

Adult
SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS July—September 1985



**Beginnings and
Belonging**



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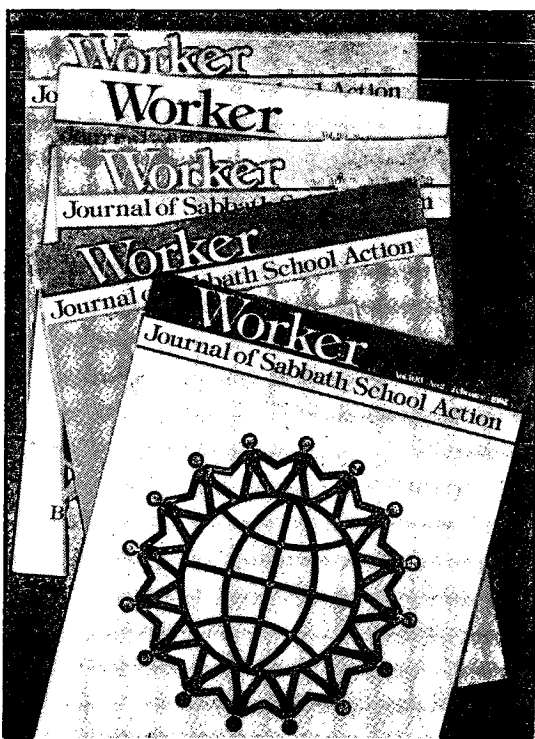
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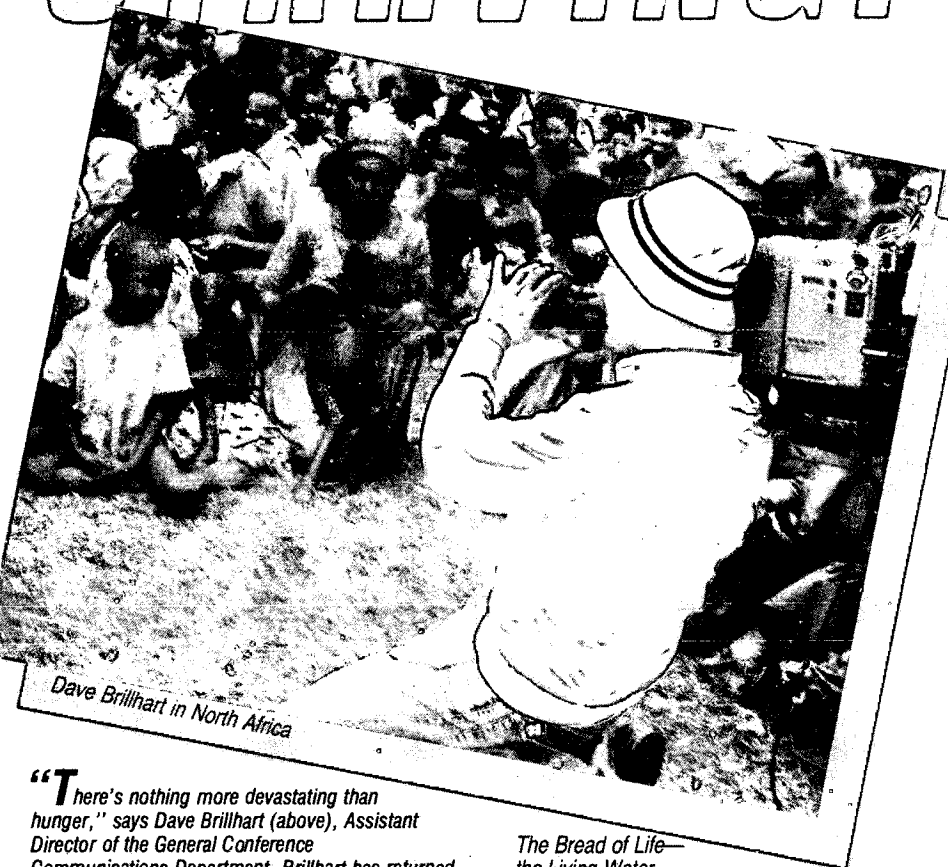
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STARVING!



Dave Brillhart in North Africa

"There's nothing more devastating than hunger," says Dave Brillhart (above), Assistant Director of the General Conference Communications Department. Brillhart has returned recently from North Africa where the people are in the throes of one of the worst famines in the Earth's history. "To see a tiny child die for lack of a nutritional supplement costing only a few cents simply is soul wrenching."

Not only are the African people hungry, but they also are starving for the Bread of Life and thirsting for Living Water. Many Africans long to read about Christ in their own languages. Your generous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering on September 28 will help the Advent Press in Accra, Ghana, obtain the new printing press needed to produce high quality Christian literature for millions of West Africans in the Africa-Indian Ocean Division.

The Bread of Life—
the Living Water—
You can give these gifts of eternal life to the spiritually starving.

**SPIRITUAL STARVATION—
You can help stop it.
Thirteenth Sabbath Offering
September 28**



My Personal
Giving Plan

Introduction to Genesis

Beginnings and Belonging

“Who am I?” “Where do I come from?” “Why am I here?” “Where am I going?” “Does life have meaning?” “What is the origin of pain, alienation, and death?” Amid the confusion of responses and opinions suggested throughout history, the book of Genesis and the rest of the Bible confidently answer these all-important questions. While other explanations may contain elements of truth, Scripture, as the revelation of the Creator, boldly claims to provide ultimate truth.

Genesis is a book of beginnings. It describes the origin of earth, sky, order, fauna, flora, humankind, marriage, society, ethics, history, culture, science, labor, love, grace, salvation, faith, providence, distrust, sin, passion, pain, alienation, and judgment. However, because Genesis also indicates that God is self-existent, we can be confident about meaning and purpose in life. Sin and its resultant tragedy are temporary, although powerful intruders. God not only is the first word but also the last word. He will guide His handiwork to its glorious destiny.

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF GENESIS

The Beginning of All Things Chapters 1-11	The Beginning of God's People Chapters 12-50
Creation (1:1-2:25) The Fall (3:1-24) The Antediluvians (4:1-5:32) The Flood (6:1-9:29) Origin of the Nations (10:1-11:32)	Abraham (12:1-25:18) Isaac (25:19-26:35) Jacob (27:1-37:1) Joseph (37:2-50:26)

The Way of Faith

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Overview of the Book of Genesis.

DAY 1 **MEMORY TEXT:** "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The book of Genesis reminds us of our origin and our inestimable value to God and reveals that the way of faith leads from Eden lost to Eden restored.

OVERVIEW: The book of Genesis can be divided broadly into two parts that are linked and interlaced with genealogies. The first section outlines *primal* or *primeval* history (the earliest history of the world), spanning Genesis 1 through 11. In contrast with most of the Old Testament, this record of early history has as its subject the world and the human race in its totality. The second part of Genesis, consisting of chapters 12 through 50, known as *patriarchal* history, narrows the earlier global perspective down to a particular family in a specific geographical region.

INTRODUCTION: The book of Genesis contains much helpful instruction for Christians today. Here the Creator provides His answers to the mystery of the origin of humanity and the world. This book meets our intense need to belong by declaring that our roots are in the heart and hand of God. His words and works point up our extraordinary value.

The book of Genesis goes beyond the question of beginnings and, as does the rest of the Old Testament, points to the consummation of God's purpose and design. Inspiration offers an explanation of the world in which we live and accounts for both the good and the evil that characterize our existence. We are assured that sin will not have the last word. The heroes of the book are pilgrims who invite us to join them in discovering what is best in this world and the excellence of the "better country, that is an heavenly" (Heb. 11:16).

The book of Genesis may be likened to a treasure chest filled with an abundance of gems. During this week we propose to focus on several of its many treasures. We will review particularly those themes that reveal the Lord of creation and His constant affection for those He created. Once more we will be reminded of our magnificent God and our own lofty origin, inalienable identity, and illustrious destiny. We conclude our lesson with the observation that the promises and expressions of hope found in the book of Genesis carry us beyond its pages. They point to a new heaven and a new earth where faith gives way to sight and Jesus rules forevermore.

I. BACKGROUND AND AUTHORSHIP.**1. Authorship.**

The Pentateuch (the first five books found in our modern Bibles) itself gives evidence that Moses was its author. The books that begin with Exodus and end with Deuteronomy intertwine the life and work of Moses with the events that they record. They also include lengthy speeches of Moses and refer to other material that he wrote. (See for example Ex. 17:14; 24:3-7; Num. 33:2.) In addition, the form of the book of Deuteronomy corresponds to a style of Near-Eastern treaties that predominated in the Mosaic age but virtually disappeared after that period.

Nevertheless, the Pentateuch largely is written as history and biography rather than as autobiography (such as the memoirs of Nehemiah). There also is evidence for later additions (for example, the report of Moses' death and burial in Deuteronomy 34:5, 6) and updating (for example the place named Dan; compare Genesis 14:14 with Judges 18:29).

How does the New Testament support Moses' authorship of the Pentateuch? Compare Mark 12:26 with Exodus 3:6.

The New Testament supports the fact that the Pentateuch was written by Moses. Ellen White, reflecting on the sojourn of Moses in the desert of Midian, commented: "Here, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he wrote the book of Genesis."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 251.

2. Historical Genuineness.

COMPARE as many of the following passages as time allows:

1. Matt. 19:3-8 and Gen. 1:27; 2:24.
2. Luke 17:26-30 and Gen. 6 and 19.
3. Rom. 4:3, 9-21 and Gen. 15:4-6; 18:11.
4. Heb. 11:3-22 and Gen. 1:3-26; 4:4; 5:24; 6:13, 22; 12:1, 4.

What do these later references to events in the book of Genesis imply about the historical genuineness of Genesis?

Later Bible references to specific aspects in Genesis demonstrate no hesitancy on the part of Jesus and the writers of the Bible to accept the details of the Creation story and other accounts recorded in the first book of the Old Testament. Indeed, some of the references make these details of Genesis the basis for teachings that would collapse were they without historical basis.

II. HOW GENESIS PICTURES GOD.

The book of Genesis is first and foremost a revelation of God. In this first book the Bible opens to our view many splendid facets of the God whom we still worship today.

DAY

3

1. Divine Preexistence and Power.**SEARCH AND LEARN: How is God depicted in the following passages?**

Gen. 1:1 _____

Gen. 14:19, 22 _____

Gen. 18:23-33 _____

Gen. 48:15 _____

The first book of the Bible rings with the might and power of God. He is seen as the Creator, Judge, Exemplar, Sustainer, Most High, Almighty, and Everlasting God. As the Sovereign He not only exists before everything but also brings everything into existence.

However, the God of Scripture is not simply the All Holy, or some detached and distant deity, He also demonstrates intense concern over the welfare, progress, and happiness of His creatures.

2. Divine Purpose and Planning.

What assurances does Genesis offer that human destiny is guided by a divine purpose and plan? Gen. 1:26; 3:15; 15:13-15.

The Creation story in Genesis not only maintains a distinction between the Creator and the creature but also reveals that creation is the product of the divine will rather than a result of blind forces of chance. Similarly, the rise and fall of nations testify to God's purpose. Eliezer was convinced that Providence had led him to find Rebekah; and Joseph had no doubt that, although from a human perspective so many years of his life seemed cruelly wasted, God's purpose had been realized in his life. Likewise, the experiences of Jacob and Esau reassure us today that no amount of human stubbornness, deceit, or faithless scheming can thwart the carrying out of God's will and purpose.

How does the New Testament reinforce the truth that there is a divine plan? Acts 2:23; Gal. 4:4.

Although human research may detect no more than causes and effects in history, Scripture claims that God accomplishes His will quietly, steadily, and unperturbed by human schemes. This divine plan gives meaning to our lives.

DAY

4

3. Divine Interest in and Contact with Earth.

What examples illustrate the living contact between heaven and earth? What agencies does God employ to care for His human children? Gen. 19:12-17; 28:12-15.

“Heaven is brought near to earth by that mystic ladder, the base of which is firmly planted on the earth, while the topmost round reaches the throne of the Infinite. Angels are constantly ascending and descending this ladder of shining brightness, bearing the prayers of the needy and distressed to the Father above, and bringing blessing and hope, courage and help, to the children of men. These angels of light create a heavenly atmosphere about the soul, lifting us toward the unseen and the eternal. . . .

“... It would be well to remember that every true child of God has the cooperation of heavenly beings. Invisible armies of light and power attend the meek and lowly ones who believe and claim the promises of God.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 153, 154.

SEARCH AND LEARN: While Genesis speaks of God as the all-powerful Creator, it also depicts Him as intensely personal. Look up at least two of the following examples: Gen. 1:26, 27; 2:7; 3:8; 5:24; 6:8, 13-18; 18:17.

The God of power is the God of love who revealed Himself millenniums later in the life, work, and words of Jesus. (Compare Heb. 1:2.) God is delighted by His handiwork, grieved by sin, and open to man's prayer. He saves from danger and folly, remains faithful in spite of human unfaithfulness, and bestows His supreme regard upon the human family.

4. Divine Justice and Loving Purpose.

While God lavishes His grace and love upon His human children, what is His attitude toward sin and the sinner? Gen. 3:14, 16-19, 24.

Divine love ceases to be love if it permits sin and destructive forces to go unchecked. Moses testified to the fact that, although God's mercy bears long with a sinner, there is a limit beyond which the sinner can no longer receive mercy.

“The Saviour watches for a response to His offers of love and forgiveness, with a more tender compassion than that which moves the heart of an earthly parent to forgive a wayward, suffering son. . . . But if the erring one persistently refuses to heed the voice that calls him with pitying, tender love, he will at last be left in darkness. The heart that has long slighted God's mercy, becomes hardened in sin, and is no longer susceptible to the influence of the grace of God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 165.

