\_\_

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32. On what principle did Noah operate in building the ark? \_\_\_\_\_

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## LESSON NUMBER 8

# THE TOWER OF BABEL

Gen. 11:1-9

### INTRODUCTION

Since our lesson deals with the Tower of Babel, it will be well to review the history of Babylon. Moses connects Babel with the land of Shinar and with Nimrod, the mighty hunter. (Gen. 10:9,10.) Babel is said to be the beginning of Nimrod's kingdom. According to Price in *Monuments and the Old Testament*, Babylon is one of the oldest cities of which we have any knowledge. According to records left by Sargon I and Hammurabi dating back nearly to 3000 B.C. Babylon was quite a city in their day and has been the capital of that region from antiquity.

Another thing of interest in this lesson is the genealogical line of Shem. Shem is said to be the father of the children of Eber. (Gen. 10:21.) Some have thought the word Hebrew comes from this word Eber and hence identifies the Hebrews as the descendants of Shem. It is true that the Hebrews came from Shem, but conservative scholars deny that the word Hebrew is derived from the word Eber. In Genesis 11:10-26 we have the line of Shem traced to Abraham and this is all the proof we need that Abraham and his descendants came from Shem. Nimrod, who built Babylon, was a descendant of Ham. (Gen. 10:6-8.)

From general Bible teaching and from the context in which our lesson is found especially, the human race is said to be derived from one source. This unity of the human race is suggested by a number of characteristics. Adam Clarke gives thirteen of these evidences of unity. The fact that all divisions of the human race count by tens and that they compute time by a cycle of seven days; their use of sacrifice both sin-offering and thank-offering; the consecration of temples and altars; giving one-tenth of their income to religious purposes; supporting a priesthood; abstinence from sinful gratifications prior to sacrifices, and the tradition of a general deluge among all divisions of the race are cited as proof of a common source for all these divisions of the human race.

### I. KEY SCRIPTURE

*“Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.”* (Psa 127:1).

**1. Exposition of the Text.** The word house in our text may be taken to mean a dwelling house or a temple. It is also used to mean a family. There is no particular reference in our text to any certain builder. The thought is simply that anyone who builds independently of Jehovah is laboring in vain. The word vain suggests that he is laboring to no profit, that he will not succeed in his intentions and desires. The second division of our text shifts from the builder to that of a watchman. But the thought is the same as that in the first section. The writer of this Psalm intended to impress upon his readers the necessity of regarding God as being over all men. The success of man's labors is dependent upon God's sanction and only those who labor in harmony with God's will may expect to succeed.

**2 Application of the Text.** David did not mean to teach that a man cannot build a dwelling house without taking God into consideration. He simply used the word house in a figurative sense expecting his readers to make a practical application of his poetic statement.

(a) In our application of the text we would say except Jehovah build a home people labor in vain that build it. Much of the sorrow and disappointments come as a result of people trying to build homes without taking God into consideration. Many young people start in the business of building a home knowing little and caring less about what God has taught on the subject. Years later they find that their building has been contrary to the teaching of the Lord and they find it difficult and practically impossible to rebuild so as to meet the Lord's approval. The time and the labor invested in the building of their home have been in vain.

(b) It ought to go without argument that people who build a church without taking God into consideration labor in vain. Many religious groups make their own laws, carry on their work and worship according to the decrees of councils and the conclusions of synods and conferences that build according to man's wisdom. They do that which to them seems right; they see no reason why God would be opposed to what they are doing, but it seems never to have occurred to them that all they do must be done in harmony with God's revealed will. We walk by faith, and faith comes by hearing the word of God. Hence our church life is determined by what is revealed in God's word.

(c) A careful study of the scriptures will show that God is interested in and takes part in the affairs of nations. Kings, dictators, presidents, and senators laboring to build nations should realize that their labor is in vain if they do not build in harmony with God's will. The prince of righteousness and of morality cannot be disregarded if they expect their national structure to endure. It seems that the builders and directors of nations have about reached the point where they must admit the failure of human wisdom. International organizations and great armies with terrible destructive power are unable to keep peace. These are not the Lord's ways and hence will never be successful. The sooner world rulers recognize God and begin to depend upon Him for guidance, the sooner we may expect peace to reign. A wholehearted acceptance of the Golden Rule would do more to bring peace than all the political schemes and armies the nations can muster.

## **II. A COMMENTARY ON GENESIS 11:1-9**

### **1. Man's Sinful Purpose (Gen. 11:1-4)**

*The whole earth was of one language.* Adam Clarke says, "The names and their significations given in the Scriptures seem incontestable evidences that the Hebrew language was the original language on the earth--the language in which God spoke to man, and in which He gave the revelation of His will to Moses and the prophets." But other authorities deny that the Hebrew language was the one language of all the earth. Smith's Bible Dictionary says that the Hebrew of the Old Testament was not the language of Abraham when he entered Palestine, but was a form of the Chaldee language. It is probably impossible to know which was the primitive language, or if that primitive language has been preserved.

*They found a plain in the land of Shinar.* One version says they found this plain as they journeyed from the East. The margin in our version says in the East. The term East signifies a section of the country east of Palestine. It is said that the wise men came from the East. (Matt. 2:1.) Balaam came

from the East to Moab to curse the children of Israel. (Num. 23:7.) Isaiah refers to Abraham as coming from the East (41:2) and we know that he came from the Ur of Chaldees. (Gen. 11:28, 31.) So the word East of our text must refer to that general section known as Babylonia and Assyria. Our text says that the land of Shinar was in the East. The meaning of the term Shinar is unknown “though it probably meant the land of the two rivers.” (Pulpit Commentary.) It is generally located between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, northwest of the Persian Gulf.

*Come, let us make brick.* The art of brick making was known thus anciently. They knew the art of heating clay, for they said they would burn their brick thoroughly. It was necessary to use brick because of the scarcity of rock in this section. It was a low section, flooded during the rainy season, but dry and dusty during the rest of the year. For mortar they used slime or bitumen.

*Come, let us build a city and a tower.* Herodotus, one of our oldest sources, described Babylon as having been laid out in squares much like a modern city with streets at right angles. Whether these people laid out their city in such fashion cannot be known. The tower which they built had some resemblance to the pyramids. When the Jews were carried into captivity they thought they found near Babylon the very tower here mentioned. There is no proof that they actually found the tower, but any one of the several towers in that section would surely resemble the one in our text. One such tower is described as having a base 272 feet square and 26 feet high. The second story is 230 feet square, the third 188 feet square and so on up until the seventh story is reached which is only 25 feet square. These stories are off-centre, making the steps on one side thirty feet wide while on the other only twelve feet wide. Some of the towers were round with circular stairs reaching from the ground to the top. They proposed to build a tower that would reach to heaven. What their conception of heaven was and just how high they intended to build we cannot know.

*Let us make us a name.* Here we see the first sinful purpose of these people. The flood had destroyed whatever marks of civilization had been left by the people. These descendants of Noah seemed to resent the loss of that civilization and intended to take measures to prevent such another loss. There were ambition and pride in their motives. Those today who have such ambition to perpetuate their wisdom and attainments might reflect upon the fact that neither the tower, nor the rock of the tower, nor the names of the builders of that tower are known today. And if such knowledge was held by Moses or any of his contemporaries it was not preserved in their records. “It is just with God to bury those names in the dust which are raised by sin. These Babel-builders put themselves to a great deal of foolish expense; but we do not find in any history the name of so much as one of them.” (Matthew Henry.) Tradition says that they engraved the names of the builders on the bricks, but in spite of that they are still unknown.

*Lest we be scattered abroad.* This is the second motive for building the tower. The tower was to serve as a rallying point, a gathering place which would serve to keep or hold the people together. It is thought that these people rebelled at the command of God to Noah to multiply and replenish the earth. (Gen. 9:1.) Instead of scattering to the various parts of the earth as God intended, they determined to stay together in this portion of the earth. This indicates (1) a rebellious attitude on their part; (2) this indicates their ignorance and shortsightedness. They seemed unable to see that within a few generations man would multiply to the extent that this one section of the earth would be unable to maintain them. God’s plan provided for thousands of years of growth and the development of various nations. Their idea provided for neither. As usual, when man opposes God he is foolish, and if he lives long enough his foolishness becomes apparent to him.

## 2. God's Righteous Judgment (Gen. 11:5-9)

*And Jehovah came down to see the city and the tower.* Since God is omnipresent, it is not necessary for Him to come down. This is accommodative language to convey the idea of close inspection.

*They are one people.* The unity of the people as to language and design is indicated in our text. They were one people because of one common source: they were all the descendants of Noah. It is said that they all had one language which no doubt was that which came down from Adam.

*This is what they begin to do.* The building of this tower for the purpose of perpetuating their name and their family, and of waging a successful rebellion against the will of God is the result of the unity here mentioned.

*Nothing will be withholden from them.* The thought is that this tower is the beginning of their rebellious actions, and if such an ambitious undertaking is only the beginning nothing would be impossible for them to undertake. Rather than allow them to go on in such sinful undertakings God saw fit to destroy the unity which made such ambitious undertakings possible.

*Let us go down and confound their language.* This was God's way of destroying the unity of the people. We should not conclude that each man was given a different language, though we have no way of knowing how many different languages were given at this time. Some conjecture that at least three languages were given, one each for the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. But certainly a sufficient number of languages were given to make it impossible for the people to continue their co-operative endeavors.

(1) We might learn a lesson here that unity of speech contributes to strength, growth, and success, while a confusion of speech brings defeat. Paul exhorts us to speak the same thing (1 Cor. 1:10), and Peter tells us to speak as the oracles of God (1 Pet. 4:11). Spiritual strength depends upon spiritual unity of speech. A confusion of tongues spiritually results when each speaks his own mind and brings confusion, weakness, and defeat.

(2) We might also be reminded of the far-reaching consequences of sin. The sinful ambition and rebellion of these people brought confusion of tongues, and to this day we suffer the consequences of that sin. Our association and co-operation with other nations are limited because of our inability to speak their language and to understand them and their problems.

*That they may not understand one another's speech.* A failure to understand another's speech can be overcome to some extent through a study of languages. Through study we may be able to carry on a conversation with one of another nation, but there is a deeper meaning suggested here. There are shades of meanings that are not capable of being translated from one language to another. Sentiments and implications clearly discerned by the speaker are not brought over in the translation. This gives room for a misunderstanding and a lack of appreciation of another's point of view. This definitely has been recognized by the representatives of the various nations working together on the international problems of the day.

*They left off building the city.* Since their unity of language was destroyed, their unity of purpose was shattered. Consequently, their unity of interest was made impossible. In this is seen the folly of taking

issue with God. People today who try to live without God should be warned by the fact that these people could not build in opposition to God. They could have continued in a weak way to carry on, but they realized they could not accomplish what they started out to do. So people today can live after a fashion without God but they should realize that they cannot attain to the highest and most useful lives in this world and that their efforts will be absolutely a failure with reference to the next.