SEARCH AND LEARN: Study as many of the following texts as you need to in order to learn what Genesis indicates about how fair God is: Genesis 3:11-13; 4:10; 6:3, 5, 11, 12; 11:5; 18:21.

The pattern of Creation, Fall, destruction, and re-creation that summarizes Genesis 1 through 11 points to the final judgment and salvation of God's remnant.

III. THE CROWNING ACT OF CREATION.

1. Noble Beginnings.

Scripture avows that "God is love" (1 John 4:8). Because true love cannot exist apart from community, God created beings who could both love and be loved.

What privileges and responsibilities were bestowed upon Adam and Eve by virtue of their creation in the divine "image" and "likeness"? Gen. 1:26-28.

Even after the Fall, humanity, although in constant need of renewal in the likeness of Christ, still is considered to be in God's "image." What does this fact tell us about our origin, identity, and value? Gen. 9:6; James 3:9; 1 Cor. 11:7.

The biblical doctrine of creation affirms the potential within every human being regardless of sex, race, color, or standing in society. Although sin has deprived us of innate goodness, the doctrine of creation and redemption stresses the inestimable value and importance that all of us possess. When we realize what it means to be made in the image of God we will be conscious of unique qualities such as conscience, self-awareness, freedom, decision, creativity, and the ability to value and be valued. The Bible story insists that we are precious to God and invites us to love those who, through creation, are our brothers and sisters.

How did the Creator demonstrate the value of social relationships? Gen. 2:18-24.

Created for community, we can reach up to our Creator and reach out to our fellow creatures. Being in the image of God enables us to commune with our Maker and with one another.

Marriage is the basis and continuation of human life and society. Even though social, economic, and psychological reasons may be advanced for marriage, it is the biblical pattern that invests it with deeper meaning and characterizes it as an indissoluble bond.

"A well-ordered Christian household is a powerful argument in favor of the reality of the Christian religion—an argument that the infidel cannot gainsay. . . . If the homes of professed Christians had a right religious mold, they would exert a mighty influence for good. They would indeed be the 'light of the world.' "—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 144.

How did God provide for the physical, aesthetic, intellectual, and moral needs of His creatures at Creation? Gen. 1:29-31; 2:2, 3, 16, 17.

DAY 2. The Legacy of Faith and of Distrust.

6 In the book of Genesis human choices most often were based upon sight, taste, touch, sound, and reason rather than on faith. Eve, Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and a host of others sometimes followed the voice of the creature rather than the clear word of God. Cain chose his own mode of worship while Abel trusted himself completely to the merits of Another. Ever since, righteousness by works has been in conflict with righteousness by faith.

RECALL: Although by nature the biblical heroes were as prone to sin as their contemporaries, what examples can you think of that reveal that divine grace enables people to rise above the level of their selfish propensities?

Genesis reminds us that the way of trust in God's love and wisdom is more beneficial than any attempt on our part to gain our own wishes. Believing the promise of Genesis 3:15, Adam called his wife "mother of the living," and Eve saw in Cain and Seth anticipations of the Seed, if not the Seed. By faith Noah obeyed God and built the ark. He and his family entered it in spite of a mocking crowd. By faith Abraham chose Canaan and was willing to offer Isaac. By faith the line of God's family continued through Jacob rather than through Esau. By faith Joseph rose to prominence and preeminence and Ephraim superseded Manasseh. These four generations of the family of Abraham reveal the superiority of the way of faith over the path of sight. But it was not the easiest way to travel.

"It is one of the strongest evidences of the truth of Scripture, that facts are not glossed over, nor the sins of its chief characters suppressed. . . .

"Men whom God favored, and to whom He entrusted great responsibilities, were sometimes overcome by temptation and committed sin, even as we at the present day strive, waver, and frequently fall into error. Their lives, with all their faults and follies, are open before us, both for our encouragement and warning. If they had been represented as without fault, we, with our sinful nature, might despair at our own mistakes and failures. But seeing where others struggled through discouragements like our own, where they fell under temptation as we have done, and yet took heart again and conquered through the grace of God, we are encouraged in our striving after righteousness."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 238.

IV. THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

The theme of promise of descendants, land, and salvation binds together the narratives within Genesis and links Genesis to the rest of Scripture. The genealogies and the table of nations testify to the fulfillment of God's blessings given at Creation, as do also the patriarchal narratives. Genesis begins the movement from promise to fulfillment that extends beyond the Pentateuch and, according to the New Testament, meets its final realization in the "better country, that is, an heavenly" (Heb. 11:16). The first book of the Bible began with the vibrant life of creation and concluded with a coffin. Nevertheless, the patriarchs did not die in despair but died full of faith and hope. Beyond both Egypt and the grave they anticipated a better land.

SEARCH AND LEARN: What common themes can you discover in both Genesis and Revelation? How are they related to each other? Compare:

- Gen. 3:8-10 with Rev. 21:3 _____
- Gen. 3:17 with Rev. 22:3 _____
- Gen. 3:22 with Rev. 22:2 _____
- Gen. 3:23 with Rev. 21:25 _____

The last chapters of the book of Revelation, which return to the first chapters of the book of Genesis, conclude with the elimination of suffering and death. Humanity excluded from the divine presence because of sin has found readmittance because of grace. Joseph's final words, "God will surely visit you" (Gen. 50:24), are taken up and consummated in the assurance of Jesus, "Surely, I come quickly" (Rev. 22:20).

DAY

7

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chapter 1, "Why Was Sin Permitted?"

Meditate on the following: "The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 678.

SUMMARY: In the book of Genesis, Inspiration offers us an explanation of the world in which we live. It explains our yearning for happiness, goodness, beauty, and eternal life, as well as those jagged experiences in our existence such as selfishness, sin, sickness, sadness, and death. Genesis clarifies how it all began and intimates how it all will end.

APPLICATION:

- Do I recognize my noble origin and value as a child of God?
- Do I realize that I am the subject of God's supreme regard?
- The Lord tells me that He covets my presence in His new creation, the first fruits of which I already am experiencing. Will I accept His invitation without reservation?

NOTES:

Creation

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Genesis 1.

DAY 1 **MEMORY TEXT:** "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth."
 "For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Ps. 33: 6, 9).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Neither accident nor forces of chance but a loving, caring God was responsible for the creation.

OVERVIEW: The Creation Pattern in Genesis 1:1-2:3.		
Verses 1, 2—GOD CREATED		
Formed	Elements	Filled
Day 1 (verses 3-5) Divided light from darkness	LIGHT	Day 4 (verses 14-19) Light sources seen in the firmament
Day 2 (verses 6-8) Divided waters from the waters	FIRMAMENT WATER	Day 5 (verses 20-23) Fowl in firmament Water creatures in sea
Day 3 (verses 9-13) Divided waters from land Vegetation created	EARTH VEGETATION	Day 6 (verses 24-31) Animals, man on earth Vegetation for food
Genesis 2:1-3—GOD RESTED		

INTRODUCTION: The biblical account of Creation gives purpose, meaning, and value to our existence. The opening verse of the Bible not only indicates the preexistence and power of our beneficent God but gives the lie to such human philosophies as atheism, polytheism, pantheism, materialism, and fatalism.

Genesis 1 implies that the Creator must be superior to His creation while at the same time being intimately involved with His handiwork. Particularly, the creation of human beings in the image of God invests humanity with dignity and responsibility. All people are created equal, and all are accountable. To be "in the image of God" means, among other things, (1) that our lineage originates with God, and (2) that we are answerable to such questions as "Adam, where are you?" and "Where is your brother?"

Finally, this doctrine of a supernatural beginning justifies the doctrine of a supernatural end to this world and a new supernatural beginning.

DAY
2

I. "IN THE BEGINNING" (Gen. 1:1, 2).

1. Opening Summary (verse 1).

The book of Genesis begins with a summary statement that sets forth the biblical record of origins. The remainder of chapter 1 unfolds the majestic summary of verse 1 and describes in well-defined literary units how our globe was made into a life-supporting world.

NOTICE who it is that is the subject of the first statement in the Bible.
Verse 1.

What does the New Testament indicate as to the identity of the Creator?
John 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-20; Heb. 1:2, 3, 10-12.

Nature's Creator rather than the process of creation is the subject of Genesis 1 and indeed remains the primary focus in the rest of this chapter. The word *God* punctuates the 31 verses of this chapter 32 times and rebukes perverse human curiosity that musters a greater passion for the knowledge of nature than for a knowledge of the God of nature.

Because a benevolent Creator precedes the Creation we may rest assured that His creative activity follows a divine plan and has meaning.

SEARCH AND LEARN: Indicate below what words are used in Genesis 1 to designate the creative process besides the verb "to create."

Verse 3 _____

Verse 4 _____

Verse 7 _____

Verse 17 _____

God created by means of a commanding word (verses 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24; compare Ps. 33:6-9) or by using the matter which He already had brought into existence. Ultimately, the Creator precedes all matter (Heb. 11:3). "The theory that God did not create matter when He brought the world into existence is without foundation. In the formation of our world, God was not indebted to pre-existing matter."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 258.

What time references begin and end the account of Creation?
Gen. 1:1; 2:2.

"To the question: When did God create 'the heaven and the earth'? we can only answer, 'In the beginning.' And to the question: When did God complete His work? we can only answer, 'On the seventh day God ended his work.' ...

"These remarks regarding the creation account are made, not in an attempt to close the discussion, but as a confession that we are unprepared

to speak with certainty beyond what is clearly revealed. The very fact that so much rests upon the creation record—even the whole edifice of Scripture—prompts the devout and prudent Bible student to conform his declaration to the explicit words of Holy Writ. . . . There is always safety within the protecting bounds of Scriptural quotation marks.”—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 208.

Although it is plain that the Bible offers no date for the “beginning” discussed in verse 1, the entire chapter makes it clear that it took only a few days to begin life on this planet, not the millions of years proposed by biological evolution.

DAY

3

2. First Stage of Creation (Gen. 1:2).

What does verse 2 tell us about the condition of the earth at the beginning of Creation?

The phrase “without form, and void” depicts an environment without shape, form, and light, and void of plant and animal life; in short, a non-life-supporting globe.

Through the centuries several commentators have suggested that verses 1 and 2 envisage an “original” and “perfect” creation ruled by Lucifer that rebelled and was reduced by God to a chaotic state. According to this theory, which Seventh-day Adventists reject, an unspecified and long gap of time exists between verses 1 and 2 that accounts for both the fossil sediment and geological eras. Such an interpretation is unjustified on the grounds of the Hebrew construction used to introduce verse 2 which reads “And the earth *was*” and not “And the earth *became*” as required by this theory.

How is the action of the Holy Spirit described in the second half of verse 2?

The “deep” like the “face of the waters” refers to the watery surface of the planet over which the Holy Spirit hovered watchfully and protectively. (The Hebrew word for “moved” or “hovered” also is used in Deuteronomy 32:11 to describe a mother eagle caring for its young.) A watery deep also figures in the so-called Babylonian creation story (*Enuma Elish*) where, however, it is personified as a deified water monster in combat with other deities. Genesis 1:2 knows nothing of such a war. In fact, the *Enuma Elish* is not a creation story as such but a hymn in honor of the god Marduk, and celebrates Marduk’s ascendancy over the rest of the Babylonian deities.

In sum, verse 2 depicts planet Earth at the beginning of Creation week empty, without form, covered with water, and enshrouded with darkness. All the while the Holy Spirit was waiting, ready to assist in the next phase of creation. The first two verses of Scripture represent God as a loving God intimately concerned with His creation. Today He still watches over the creation of His hands, ready through His Holy Spirit to recreate hearts that are empty and enshrouded with darkness.

II. "FORM" AND "FULLNESS" (Gen. 1:3-25).

1. Days One Through Three (verses 3-13).

Referring to the overview chart that begins this lesson will help us understand that the work of the first three days gave "form" to Creation and the creative activity of the last three days gave "fullness" to the "form."

How essential was the creation of light? Verses 3-5.

It was not an explosion of light but the sound of God's voice that began the movement of the first day. Up to that point darkness alone had enveloped the globe. But as light poured in, a sort of twilight came into existence amidst the watery mass and separated "day" from "night." Darkness was not abolished. Instead it was subordinated and, finally as a part of the entire Creation, was declared to be "very good" (verse 31).

According to verses 5, 8, 13, 19, 23, and 31 what part of the day begins the daily cycle and what implication does this have for us?

The duration of each of the six days of the Creation week mentioned in Genesis 1 is literally described as "evening was, morning was." The combination "evening (implying the following hours of the night)" and "morning (including the succeeding hours of the day)" designates clearly a literal day. In referring to the days of Creation week, the fourth commandment reinforces this conclusion (Ex. 20:11). So does the suggestion that whenever an ordinal number modifies the Hebrew word *day* it designates a day marked off by one complete rotation of the planet. Much later the Hebrews still commenced the day with sunset and ended it with the following sunset recognizing that "evening and morning" were essential components of a standard twenty-four-hour period. (See Lev. 23:32.) The notion that the days of Creation designate long and undefined periods of time was introduced on other than scriptural grounds and is unjustified.

Note the accomplishments of the second day of Creation. Gen. 1:6-8.

The expanse of the "firmament" separated the water that had enveloped the earth into two separate entities. Commentators generally identify the waters above the expanse with a cloudlike or water-vapor mass and those below with oceans, seas, lakes, and rivers.

With what does the Bible writer identify "heaven" in verse 8?

This account is written from the standpoint of a hypothetical observer based on the surface of our planet. Thus heaven would refer to the "atmosphere" or "sky" without which life as we know it would be impossible.

What two creative acts occurred on the third day? Verses 9-13.

What definition of “earth” is offered in verse 10?

Although the dry portion of our planet is designated “earth” in this verse, this definition would not apply to verse 2 in which the “earth” was still completely enveloped by water.

In the manner in which Moses classifies, distinguishes, and defines what God has done, we see signs of what today would be termed scientific description. The repeated phrase “after their kind” suggests that different and distinct kinds of plants and animals were created at the same time. While Genesis does not deny variation within a species, it does not support the notion that plants and animals evolved from lower to higher forms of life.

DAY
5

2. Days Four Through Six (Gen. 1:14-25).

With the creation of the life-giving properties of light and air, skies above, and verdant and solid land bordered by terrestrial waters below, the basic characteristics of the world were completed on the third day. “Form” had been imparted where there had been no form. The next three days were to provide the “fullness” as the Lord filled earth, sea, and sky.

What is the significance of what God did on the fourth day of Creation week? Verses 14-19.

The light-giving bodies that the Creator caused to appear in the “firmament” were not given to serve as rulers of fate but to designate times and seasons as well as to give light. The functions attributed to sun, moon, and stars in Scripture do not support the claims of astrology, which ascribes to the planetary bodies hidden powers of destiny. (Compare Isa. 47:13, 14; Jer. 10:2.)

Because the Bible implies the existence of other worlds (see Heb. 1:2; 11:3), it is unreasonable to assume that some of the stars referred to in Genesis 1:16 (and that could include our own sun) existed before the creation of this world. However, speculation on this could obscure Moses’ primary thrust in the creation record, namely, that God also created the light-giving bodies.

Summarize the creative act of the fifth day of Creation week. Gen. 1:20-23.

Genesis 1 makes no reference to the creation of water. It simply assumes its existence. Marine creatures were to occupy the waters below and winged creatures the air above. In parallel to verse 11, which literally reads “let the earth vegetate vegetation,” verse 20 suggests, “let the waters swarm with a swarm of living creatures.” The Hebrew expression “living creatures” is

identical with the last words in Genesis 2:7: “living soul,” that is, “living being.” To an observer standing on the earth looking up at the atmospheric heavens, the birds would be seen flying “above the earth across the expanse of the sky” (verse 20, NIV).

What is the significance of the blessing God pronounced upon the creatures of sea and sky and upon mankind? Verses 22, 28.

The blessing “be fruitful and multiply” was realized as the earth began to be filled. The genealogies and the nations are ample evidence of the fulfillment of God’s benediction.

As God beheld His workmanship, an exclamation of admiration escaped His lips which is expressed in the Genesis account in the words “it was good” (verses 10, 12, 18, 21, 25) and, at the culmination, “it was very good” (verse 31).

DAY III. THE CROWNING ACT OF GOD’S CREATION (Gen. 1:26-31).

6 How is “man” defined in verse 27 and in Genesis 5:2?

“Man” is not simply “male” but both “male” and “female.” It takes the two different sexes to express what Scripture means by “human.”

What do the words *our image* and *our likeness* mean? Gen. 1:26, 27; 9:6; James 3:9.

The words *image* and *likeness* complement each other and should not be treated as distinct expressions. The Scripture portrays human beings as whole persons or a unity.

“When Adam came from the Creator’s hand, he bore, in his physical, mental, and spiritual nature, a likeness to his Maker. . . . It was His [God’s] purpose that the longer man lived the more fully he should reveal His image—the more fully reflect the glory of the Creator. . . .

“But by disobedience this was forfeited. Through sin the divine likeness was marred, and well-nigh obliterated. Man’s physical powers were weakened, his mental capacity was lessened, his spiritual vision dimmed. . . . Yet the race was not left without hope. . . . To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized—this was to be the work of redemption.”—*Education*, pp. 15, 16.

How is the relationship between human beings and God and the rest of creation elaborated in Genesis 1:26 through 30? What responsibilities are imposed upon humanity? (Compare Ps. 8:6-8.)

Commentators suggest several alternatives to interpret the “us . . . our . . . our” in verse 26, none of which are without problems. (See also Gen. 3:22; 11:7; Isa. 6:8.) However, the chapter clearly specifies and the Old Testament generally represents creation as the act of God. The plurals used in this verse allow both for the role of the Holy Spirit mentioned in verse 2 and the New Testament declaration of Christ’s involvement in creation.

As a consequence of their creation in the image of God, Adam and Eve were to govern all of nature, of which they also were a part. Tragically, the Fall soon demonstrated that those who are ungoverned readily confuse the words “govern” and “exploit.”

What do Genesis 1:26 through 28 tell us about our identity, dignity, and value?

Within the heart of each of us there is an intense need to belong that can be met adequately only by a conscious knowledge of our identity. The deeper the roots of our identity, the more stable our sense of security will be.

The book of Genesis provides us with the deepest possible roots of identity, for God declared, “Let us make man in our image.” So began a golden thread that runs through the biblical genealogies to the advent of Christ, binding together all those who are found in Him. Our sense of belonging, weakened by sin, is strengthened by redemption in Jesus. Now the double root of creation and redemption supports our identity in God, for in Jesus we are both made and remade in His image.

DAY 7 FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 44, 45; *Education*, pp. 15-18; *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, comments on Genesis 1.

SUMMARY: Like a majestic anthem, Genesis 1 unfolds in six measured stanzas the noble origin of our world and mankind. It testifies to a beneficent Creator, proclaims that life has meaning and purpose, and declares that human beings invested with the image of God have identity, dignity, and responsibility.

APPLICATION:

- Do I share the psalmist’s reverent wonder, praise, and adoration as he contemplated the work of Creation (Psalm 8)?
- In the light of creation and redemption, do I recognize my true identity and value as well as that of all other human beings, regardless of sex, race, or color?
- What responsibilities has the Almighty given me in regard to being a steward of my environment?
- How does the doctrine of beginnings affect my understanding of the doctrine of the end?
- Do I experience re-creation and growth in the image and likeness of my Creator and Redeemer?

Partners in Paradise

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Genesis 2:1-25.

DAY 1 **MEMORY TEXT:** "Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them" (Eze. 20:12).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Genesis 2 introduces us to the provisions for human life that God made in Eden. It presents a model of loving parental care in which God attends to the physical, mental, aesthetic, and moral needs of His children.

OVERVIEW: Gen. 2:1-25		
Worship	Home and Work	Marriage
The institution of the Sabbath (1-3)	The original environment (4-7) Eden (8-17)	The creation of Eve (18-25)

INTRODUCTION: Having dealt with how all of creation came into being, the writer now focuses on human beings and their immediate environment. Whereas Genesis 1 answered the question How did it all originate? Genesis 2 explains why we are what we are. Without the information provided by Genesis 2, the test of allegiance to God and the subsequent Fall described in Genesis 3 would, to a large extent, be unintelligible. The intimate world of Adam and Eve surrounded by trees and animals in a garden complements the previous majestic account of Creation. Chapter 2 introduces the reader of the Bible to the social dimensions of humanity and gives some insight on prehistory and the original geography of the world.

Genesis 2 deals with such divine institutions as Sabbath, work, home, and marriage. Given to the human race before the Fall, these institutions lie at the basis of human existence, conduct, and happiness. Every seventh day should remind us of our benevolent Creator and our noble origin. Because of this the Sabbath stands at the basis of all worship. It suggests that the Creator is worthy of worship and able to create and recreate His creatures. "The duty to worship God is based on the fact that He is the Creator and that to Him all other beings owe their existence."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 436.

God's rest day reveals both the dimension in human beings by which we are linked to Him in whose "image and likeness" we were made and the obligations that we as creatures have toward our Creator. The marriage

institution, in turn, highlights our relationships to our fellow beings and the obligations we have to one another.

The Christian home in which the angels love to linger prepares its members for both this world and the world that is to come. The erosion of and the current attacks upon these Edenic institutions and upon the work ethic that is based on God's gracious provision in the Garden have contributed directly to the present disintegration of law, order, society, and the family.

DAY I. THE SABBATH (Gen. 2:1-3).

2

Although the creation of the human race was the crown of God's creative activity, what set of specific actions concluded Creation week, and what is their significance to us today? Verses 2, 3. (Compare with Ex. 20:11 and 31:17.)

Although the noun *sabbath* is not mentioned in Genesis 2, the verb for *rested*, from which the term *sabbath* is derived, suggests clearly that the Sabbath is meant. As part of the gift of Creation, the seventh-day Sabbath was given to *the entire human race* and not merely to one nation (Mark 2:27). As that which has from time immemorial marked the conclusion of the weekly cycle, the Sabbath provides an explanation for the origin of the week.

According to Exodus 20:9-11, what divine pattern of labor and rest was given to which human beings are to conform?

In the light of the fact that Isaiah 40:28 states that the Creator does not faint or grow weary, it would appear that God's rest and cessation from labor set an example that every member of the human race was expected to follow. God's Sabbath observance initiated and served as a model for our Sabbath observance (Ex. 20:11). Created in the "image of God" and encouraged to engage in useful employment, we are invited to rest with the Creator and to rejoice in His creation (1:27, 28). No command is stated in Genesis 2:2, 3, but what better injunction could be given than God's act of resting, blessing, and setting the seventh day apart as holy? Adam and Eve were an integral part of God's act of setting apart the Sabbath. They began their life with joy and rest rather than with self-interested work.

No other day of the week ever has been singled out in this fashion. The blessedness and holiness of the seventh-day Sabbath originated with an act of God, and not with a decision of any human being or group of humans. By blessing this day God filled it with fruitfulness, prosperity, happiness, life, and success. By sanctifying the last day of the week He set the seventh day apart for His distinct use and filled its time with the presence of the divine.

SEARCH AND LEARN: Compare "holy sabbath" in Exodus 16:23; 31:14, 15; 35:2; Isaiah 58:13. What have you learned from doing so?

In a way that is unique from any other day of the week, the Sabbath is filled with God's presence.

In what sense does the Creation Sabbath become the motivation for the scriptural command to keep the Sabbath? Ex. 20:8-11.

Without the model provided by God's rest the Sabbath command lacks its very basis. As God completed His work in six days so that it was said to be "finished" on the seventh day, we are to complete our work during six working days and rest, looking beyond our earthly interests and needs to the privilege of communion with our Maker. God's rest day is not merely a stop sign but an invitation to an ever-growing friendship. We are invited to renounce our rule of self and to acknowledge God's dominion by a response of grateful joy, rest, and worship. Thus the Sabbath expresses the central truths of the gospel. Freedom *from* work enables us to enjoy freedom *for* God. God built a cathedral in time, the Sabbath, to which we come, laying aside our secular cares and problems, to enter His rest and to enjoy His presence.

DAY II. THE GARDEN (Gen. 2:4-17).

3

Beginning with verse 4 of chapter 2 and continuing throughout the remainder of chapters 2 and 3, the double name *Lord God* is employed as against the single designation *God* found in Genesis 1:1 to 2:3. The combination of these two names in chapters 2 and 3 seems to convey the fact that the Creator also is the more intimate God of the covenant.

1. The Original Environment (verses 4-7).

The scene shifts from the creation of the world to a local garden. Rather than being a second and different Creation narrative, Genesis 2 complements Genesis 1. Human beings are the pinnacle of the pyramid in Genesis 1. In Genesis 2 they become the center of the circle. The spotlight falls on the human race, and everything else is relegated to the background.

How does Genesis 2:7 complement 1:27? What do the verbs *formed* and *breathed* convey about God? (Compare Isa. 45:9, 10 and John 20:22.)

Human beings are linked with heaven and earth. Formed initially of the "dust of the ground," Adam was animated by the breath of his Maker. The Creator is both Divine Sovereign and loving Father. With infinite care and intricate skill He fashioned the object of His hand, leaving no doubt as to His lordship. (See Isa. 29:16.) Then, as would be expected of a loving Father, God bent over the form He had created in His own image and gave it the animating breath of life. Even in the act of Creation we can anticipate the glorious news that "God so loved the world that he gave."

SEARCH AND LEARN: What can we learn about the "breath of life" from studying the following scriptures? Gen. 7:21, 22; 1 Kings 17:17; Job 33:4; 34:14, 15; Ps. 104:29, 30.

The Source of life imparted the “breath of life” both to humanity and to the rest of the creatures He made. Hence “breath of life” cannot refer to either mind or intelligence; rather, it designates the spark of life that is withdrawn at death. Without this spark of life the body remains lifeless.

According to verse 7 what elements are essential to the existence of a “living soul”?

The Hebrew word for *soul* found in this text is used 754 times in the Old Testament. It has a variety of meanings including “person,” “self,” “life,” or “being.” Since a soul can die (Eze. 18:4) or be killed (Joshua 11:11) the word cannot designate what is popularly conceived of as an “immortal soul” but is best understood in the sense of “being.” The popular concept of the “immortal soul” is foreign to the Bible. Genesis 2:7 states that only when the elements of the earth were animated by the spark of life from God did Adam become a “living being.”

DAY 2. The Garden Home (Gen. 2:8-17).

4 The specific geographical details presented in verses 10 through 14 indicate that, in the mind of the Bible writer, Eden was a specific locality rather than merely being a symbol or a metaphor. Several of the names mentioned in verses 11 through 14 are later applied to post-Flood localities and rivers. However, the Flood changed the surface features of our planet so radically that identification of pre-Flood geography with places and rivers known to us is impossible.

What elements mentioned in verses 8 through 17 indicate that the garden home was an ideal model? (Note particularly the setting and the attention given to man’s physical, mental, aesthetic, and moral needs.)