*Therefore was the name of it called Babel.* The word Babel has come to mean confusion because it was at the Tower of Babel that God confounded the languages. Some have thought that Moses intended to say that the word Babel itself means confusion but Hebrew authorities tell us that the word means “the gate of God.” (Smith’s Bible Dictionary.) This is no doubt the original intention of the appellation as given by Nimrod, though the other since came to be attached to it after the confusion of tongues. In Gen. 10:10 Babel is given as the name of the kingdom of Nimrod. If Nimrod called it Babel we are forced to conclude that the term Babel was not given because of the confusion of tongues, but since tongues were confused in the Tower of Babel, the word Babel, which originally meant “the gate of God,” came to mean confusion.

### **III. SOME APPLICATIONS**

1. The brickmakers in Shinar are examples of (1) ingenuity, (2) earnestness, (3) perseverance, and (4) unity in sin. The brickmakers of Egypt (Ex. 5:7) are illustrations of (1) bondage, (2) degradation, (3) misery, and (4) hopelessness of sin.

2. The Tower of Babel is a monument of man’s (1) sinful ambition, (2) laborious ingenuity, (3) demonstrated feebleness, and (4) stupendous folly. But the Tower is also memorial of God’s (1) overruling providence, (2) resistless power, (3) retributive justice and (4) beneficent purpose. (Pulpit Commentary.)

## QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 8

# THE TOWER OF BABEL

1. With whom does Moses connect Babel? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How far back in the world's history does Babylon reach? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. The Hebrew people are descendants from which of the sons of Noah? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Name and discuss the evidences of the unity of the human race as suggested in our lesson. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What is said of those who labor independently of God? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What is said in our key scripture of the watchmen? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Discuss the meaning of our text as it applies to building a home? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Discuss the text as it applies to the building of the church? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What application does our text have in the building of a nation? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What turn must be taken in human events before we may expect peace to reign? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. What fact suggests that the original language of the earth was Hebrew? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. Is it possible to know which was the primitive language of mankind? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. To what section of the world does the word East of our text refer? \_\_\_\_\_

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- 
14. What is the probable meaning of the term Shinar? \_\_\_\_\_
- 
15. Between what two great rivers was Shinar located? \_\_\_\_\_
- 
16. What building material did the people use? \_\_\_\_\_
17. What do you know of towers such are mentioned in our lesson? \_\_\_\_\_
- 
18. What do you know of the height of the tower they planned to build? \_\_\_\_\_
- 
19. What was wrong with their intentions to build a tower? \_\_\_\_\_
- 
20. What practical lesson is suggested in their failure? \_\_\_\_\_
- 
21. What was the people's second motive for building the tower, and what is implied by it? \_\_\_\_\_
- 
- 
- 
22. What is said of the unity of the people? \_\_\_\_\_
- 
23. What was done to destroy this unity? \_\_\_\_\_
- 
24. Of what practical benefit is unity of speech in religion? \_\_\_\_\_
- 
25. What is suggested as to the far reaching consequences of sin? \_\_\_\_\_
- 
26. Their inability to build in opposition to God suggests what lesson for us? \_\_\_\_\_
- 
27. What do you know of the meaning of the word Babel? \_\_\_\_\_
-

## LESSON NUMBER 9

# ABRAHAM AND LOT

Gen. 13:1-12

### INTRODUCTION

The location of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah has been a difficult question for a long time. Many of the older scholars supposed these cities were located at the south end of the Dead Sea, but there are several very valid objections to this position. Our text says that these cities were in the “*Plain of the Jordan*.” Instead of the word plain the margin has the word circle. If these cities were located in the circle of the Jordan they were obviously north of the Dead Sea, for the Jordan ends there. And if the word plain is to be retained, it is difficult to see how there could be a plain of the Jordan at the southern end of the Dead Sea. It is also said that Lot lifted up his eyes and beheld all the plain or circle of the Jordan. From where Abram and Lot lived it would have been impossible for him to see the section of the country south of the Dead Sea. In Deut. 34:3, Moses associated the city of Zoar with the valley of Jericho. This Zoar was one of the five cities of the plain in which Sodom was situated. Since it was near Jericho, it must have been at the north end of the Dead Sea. Brother McGarvey says, “A candid consideration of the evidences above adduced seems to require us to abandon the old theory as to the location of these cities, and to suppose that the local traditions, which furnish almost its only support, originated from an unsuccessful attempt at an early period since the Christian era to settle the question which still remains unsettled among scholars and explorers. (Lands of the Bible, p. 349.)

As to the destruction brought upon Sodom, there are numerous references. Moses suggests that it was such that nothing would be sown and not even grass would grow. (Deut. 29:23.) Isaiah indicates that like Babylon, Sodom shall never be inhabited, nor shall flocks lie down there. (Isa. 13:20.) It is to be “*a possession of nettles and saltpits and the perpetual desolation*.” (Zeph. 2:9.) And Peter says the cities were turned into ashes. (2 Pet. 2:8.) Jude tells us these cities “*are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire*” (Jude 7).

### I. KEY SCRIPTURE

*“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”* (Matt 5:9).

**1. The Active Beatitude.** All the beatitudes, except the one in our text, refer to some attitude or quality of character. The poor in spirit, the sorrowful, the meek, the merciful, the poor, and those that are persecuted are included in the other beatitudes. But our text deals with people who are active. They are the peacemakers. These busy themselves in the business of making peace. Purity of heart, meekness, and poverty of spirit do not suggest action. But making peace suggests an active, aggressive course of conduct.

**2. Qualifications of a Peacemaker.** Whether the peacemakers mentioned here are those who make peace between man and God or between man and man is not indicated. Perhaps both are included. But in order to do either, one must be at peace with God. One who lives in rebellion against God and the

authority of His Christ would not be in a position to lead men to be at peace with God, nor could he be very successful at bringing estranged men to be at peace with one another. To be a good peacemaker one should be in control of the warring elements of his own life. A split personality is too unstable and unpredictable to be a peacemaker. The ungodly fight of his character would make it impossible for him to have influence for good. We need people with single purpose and determination and steadfastness not only to teach people to live in peace, but to set an example to illustrate the principles taught. Another qualification of the peacemaker is a genuine interest in the welfare of others. Too many of us are inclined to live to ourselves and let the other fellow do the same. Paul's interest in others who had not made peace with God led him to sacrifice the pleasures, the honors, and the ease of this life to suffer persecution and death that he might reconcile man to God. Luke, the physician, we may safely conclude, left a lucrative practice perhaps in Troas to give Paul the help and service he needed to carry on his great work. Matthew left his place of custom to follow the Prince of Peace and influence others to be at peace with God. How many of us would be willing to leave as much as these men left to spend our lives reconciling people to God? Some other qualifications of the peacemaker are tact, wisdom, courage, good common sense, and a willingness to give time and attention to the needs of others.

**3. The Reward of the Peacemaker.** First, our text says that the peacemaker shall be called the child of God. To be called a child of God simply means to be of such character that we may truthfully be called a child of God. Hence, it is equal to saying that peacemakers are children of God. They are children of God because they are born again into the family of God, and they partake of the nature of God. God is called the God of peace. (Phil.4:9.) We are told that children of God partake of the nature of God. (2 Pet. 1:4.) Since He is the God of peace and we partake of His nature we should be children of peace, that is characterized by (a) a peaceable nature, (b) given to the task of bringing others to be at peace with God and man. Next, peacemakers may be called the children of God because they are engaged in the same work as Jesus, who is the Son of God. Since Jesus is the Prince of Peace and we are engaged in carrying on His work, we would be engaged in making peace between God and man.

## II. A COMMENTARY ON GENESIS 13:1-12

### 1. Abram Returns to Canaan (Gen. 13:1-4)

*Abram went up out of Egypt.* Abram had been in Egypt for the first time prior to the events of our lesson. He went there on account of a famine in Canaan. (Gen. 12:10.) It was on this journey that through fear he misrepresented his relationship with Sarah. Not only his wife, but Lot also was with him on the journey. It is said that they came into the south, meaning the south portion of Canaan.

*Abram was very rich.* His riches consisted largely in cattle and sheep, though it is mentioned that he had silver and gold. Josephus says that part of his riches was acquired by teaching in Egypt. This is the first mention of silver and gold in the Bible. It implies a knowledge of the arts of mining, refining, and coining the metals.

*He went on his journey to Bethel.* It is suggested that Abraham went back to his former location between Bethel and Ai. Bethel has many associations in scripture. It was there that Jacob saw the ladder reaching from earth to heaven, and it was there that Jeroboam instituted idol worship for the northern kingdom.

*Unto the place of the altar.* Some have suggested that Abraham was sorry for his misdeeds in Egypt and that his return to the altar near Bethel was in reality to start his life anew in the promised land. We are told that he “*called on the name of Jehovah,*” but this cannot be used to prove anything other than that he worshipped God at this altar on his return. It is significant that no mention is made of his erecting an altar while he was in Egypt.

## **2. Strife and How to Settle It (Gen. 13:5-9)**

*Lot also had flocks and herds and tents.* Lot was Abraham’s nephew. He was the son of Haran, who was the third son of Terah. (Gen. 11:27-28.) Lot came from Ur of Chaldees with Abraham. Several of Abraham’s kinsmen left Ur with him and went as far as Haran, where Terah died. Nahar, Abraham’s brother, remained in Haran when Abraham and Lot set out for Canaan. Lot’s father died before the family left Ur of Chaldees.

*The land was not able to bear them.* Three things perhaps contributed to the inability of the land to sustain them. (1) The numerous flocks and herds of Lot and Abraham, (2) the scarcity of good pasture, (3) and the presence of other people in the land. When Abraham pitched his tent at Shechem we are told, “*the Canaanite was then in the land.*” (Gen. 12:6.) Abraham and Lot could not take over all the land, nor could they select any portion of it they desired unless they were able to pay the fair market price. Our text mentions only one of these reasons and that because their substance was too great for them to dwell together. The reasonable conclusion is that they could not find a tract of land not held by a Canaanite large enough to afford pasture and water for their flocks and herds.

*And there was strife between their herdsmen.* It is to be noticed that the strife was between the herdsmen and not between Abraham and Lot. This strife was probably due to the scarcity of water and pasture. Abraham’s herdsmen wanted the best for their master’s cattle and so did Lot’s herdsmen look out for Lot’s prosperity. Mention is made here of the fact that both the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt in the land. This mention is made in connection with the fact that there was strife between the herdsmen of the two men. It is made in such way as to indicate that it was bad for the herdsmen of these two men to quarrel in the presence of their enemies. This might be used to teach church members to live in peace with one another because they live in the presence of and are observed by the people of the world.