“The home of our first parents was to be a pattern for other homes as their children should go forth to occupy the earth. That home, beautified by the hand of God Himself, was not a gorgeous palace. . . . God placed Adam in a garden. . . . In the surroundings of the holy pair was a lesson for all time—that true happiness is found, not in the indulgence of pride and luxury, but in communion with God through His created works. . . . Pride and ambition are never satisfied, but those who are truly wise will find substantial and elevating pleasure in the sources of enjoyment that God has placed within the reach of all.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 49, 50.

What does verse 15 imply about the idea of “work”?

“God appointed labor as a blessing to man, to occupy his mind, to strengthen his body, and to develop his faculties. In mental and physical activity Adam found one of the highest pleasures of his holy existence. And when, as a result of his disobedience, he was driven from his beautiful home, and forced to struggle with a stubborn soil to gain his daily bread,

that very labor, although widely different from his pleasant occupation in the garden, was a safeguard against temptation and a source of happiness. Those who regard work as a curse, attended though it be with weariness and pain, are cherishing an error. . . . Our Creator, who understands what is for man's happiness, appointed Adam his work. The true joy of life is found only by the working men and women. . . . The Creator has prepared no place for the stagnating practice of indolence."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 50.

Adam and Eve were placed in a comfortable setting surrounded by ample provisions that were pleasing to the taste and sight. What instructions and warning did God give and why? Verses 16, 17.

The instructions were clear and unmistakable: "Thou mayest. . . Thou shalt not. . ." (verses 16, 17). Adam and Eve were free to demonstrate their absolute trust in God's love and wisdom in obedience or to choose to reveal their distrust, affirm their independence of God, and disobey at the peril of their lives (verse 17). Only the Life-giver has the power of absolute choice; human beings may choose life only on God's terms. Never did so much depend on so little. The fact that Adam and Eve's rebellion led to the death of Christ on the cruel cross demonstrates beyond any doubt that God is particular about what He says.

How do you explain the relationship between the announcement, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17) and what happened after Adam and Eve disobeyed? (Compare Rom. 5:12.)

Apart from being the means of testing our first parents' loyalty and allegiance there was no particular evil or virtue in the tree of knowledge of good and evil. "There was nothing poisonous in the fruit itself, and the sin was not merely in yielding to appetite. It was distrust of God's goodness, disbelief of His word, and rejection of His authority, that made our first parents transgressors, and that brought into the world a knowledge of evil."—*Education*, p. 25.

From the moment the first pair transgressed they passed from the status of conditional immortality to that of unconditional mortality. Whereas prior to the Fall their access to the tree of life assured them of immortality, after their disobedience they were equally as certain of mortality. The reign of death since that moment testifies that God's warning about death was no vain threat.

DAY
5

III. THE CREATION OF EVE AND HUMAN COMPANIONSHIP (Gen. 2:18–25).

How do verses 18 through 20 suggest that members of the human race were created as social creatures?

The task of naming the animals afforded Adam the opportunity to observe closely the habits of the animals created on the fifth and sixth days.

It is of interest that, in this instance, his words were not so much a means of communication but were the instrument used for ordering and establishing his rule over the environment.

What was God's purpose in giving woman to man? Verses 18, 20. (Compare Gen. 1:27, 28.)

The woman was to be a "help meet for him" (the Hebrew suggests a "helper over against him," "a help equal to him," "his counterpart"). The Genesis record places value on woman as an equal, a counterpart, a partner, or a complement in whose company man finds his fullest satisfaction and with whom he shares God's image and likeness.

What is signified by the creation of Eve out of a rib of Adam? Verses 21, 22.

"Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him. A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, she was his second self, showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 46.

DAY 6 What kind of intimate relationship between husband and wife did the inspired writer uphold long after the Fall? Eph. 5:21-29; 1 Cor. 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4.

NOTE Adam's jubilant expression as God brought Adam's newly created companion to him. Gen. 2:23.

Adam was so rapt that he expressed his triumphant welcome of his wife in poetry (verse 23 is the first poetic couplet in Scripture).

Marriage "was one of the first gifts of God to man, and it is one of the two institutions that, after the Fall, Adam brought with him beyond the gates of Paradise. When the divine principles are recognized and obeyed in this relation, marriage is a blessing; it guards the purity and happiness of the race, it provides for man's social needs, it elevates the physical, the intellectual, and the moral nature."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 46.

NOTE who it was that, according to Matthew 19:4 and 5, spoke the words recorded in Genesis 2:24.

What three steps in marriage are outlined in the words of God, and in what order are these steps to occur? Gen. 2:24.

God's ideal for marriage is expounded in this verse. When the time came to leave those closest to him, his parents, man's first earthly loyalty was to be to his wife. She was to occupy the foremost place in his affections. In God's order the union of bodies between husband and wife is to follow their commitment in marriage. The biblical order, "leave ... cleave ... and they shall be one flesh" tragically and defiantly has been turned upside down with the result that nowadays there is a great deal of "one flesh," only a little of "cleaving," and too much "leaving."

DAY 7 How did Jesus endorse the values of Genesis 2:24 and, disregarding the concession to human hardness, stress the permanence of the marriage bond? Matt. 19:3-6.

Genesis 2 ends with a description of the concord of love and openness that existed between Adam and Eve and between our first parents and our heavenly Father.

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 46-51; *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, comments on Genesis 2.

SUMMARY: Flanked by the Edenic institutions of Sabbath and matrimony, the story of humanity's first home remains as the model of the ideal home.

APPLICATION:

- What can I do to get the most out of God's blessed and hallowed day of rest? (Compare Isa. 58:13, 14; Eze. 20:12; Mark 2:23 to 3:5.)
- Do I take advantage particularly of the edges of the Sabbath to contemplate God's love and to acknowledge His dominion in our lives?
- How may the ideal depicted in Ephesians 5:21 to 6:4 be reflected in my home?

The Fall

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Genesis 3:1 through 4:26.

DAY 1 **MEMORY TEXT:** "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Although distrust of God led to the first act of sin on earth and its fateful consequences, divine love surpassed human unfaithfulness and followed the sinners beyond the gates of Eden.

OVERVIEW: Gen. 3:1 - 4:26

The Entrance of Sin (3:1-7)	God's Judgment on Sin (3:8-24)	The Consequences of Sin (4:1-26)
Dialogue with the serpent (1-5) The Fall (6,7)	God seeks the fallen (8-13) God's judgment (14-24)	Two altars (1-7) The first murder (8-16) The families of Cain and Seth (17-26)

INTRODUCTION: The New Testament treats the events of Genesis 3 and 4 as literal. Luke traces the ancestry of Jesus back to Adam (Luke 3:23-38). Paul considers the Adam of the Creation record to be as real as the second Adam, and his trespass as factual as Jesus' death and resurrection. (See Rom. 5:12-14; 1 Cor. 15:20-22.)

Faced with a decision that would test their allegiance to God, Adam and Eve were tempted to place greater trust in the creature than in the Creator. The tragic consequences included shame, suffering, estrangement, flight from God, disharmony within and without, passion, and disillusionment. However, God's love for the sinner exceeded His abhorrence of sin. Had it not been for God's grace and the certainty of His ultimate triumph, Adam and Eve might well have succumbed to despair. Taking comfort in God's interest and concern, Adam's vision extended beyond the apparent doom and laid hold upon the divine promise. His confidence was shown when he called Eve "mother of all living" rather than "mother of the doomed." Similarly, Eve's pronouncements at the birth of Cain and Seth reflected her faith in the promised Deliverer. (See Gen. 4:1, 25.)

With these chapters the various vocations, the arts and crafts, domestication of animals, and food production make their debut. The human race for the first time is divided into two distinct families who gather around two altars. The remainder of Scripture traces their history.

DAY
2**I. THE ENTRANCE OF SIN (Gen. 3:1-7).****1. Dialogue With the Serpent (verses 1-5).**

We are not informed as to the length of the period of happiness our first parents enjoyed in the presence of their Creator. However, it is apparent that they had no children before they were cast out of the Garden. That fact would limit the period before the Fall to something less than 130 years; how much less we do not know. (See Gen. 5:3).

In what sense does Genesis 1:31 exclude any possibility that some imperfection in God's creation may have been responsible for the weakness of Adam and Eve?

SEARCH AND LEARN: How does the Bible unmask the figure of Satan behind the "crafty serpent" in Genesis 3:1? (Compare Gen. 3:15 with 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 John 3:8; Rev. 12:9; 20:2.)

In the same way that Jesus discerned the intentions of Satan behind the words of His disciple Peter (Matt. 16:22, 23), we can discern Satan behind the words of the serpent. The story implies that the fall of Lucifer took place prior to this interview between Eve and the serpent.

How clear had been God's command to the first parents? How did the tempter seek to confuse the issue with his question and obscure the exact meaning of God's stipulation? Gen. 2:16, 17; 3:1.

According to Eve, what additional command, not recorded in Genesis 2:17, did the holy pair understand? Gen. 3:3.

Having first questioned the divine stipulation, to what did the serpent now resort? Verse 4. (Compare John 8:44.)

The serpent categorically and emphatically contradicted God's word and thus originated the lie, still popular today, that human beings inherently are immortal. Insinuating that God could not be trusted, Satan informed Eve that disobedience would bring great gain. Present limitations would be removed if the tempter's advice was followed. God was presented as a selfish liar, jealously withholding from Adam and Eve greater happiness and nobler development. Satan tempted our first parents to doubt God's love and wisdom. He lured them into the belief that the way of the curse was the way of blessing and thus placed God's requirements in the most reprehensible light.

“Satan represented to the holy pair that they would be gainers by breaking the law of God. Do we not today hear similar reasoning? Many talk of the narrowness of those who obey God’s commandments, while they themselves claim to have broader ideas and to enjoy greater liberty. What is this but an echo of the voice from Eden, ‘In the day ye eat thereof’—transgress the divine requirement—‘ye shall be as gods?’”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 55.

In what sense would the transgressors now know “good and evil”?

While verse 4 represented a lie, so much of verse 5 tragically reflected the truth. In addition to their knowledge of pure and unadulterated love and goodness, the human family now added a first-hand knowledge of and experience with evil. With God, Adam and Eve would come to know the misery and pain that results from disobedience. Their disobedience brought pain to God as well as to themselves. But, unlike God, they would experience with Satan the guilt and shame of sin. Not equality with God but separation from the tender Creator, hatred toward fellow beings, and estrangement from one’s self and one’s environment were the fruits of distrust and disobedience.

DAY 2. The Fall (Gen. 3:6, 7).

3 COMPARE: Using the following chart, compare Eve’s failure, Christ’s victory, and our conflict in the three areas of temptation indicated:

Appeal of Tempter	TO EVE Gen. 3:6	TO CHRIST Matthew 4	TO US 1 John 2:16
Physical			
Mental			
Spiritual			

“Christ came to the earth, taking humanity and standing as man’s representative, to show in the controversy with Satan that man, as God created him, connected with the Father and the Son, could obey every divine requirement.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 253. Because the work of redemption had to begin where the ruin began, Christ had to succeed where Adam and Eve failed. As they fell through their independence from God and indulgence of appetite, so Christ had to live in complete dependence upon God and overcome appetite. Whereas our first parents’ action indicates that they believed that God’s great love would excuse their transgression, Jesus demonstrated by His life that true faith always is

revealed in obedience. The fact that Jesus followed the path of humility and died on the cross ever will reprove Adam's surrender of loyalty, love, and gratitude for the satisfaction of personal ambition.

In what sense does Genesis 3:7 unmask the devil's claims?

In fulfillment of the serpent's promise the eyes of Adam and Eve were opened, but their dream of enlightenment turned into a nightmare. This, the first of countless subsequent satanic schemes, demonstrates that the devil's promises of precious gold are delivered only in the form of tawdry tinsel. Deprived of the glory of holiness, burdened by the sense of guilt, their physical nakedness revealed in a consciousness of inner nakedness, the first pair sought to hide from God and to fashion *their own* covering.

What was the result of Adam's surrender? Rom. 6:16. (Compare with Rom. 5:19.)



II. GOD'S JUDGMENT ON SIN (Gen. 3:8-24).

1. God Seeks the Fallen (verses 8-13).

The presence of God, previously a delight to Adam and Eve, had now become a source of fear and embarrassment to them. This was a clear sign that their bond of trust with God had been broken.

What was God's first response? Verses 8, 9.

EXAMPLES: Think of other examples in which God took the initiative in the search to restore a broken fellowship.

The Lord revealed His grace by creating human beings in His image and by providing a delightful setting where His creatures could develop as free moral beings. Subsequent to the Fall, God once again took the initiative and sought out His children, knowing that, in order to deal most effectively with them, He must draw them to Him rather than drive them out of their hiding.

In what sense did Adam confuse sin with the consequences of transgression? Verse 10.

How did Adam and Eve endeavor to escape responsibility for their sin as they responded to God's probing questions? Verses 11-13.

Adam and Eve virtually blamed God for their disobedience. What a change transgression had brought to the first couple! Adam, who had received his bride with jubilation (Gen. 2:22, 23), now coldly referred to his wife as “the woman whom thou gavest to be with me.” The sin which they had committed together now separated their union of love as both indulged in a series of excuses that is typical of fallen beings.

DAY 2. God’s Judgment (Gen. 3:14-24).

5

In verses 14 and 15, what indicates that God was not merely addressing the reptile?

The phrase “dust shalt thou eat” is used in other ancient literature to indicate a curse. Sadly, the consequence of sin affected not only the sinner but also the environment. The erstwhile protector, Adam, had become the cause of suffering that was to be experienced by the entire creation. (Compare with Rom. 8:19-23.)