*Abraham said unto Lot, let there be no strife.* As is to be expected, Abraham, the elder, took the lead in suggesting that peace should reign. This statement, let there be no strife, could well be used as a text for a sermon to the average church. In all too many places there is strife between preacher and elders, or elders and deacons or song leaders. In all these situations someone should covet blessedness of the peacemaker and lead these warring individuals or factions to be as far advanced in spirituality as Abraham and do everything necessary to maintain peace among brethren.

*For we are brethren.* This is given as the reason why there should be no strife between them. There should be no strife between brethren because (a) they have the same father and partake of the same nature. (b) They are working together for the same purposes. Men cannot gain their purposes through strife. Jesus said that if a kingdom is divided against itself it cannot stand. No program of work or worship can be carried on to a successful conclusion unless those involved are at peace with one another. (c) Brethren should not engage in strife here because they expect to live together in the next world. Brethren who refuse to speak to each other when they meet seemingly expect to go to heaven

when they die. One cannot keep from wondering how they would greet each other on the streets of glory. Let no one think that death is going to change one's whole attitude and disposition so that he will love in heaven the people he hated on earth. These strifes and divisions, and sinful hatreds and enmities must be cured here in this life if we expect to be free of them in the next world.

*If you take the right hand, then I will go to the left.* This is the magnanimous proposition which Abraham made to Lot. Lot was allowed to choose the direction he would go, and Abraham was willing to take what was left. There is no better way of settling a strife than to allow the other fellow to have his way. We are usually afraid that we will be imposed upon if we follow this course of action. But one who has such fears forgets God's promise and providence. Much of the Sermon on the Mount is devoted to teaching such principles as are obviously in Abraham. They are the plain, unscientific rules of life which require faith in God's goodness to His children. Abraham believed that he was under the care of God and that God would provide the necessities of life regardless of the section of the country he inhabited. Paul teaches us some of these enduring principles by saying, "*doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.*" (Phil. 2:3,4.)

### **3. Lot's Selfish Choice (Gen. 13:10-12)**

*Lot lifted up his eyes.* Lot was a worldly man. It is not meant that he was immoral, but that he was worldly minded; he valued material things more highly than he did spiritual things. He lifted up his eyes and beheld the fertile land. He was looking for material things, for material advantages. He had no eyes for the spiritual values nor for the dangers that lurked in the rich plain of the Jordan. Many church members are like Lot. They have no ability to see anything spiritual; they have the ability to see the time and the energy to acquire material riches, but they have neither the time nor the energy for the spiritual things of life. Lot was unconscious of his weakness, and so are people unconscious of this very weakness today. If Abraham had pointed out these dangers to Lot, Lot very likely would not have listened. Neither will people today who are thus inclined to worldliness listen when they are warned of the dangers toward which they are driving.

*Like the garden of Jehovah.* This expression is used to describe the plain in which were situated Sodom and Gomorrah. It is also said to be like the land of Egypt. This very likely is said to imply the beauty and the fertility of this land which Lot saw. The garden of Eden is known for its beauty, and the land of Egypt on either side of the Nile is known for its great fertility. This land which Lot looked upon compared with both qualifications. No wonder Lot was attracted by it.

*So Lot chose him all the Plain of the Jordan.* Lot's choice indicates (a) selfishness. It would have been better for Lot to have offered the older man the better grazing land. Youth owes such consideration to age, and lack of such consideration is an indication of an ugly disposition (b) Lot's choice indicates a lack of concern for the welfare of others and a willingness to gain wealth by the impoverishment of others. (c) Lot's choice indicates a greater appreciation of material wealth than for good company. He advanced his worldly fortunes by trading the company of Abraham for that of the ungodly men of Sodom.

*They separated themselves from each other.* This separation does not indicate any bad feelings but simply that they got far enough from each other that there could be no friction between their

herdsmen. But there is a spiritual implication which may be legitimately drawn from the words. It is a sad day in the life of anyone when he separates himself from the company of the godly and pitches his tent toward the world. David praised the man that refused to walk with the wicked or stand with sinners or to sit with the scoffers. (Psalm 1:1.)

*The men of Sodom were wicked.* Our text goes on to say that the Sodomites were exceedingly wicked. It seems that Lot was able to live a godly life in spite of his wicked surroundings, for Peter tells us that God delivered righteous Lot who was “*sore distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked.*” (2 Pet. 2:7.) But he exposed his family to an environment with which they were not able to cope. His children became so worldly that they would not leave Sodom and his wife became so attached that she looked back in spite of God’s warning. Many men today expose their families to godless, churchless environments in order to make money. Let all such be warned by Lot’s experience.

### **III. SOME APPLICATIONS**

1. Selfishness is an ugly trait. It is most unlike Christ. It is doubtful if one can become more un-Christlike than is the selfish individual.
2. Material prosperity costs entirely too much when a man has to lose his family to gain it. Lot paid a fearful price for running water and green pasture. If a man should gain the whole world and lose one child he has been miserably cheated.
3. Abraham was rewarded for his magnanimity. Short pastures with the blessing of God are worth more than green pastures without God. Lot suffered for his selfishness, so we conclude with Peter that God knows how to reward the righteous and how to keep the unrighteous unto the day of punishment. (2 Pet. 2:9.)

## QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 9

### ABRAHAM AND LOT

1. Discuss what is said in the lesson with regard to location of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How complete was the destruction of these cities? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What other city suffered a similar destruction? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What one thing is peculiar to the beatitude of our text? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the business of people who practice our text? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What characteristic is essential in the peacemaker? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Name and discuss several qualifications of peacemakers? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What is the reward of the peacemaker? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Why are peacemakers called the children of God? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Where had Abram been and why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Who accompanied him on his journey? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. Of what did Abram's riches consist? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. What metals are first mentioned in our lesson, and what does that suggest with regard to its production? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. To what place did Abram return and what later characters are mentioned in connection with it? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
15. Did Abram erect an altar in Egypt? \_\_\_\_\_

16. How was Lot related to Abraham? \_\_\_\_\_

17. Name some of Abraham's relatives who left Ur of the Chaldees with him. \_\_\_\_\_

18. What three things contributed to the inability of the land to sustain Abraham and Lot? \_\_\_\_\_

19. Was there strife between Abraham and Lot? \_\_\_\_\_

20. Why is the presence of the Canaanites mentioned in this connection? \_\_\_\_\_

21. What good exhortation did Abraham give Lot? \_\_\_\_\_

22. Why did Abraham say there should be no strife? \_\_\_\_\_

23. What magnanimous offer did Abraham make? \_\_\_\_\_

24. In what sense was Lot worldly minded? \_\_\_\_\_

25. In what respects are people like Lot? \_\_\_\_\_

26. How is the plain of the Jordan described? \_\_\_\_\_

27. Name and discuss three things which Lot's choice indicates. \_\_\_\_\_

28. Who suffered more by this separation, Abraham or Lot? \_\_\_\_\_

29. What is said of the people of Sodom? \_\_\_\_\_

30. How may people today be guilty of the folly of Lot? \_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON NUMBER 10

# THE TRIAL OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH

Gen. 22:1-13

### INTRODUCTION

Men are known to posterity for one or more outstanding traits of character. Abraham is known for his faith. However, we should not conclude that he was perfect even with respect to his faith. There are times when he made mistakes which showed a weakness in his faith, but when we consider the number of tests of his faith and the long period of time involved we are impressed with the strength and depth of his trust in God. The first test of his faith came in his separation from all of his kindred. He was told to leave Ur of the Chaldees to go to some unknown land. His father, brother, and nephew accompanied him on the first leg of the journey. This may not have been displeasing to God, but he certainly had not separated himself from all his family. Terah died in Haran and Nahor chose to remain, but Lot accompanied Abraham into Canaan. Still Abraham was not entirely separated from his kindred. When their herds became too great for the land to bear, Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom and Abraham took to the hill country. At that time Abraham was completely separated from his family. His faith in the promise of God and his trust in God to take care of him and fulfill his promises enabled Abraham to leave his family and live alone among the Canaanites.

Another indication of the greatness of Abraham's faith is the fact that he clung to the promises of God through a long period of childlessness. God had promised to make a great nation of his posterity, yet he had no children. This weighed heavily on Sarah's mind and she attempted to help God fulfill His promises by giving her handmaid, Hagar, to Abraham. Whether Abraham considered Ishmael the heir through whom God was to bless him we cannot know. If he did not, there was a period of nearly twenty-five years after the first promise was made before he had any concrete evidence that the promise would be fulfilled. (Acts 7:2-5; Gen. 12:1-4.)

The third test of Abraham's faith is in his lifelong pilgrimage in the Land of Promise "*as in a land not his own.*" (Heb. 11:8-10.) The fact that Abraham believed that God would give the land to his seed, though Abraham lived and died a stranger in the land, is proof that Abraham accepted the word of God as true with very little concrete evidence. He believed because of God's word and not because God made him owner of any of the land.

### I. KEY SCRIPTURE

*"By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac."* (Heb. 11:17)

**1. Abraham Believed God in Spite of His Natural Inclinations.** Our text has to do with Abraham's offering of Isaac. When God told Abraham to offer his son as a sacrifice, every human and paternal emotion within him must have been stirred. The deed was contrary to every worthy human emotion. The burning of human flesh is repulsive to any good man, but the burning of one's only son is much more repulsive. Hence when Abraham responded immediately to stab and burn his son we see faith

in God triumphing over his human and paternal emotions.

**2. Abraham Obeyed God in Spite of His Understanding of God's Promise.** Abraham believed that Isaac was the child of promise. God had told him that the world was to be blessed through Isaac. This command to offer Isaac in sacrifice seemed contrary to everything God had said with reference to him. Abraham might easily have questioned the commandment since obedience to the commandment seemed to make impossible the fulfilment of the promise. Abraham's faith was such that he asked no questions and made no arguments either to delay or avoid the unpleasant duty. In this connection it is interesting to note that Abraham solved the problem as to how God would fulfill His promise to make a great nation out of Isaac in spite of his death and sacrifice. Abraham believed that God would raise Isaac from the dead. (Heb. 11:19.) But as usual, man's opinion about how God will or should operate is wrong.

**3. Abraham Was Schooled for This Ordeal.** God never brings a trial upon man which he is unable to bear. (1 Cor. 10:13.) Former experiences in the life of Abraham strengthened his faith so that he was able to stand this test. Sarah's conception, in spite of her lifelong barrenness and her old age, was sufficient to convince Abraham that God was able to keep His promises. Paul uses these very difficulties to prove the strength of Abraham's faith. (Rom. 4:16-22.)