What hope and promise is contained in God’s curse upon the serpent? Gen. 3:15.

Before Adam and Eve heard about toil, pain, submission, thorns, and sweat, God granted them words of hope and promise. Verse 15 not only offers the first glimpse of the gospel, but also presents a compressed history of the conflicts between the family of the serpent and the descendants of the woman. The genealogies of Genesis develop the lines of those who chose “sonship” either with the devil or with God. And the rest of Scripture continues to depict the struggles between God’s people and their enemies. The conflict announced in verse 15 points past the immediate actors in the drama, and the New Testament elaborates on the fact that although Christ’s victory would mean suffering, the serpent’s wound would be fatal. (Compare Rev. 12:1-12; Heb. 2:14.)

What effect would Eve’s sin have upon her childbearing and marriage? Gen. 3:16.

“In the creation God had made her [Eve] the equal of Adam. Had they remained obedient to God—in harmony with His great law of love—they would ever have been in harmony with each other; but sin had brought discord, and now their union could be maintained and harmony preserved only by submission on the part of the one or the other. . . . It was by her solicitation that Adam sinned, and she was now placed in subjection to her husband. Had the principles enjoined in the law of God been cherished by the fallen race, this sentence, though growing out of the results of sin, would have proved a blessing to them; but man’s abuse of the supremacy thus given him has too often rendered the lot of woman very bitter and made her life a burden.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 58, 59.

What changes were to occur as a result of Adam's preference for Eve's counsel? Verses 17-19. (Compare with Rom. 6:23.)

Because of His love for us God appointed a life of toil and care. "It was a discipline rendered needful by . . . [Adam's] sin, to place a check upon the indulgence of appetite and passion, to develop habits of self-control. It was a part of God's great plan for man's recovery from the ruin and degradation of sin." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 60.

What was the purpose and the significance of God's renewed provision of grace? Gen. 3:21. (Compare with verse 7 and Gen. 4:4.)

In what sense was the expulsion of Adam and Eve out of the garden a manifestation of both judgment and mercy? Gen. 3:22-24.

The couple's attempt to be independent from God resulted in their banishment from His very presence. However, even in judging them God demonstrated love. Access to the tree of life would have turned Adam and Eve into immortal sinners, thus perpetuating sin and misery eternally.

DAY III. THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN (Gen. 4:1-26).

6

1. Two Altars (verses 1-7).

Why did God accept Abel's sacrifice but reject his brother's offerings? Verses 3-7. (Compare with Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22. See also Heb. 11:4.)

How does Genesis 4:6, 7 describe God's fatherly concern for Cain?

The dialogue between God and Cain, and the fact that Cain neither accused God of partiality in accepting Abel's sacrifice nor protested his ignorance of God's stipulations suggests that the brothers were acquainted fully with what God required. The sacrificial ritual, the distinction between clean and unclean animals, and the basic principles of God's law were not introduced for the first time at Sinai but were set out in greater detail in the time of Moses. (See Ex. 13:12; Num. 18:17.)

2. The First Murder (Gen. 4:8-16).

The enmity predicted in Genesis 3:15 and hinted at in Cain's jealousy was manifested in full force in the murder of Abel. This murder demonstrated that Cain was a follower of Satan. (See John 8:44.)

What reason does 1 John 3:12 give for Cain's murder of Abel? (Compare Gen. 4:8 with Matt. 23:35.)

How did Cain seek to conceal the sin of commission that was behind his sin of omission? Gen. 4:9.

Cain discovered that people cannot hide anything from God (verse 10) and that the divine Sovereign will right all wrongs. As punishment for his callous sin, the earth, which had been forced to drink innocent blood, would withhold its strength from the murderer (verses 11, 12). It is remarkable that in the story of Cain there is neither one word of remorse nor any sign of penitence. Even though the death penalty that he deserved was commuted to lifelong exile, Cain still complained.

How does Genesis 4 reveal that God shows concern for even the unrepentant sinner? Verse 15.

3. The Families of Cain and Seth (verses 17-26).

Verses 17 through 24 disclose a picture of rapid moral decline as well as technical and cultural advances. Polygamy and murder characterize the family of Cain. Yet the Bible writer does not attribute only evil to the descendants of Cain. Their achievements are recognized. He notes that artisans, craftsmen, pastoralists, and agriculturalists descended from Cain.

The chapter concludes with a reference to Seth, who replaced Abel. Seth became the ancestor of the line of pre-Flood patriarchs who bridged the period between Adam and Noah.

DAY 7 **FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 52-62, 71-81; *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, comments on Genesis 3 and 4.

SUMMARY: In attempting to rise above the position ordained by God, Adam and Eve fell far below it. Their fall resulted in their estrangement from God, from each other, and from their environment. Yet God's promise intimated redemption. The choice that that redemption provided sinful beings led to the division of the human family, whose history we will study in the lessons to come.

APPLICATION: The Lord approached the first sinners and the first murderer with two questions: "Where are you?" and "Where is your brother?" Both inquiries are as relevant today as they were at the beginning of human history.

- Am I ever tempted to presume that God's great love will excuse my transgression and save me from the consequences of sin?
- Have I personally tested the promises of 1 Corinthians 10:11-13; Philipians 4:13; James 4:7, 8; and Psalm 50:14, 15?

Preacher of Righteousness

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Genesis 5:32 through 9:29.

DAY 1 **MEMORY TEXT:** "The bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth" (Gen. 9:16).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: "By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith" (Heb. 11:7, NIV).

OVERVIEW: Genesis 5:32 through 9:29.

Noah's age at the introduction of the Flood story (5:32)

Prologue: Human sin (6:1-10)

Violence on earth; Flood and covenant announced (6:11-22)

Command to enter the ark (7:1-16)

Rising flood waters (7:17-24)

GOD REMEMBERS NOAH (8:1)

Receding flood waters (8:2-14)

Command to leave the ark (8:15-19)

Harmony on earth; sacrifice, covenant consummated (8:20-9:19)

Epilogue: Human sin (9:20-27)

Noah's age at death (9:29)

INTRODUCTION: The story of the Flood follows a literary pattern known as a chiasmus (an X-shaped inverted literary structure named after the Greek letter *chi*). A chiasmus is comprised of a sequence of units in which the action flows through each unit to a climax before the action returns through the same sequence in reverse order. (See Overview above.) Noah entered the ark after 120 years of preaching, not merely as a survivor but also as a bearer of God's promise of a new age. As darkness increased with each step of divine justice in the first half of the story of the Flood so the light increased during the last half of the story as divine grace finally revealed a peaceful and calm world crowned with a rainbow of promise.

DAY 2 **I. THE GREAT INCREASE IN SIN AND NOAH'S PREPARATIONS FOR THE FLOOD (Gen. 5:32-7:24).**

1. Noah's Ancestors (5:1-32).

Seth's line of descent is introduced here, following the line of Cain in Genesis 4:17-24. Adam and Eve had many other sons and daughters (5:4), but Seth's line of descent outlines the history of the pre-Flood patriarchs who were loyal to God. The promised Deliverer would come through this line.

2. Human Wickedness and Corruption (6:1-7).

How is the theme of human sinfulness described in the prologue and epilogue of the Flood narrative? Gen. 6:1-8 and 9:20-27.

While some commentators suggest that the designation “sons of God” (6:2) refers to heavenly beings, context and content indicate a reference to the descendants of Seth. The “daughters of men” (the “men” who multiplied in verse 1) would then designate the posterity of Cain. The “sons of God,” representing the line of faith, contracted marriages with unbelievers and succumbed to the danger of such alliances.

“There were many giants, men of great stature and strength, renowned for wisdom, skillful in devising the most cunning and wonderful works; but their guilt in giving loose rein to iniquity was in proportion to their skill and mental ability.

“God bestowed upon these antediluvians many and rich gifts; but they used His bounties to glorify themselves, and turned them into a curse by fixing their affections upon the gifts instead of the Giver.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 90.

What is stated in Genesis 6:5 as the compelling motive for the forthcoming destruction? (Compare also verses 11-13.)

The wickedness of humankind could not be stated more emphatically. Notice the words “every . . . only . . . continually.” The Hebrew word translated “imagination” is derived from the verb earlier rendered by “to form” (in Gen. 2:7) and here indicates deliberation and action. In the Old Testament the word *heart* describes the complete inner life of a human being, as it is the seat of emotion, will, and understanding. The words *corrupt* and *violence* in verses 11 through 13 expand the picture of verse 5.

How do Genesis 6:6 and 7 depict God’s sorrow for what was taking place?

After describing the human heart, the author turns to the grief and affliction of the heart of God. Moses describes the Lord in terms which human readers can understand. He is not some far off abstract idea or unbending principle but, like us, is portrayed as characterized by will, open to the tragedy of sin and prayer, and weeping over human guilt. These words give us a feeling for how difficult it is to explain or even understand the introduction and great increase of sin.

What assurance does Peter give that the Lord had not left the world without a witness? 1 Peter 3:18-20; 2 Peter 2:5.

What decision did God announce to Noah? (Compare Gen. 6:13 with verse 7.)

God's act of destruction was not arbitrary. It brought to conclusion the destruction initiated by human sin. The writer here develops a "creation" and "uncreation" theme. The creation of God described as "very good" and full of life now has been corrupted and is being undone. (Compare Gen. 1:31 with 6:11, 13, 17.)

DAY
3

3. Noah Instructed to Prepare for the Flood (Gen. 6:8-22).

How is grace introduced in verse 8?

This is the first time that the word *grace* is found in the Bible. When applied to God, grace designates God's power and willingness to do for undeserving sinful beings that which they cannot do for themselves. God's grace saved faithful Noah and his family. Here, as elsewhere in Scripture, God deals with the sin problem by both providing salvation and rendering judgment.

What does the Bible record tell us about the character of Noah? Gen. 6:8, 9, 22; Heb. 11:7; 1 Peter 2:5.

Although Noah was not without fault (see Gen. 9:20-24), he is characterized by faith, moral uprightness, and integrity. In response to God's initiative of love, he demonstrated his faith by complete acceptance of God's Word and by building the ark. His intimate and personal relationship with God manifested in faith and obedience distinguished Noah from the rest of the world and marked him as a member of the family of God. As God had walked Enoch into the safety of heaven, He now walked Noah into the safety of the ark.

What divine action prior to the destruction of the world of Noah's day reveals that the Deluge was no arbitrary judgment? Gen. 6:12. (Compare with Gen. 11:5; 18:21; Dan. 7:9, 10.)

In contrast to the Babylonian flood stories that are filled with intrigue and capriciousness, the biblical account of the Flood stresses the absolute justice of the divine sentence.

ANALYZE the announcements (Gen. 6:13, 17, 18) and the commands (verses 14-16, 19-21) found in God's instruction to Noah (verses 13-21).

God's instruction was given 120 years before Noah entered the ark. That means that Noah at that time was 480 years of age. He still was childless

and, as was true also of Abraham, had to accept by faith the announcement concerning his children.

What does verse 22 tell us about Noah's faith in God's word? (Compare Gen. 7:5, 16 with Heb. 11:7.) Is there any parallel with Abram's response to the call out of Ur of the Chaldees?

DAY
4

4. The Command to Enter the Ark (Gen. 7:1-16).

What does the reference to "clean" and "unclean" animals imply about the knowledge that Noah already possessed on this matter? Gen. 7:2, 3, 8; 8:20.

In chapter 7 God's command first given in Genesis 6:17 through 21 is repeated and expanded. Whereas the instructions concerning the animals in 6:19, 20 were general, they were now repeated and amplified with greater detail as the time of the Flood drew near. Similarly, more specific details were given to Noah in regard to the commencement and duration of the Flood. (Compare Gen. 6:17 with 7:4.)

The fact that God distinguished "clean" and "unclean" animals *long* before the difference was explicitly stated in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14, presupposes the clear knowledge of the distinction between "clean" and "unclean" animals from earliest times. Furthermore, it is evident that "clean" animals were to be used for sacrificial offering and (after the Flood) for food. Only one pair of "unclean" animals entered the ark, and both male and female were indispensable for propagation. Therefore Noah could not have selected any of the "unclean" animals for purposes of sacrifice or food.

What lesson may be derived from the fact that the ark was the only place of safety and salvation appointed by God during the Flood?

The Deluge covered the earth, and the world returned to the conditions that existed before God had prepared a habitable globe when the waters of the deep covered the earth (1:2). The only faint glimmer of light in the dark scene of the Flood was the ark with its precious cargo.

What do the words "the Lord shut him in" signify as far as Noah and the unrighteous of his day were concerned? Gen. 7:16.

God means what He says. As was demonstrated in the destruction of the antediluvian (pre-Flood) world and the inhabitants of the cities of the plains (Genesis 19), there is a limit beyond which sinners cannot safely go. When that limit is reached divine judgment begins. "Love, no less than justice, demanded that God's judgments should put a check on sin."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 101.

5. The Waters Cover the Earth (Gen. 7:17-24).

What do verses 17 through 24 imply about the extent of the Flood?

The repeated biblical statements, “the waters prevailed ... increased greatly upon the earth ... prevailed exceedingly ... fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered ... all flesh died,” indicate a worldwide catastrophe. The universality of the Flood is further attested to by the worldwide distribution of Flood legends and the global distribution of fossil remains. Many of the fossil remains testify to the violence as well as the extent of the Flood.

Genesis 7:9 through 23 repeatedly emphasizes the concept that the Flood covered the entire earth. Ellen White indicates the same: “The Lord brought a flood of waters upon the earth, and swept away its wicked inhabitants.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 178. “The entire surface of the earth was changed at the Flood.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 107.

In what sense does the experience of Noah and his family give rise to and illustrate the idea of the remnant? (See verse 23.)

DAY 5 II. GOD REMEMBERS NOAH (Gen. 8:1).

5

How did God demonstrate His faithfulness and interest in humanity when, from a human perspective, all seemed lost? Verse 1.

III. THE PREPARATION OF A NEW EARTH (Gen. 8:2–9:29).

1. Receding Waters and the Command to Leave the Ark (8:2-19).

Having reached the turning point of the narrative, the literary structure begins to repeat in reverse order the steps that led to the Flood. (See the lesson overview on page 34.) The water began to recede and the dry land finally began to appear (verses 2-14). Thus a new beginning was made possible. While the Bible specifies that the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat, commentators are not clear as to what part of the Ararat range of Armenia is indicated.

Who finally liberated the survivors and introduced them to a new age? Verses 15-19.

Imagine the differences that existed between the earth Noah had left and the planet upon which he now set foot.

SEARCH AND LEARN: If Noah had kept a ship’s log it probably would have read about as follows (assuming a thirty-day month):

	Month	Day	Year
Entered the ark (7:4, 7, 10).	2	10	600
Beginning of the Flood (7:11).	2	17	600
Rain and prevailing waters (first 40 days of Flood, 7:4, 12, 17) to	3	27	600
"Waters prevailed" (110 additional days, 7:24) to	7	17	600
The ark rests on the mountains of Ararat (8:4).	7	17	600
The mountains seen (8:5).	10	1	600
The raven released (40 days later, 8:6).	11	11	600
The dove released (first time, 8:8; PP 105).	11	18	600
The dove released (second time, 8:10).	11	25	600
The dove released (third time, 8:12).	12	2	600
Covering of the ark removed; waters dried (8:13).	1	1	601
Left the ark (8:14-16).	2	27	601

Based on *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 260.

Study this "log" carefully. How many days did Noah and his family spend in the ark?

DAY 2. Harmony Restored (Gen. 8:20-9:7).

6

How did Noah express his dedication, homage, and gratitude to God upon leaving the ark? Verse 20.

"Here was a lesson for all succeeding generations. Noah had come forth upon a desolate earth, but before preparing a house for himself he built an altar to God. His stock of cattle was small, and had been preserved at great expense; yet he cheerfully gave a part to the Lord as an acknowledgment that all was His. In like manner it should be our first care to render our freewill offerings to God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 106.

How did God respond to Noah's devotion and worship? Verses 21, 22.

The divine response is stated in human terms. God had destroyed the world because "every imagination of the thoughts" of the human heart was evil (6:5). In the light of that fact, Genesis 8:21 has been considered by some to be self-contradictory. However, God's resolve not to destroy the earth again by water and to preserve order is based on the spirit behind the sacrifice offered and not on human performance.

As the survivors stepped into the new world, what command first given in Eden was repeated? Gen. 1:28; 9:1, 7.

How did God relieve the fear of Noah's family who were greatly outnumbered by the animals who disembarked from the ark, and what responsibilities did He place upon human beings? Gen. 9:2.

What further provision did God make for the welfare of Noah, and what restrictions did He apply? Verses 3-6.

DAY 3. The Covenant (Gen. 9:8-17).

7

How extensive was the covenant referred to in verses 9 through 11?

Whereas the covenants God later made with Abraham, Israel, and David invited individuals or a nation into a personal fellowship with God, this covenant is different in that it does not call for a personal response and appropriation. However, as were the later covenants, this covenant was initiated entirely by divine grace. Yet it differs from them in that it was not so much an agreement between two parties as a statement of God's intention never again to destroy the earth by a *flood*. (See verses 11-15.)

What was to be the sign of the covenant? Verses 12-17.

Sun and storm mingle to produce the rainbow reminding people on earth of mercy and judgment being blended, and of God's resolve never to cut life off by the waters of a flood.

(The overview on page 34 includes Genesis 9:18 through 29 in order to present the complete picture of the literary structure involved. These verses will be studied in next week's lesson.)

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 90-104; *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, comments on Genesis 6 through 9.

SUMMARY: In spite of the terrible inroads of sin, God does not leave Himself without witnesses in this world. Only faithful Noah and his family survived the Flood and became the progenitors of the people whose history we will study in the following lessons.

APPLICATION:

- In the light of Jesus' comparison of conditions in Noah's day with those preceding the second advent (Matt. 24:37-39), am I as serious about preparing myself for the events ahead as was Noah?
- In the light of the judgment that will soon come upon the world, what am I doing to follow Noah's example in warning those near and dear to me? (See 2 Peter 2:5.)

The Earth After the Flood

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Genesis 9:18 through 11:26.

DAY 1 **MEMORY TEXT:** "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Peter 3:3, 4).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Even though they were surrounded by the results of the great Flood, Noah's descendants continued in sin and rebellion against God as they were dispersed throughout the world. But there were a few who, by God's grace and strength, continued to serve Him and to whom His covenant of peace was extended.

OVERVIEW: New Beginnings After the Flood

Gen. 9:18-29	Gen. 10:1-32	Gen. 11:1-9	Gen. 11:10-26
Sin still present after the Flood	The table of nations	The Tower of Babel	Genealogy—Shem to Abraham

INTRODUCTION: One demonstration of the inspiration of Scripture is the way in which it meets the needs and provides the counsel for each generation of earth's inhabitants. Second Peter 3:3-5 is applicable to our time. Not only does the text itself refer to the "last days" but the words placed in the mouths of the scoffers by Peter are in a sense a paraphrase of the modern principle of uniformity that has been one of the major guiding principles for evolutionary geology. Geologists have tended to interpret the past by what they find in terms of the geological processes in operation today. For instance, the present rate at which mountains are being eroded and valleys are filling up, they say, is the rate that has been in operation throughout the indefinite past. But the Bible teaches that the earth had a dramatic origin, a catastrophic destruction at the time of the Flood, and will be destroyed by fire in the near future. Those who believe in a philosophy based upon the continued gradual operation of geological processes are doomed to great disappointment.

There has been a less rigid adherence to the concept of uniformity among geologists in the last few years. This provides an opportunity for Seventh-day Adventists and other creationists to point out the catastrophic history of the earth and to warn of catastrophe in the future, even as Jesus did.

The inhabitants of the world live in fear today—fear of man-made disasters such as war and much of the starvation that is found in the earth

today. But they should be concerned also about physical catastrophes in the near future that Bible prophecy leads us to expect. However, God's people can claim His promises of protection in the time of trouble and of deliverance at the final catastrophic climax of world history.

Genesis 10 and 11 deal with the earliest history after the Flood, demonstrating how wickedness and rebellion built up again. The scriptural record then moves into the special history of those who continue to serve the true God.

DAY
2

I. SIN STILL PRESENT AFTER THE FLOOD (Gen. 9:18-29).

What evidence of the impartial nature of Scripture may be understood from a careful reading of verses 20 through 27?

Although not making a moral comment on Noah's drinking, this, the first biblical account of the use of strong drink, testifies to the loss of dignity and honor that often results. This same thing is true about the story of the derision, degradation, and shame with which Lot came to be known as a result of drinking wine. (See Gen. 19:31-36.) The Bible warns of the degradation and hardships caused by drunkenness. (See Prov. 20:1; 23:29-35; 31:4, 5.) As Christians it is our privilege to recognize that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit. The apostle challenges us to "glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:20).

It is not clear why, after Ham's act of disrespect, Noah did not curse Ham, but instead cursed Canaan, the youngest son of Ham. (Gen. 9:24; 10:6). Hamites included peoples living in southern Asia Minor, coastal Syria, and Palestine, the Red Sea coast of Arabia, and parts of East Africa. The Canaanites were one branch of the Hamitic people who spoke a Semitic language. The subservience of the Canaanites to the Israelites after the conquest of Palestine may have fulfilled this curse literally just as the prediction that Japheth would live in the tents of Shem had to await its ultimate spiritual fulfillment until Gentiles and Jews became one in Jesus Christ. (Compare Gen. 9:27 with Gal. 3:26-29.)

1. The Condition of the Earth After the Flood.

What kinds of changes in the earth and its inhabitants were caused by the Flood?

1. Before the Flood the dry land was teeming with animals and a "vast population" of human beings (Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Sept. 25, 1888). After the Flood only the passengers and living creatures preserved in the ark remained alive on land. (See Gen. 7:21.)

2. Before the Flood, apparently, the area of dry land was more extensive than that of water. "When God had formed the earth, there were mountains, hills, and plains, and interspersed among them were rivers and bodies of water. The earth was not one extensive plain, but the monotony of the scene was broken by hills and mountains, not high and ragged as they now are, but regular and beautiful in shape. The bare, high rocks were never seen upon them, but lay beneath the surface, answering as bones to the

earth. The waters were regularly dispersed.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 33. Today more than 70 percent of our globe is covered with water.

3. After the Flood, “stones, ledges, and ragged rocks were . . . scattered upon the surface of the earth. In many places hills and mountains had disappeared, leaving no trace where they once stood; and plains had given place to mountain ranges.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 108.

4. Precious stones that before the Flood had beautified the surface of the earth were now buried. “By the same means [wind-driven waves] the silver and gold, the choice wood and precious stones, . . . were concealed from the sight and search of men, the violent action of the water piling earth and rocks upon these treasures.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 108.

5. Confused types of animals that had been produced by hybridization “were destroyed by the Flood.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 78.

6. “There were a class of very large animals which perished at the Flood. God knew that the strength of man would decrease, and these mammoth animals could not be controlled by feeble man.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4, p. 121.

DAY 2. Scoffers—Past and Present.

3

What term does Peter use to designate those who refuse to accept the facts as God outlines them, and what application can be made to the same kind of attitude today? 2 Peter 3:3-5.

Scoffers are those who reject the predictions of the prophets and the message of Jesus (2 Peter 3:2). They cannot envisage a day when the end will come and Jesus will be seen in the clouds of heaven (verse 4). The basis of their rejection is the supposition that if things have operated a certain way for a number of years, there is no reason to suppose any change will take place. Verse 5 indicates that they are willingly ignorant. They deliberately choose to ignore the evidence and project the observable continuity into the past, thereby establishing a principle by which they seek to explain all aspects of the universe. The fact that scoffers did this in Peter’s day has a parallel in the development of the modern concept of uniformity that has been a guiding rule for much of geology.

Uniformitarianism is based on the maxim, “The present is the key to the past.” Because the theory of evolution requires much time to account for change, and because the application of the principle of uniformity requires long ages of time, uniformitarianism has served as a traditional interpretive tool for evolutionists.

THINK IT THROUGH: Why do you accept the biblical account of history rather than the concepts and theories of man?

“When men leave the word of God in regard to the history of creation, and seek to account for God’s creative works upon natural principles, they are upon a boundless ocean of uncertainty. Just how God accomplished the work of creation in six literal days he has never revealed to mortals.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 93.

DAY
4

What did the apostle Peter point to as an example of the world being destroyed by a great catastrophe? 2 Peter 3:5, 6.

These verses point prophetically to the last days and a dramatic fulfillment of prophecy. The trend in modern science has been toward a geological interpretation that favors long ages rather than the Flood and toward evolution as an explanation of origins rather than Creation. It is remarkable that long ago Peter pointed to these two areas as being the points of contention in the last days. That this has happened as predicted is a strong sign that we are living in the last moments of time.

The Genesis Flood had a profound effect on the surface of the earth and is the major key to understanding much of geology. Most of the characteristics of the crust of the earth, the thick beds of sediments, and their fossil contents came about through the action of flood waters.

“Geologists claim to find evidence from the earth itself that it is very much older than the Mosaic record teaches. . . .

“But apart from Bible history, geology can prove nothing. Those who reason so confidently upon its discoveries have no adequate conception of the size of men, animals, and trees before the Flood, or of the great changes which then took place. Relics found in the earth do give evidence of conditions differing in many respects from the present, but the time when these conditions existed can be learned only from the Inspired record. In the history of the Flood, inspiration has explained that which geology alone could never fathom.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 112.