**4. Abraham's Faith Was Demonstrated by His Works.** In Rom. 4, Paul emphasizes faith as the condition of Abraham's justification. James emphasizes work as the condition of Abraham's justification. (James 2:20-24.) Some have concluded that James and Paul held contrary views concerning justification. Instead of being contrary they are complementary. Paul emphasizes faith, yet he speaks of walking in the steps of Abraham's faith (Rom. 4:12), which implies obedience. James emphasizes works which proves one's faith "*you see that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect; and the scripture was fulfilled which says, and Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God. Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith.*" (James 2:22-24.)

## II. A COMMENTARY ON GENESIS 22:1-13

### 1. The Command Issued (Gen. 22:1- 4)

*God would prove Abraham.* The Authorized Version uses the word tempt. James says that God does not tempt any man. (James 1:13.) The word tempt sometimes means to induce to sin. God never induces or encourages one to sin. The word tempt is also used in the sense of trying or proving, and God often proves his children. Our lesson has to do with the proving of the faith of Abraham.

*Take now your son, your only son.* Isaac is called Abraham's only son because he is the only son by Sarah. God seems not to have recognized Ishmael as a part of the covenant of promise. The order of words in this command is important. He is first called your son; next, by way of emphasis, your only son; and then it is said, whom you love; and last, that name which brought laughter to Sarah and joy to Abraham is used, even Isaac. These terms no doubt suggest the thoughts which ran through Abraham's mind when the command was given. He would naturally rebel at the thought of offering his son. Then when he reflected that this was the only son of Sarah, the offering would be more difficult. And when he thought of his love for Isaac, the order to sacrifice him was all the more difficult. Either of these considerations might have been urged as a reason for not obeying the

command, but his faith did not waver in spite of these difficulties.

*Get thee into the land of Moriah.* The location of Moriah is not certain, but is supposed to be in the vicinity of Jerusalem. Some have thought that the place of Isaac's offering was the hill of Calvary where God's only Son was sacrificed some centuries later.

*Offer him there for a burnt offering.* This seems to be the greatest trial to which Abraham's faith could be subjected. He had left his kindred and homeland; he had separated from Lot, but now he is called on not only to give up his own flesh, but to destroy his own child. This not only tested his faith in God's promise and his ability to fulfill that promise, but it was a test of his love. In this he proved that he loved God more than his own son.

*Abraham rose early in the morning.* His early start indicates his willingness and readiness to obey God. It also suggests that Abraham put obedience to God first. Many of us could have found enough of our own affairs needing attention to have kept us busy until late in the day.

*On the third day.* Abraham lived at Beersheba, which is more than forty miles from Jerusalem. He travelled two full days and a part of the third. This added to the strength of the trial. For three days he walked along with Isaac contemplating his grim duty. There was plenty of time for reconsideration, the weakening of his faith, and returning home in disobedience. But Abraham's faith wavered not at difficulties, but in the language of Paul "*waxed strong ...being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform.*" (Rom. 4:20, 21.)

## **2. Preparation for the Offering (Gen. 22:5-9)**

*We will worship.* Abraham was assisted on this journey by some of his servants; At a spot "*afar off*" Abraham left these servants saying that he and the lad would go farther to worship. We may presume (1) that Abraham wished to be alone with Isaac in this ordeal. (2) It is possible that Abraham knew that his servants did not share his faith in God and that they might seek to prevent the offering by force; and for these reasons the servants were left behind. Notice that Abraham calls this experience worship. Though grim and terrible in its nature, to Abraham it was an act of worship because God commanded it.

*And come again to you.* Here Abraham shows his faith. He said we will go, and we will worship, and we will come again to you. Abraham expected confidently to bring Isaac back with him, though he was mistaken in his opinion as to how he would be able to do so.

*The wood laid upon Isaac.* Perhaps bearing the wood for this offering was not intended as a type of Christ's bearing his cross, but it certainly reminds us of the statement that Jesus "*went out, bearing the cross for Himself, unto the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha.*" (John 19:17).

*Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?* As Isaac walked with his father toward the place of sacrifice, he asked this question. From this we know that Abraham had not explained the matter to Isaac. We may well imagine that he had not said anything about it to Sarah that he might save her the sorrow and anxiety she would have borne through those days of their absence. This is another indication of the strength of Abraham's faith. He confidently expected to bring Isaac back to Sarah.

*God will provide Himself the lamb.* This can hardly mean that Abraham expected God to provide an animal in the place of Isaac since we are told that Abraham expected God to raise Isaac from the dead. Yet it is difficult to see what Abraham understood by his own statement. It is generally accepted as prophetic with reference to Christ as the lamb for the sin of the world.

*Abraham built the altar.* Altars were little less than a pile of stones on which wood might be arranged for the burning of an offering. In later times twelve stones were used because of the number of the tribes of Israel.

*Bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar.* According to accepted chronology, Isaac was about twenty four years old at this time. Since his father was more than 120 years old, Isaac could easily have prevented the sacrifice. This emphasizes the submission of Isaac as well as the piety of Abraham. Certainly Abraham must have lived a definitely religious life before his son. Otherwise Isaac would not have been willing to co-operate with his father in this action of worship. Our curiosity makes us wonder what Abraham said to Isaac between the events of verse eight and this statement in verse nine. Obviously, Isaac knew nothing of his part in this worship when he asked about the burnt offering. Between the time he asked that question and the time Abraham bound him, some explanation had to be made. His consent had to be gained. Here again we wonder if Isaac's submission is intended to be a type of the submission of Jesus to His heavenly Father in becoming a sacrifice.

### **3. Offering a Test of Faith (Gen. 22:10-13)**

*Abraham stretched forth his hand.* There seems to have been no hesitation on the part of Abraham. The man who would rise early in the morning to start on such a mission would not hesitate to execute the command when the sacrifice lay bound upon the altar.

*The angel of Jehovah called unto him.* This expression, angel of Jehovah is frequently used of the second person of the Godhead. Undoubtedly it is so used here. In verses 1 and 2 of our text, it is said that God appeared to Abraham and sent him on this mission. In verse 12 this angel of Jehovah said, "*you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.*" From a comparison of these verses, it will be seen that God commanded Abraham to offer his son to Him, and that the angel of Jehovah spoke of Isaac as being offered to Him. Hence, we conclude that this angel of Jehovah was none other than God in another form. Jacob saw Jehovah at Bethel when he had the vision of the ladder (Gen. 28:13-16) and he wrestled with God at Peniel (Gen. 32:22-32). But Jacob spoke of this being as the angel in Gen. 48:16, and Hosea says he prevailed over the angel which he found at Bethel "*even Jehovah, the God of hosts; Jehovah is His memorial name.*" (Hos. 12:4,5.) So we may safely conclude that the second person of the Godhead is speaking to Abraham on the occasion in our lesson.

*Now I know that you fear God.* This is accommodative language. God knows all things from the beginning. Certainly He knew that Abraham would stand his test, for all the purposes even down through the gospel age were based upon Abraham's faithfulness. But from this we may learn that obedience to every commandment regardless of how difficult it is manifests a healthy fear of God. This is one quality of faith sorely needed today. People need to fear God. Paul said one reason why the Jewish world apostatized was "*there is no fear of God before their eyes.*" (Rom. 3:18.) Godly fear will cause people to submit to God's way instead of doing things their own way. When people refuse to be buried in baptism and sprinkle water on the head instead, they demonstrate a lack of that godly fear which characterized Abraham.

*You have not withheld your son.* The fact that Abraham was willing to offer his only son, the dearest possession he had, is said by the Lord to be a demonstration of his godly fear. If we make minor sacrifices, giving things of little value or of no further use to us, we cannot say they are proof of genuine love and godly fear. Only when we give our best do we demonstrate our love for God.

*Abraham beheld a ram caught by his horns.* This is what Jehovah provided for the sacrifice, though there is no evidence that Abraham believed such would be done. Jehovah's provision was a substitute for Isaac. Perhaps this is meant to suggest that Jehovah provided a substitute for man generally in the gift of His Son. The joy that must have filled Isaac's heart when he saw this ram take his place on the altar is little in comparison with that which should fill our hearts when we look to Calvary and see Jesus dying in our place. The ram took Isaac's place in temporal death; Jesus suffered in our place to save us from eternal destruction. Man demonstrates himself to be an ungrateful wretch who refuses to acknowledge his gratitude for such a sacrifice.

### **III. SOME APPLICATIONS**

1. Human sacrifice in heathen religions was fairly common in Abraham's day as well as in later Jewish history. This sacrifice on the part of Abraham was a demonstration that the followers of God would make as great sacrifice as the devotees of heathen religions. Do churches of Christ generally make as great sacrifice for the spread of the gospel as denominational people make for the spread of their doctrines?

2. Jesus said, "*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it, and was glad.*" (John 8:56.) This is generally supposed to be a reference to the sacrifice of Isaac. In the provision of the ram to take the place of Isaac Abraham saw typically and prophetically the Son of God given as a substitute for sinners.

## QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 10

# THE TRIAL OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH

1. What was the outstanding characteristic of Abraham? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What was the first test of Abraham's faith? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. When was Abraham completely separated from his family? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What connection is there between Abraham's childlessness and his faith? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the third test of Abraham's faith? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Abraham believed God in spite of what? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Abraham obeyed in spite of his understanding of what? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. How did Abraham think God would keep His promise with reference to Isaac? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. How was Abraham schooled for this ordeal? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. How was Abraham's faith demonstrated? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Show the harmony between James and Paul on faith and works of Abraham. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. What is the meaning of the word tempt? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. In what sense was Isaac Abraham's only son? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. What reasons might Abraham have urged for not offering Isaac? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
15. In what place was the offering to be made, and where was it? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
16. The offering of Isaac tested Abraham in what ways? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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17. What act of Abraham shows his prompt obedience? \_\_\_\_\_

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18. How far did Abraham live from the place of offering? \_\_\_\_\_

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19. Would this distance add to the strength of the trial? \_\_\_\_\_

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20. For what reasons were Abraham's servants left behind? \_\_\_\_\_

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21. What statement of Abraham to his servants indicated his great faith? \_\_\_\_\_

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22. Who carried the wood for the sacrifice and what later incident was suggested by it? \_\_\_\_\_

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23. What significant question did Isaac ask his father? \_\_\_\_\_

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24. About how old was Isaac at the time of the offering? \_\_\_\_\_

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25. What suggests the submission of Isaac? \_\_\_\_\_

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26. Of what is the submission of Isaac probably an anti-type? \_\_\_\_\_

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27. Who prevented the death of Isaac? \_\_\_\_\_

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28. What do you know of this angel of Jehovah? \_\_\_\_\_

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29. Was it necessary for Abraham to go through this ordeal in order that God might know his faithfulness? \_\_\_\_\_

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30. How did Abraham show that he feared God? \_\_\_\_\_

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31. Name some religious practices which indicate a lack of Godly fear in people today? \_\_\_\_\_

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32. What was offered instead of Isaac? \_\_\_\_\_

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## LESSON NUMBER 11

# ISAAC AND REBEKAH

Gen. 24:1-4; 10,11; 23-25; 57,58; 66,67.

### INTRODUCTION

Isaac was the son of Abraham's old age. It has been said that Isaac obeyed the Sermon on the Mount hundreds of years before it was preached. "He was a lover of quiet ...he was not a stuffed specimen of a content, sleek animal. He was a man of industry, as his successful farming and ever-growing riches testify . . . the gentler virtues--and these we take to have been rare in that age--shine with a sweet, pleasing and steady light, like the stars in the heavens .. he steadily maintains the worship of Jehovah, honors the memory of his father, cherishes great affection for his mother, is true to his wife, and works righteousness day by day." (Errett.)

1. He was a good son. Abraham was out with his herds much of the time, so Isaac grew up much in company with his mother. He gave no thought to marriage as long as she lived and refused to be comforted for some time after her death. A boy's character may well be measured by his attitude toward his mother. He was also obedient to his father. No greater evidence of this could be given than his immediate and complete submission to his father's wishes in connection with his sacrifice. Isaac was at least twenty years of age when Abraham bound him upon the altar. He could easily have prevented his aged father from making the sacrifice. In his submission he showed great respect for his father's religion. This is also an indication of his good character.

2. Isaac was a good citizen. He was a man of peace and refused to allow the rough treatment of his neighbors to cause him to fight back. Selfish neighbors took one well after another from him. His kindness and gentleness outlasted the violence of his neighbors. In this matter he practised the doctrines of peace taught by Jesus.

3. Isaac was a good husband and father. He refused to marry a woman of Canaan and at his father's suggestion sent back to Haran for his wife, Rebekah. His father had concubines, but Isaac never loved but one woman. Other men of his time and some of the prominent in the Bible had affairs with other women, but if Isaac ever shared his love for Rebekah, nothing is said about it.

### I. KEY SCRIPTURE

*"He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the LORD."* (Prov. 18:22).

**1. How to Find a Wife.** There are two things that stand out prominently in the selection of a wife for Isaac. The first is that she must not be a woman of Canaan, but one of Abraham's kindred. While there were special reasons for being careful of the family connections in this case, it is always good for young people to give consideration to the family of one they are considering for marriage. It is not best for young people of extreme social circles to marry. There is no intimation in this that a poor child is not as good as one whose parents are rich. It is not a matter of one's standing before God, or of his value to society, but a girl who has been reared in the lap of luxury is not likely to be contented to live

and rear a family in poverty. A young man of learning and refinement will not likely be happy with a girl who has had no opportunities for education and for learning some of the niceties of social life. Hence, serious consideration should be given to the family. Opportunities for getting acquainted should be provided before the case is developed too far. Another consideration should be that of religion. Christian boys and girls should not marry out of the church. Whether such marriages are a violation of a positive commandment is a matter of question. But to Bible students and close observers, there can be no question about the wisdom or advisability of such unions.

**2. Why Is Finding a Wife Good?** First, God said it is not good for man to be alone. (Gen.2:18.) Man is a social being and needs the companionship of woman. Next, a man finds a good thing when he finds a wife because he needs a helper in building a home. Seeing that it was not good for man to be alone, God gave him woman as his companion and then gave them the command to build a home and replenish the earth. And next, man finds good in his wife as a helper in his spiritual life and activities. The intimate companionship of a Christian man with a Christian woman creates an atmosphere in which spirituality thrives. The peace and contentment of a Christian home is fertile soil for the growth of a spiritual character. Lack of companionship between a husband and a wife makes spiritual growth difficult if not impossible. This is another reason why Christians should not marry people who are not Christians. There can be no spirituality in companionship with a child of Satan. Hence, one who has not a Christian wife cannot say he has found a good thing.

**3. The Favor of Jehovah.** Our text says the man who has found a good wife “*obtains favor of Jehovah*” First, this is true because she is looked upon as a gift from God. Eve was no more a gift to Adam than a Christian woman is to a Christian man today. We should make the selection of a mate a matter of prayer. When one has prayed fervently and followed God’s teachings with reference to the selection of a mate, he should feel that the mate is an answer to his prayer. This being true, she is in every sense of the word a gift from God. Next, a Christian wife is a favor of Jehovah because her help is an expression of God’s favor. God made woman to be man’s helper in many ways, and every assistance which she renders is an assistance from God through her. So when man obtains a wife in harmony with God’s will, he enjoys the favor of God through life.

## II. A COMMENTARY ON GENESIS 24:1-4; 10,11; 23-25; 57,58; 66,67.

### 1. The Proper Bride Sought (Gen. 24:1-4; 10,11).

*Abraham was old.* Abraham was one hundred years old when Isaac was born. Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah (Gen. 25:20), so Abraham was 140 years old at this time.

*Jehovah had blessed Abraham.* Our text says Abraham had been blessed in all things. He was a very wealthy man. He had enough servants to engage several petty kings in battle and come off victorious. (Gen. 14:14.)

*The elder of his house.* This perhaps refers to Eliezer of Damascus (Gen 15:2), who would have been heir to Abraham’s possessions if he had died childless.

*Put your hand under my thigh.* This ceremony connected with oaths is mentioned only here and in Gen. 47:20 where Jacob had Joseph to swear in such fashion. The significance of putting the hand under the thigh is uncertain. Calvin and others interpreted it as symbolizing lordship or authority.

Luther and others have regarded the thigh as a symbol of the source of posterity and so the servant is pictured as swearing by Abraham's posterity that he would be faithful in view of that posterity. (See Pulpit Commentary.)

*You will not take a wife for my son of the daughters of the Canaanites.* The reasons for this are: (1) The difference in religion. Abraham was monotheistic in his religion while the Canaanites were polytheistic. Abraham had been given the task of building a nation for God. He knew this could not be done if he mixed believers in the true God with worshippers of idols. (2) The ideals of Isaac were not harmonious with those of heathen families in Canaan. Isaac was reared in a devoutly religious atmosphere. To marry a woman who was an idolater and with the low ideals of the Canaanites would have been to defeat the purposes of God. (3) Isaac was born of a free woman. The Canaanites, though not now in slavery, were condemned and doomed to such position. The land on which they lived was to be given to Abraham's seed. The descendants of the Canaanites were to be driven out or enslaved. For Isaac to marry a woman of Canaan would have meant to mix free men with slaves.

*You shall go unto my country.* Though Abraham came from Ur of the Chaldees, he lived several years in Haran. Ur was in the southern part of Mesopotamia, while Haran was in the northern part. Verse 10 says that they went to the city of Nahor for Isaac's wife. From Gen. 11:27-32 we learn that Nahor, in company with his brother Abraham, went with Terah their father unto Haran where they lived until the death of Terah. At that time Abraham moved down into Canaan while Nahor continued to live in Haran. Hence, the city of Nahor is Haran.

*The servant took ten camels.* It seems that the servant determined what should be taken as presents for the bride. Our text says that he had "*all goodly things of his master's in his hand*" The margin reads, "for all the goods of his master were in his hand." These ten camels were loaded with food for the journey and presents for the bride.

*The time that women go out to draw water.* When the servant reached Haran he went to the city well. Here he knew he would contact someone who could tell him where to find Abraham's people. The statement that women came out to draw water suggests the customs of the day; women did the carrying of the water.

## **2. The Proper Bride Contacted (Gen. 24:23-25).**

*Whose daughter are you?* The servant had prayed that God would show kindness to his master and give him good speed on his mission. He asked that the Lord would give him a signal to show which girl was to be Isaac's bride. This signal was the courtesy of giving the servant a drink and drawing water for his camels. When the servant asked Rebekah for a drink she generously offered not only to give him a drink, but to draw water for his camels. When Rebekah did this the servant knew that his mission was about accomplished. He took a golden ring and two bracelets as the first gifts. From verse 47 we learn that ring was not for her finger, but for her nose. The orientals are very fond of rings and bracelets. Often, the whole arm from the wrist to the shoulder is practically covered. Adam Clarke says that there are seven different parts of the body mentioned in scripture as being ornamented, such as the forehead, the nose, the ears, the arms, fingers, neck, and ankles. The servant not only asked Rebekah whose daughter she was, but if there was room in her father's house for him and his associates to lodge.

*I am the daughter of Bethuel.* This Bethuel is said to be the son of Milcah and Nahor. Nahor was Abraham's brother. Haran was also a brother to Abraham and Nahor; Milcah was the daughter of Haran. Hence Nahor married his niece. To this union eight sons were born. Bethuel was the youngest of the eight. (Gen. 11:27-29; ss: 20-24.) Since Bethuel was the son of Milcah and Nahor, he and Isaac were first cousins, so Isaac and Rebekah were second cousins.

*We have both straw and provender enough.* Eastern hospitality is evident here. The daughter did not have to return home to see whether this stranger could lodge with the family. She was able to give him assurance that he would be welcome in her father's house. Upon being given this assurance, the servant bowed his head and worshipped Jehovah. In the midst of business the servant takes time to thank Jehovah for his kindness. This worship consisted of a prayer of thanksgiving that Jehovah had led him to the house of his master's brethren where he had every right to expect that he would find the bride for Isaac.

### **3. Consent of the Bride and Marriage (Gen. 24:57,58; 66,67)**

*We will call the damsel.* It is necessary to refer to the preceding verses for the connection. Upon leaving the well, Rebekah ran home to show her parents the ring and bracelets the servant had given her. Laban, Rebekah's brother, went to the well to bring the servant to the house. Food was set before him, but he refused to eat until he had told his business. He then related how Jehovah had abundantly blessed his master, saying that God "*has given him flocks and herds and silver and gold, and men-servants and maid-servants, and camels and asses.*" He told of the birth of Isaac, of the oath he had sworn to Abraham to take a wife for Isaac from among their kindred. He told them why he was sure that Rebekah was the Lord's choice for Isaac since she had done what he requested the prospective bride should do when he met her at the well. The servant pressed Bethuel for an immediate answer as to whether they would consider allowing him to take Rebekah. When Laban and Bethuel had talked the matter over, they agreed that "*the thing proceeds from Jehovah: we cannot speak to you bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before you, take her, and go, and let her be your master's son's wife, as Jehovah has spoken.*" The servant then brought jewels of silver and gold and changes of raiment for Rebekah. He also gave gifts to her brother and her parents. The next morning the servant asked to be sent away to take Rebekah to his master. But her parents asked that she be allowed to stay a few days longer. However, the servant insisted that since God had so prospered him in his mission he must not delay his return. It was at this point that they said we will call the damsel to inquire at her mouth.