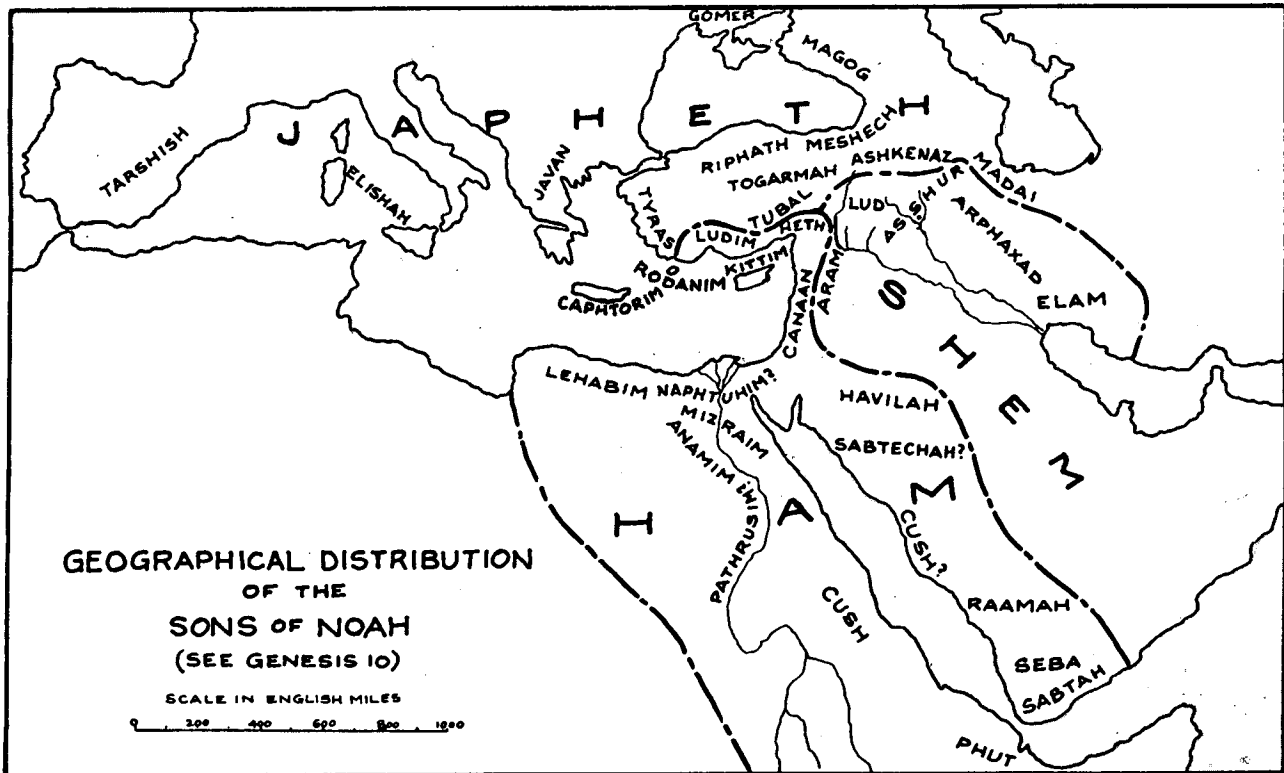
NOTES:

II. THE DIVISION AND DISPERSION OF NOAH'S DESCENDANTS (Gen. 10:1-11:26).

1. The Table of Nations (Gen. 10:1-32).

All of the children of Shem, Ham, and Japheth were born after the Flood. As illustrated by the map below, the descendants of Shem settled mostly in parts of the Middle East and Africa, the descendants of Japheth settled mostly in Europe and Asia Minor, and the descendants of Ham settled in parts of the Middle East and Africa. Of course, subsequent milleniums of folk wanderings and mixtures of people have made it nearly impossible to trace these lines of descent with any accuracy.

Geographical Distribution of the Sons of Noah, Genesis 10



The three sons of Noah migrated to different areas. The Semites occupied the Tigris-Euphrates valley and most

of Arabia; the Japhethites moved north, around the Black Sea, and even west to Spain; the Hamites went south

into lower Asia Minor, coastal Syria and Palestine, and the Red Sea coast of Arabia, but principally into Africa.

DAY 2. The Dispersal of the Nations (Gen. 11:1-9).**5**

SUMMARIZE this familiar story in your own words, emphasizing that which you consider to be most important in the Tower of Babel experience:

3. Genealogy—Shem to Abraham (Gen. 11:10-26).

“Chapter 10 sets forth the racial relationship of the various tribes and nations and their common descent from Noah, whereas ch. 11:10-26 presents the exact descent of God’s chosen people through the many intervening generations. This is a continuation of the list of generations from Adam to Noah as given in ch. 5.”—*S. D. A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 287.

DAY 6 SEARCH AND LEARN: In order to understand better the dramatic decrease in length of age after the Flood from the information outlined in Genesis 11:10-32; 25:7, compute the ages of the post-Flood patriarchs that are not given below:

6

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Shem—_____ | 6. Reu—239 |
| 2. Arphaxad—438 | 7. Serug—_____ |
| 3. Salah—_____ | 8. Nahor—148 |
| 4. Eber—464 | 9. Terah—_____ |
| 5. Peleg—_____ | 10. Abraham—175 |

What effect did eating animal flesh have on length of life and why did God permit it? Gen. 9:3, 4.

“After the flood the people ate largely of animal food. God saw that the ways of man were corrupt, and that he was disposed to exalt himself proudly against his Creator and to follow the inclinations of his own heart. And He permitted that long-lived race to eat animal food to shorten their sinful lives. Soon after the flood the race began to rapidly decrease in size, and in length of years.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 373.

DAY 7 FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read *Patriarchs and Prophets*, “After the Flood,” pages 105-110.

7

“There are men who think they have made wonderful discoveries in science. They quote the opinions of learned men as though they considered them infallible, and teach the deductions of science as truths that cannot be controverted. And the word of God, which is given as a lamp to the feet of the world-weary traveler, is judged by this standard, and pronounced wanting. The scientific research in which these men have indulged has proved a snare to them. It has clouded their minds, and they have drifted

into skepticism. They have a consciousness of power; and instead of looking to the Source of all wisdom, they triumph in the smattering of knowledge they may have gained. They have exalted their human wisdom in opposition to the wisdom of the great and mighty God, and have dared to enter into controversy with him. The word of inspiration pronounced these men 'fools.'

"God has permitted a flood of light to be poured upon the world in discoveries in science and art; but when professedly scientific men lecture and write upon these subjects from a merely human standpoint, they will assuredly come to wrong conclusions. The greatest minds, if not guided by the word of God in their research, become bewildered in their attempts to investigate the relations of science and revelation. The Creator and his works are beyond their comprehension; and because they cannot explain these by natural laws, Bible history is considered unreliable. Those who doubt the reliability of the records of the Old and New Testaments will be led to go a step farther, and doubt the existence of God; and then, having let go their anchor, they are left to beat about upon the rocks of infidelity. Moses wrote under the guidance of the Spirit of God, and a correct theory of geology will never claim discoveries that cannot be reconciled with his statements. The idea that many stumble over, that God did not create matter when he brought the world into existence, limits the power of the Holy One of Israel. . . .

"...Skeptics, who read the Bible for the sake of caviling, through ignorance claim to find decided contradictions between science and revelation. But man's measurement of God will never be correct. The mind unenlightened by God's Spirit will ever be in darkness in regard to his power.

"Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. Those who have no vital union with God are swayed one way and another; they put men's opinions in the front, and God's word in the background. They grasp human assertions that judgment against sin is contrary to God's benevolent character, and, while dwelling upon infinite benevolence, try to forget that there is such a thing as infinite justice."—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, March 13, 1884.

SUMMARY: The record of the years from Noah to Abraham indicates clearly that mere knowledge of God and His judgments cannot prevent human beings from sinning nor can a worldwide flood wash away the sin that permeates human hearts. Only by divine grace can people walk the path of righteousness. The brief record of the post-Flood patriarchs shows that God has had witnesses to this fact throughout history.

APPLICATION: Just as God gave Noah and his descendants the right and the responsibility to exercise the power of choice, He has given us the same privilege and responsibility today. Ask yourself:

- Am I abusing in any way this right and responsibility?
- What needs to be seen in my home and the environment I create in order for those I contact to be attracted by the love and goodness of God?

From Haran to Hebron

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Genesis 11:27 through 15:21.

DAY 1 **MEMORY TEXT:** "He believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness" (Gen. 15:6).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: In this lesson we commence our study of patriarchal history and focus on Abram's early struggles that are reflected in his alternating attitudes of faith and fear.

OVERVIEW: Gen. 11:27-15:21

Covenant Granted (11:27-12:20)	Covenant Guarded (13:1-14:24)	Covenant Guaranteed (15:1-21)
Ancestor of the chosen family (11:27-32) The call and covenant (12:1-3) Abram leaves for Canaan (12:4-10) Excursion into Egypt (12:11-20)	Struggle between faith and sight (13:1-18) Lot's rescue (14:1-16) Melchizedek and Abram (14:17-24)	Renewed promise of seed and land (1-7) God's promise confirmed (8-21)

INTRODUCTION: The primeval story (Genesis 1 through 11) outlined the course God took with the world until the call of Abraham. Beginning with the middle of chapter 11 the writer narrows his worldwide perspective maintained in Genesis 1 through 11 down to the family of Abram with which the call of Israel commences. This call is both the conclusion to primeval history and the commencement of patriarchal history.

Up to this point history demonstrated the frightful power of sin and illustrated the even greater might of grace. The stories of the Fall, of Cain, and of Noah witness to sin but even more to God's forgiveness and His saving acts. Now Abram is chosen from among the nations to reveal the folly of the builders of the Tower of Babel who sought to make a name for themselves (11:4). While Abram's name is cherished among millions of Moslems, Jews, and Christians because of his faithfulness to God, the fame sought by the architects of the Tower of Babel eluded the builders on account of their disobedience.

Genesis 12 through 15 provides background to the history of Israel and represents a new phase in the history of salvation. Abram's faith response to God commences the unfolding of God's plan which reaches its first major climax in the events of the Exodus and Sinai and the choice of a nation.

DAY 2 I. ABRAM'S CALL AND GOD'S COVENANT (Gen. 11:27-12:20).

2

Genesis 11:10-32 notes the descent of God's chosen people from Noah's son Shem. Verses 27 through 31 center on the immediate ancestors of Abram.

1. The Father of the Chosen Family (11:27-32).

What do we know about the immediate family of Abram? Verses 27-30. What significant information is added in Joshua 24:2? (Note that "flood" in this verse refers to the Euphrates River.)

Even though chronological considerations suggest that Abram was the youngest of Terah's sons, he appears to be mentioned first in Genesis 11:27 because of his importance as the ancestor of the chosen family. Although archeology has revealed much concerning the times in which Abram lived, the great empires of the day form merely part of the background. The spotlight is on certain patriarchs and their families who move from place to place and occasionally interact with rulers and nations. Although it is not possible to give precise dates for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, certain chronological points of reference suggested in the Bible and pinpointed in the *S.D.A. Bible Commentary* will provide the time framework that is used in these lessons.

In how many stages did the call of Abram take place according to Acts 7:2-4? (Compare Gen. 12:1 with Acts 7:4.) Why do you think he went through these stages rather than going immediately to Canaan?

Stephen states that God first appeared to Abram in Ur of the Chaldees and called him to go to the land He would show him.

The southern Mesopotamian Ur which probably was Ur of the Chaldees was located halfway between what is now Baghdad and the present coast line of the Persian Gulf. At the beginning of the second millennium, the time when Abram lived there, Ur enjoyed a sophisticated culture. Archeological excavations have revealed a city with an efficient sewage system, well constructed homes, and an advanced educational program. A variety of deities were worshipped in Ur, and most of Abram's close relatives had succumbed to paganism. Abram was asked to make a considerable sacrifice in leaving behind this advanced culture to travel over 1000 miles to the land of Canaan.

Skirting the great Arabian Desert to the west, the large caravan first moved north to the fertile plain of the Balikh river to a city known as Haran. Although we do not know how long Abram and the rest of his relatives, who stayed there when he went on to Canaan, lived in the region, local place names testify to their considerable influence.

DAY
3**2. The Call and Covenant in Haran (Gen. 12:1-3).**

What seems to have been the purpose behind the divine call, and what moved Abram to obey? Verses 1-3; Heb. 11:8-10.

God, not Abram, took the initiative. Yet, the call of grace and the promise were also tests of faith and obedience. Abram had to leave his family, his own race, a sophisticated culture, fertile and watered grazing land, and travel to a mountainous, wooded country, a new climate, and a foreign people with strange customs who lived at a different cultural level.

The divine command continued with a promise and concluded with a blessing. The promise theme of verse 2 becomes a dominant motif throughout the remainder of the book of Genesis. Childless Sarai (Gen. 11:30) would become the mother of a great nation. While the promise of descendants is more prominent in the early chapters of patriarchal history than the promise of the land, the latter assumes more significance as time passes. Both Jacob and Joseph die in the certain hope of Israel's return from Egypt to Canaan (Gen. 48:21; 50:24).

How closely did God associate Himself with Abram? Gen. 12:2. What is the significance of the last half of verse 3? (Compare with James 2:21-23.)

The reading "in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3) broadens our understanding of Genesis 11:9. Much later Paul adds the conviction that Christians share in the blessings given to Abram and are his descendants by faith (Gal. 3:8, 29).

3. Abram Leaves Haran for Canaan (Gen. 12:4-10).

What may be inferred from verses 4 and 5 about Abram's response?

While a youth may leave home and family with relative ease, an older person finds such separation much more difficult. Yet Abram unquestioningly "departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him" (Gen. 12:4). The Bible records no negotiations with God nor any delaying tactics, merely unquestioning obedience. Abram's wealth and possessions, consisting of extensive flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, and a large household, were no hindrance to the patriarch.

Ahead of him lay Canaan, which early in the second millennium B.C. contained several powerful cities. The land was populated by an alien race, economically dependent on Egypt, overspread by idolatry, criss-crossed by bad roads, covered by heavily wooded mountains, and offering few permanent grazing areas. If Abram thought the divine promise implied vast tracts of unpopulated land, he was badly mistaken (verse 6).

God, it demonstrated the Lord's never-failing mercy and patience. God interfered with human folly in order to maintain the covenant and its significance in the light of the coming of the Saviour.

SEARCH AND LEARN: Study the texts below and list some other circumstances that did not interfere with God's covenant promises:

14:21-24 _____

15:1,2 _____

15:13 _____

DAY II. THE COVENANT GUARDED (Gen. 13:1-14:24).

5

1. Struggle Between Faith and Sight (13:1-18).

What problem arose after the expulsion of Abram and Lot from Egypt? Verses 1-7.

Returning from Egypt Abram called on the Lord at the second altar he had built in Canaan (verses 3, 4). Fortified by this renewal of his relationship with the Lord, he was able to face another test. Once more the promise of land seemed to elude Abram (verses 5, 6), and a decision had to be made.

What was involved in the choice between the Jordan valley and the rugged and less fertile hills of Canaan? Verses 8-13.