*Will you go with this man?* This is the question which her parents put to Rebekah. The point of the question was not whether she was willing to go to be Isaac's wife, but whether she would go immediately as the servant insisted. Her answer was, "*I will go.*" Sharing the opinion of her parents and Laban that this might proceed from the Lord, she was willing to go immediately. Had she always been as anxious to do the will of the Lord, she would have avoided some sorrow and would not have been known to posterity as a partial mother and a deceiver of her husband.

*The servant told Isaac all.* When the servant and Rebekah reached Canaan, they found Isaac in the field. Isaac had come from Be-er-la-hai-roi. This is the place where Hagar was found when she fled from Sarai because Sarai had dealt severely with her. The word means "*the well of the living one who sees me.*" (Gen. 16:14.) This is not far from Kadesh, from which place the twelve spies were sent into Canaan. (Deut. 1:19-24.) This was the extreme southern point of the grazing locations of Abraham and Isaac. Isaac had recently been in this section but returned no doubt expecting the servant to come

soon.

*Isaac brought her into his mother's tent.* There seems to have been little ceremony. Perhaps the only necessary ceremony for marriage was the solemn acceptance one of the other in the presence of competent witnesses. In this instance, the servant and his attendants would be sufficient. Whether Abraham was present on this occasion, we cannot know.

*And he loved her.* The truth of this statement Isaac demonstrated over and over through the balance of his life. Her self-sacrifice in leaving her family and friends to come to a strange land to marry a man she had never seen simply because she believed it to be the Lord's will deserved such a reward as the love of Isaac.

*Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.* Sarah died about four years before Isaac's marriage. The fact that Isaac found no comfort during that time emphasizes his love for his mother. This is an indication of the good character of Isaac; it also indicates the fact that man is not complete in himself but needs the love and companionship of woman. Many a young man since has learned to transfer his affection from his mother to his wife. Some have made the mistake of refusing to make that transfer, embarrassing and aggravating their wives by refusing to cut loose from mother's apron strings. It is no more necessary for a wife to break away from her parents for the sake of her husband than it is for the man to break loose from his parents for the sake of his wife. When each has given up parents, it follows that they find comfort in each other such as Isaac found in Rebekah.

### III. SOME APPLICATIONS

1. The success of Isaac's marriage contrasted with the failure of Solomon's marriages will demonstrate the wisdom of Isaac in choosing a wife from his own people and the folly of Solomon in choosing strange women. Solomon made marriages for political and financial reasons. Those who marry for money and position instead of following scriptural principles need not expect to enjoy the blessings of God.

2. It is said that Isaac loved Rebekah and that Rebekah comforted Isaac. Paul teaches husbands to love their wives as Jesus loved the church (Eph. 5:25.) Husbands who love their wives after this fashion may reasonably expect to find them a comfort. Husbands who consider their wives merely a physical and temporal convenience do not deserve and need not expect the comfort which a Christian companion can give.

## QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 11

# ISAAC AND REBEKAH

1. Isaac lived by the principles of what sermon before it was preached? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Discuss Isaac's character as a son. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What of his character as a citizen? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What do you know of Isaac as a husband and father? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What was the first consideration in a wife for Isaac? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Discuss this principle as it applies to young people today? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What was the second consideration and its present day consideration? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Give several reasons why God says woman is good for man. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Give two reasons why a good wife is a favor from Jehovah? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. How old was Abraham at the birth of Isaac? \_\_\_\_\_
11. How old was Isaac at the time of his marriage? \_\_\_\_\_
12. What is said of the wealth of Abraham? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. Who was the elder in Abraham's house? \_\_\_\_\_
14. In what way was the servant required to make an oath to Abraham? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. Give three reasons why Isaac was not to marry a Canaanite? \_\_\_\_\_

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16. To what country did the servant go for Isaac's wife? \_\_\_\_\_

17. With what was the servant equipped for seeking a wife? \_\_\_\_\_

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18. For what did Abraham's servant pray? \_\_\_\_\_

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19. What do you know of ornaments worn by the orientals of that time? \_\_\_\_\_

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20. How was Rebekah related to Isaac? \_\_\_\_\_

21. How was hospitality shown to Abraham's servant? \_\_\_\_\_

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22. What act on the part of Abrahams' servant showed deep piety? \_\_\_\_\_

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23. What shows the diligence of Abraham's servant in accomplishing his business? \_\_\_\_\_

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24. Who was Laban, and what right did he have to determine whether Rebekah should marry? \_\_\_\_\_

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25. On what ground did they finally decide to allow Rebekah to go immediately? \_\_\_\_\_

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26. Where was Isaac when Rebekah first saw him? \_\_\_\_\_

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27. What do you know of the marriage ceremony? \_\_\_\_\_

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28. How long had Sarah been dead, and what of Isaac's mental disposition during that time? \_\_\_\_\_

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29. What is necessary for a husband or a wife to do in order to find comfort in the spouse? \_\_\_\_\_

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## LESSON NUMBER 12

# JACOB AND ESAU

Gen. 27:18-32

### INTRODUCTION

According to the accepted chronology, Jacob and Esau were born 1905 BC. At the time Esau sold his birthright, they were about thirty one years of age. The record says, *“Esau was a skilful hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents.”* (Gen. 25:27.) “The key of Esau’s character is found in the epistle to the Hebrews, where he is styled a profane person --that is, of low order of thoughts and desires, destitute of spiritual affections and aims. He was irreligious; his life was largely one of animal excitement and enjoyment ... present good, present enjoyment was worth more to him than all besides; hence the ease with which he sold his birthright--which had no value except in the distant future, and then a religious value chiefly--for a mess of pottage to make him happy in the present hour.” (Errett) When we first meet Jacob, we see a man of self-sufficiency and selfish ambition. He had a deep appreciation of things spiritual, but his method of obtaining these spiritual values displays his selfishness. “There is such a thing as divorcing religion from morals; and in Jacob’s case his religious faith seems to have had but little control of his conduct,” but the experiences Jacob had on his way to Padan-aram and back made an altogether different character of him. In his early life we read of sharp bargains and deceit, but after his struggle with the angel at Peniel (Gen. 32:22-32), we read of altars erected to God, of family worship, of confession of sin and unworthiness, and of mercy sought through sacrifice.

The date of the events of our lesson is given as 1779 BC which would make Jacob and Esau fifty-seven years of age. We are prone to think of the two as being mere boys when the birthright was exchanged and when the blessing was stolen. Esau was, already married at the time of our lesson. By some it is thought that Jacob was seventy-seven when he left Canaan and that he spent only twenty years in Padan-aram. Those who are interested in a further study of this point should read Adam Clarke’s Commentary, Volume 1, page 197.

### I. KEY SCRIPTURE

*“Therefore, putting away lying, ‘Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,’ for we are members of one another.”* (Eph 4:25).

**1. Putting Away Falsehood.** Jacob is a good example of putting away falsehood. He was a deceiver in the early part of his life. His name means “supplanter,” and Esau complained that Jacob had supplanted him two times. But upon Jacob’s return from Padan-aram, he had seen the folly and the sinfulness of such deception and had put away falsehoods. In recognition of this change, his name was changed by the Lord from “supplanter” to Israel--“a prince with God.” Falsehood is among the things which God hates.

*“There are six things which Jehovah hates; Yea, seven which are an abomination unto him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood; A heart that devises wicked purposes, Feet*

*that are swift in running to mischief, A false witness that utters lies, And he that sows discord among brethren.*” (Prov. 6:16-19.) And again Solomon says that *“lying lips are an abomination to Jehovah; but they that deal truly are His delight.”* (Prov. 12:22.) The attitude of God toward this sin may be seen (1) by the fact that one out of the ten commandments is directed against falsehood-- *“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”* (Ex. 20:16.) (2) In the story of God’s dealing with Ananias and Sapphira we have an indication of God’s attitude toward falsehood in this dispensation. (Acts 5:1-11.) If the Lord were to punish sins as swiftly today as He did in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, there would either be a lot less people in the world or less sin. The fact, however, that the execution of sentence against sin is delayed should not be interpreted to mean that it will not surely be executed. God will not forget such sins in the judgment. (3) Another indication of the Lord’s attitude toward falsehood is the fact that all liars shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. (Rev.21:8.) In this verse liars are associated with murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, and idolaters. When tempted to use the truth recklessly, we should think of this classification and of the consequences visited upon all liars. (4) Another indication of God’s attitude toward this sin is seen in the source of falsehood. Jesus said of Satan, *“When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof.”* (John 8:44b.) Since Satan is the father of lies, those who indulge in falsehoods are the servants or children of Satan. Hence, we ought to put away falsehood.

**2. Speaking the Truth.** Paul lays this duty upon each one of us. God is the source of truth as Satan is the source of falsehood. When we speak the truth, we are speaking that which is of God, and to that extent render Him service. Sometimes it is difficult to speak the truth, for it may bring persecution or ridicule, but these are only tests of our submission to God and our willingness to be like Him in spite of the consequences. Paul says, *“Lie not one to another; seeing that you have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man.”* (Co1. 3:9,10.) Here we are told not to lie because we have put on the new man. Lying is consistent with the old manner of life in Satan’s kingdom, but lying is wholly inconsistent with our new relationship. In our text Paul says we are to speak the truth because we are members one of another. One member of the body should not deceive or harm in any way another member of the same body. For one member of Christ’s body to lie to another member would be like one hand working against the other hand in the physical body.

## II. A COMMENTARY ON GENESIS 27:18-32

### 1. The Deception (Gen. 27:18-22)

*Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau your first-born.* The student should review the first seventeen verses of this chapter, for in these verses we learn that Isaac had instructed Esau to prepare his favorite food so that he might eat and give Esau his blessing. When Rebekah heard Isaac giving such instruction to Esau, she told Jacob to bring her meat so she might cook it before Esau had time to return. She then instructed Jacob to lie to his father in order to secure the blessing. Jacob feared that his father might detect his voice and demand proof that he was Esau. Since Esau was a hairy man, it was necessary for Jacob to put the skins of kids of the goats upon his hands and neck. It is difficult to understand how a mother could teach her son to practice such deception and equally difficult to understand how she could take advantage of her aged husband. Jacob lived to see the folly of such conduct as well as to suffer from such conduct on the part of others.

*How is it that you have found it so quickly.* Rebekah lost no time in preparing the food with which Jacob was to deceive his father. She was bent upon seeing that her favorite son got the blessing. One

of the greatest mistakes we can find in the life of Isaac in connection with his family affairs was that he showed partiality to Esau. Rebekah was equally partial to Jacob. No doubt she thought she was helping to fulfill the prediction made at the birth of her sons concerning their future when Jehovah said, "*The elder shall serve the younger.*" But God does not need deceitful activities to assist in the fulfilment of his predictions. Sarah thought she was helping to fulfil a promise when she gave Hagar to Abraham as his wife, but this only complicated matters. How Jacob would have received the blessing we do not know, but we may be sure that such deception as was practised by Rebekah was not part of God's plan. God's purposes were worked out in spite of the human errors connected therewith.

*The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.* In this we see the care which Isaac exercised in bestowing his blessing. When Jacob brought the food more quickly than Isaac was expecting, Isaac's suspicions were aroused. When he asked how it had been done so quickly, Jacob said, "*Jehovah your God sent me good speed.*" In this statement is an indication of the extent to which one will go to carry his point. Jacob had no scruples in using the name of God to work his deception. The fact that Isaac asked Jacob to come near that he might feel him to see whether he was actually Esau or not is another indication of the care Isaac exercised in bestowing his blessing. This statement concerning the voice of Jacob and the hands of Esau has become a proverb to express duplicity. There are those both in business, social, and religious life who walk one way and act another. Some of it may be due to inconsistencies; some to an inability to make close distinctions and to be logical in their thinking, while others are downright deceitful.

## **2. The Blessing (Gen. 27:23-29)**

*So he blessed him.* "From the time that God entered into covenant with Abraham and promised extraordinary blessings to his posterity, it appears to have been customary for the father of each family in direct line, or line of promise, immediately previous to his death, to call his children around him, and inform them according to the knowledge which it pleased God to give him, how and in what manner the divine blessing conferred upon Abraham was to descend among them. Upon these occasions the patriarchs enjoyed a divine illumination, and under its influence their benediction was deemed a prophetic oracle, foretelling the events of the future with the utmost certainty, and extending to the remotest period of time." (McClintock and Strong, Volume 1.)

*He smelled the smell of his raiment.* Here again we have another indication of the care which Isaac exercised in bestowing his blessing. There is also an indication of the perfection of the cunning and deception of Rebekah. She not only thought of counterfeiting Esau's hairy skin, but she had Jacob to wear some of Esau's clothes in case Isaac should detect the smell of his raiment.

*God give you the dew of heaven.* One peculiarity of the arid section of Canaan was that in spite of the small amount of rain, dews were unusually heavy. As evidence of this, Gideon's fleece collected enough dew during one night to fill a bowl when wrung. (Judg. 6:36-40.) On account of this moisture the land was more productive than it would otherwise have been. Hence when Isaac blesses Jacob with the dew of Heaven, he is giving him prosperity.

*The fatness of the earth.* This is another term which indicates prosperity. It may be taken to mean the choicest produce or the choicest parts of the earth. Since there seems to be a difference between this and that suggested by the dew of heaven, it is probable that the choicest or most productive parts of

the earth are meant.

*Plenty of grain and new wine.* This is the climax of temporal prosperity with which Jacob was blessed. He was to have the choicest parts of the earth, watered with the dews of heaven, producing plentifully the things to make one wealthy.

*Let peoples serve you.* Isaac now turns from temporal prosperity to pre-eminence and dominion in world affairs. The next line shows how peoples were to serve Jacob when it says, “*Nations bow down to you.*” This was fulfilled when the descendants of Jacob entered Canaan and subjected the other nations of that land. Then in the days of David, their dominion was extended far to the north, south, and east.

*Be lord over your brethren.* Jacob is here appointed ruler over Esau and his descendants. This is in keeping with the prophecy made at the time of their birth when it was said, “*The elder shall serve the younger.*” (Gen. 25:23.) We find the elder serving the younger when David slew 18,000 Edomites (instead of Syrians--see margin) in the Valley of Salt. (2 Sam. 8:13ff.) Again Edom’s king accepted the supremacy of Judah (2 Kings 3:9) and Amaziah invaded Edom and slew 10,000 in the Valley of Salt (2 Kings 14:7).

*Cursed by everyone that curses you.* This is somewhat in keeping with the Abrahamic blessing and may be intended to convey all that was contained in that blessing as stated in Gen. 12:3, though the key sentence, “*in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed,*” is omitted.

### **3. Esau Discovers the Deception (Gen. 27:30-32)**

*Esau came in from his hunt.* We are told that Jacob was scarcely out of the presence of Isaac before Esau returned. The wisdom of Rebekah in requiring Jacob to act quickly is seen in the near failure of their scheme.

*Let my father arise and eat his son’s venison.* The characters of Isaac and Esau should be closely examined in this connection. Esau knew that he had sold his birthright and undoubtedly he knew that God had said he was to be the servant of his younger brother. Yet on this occasion, without intending that Jacob should be cognizant of it, he attempts to get the blessing to which he must have known he was not entitled. Isaac also must have known that God had said, “*The elder shall serve the younger.*” And he must have known that this statement meant that Jacob was to have the blessing. Yet he co-operates with Esau in preparing to give the blessing contrary to God’s will. Shall we conclude that neither Isaac nor Esau understood the meaning of God’s statement? Or shall we conclude they understood the statement and they intended to thwart the purposes of God? Our information on this subject is not sufficient to warrant conclusion either way. “Esau was at this time a man of mature age, being either fifty-seven or seventy-seven years old, and must have been acquainted with the heavenly oracle (chapter 25:23) that assigned the precedence in the theocratic line to Jacob. Either, therefore, must have supposed that his claim to the blessing was not thereby affected, or he was guilty of conniving at Isaac’s scheme for resisting the Divine will. Indignation at Jacob’s duplicity and baseness, combined with sympathy for Esau in his supposed wrongs, sometimes prevents a just appreciation of the exact position occupied by the latter in this extraordinary transaction. Instead of branding Jacob as a shameless deceiver, and hurling against his fair name the most opprobrious epithets, may it not be that, remembering the previously expressed will of Heaven, the real supplanter was Esau, who as

an accomplice of his father was seeking secretly, unlawfully, and feloniously to appropriate to himself a blessing which had already been, not obscurely, designated as Jacob's? On this hypothesis the miserable craft of Jacob and Rebekah was a lighter crime than that of Isaac and Esau." (Pulpit Commentary.)

This position is given here for the consideration of the student. The writer neither agrees nor disagrees with the position taken, but believes that it is worthy of studious consideration. Most people have looked upon Jacob and his mother as being the only persons in the wrong, but certainly the point is well taken that Isaac and Esau had every right to know that it was God's will for Jacob to have the blessing.

### **III. SOME APPLICATIONS**

1. Parental partiality is unwise and often leads to grievous sins.
2. God's foreknowledge of man's action enables Him to accomplish His purposes in spite of man's sins.
3. When God uses sinful men to accomplish His purposes, He is not to be judged as the author of their sins, or to condone it, nor are they relieved of their guilt.

## QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 12

### JACOB AND ESAU

1. Give the date of the birth of Jacob and Esau. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How old were they when Esau sold his birthright? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Explain what is meant when Esau is said to have been a profane person. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What is said of Jacob's appreciation of things spiritual? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What is said of the age of Jacob and Esau at the time of our lesson? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Show how Jacob is a good example of putting away falsehood. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Give some Old Testament teaching on falsehood. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What four things in our lesson indicate God's attitude toward falsehood? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What is said of the sources of truth and falsehood? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. With what is lying consistent, and inconsistent? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Who worked with Jacob in this deception? \_\_\_\_\_
12. What mistake did Isaac and Rebekah make in the rearing of their children? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. What good excuse could Rebekah give for her part in the deception? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. How did Isaac manifest his carefulness in bestowing the blessing? \_\_\_\_\_

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15. How did Jacob try to involve God in his falsehood? \_\_\_\_\_

16. What proverb had its rise in the fact of this lesson, and make present day applications of it? \_\_\_\_\_

17. What patriarchal custom was Isaac following? \_\_\_\_\_

18. Were these patriarchs inspired when giving these blessings? \_\_\_\_\_

19. What shows the care which Isaac exercised in giving the blessing? \_\_\_\_\_

20. What shows the cunning of Rebekah in her work of deception? \_\_\_\_\_

21. What is said of the dews of Canaan? \_\_\_\_\_

22. What temporal blessings did Isaac bestow upon Jacob? \_\_\_\_\_

23. What was said of his relation to his brethren and other people? \_\_\_\_\_

24. When did Jacob become the lord over his brethren? \_\_\_\_\_

25. Is it possible that Esau had sinful motives in his effort to obtain the blessing? \_\_\_\_\_

26. Is it possible that Isaac and Esau were as much in the wrong as Rebekah and Jacob? \_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON NUMBER 13

# JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT

Gen. 37:23-36

## INTRODUCTION

Joseph was the son of Jacob by Rachel. The reader will remember that Jacob went to Padan-aram after he had deceived his father and stolen the blessing from Esau. There he met Laban and his family. Laban was Jacob's uncle. Jacob worked seven years for Laban in return for which he was to receive Rachel as his wife. Through deceit of Laban, Jacob found himself married to Leah and was obliged to work seven more years for his favorite, though he was allowed to marry her after his week was fulfilled with Leah. Leah bare Jacob six sons and one daughter. Rachel was the mother of only two children, Joseph and Benjamin. Joseph was born before the family left Haran and Benjamin was born on the way from Bethel to Bethlehem. Rachel died at the birth of Benjamin, leaving her sons to be reared by Jacob's other wives. Being sons of his favorite wife, Jacob bestowed more affection upon them than upon the others, which was the source of envy and jealousy on the part of the other sons. Jacob should have remembered the evils of parental partiality in his father's home. But in spite of such partiality as characterized his father's home, Jacob was even more partial than his father. He made Joseph a coat of many colors. Students of ancient customs agree that this was a mark of distinction and some suggest that it was Jacob's way of indicating his intentions to give Joseph the pre-eminence in the family. Such partiality invariably brings suffering upon the favored child. The disadvantage and ill-treatment from the other children of the family outweigh the favors bestowed by the parent. Such treatment of a child is unfair in the family and usually causes associates in the community to dislike the favored child. Children accustomed to such treatment at home are likely to be disappointed in school and society generally. Children enjoying such favors rarely learn the lessons of self-denial, co-operation, and fair play.

## I. KEY SCRIPTURE

*"And the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him."* (Acts 7:9).

**1. Jealousy Defined.** Webster says that jealousy means "unpleasant fear, suspicion, or resentment, arising from mistrust of another." He also says that it means the state or quality of being jealous. The word jealous is defined as "exacting exclusive devotion; intolerant of rivalry." Our text says that Joseph's brothers were moved with jealousy against him. This means that they were intolerant of his rivalry in the affections of their father. It also suggests their resentment which they bore toward him on account of the special love and favor of their father which he enjoyed.

**2. Jealousy a Moving Force.** Our text says that the patriarchs were moved with jealousy. Jealousy was such a moving force in their hearts that they stooped to inhuman cruelty in the treatment of their brother. We are told that, *"where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed."* (Jas. 3:16.) This does not mean that one who is guilty of jealousy is also guilty of every other vile

deed, for certainly one can be guilty of jealousy without being guilty of many sins. The obvious meaning is that one who is controlled by a jealous disposition will stoop to committing any deed regardless of how vile it is if it seems necessary to gain his point. Men will stoop to lying and murder because of jealousy. Leaders in the church who are ordinarily good men have been known to stoop to lying and underhanded schemes which involved the very life of the church because they were moved with jealousy.

Solomon says that, "*Jealousy is cruel as Sheol; the flashes thereof are flashes of fire.*" (Song of Sol. 8:6.) Sheol is the unseen abode of the dead, taking infants and good men and women as well as the wicked. It spares none regardless of character or accomplishments, so Solomon means to say that jealousy is so cruel that it spares none regardless of character or standing. The only way for us to treat people as they deserve to be treated is to keep our hearts from being moved with jealousy toward them. Again Solomon says, "*For jealousy is the rage of a man; and he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though you give many gifts.*" (Prov. 6:34,35.) This describes a man as being cruel and unrelenting in his vengeance when moved with jealousy. A ransom regardless of how great he will not regard. Jealousy will not allow him to rest content until he has accomplished his evil purposes though many gifts may be offered.

**3. Examples of Jealousy.** From the many Biblical examples we choose (1) that of Miriam and Aaron against Moses. (Num. 16:1.) They were jealous of the position and power of Moses and spoke against him before the people. As usual they tried to hide their jealousy and insisted that their opposition to Moses was due to the fact that he had married a Cushite woman. (2) Korah and others rebelled against Moses accusing him of exercising too much authority. They brought grievous false accusations against him and influenced 250 families among the princes to follow their example of rebellion simply because they were jealous of Moses. (3) A splendid example in the New Testament is that of the elder brother who was jealous of the prodigal's place in the affections of his father when he returned from the far country. (Luke 15)

## II. A COMMENTARY ON GENESIS 37:23-36

### 1. Joseph Sold by His Brothers (Gen. 37:23-28)

*Joseph was come unto his brethren.* Being younger than his brothers and a son of Jacob's favorite wife, Joseph stayed at home more than his brothers. His father used him as an errand boy to check on the activities of his brothers and to bring a report. At the time of our lesson he was on such a mission. His father sent him to Shechem where he supposed the brothers were quartered. But when Joseph arrived at Shechem he was informed by one of that place that his brothers had gone to Dothan.

*They stripped Joseph of his coat.* The brothers took this coat for at least three reasons: (1) To rob Joseph of that which indicated his father's affections; (2) such a coat was an indication of pre-eminence and respect and would be easily identified; (3) they needed something to help them cover their crime. The coat dipped in blood would enable them to deceive their father.

*They cast him into the pit.* This pit was a cistern. In this dry section of the country such cisterns were dug in many places where water would drain into them so that it might be stored for use during the dry season. Obviously, the brothers intended to leave Joseph to starve or they might have intended to fill the cistern and bury him alive.

*They sat down to eat bread.* This indicates something with reference to their characters. They were so cruel and calloused that they could sit down to eat within the hearing of the pitiful cries of their brother begging for his life. It is difficult to understand how men can become so depraved as to treat a young brother in such fashion. Joseph was only seventeen years of age at this time. (Gen. 37:2.)

*A caravan of Ishmaelites was coming.* These traders are called Midianites in verses 28 and 36. Midian was a son of Abraham by Keturah (Gen. 25:2); another son of Keturah was Medan and some versions use the word Medonites in verse 36. The Ishmaelites were descendants of Abraham through Hagar. No doubt the caravan was composed of individuals of these several families. They all lived in the Arabian peninsula around Sinai. It was there that Moses found his wife, who was a Midianite.

*Bearing spicery, balm and myrrh.* These traders had been to Gilead for their merchandise. Gilead is a mountainous region east of the Jordan between Bashan on the north and Moab on the south. Sometimes it is referred to as Mount Gilead, though there is no one mountain which bears that name. Besides abounding in spices and aromatic gums, we are told that Gilead had much rich pasture land, well suited for flocks and herds. These spices were used by the rich in Egypt for perfuming their baths, and myrrh was used for embalming.

*What profit is it if we slay our brother?* This is the language of Judah who seems to have had a less murderous disposition or a more covetous inclination than the rest; the financial opportunity was recognized by Judah. This seems to have been an early characteristic of Jews and has been cultivated by them through the years.

*For he is our brother.* This is another reason given by Judah for selling Joseph in preference to murdering him. However, this seems to have been an afterthought since there was an opportunity to sell him for money. It was not difficult to persuade his brothers to sell Joseph rather than stain their hands with his blood.

*They sold Joseph for twenty pieces of silver.* Under the law of Moses a child from five to twenty years old might be redeemed for twenty shekels or pieces of silver and a grown man might be redeemed for fifty shekels. The price of a full-grown slave under the law of Moses was thirty shekels of silver. (Ex. 21:32.) There is an interesting parallel between Joseph and Jesus. Both were beloved of their fathers and were sent by their fathers to visit their brethren. Both were innocent of any wrong toward their brethren, yet both were sold by their brethren for a few pieces of silver. The sale of Joseph was proposed by Judah; Jesus was sold by Judas, which is the same name. Both became saviors of the people who sold them, though Judas did not take advantage of the saving power of Jesus. The sale and mistreatment of both seemed to be a necessary step towards the salvation effected by each. Joseph suffered in prison with two criminals and Jesus suffered on the cross between two thieves. Joseph foretold the deliverance of one of his fellow prisoners and the death of the other; Jesus saved one of the thieves, while the other perished for his crimes. While these parallels are interesting, we should not necessarily conclude that Joseph was intended to be a type of Jesus Christ.

## **2. Joseph's Father Deceived (Gen. 31:29-36)**

*Reuben returned unto the pit.* It was Reuben who saved Joseph from death by suggesting that he be put into the pit. He made this suggestion “*that he might deliver him out of their hand, to restore him*

to his father.” (Gen. 37:22.)

*The child is not; and I, where shall I go?* Reuben was troubled enough over this affair to rend his clothes, but he seems not to have had the courage to tell his father the truth. This statement, “*Where shall I go*” is about the same as our common expression, “What shall I do?” It was commendable in Reuben to wish to save his brother and to be distressed at his disappearance, but we lose sight of this when we see him taking part in the deception of his father with reference to the disappearance of his brother. The fear and weakness which he exhibited are about as contemptible as the jealousy and consequent mistreatment of the rest of the brothers. There are modern day Reubens who would like to see right prevail but who have not the courage to suffer the consequences entailed in making the right prevail. People often see conditions in both the church and community which they deplore, but they have not the necessary zeal and courage to institute a crusade of betterment.

*They dipped the coat in blood.* In order to deceive their father these men killed a goat, dipped Joseph’s coat in its blood, and brought it to their father. This is cruelty in its lowest degree. They not only are guilty of deception, but they cruelly contrived to break their father’s heart.

*Know now whether it is your son’s coat or not.* First these men lied to their father. They said, “*This have we found.*” They did not find the coat; they took it off Joseph. Next, they practised deceit; as they handed the coat to their father they asked him to judge whether it was his son’s coat or not. By this they implied that they did not know whether the coat belonged to Joseph or not. An implied lie is as bad as one expressed.

*Joseph is without doubt torn in pieces.* This was Jacob’s conclusion after looking at the coat. It was the conclusion which his sons intended he should reach. It was the only conclusion he could reach with the evidence submitted.

*Jacob mourned for his son many days.* As was customary on such occasions, Jacob rent his garments and put sackcloth upon his loins, and though his children attempted to comfort him he refused to be comforted. Again we see the hypocrisy and deceit of these ten sons when they along with his daughters rose up to comfort him. How hollow must have been their expressions of comfort. Jacob had but one daughter, Dinah, a child by Leah, but likely his sons’ wives are included in this mention of daughters who comforted him.

*I will go down to Sheol to my son mourning.* This is Jacob’s response to his children in their efforts to comfort him. He expected to go to his grave feeling the loss of his son. But subsequent history tells us that Jacob was allowed to enjoy the company and the sustaining love of Joseph in his latter days. About twenty years later Jacob’s sons were sent to Egypt to buy corn. There they found Joseph the second ruler of the land. On finding that the brothers had changed in character, Joseph revealed himself to them and sent wagons for the removal of the family. About seventy souls were moved to Egypt where they lived in the Land of Goshen.

*The Midianites sold him unto Potiphar.* Potiphar is said to have been the captain of the guard, or as the margin says, chief of the executioners. This Potiphar is said to have been an officer, which word is the translation of the Hebrew word used for eunuch. Adam Clarke says that it should be so translated and says that examples might be given of eunuchs maintaining families and even a harem, but the Pulpit Commentary says the word is employed here to denote simply an officer or courtier

without any reference to the primary signification. However, no other such use of the word is cited, either in the Bible or other literature. It was Potiphar's wife who caused the arrest and imprisonment of Joseph.

### **III. SOME APPLICATIONS**

1. Jacob learned a truth so aptly expressed by Paul that men “*reap what they sow.*” He deceived his father and in turn was deceived by his sons.
2. Our misfortunes are often blessings in disguise. Though Joseph suffered by being sold into Egypt, he was thereby placed in position to save his family later. At the conclusion of events he realized that God had sent him to preserve his family in time of need.
3. God had one purpose in sending Joseph into Egypt, but the brothers had another. God overruled their wicked purpose and brought good to the family in spite of their wickedness.

## QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 13

# JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT

1. Review Jacob's experiences in Laban's house. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Who was Joseph's mother and brother? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Where was Joseph born? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Why did Joseph and Benjamin receive better treatment from their father than their brothers did? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How did Jacob show his partiality? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Of what was his coat of many colors an indication? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. How does parental partiality affect a child? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What is the definition of jealousy? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Discuss jealousy as a moving force in the lives of people. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What does Solomon say of jealousy? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Discuss three Biblical examples of jealousy. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. What were Joseph's duties in the home? \_\_\_\_\_

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13. Give three reasons why Joseph's brothers took his coat. \_\_\_\_\_

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14. What indicates that Joseph's brothers were cruel and hardhearted? \_\_\_\_\_

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15. How old was Joseph at the time he was sold? \_\_\_\_\_

16. To whom was Joseph sold and from whom descended? \_\_\_\_\_

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17. In what were these Ishmaelite traders dealing? \_\_\_\_\_

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18. Which of the brothers saved Joseph from death? \_\_\_\_\_

19. For how much money did they sell him? \_\_\_\_\_

20. Develop the parallel between Joseph and Christ. \_\_\_\_\_

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21. What did Reuben intend to do with Joseph? \_\_\_\_\_

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22. How did the brothers deceive their father? \_\_\_\_\_

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23. Did the brothers actually lie to their father, or leave him to reach an untrue conclusion? \_\_\_\_\_

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24. How did the sons continue to practise deceit on their father? \_\_\_\_\_

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25. What did the Midianites do with Joseph? \_\_\_\_\_

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