Abram's failure in Egypt seems counterbalanced by the nobility of character that he demonstrated in his dealings with Lot. From the heights of Bethel Lot saw the Jordan valley well-watered and fertile like the Garden of Eden and the plains of Mesopotamia. Lot chose that which appealed to his sense of immediate gain. Little did he realize that his choice would cost him his family. The decision was between "faith" and "sight," and the results demonstrate the wisdom of making the right choice. Abram's close relationship with the Lord and his determination to walk by faith enabled him to look beyond the immediate temporal advantages to eternal gain.

How did God reward Abram for his unselfishness? Verses 14-18.

At Hebron (formerly known as the "city of Arba"), the patriarch set up camp in the shade of a grove of trees and erected another altar. Here Abram became a friend and ally of an Amorite chieftain named Mamre.

2. Lot's Rescue (Gen. 14:1-16).

REVIEW the details given about the military operation between the Mesopotamian invaders and the Palestinian kings. Verses 1-12.

DAY
4

After reaching Canaan, what did Abram do that gave silent testimony to his faith? Verses 6-8.

Shechem was in a pivotal position, situated in central Palestine between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. Here the major roads crisscrossing Palestine intersected.

Probably in search of grazing pastures, Abram moved another 20 miles south to a location between Bethel (formerly known as Luz, see Gen. 28:19) and Ai.

“Wherever he [Abram] pitched his tent, close beside it was set up his altar, calling all within his encampment to the morning and evening sacrifice. When his tent was removed, the altar remained.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 128. These altars were protests against idolatry and testimonies to the living God to all who passed by.

What test of faith came to Abram after he had moved to the more sparsely populated open grazing country of the Negeb (the southern desert)? Gen. 12:10.

We might expect that, because he was following the call of God, Abram would have had his paths smoothed by Providence. Not so; Abram's experience is real to life. Not long after he had entered Canaan, a severe famine caused him to depart for Egypt which was watered by the flooding waters of the Nile. The Sacred Record teaches us that even those who follow God's commands may have to endure trials of faith.

“The Lord in His providence had brought this trial upon Abraham to teach him lessons of submission, patience, and faith—lessons that were to be placed on record for the benefit of all who should afterward be called to endure affliction. God leads His children by a way that they know not, but He does not forget or cast off those who put their trust in Him.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 129.

4. Abram's Excursion Into Egypt (Gen. 12:11-20).

What evidence did Abram give in Egypt that he was not free of human weakness and imperfection? How did he almost jeopardize the promise of a son and heir? Verses 11-16.

Hunger and fear reduced the hero of faith to a person with frailties that most of us can identify with readily. Faith succumbed to fear and fear to deviousness as Abram used one half truth to conceal the other half.

How do you explain the plagues which fell upon Pharaoh? Verses 17-20.

The plagues disclosed Sarai's true identity. While Abram's deliverance in no way absolved the patriarch from suffering the consequences of his actions that had brought such disgrace upon himself and dishonor to his

It is significant that Lot, who according to Genesis 13:12 had pitched his tent toward Sodom, now “dwelt in Sodom” (14:12). In contrast to Abram’s heritage, Lot may already have lost much of his former possessions, thus revealing the superiority of Abram’s choice.

THINK IT THROUGH: What does the fact that Abram took his community responsibilities seriously indicate about our duty in this area? Gen. 14:13-16.

DAY

6

3. Melchizedek and Abram (Gen. 14:17-24).

What light does the Melchizedek episode cast upon the spiritual stature of Abram? Verses 17-24.

Melchizedek (meaning “my king is righteous”) was king of Salem (a name for Jerusalem, see Ps. 76:2) and priest of the Most High God. Abram worshiped the same God. In deference to Melchizedek, who welcomed and blessed the patriarch upon his return from the battle, Abram gave the king-priest a tithe of all (verse 20). This indicates that the institution of tithing was practiced long before Moses repeated it among the precepts, thus recognizing the practice of tithing as a divine requirement.

SEARCH AND LEARN: Compare Genesis 28:22; Leviticus 27:31-33; Numbers 18:21-28; Nehemiah 13:12; Matthew 23:23 and list below what you learn about the subject of tithe from this comparison:

III. THE COVENANT GUARANTEED (Gen. 15:1-21).

1. Promise of Seed and Land Renewed (verses 1-7).

Great victories are frequently followed by periods of deep depression. (See 1 Kings 19:1-10.) Abram, who had been a man of peace so far, had become involved in the wars of his neighbors. Now fear of reprisals weighed him down. What if the Mesopotamian kings should return?

How did the Lord reassure His disheartened servant? Verse 1. What does this tell us about God’s interest when we are discouraged or despondent?

What further problems did the words “I am ... thy exceeding great reward” raise in Abram’s mind, and how did the Lord respond? Verses 2-5.

God repeated His earlier promise that Abram’s descendants would be innumerable in multitude (Gen. 12:2; 13:16). Even though the advancing age of Abram and Sarai seemed to make the promise of descendants increasingly more impossible, Abram took God at His word and trusted the divine power.

Abram's complete trust in God and his acceptance of the divine promise became the subject of much New Testament discussion about justification by faith. God accepts a person, not on the basis of what that person does to merit His approval, but purely and simply on the grounds of divine grace. As did Abram, we may trust God and accept His offer of salvation. The person thus accepted into God's family will act as a son or a daughter of the heavenly King and, like Abram, reveal his or her relationship to God in acts of obedience. Divine grace ever precedes the response of gratitude that we express in obedience. While human obedience is not the prerequisite for God's initiative of grace, Jesus taught that obedience must follow as an evidence of gratitude and love. (See John 14:15.) Although obedience does not bring merit, deliberate and willful disobedience or carelessness leads to loss of eternal life. (See 1 John 5:1-4, 11, 12.)



2. God's Promise Confirmed (Gen. 15:8-21).

What led to the ritual described in verses 9 through 21? Verse 8.

What details concerning Abram's seed and the Promised Land are related in verses 13 through 16 that were not mentioned before?

God guaranteed His promises by the ritual described. Ordinarily all parties to such an agreement would pass between the dismembered animals and invoke on themselves a death like that of the sacrificed beasts should they themselves violate their agreement.

God not only assured Abram of the ultimate fulfillment of His promises but also of Heaven's patience with the present inhabitants of the land (verse 16). The intervening years were a time of waiting for the chosen family and a period of probation for the Amorites. Thus God certified that Israel's conquest of Palestine was an act of divine judgment rather than one of wanton aggression.

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 125-136; *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, comments on Genesis 11:26 to 15:21.

SUMMARY: With Abram's departure from Ur, the patriarchal period begins. ("The patriarchs mentioned in Scripture were the founders of the Jewish race and religion."—*S.D.A. Bible Dictionary*, p. 843.) At God's call he left relatives, friends, fertile plains, and a sophisticated civilization for an unknown land. He did so because He trusted in God's promises.

APPLICATION: Abram's unqualified obedience at considerable sacrifice to himself stands out as a monument of faith. When called by the Lord, will I be prepared to renounce cherished plans and familiar associations?

Faith and Frailties

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Genesis 16:1 through 19:38.

DAY 1 **MEMORY TEXT:** "Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son" (Gen. 18:14).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The story of Abram, who became Abraham, demonstrates both God's long suffering mercy and His unfailing justice as He deals with His erring and contrite children and His unrepentant ones.

OVERVIEW: Gen. 16:1-19:38			
Hagar and Ishmael (16:1-16)	Covenant of Circumcision (17:1-27)	Heavenly Harbingers (18:1-33)	Wickedness Punished (19:1-38)
Abram, Hagar, and Sarai (1-6) Hagar's flight and return (7-16)	Promise and stipulations (1-14) Sarah and Issac (15-22) The men circumcised (23-27)	Three visitors (1-15) Abraham intercedes for Sodom (16-33)	Visitors in Sodom (1-11) The Visitors' purpose disclosed and Sodom destroyed (12-29) Lot and his daughters (30-38)

INTRODUCTION: With characteristic candor the Bible once more presents to us the faith and frailties of its great heroes. Abram, tempted by the pressures of time, with that temptation intensified by human manipulation, tried to run ahead of God. He endeavored to shorten the waiting period. The Lord had to teach His trusted friend that the promise of a descendant would not be realized through any human scheme. Isaac was to be a miracle son. Yet, God never forsakes His erring but repentant children. He returned to Abram and reaffirmed the covenant He previously had made with him.

Although divine patience bore long with the city of Sodom, the offer of mercy that persistently had been rejected and despised was withdrawn finally, and the ministration of judgment came. The desolation of Sodom and Gomorrah is a perpetual reminder of the certainty of God's judgment upon sin.

DAY
2**I. HAGAR AND ISHMAEL (Gen. 16:1-16).**

Ten years had passed since Abram had entered Canaan, and still there was no sign of the promised seed. In typical human frustration the patriarch listened to “reason” and to his wife Sarai rather than to the voice of God.

1. Abram, Sarai, and Hagar (verses 1-6).

What was wrong with the suggestion that barren Sarai offered in order to shorten the period of waiting for the expected son and heir? Verses 1-4.

As Leah and Rachel did later, Sarai decided to take matters into her own hands. She suggested an action that, although compatible with the practices of her day, was inconsistent with God’s plan.

How did Paul regard the efforts of Abram and Sarai? Gal. 4:22-29.

What were the results of these efforts at self-help? Gen. 16:4-6.

Note particularly Hagar’s pride (verse 4), Sarai’s placing the blame on Abram (verse 5), and Abram’s unwillingness to intervene (verse 6).

Unfortunately, forgiveness is not always able to cancel out the awful consequences of our actions, and Abram’s unwise step resulted in untold suffering for centuries to come; the consequences of which have continued even to our day.

2. Hagar’s Flight and Return (Gen. 16:7-16).

What significant message did the “angel of the Lord” give to Hagar to encourage her to return as she fled toward her native Egypt? Verses 7-14.

“God recognized the difficult circumstances in which Hagar found herself, and for which she was not primarily to blame. Hagar honored the true God, and He would not abandon her in her extremity. The promise He there made to her, a slave, is without parallel. This promise greatly comforted Hagar. Although her son was not to be the son of the divine plan, he would nevertheless share in the promise made to Abram. God had promised to multiply Abram’s seed, without limiting it to the offspring of Sarai.”—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 318.

DAY
3**II. THE COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION (Gen. 17:1-27).**

Thirteen years after the birth of Ishmael, God appeared to Abram and repeated in expanded form the covenant he had made with the patriarch. In chapter 15 God reiterated the earlier promise of a son and Abram

accepted the divine words with unqualified faith. Similarly, God had renewed the promise of land and guaranteed it with a covenant ritual. Now, some years later, with Abram and Sarai's faith tried further, God reaffirmed the covenant and asked Abram to demonstrate his faith and commitment to God through tangible actions.

1. Promise and Stipulations (Gen. 17:1-14).

What challenge to Abram was particularly appropriate in the light of the failures recorded in chapter 16? Verses 1, 2.

What covenant promises did God present under the heading "as for me"? Verses 4-8.

What stipulations are listed under the heading "as for you"? Verses 9-14.

God still held Himself bound to the promises given 25 years before. Divine faithfulness could not be cancelled out by Abram's failures. (Compare Rom. 3:3, 4.) Here, as elsewhere in Scripture, a reminder of grace precedes the call to specific and total obedience. Anything less leads to expulsion from God's family (Gen. 17:14). It is within the covenant that human fulfillment and happiness are found. (Compare Ex. 19:4, 5; Deut. 10:12-22; 30:15, 16.)

The promise of seed was expanded at that time to include "nations" and "kings." This led to a change in names. Abram ("high father" or "exalted father") was renamed Abraham ("father of many"), and Sarai ("my princess") was to be known as Sarah ("a princess"). While this promise was initially fulfilled in the many tribes who traced their lineage back to Abraham and Sarah, it met its greater realization in the multitudes of believers that are Abraham's spiritual descendants (Gal. 3:29).

What outward sign signified Abraham's pledge of commitment to God? Gen. 17:10-14.

Much later, with the rejection of literal Israel as the Lord's peculiar people, the institution of circumcision ceased as a religious symbol and was replaced by Christian baptism. (See Col. 2:11, 12.)

2. Sarah and Isaac (Gen. 17:15-22).

How did Abraham react to the pledge that Sarah would be the mother of a son? Verse 17. (Note that Romans 4:19, 20 implies a change in Abraham's attitude following this conversation.)

Why did God reply in the way that He did to Abraham's request that Ishmael be accepted as his heir? Verses 18-21.

3. Abraham and His Family Men Circumcised. (Read Gen. 17:23-27.)

DAY
4

III. HEAVENLY MESSENGERS VISIT ABRAHAM (Gen. 18:1-33).

1. Three Visitors Pass by Mamre (Verses 1-15).

Because the events of Genesis 17 through 19 took place within the year before Isaac's birth, the covenant of circumcision, and the visit by the three heavenly visitors, as well as the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, must have followed each other in close succession.

SEARCH AND LEARN: What do we learn about hospitality when we put Genesis 18:1 through 8 together with Hebrews 13:2 and Matthew 25:35?

During the midday siesta, a most inconvenient moment, Abraham, as would a modern Bedouin chief, welcomed three strange chance visitors and showered them with the best of Oriental hospitality.

Note how the unexpected visitors gradually revealed their identity. Gen. 18:9-15.

What tremendous assurance did the Lord give to Sarah? Gen. 18:14.

THINK IT THROUGH: Would it not be wonderful if these words could be etched onto our minds! Ask yourself: Am I discouraged? Do I sense my weakness? Do I feel like Sarah? Remember, nothing is too hard for the Lord. (See Jer. 32:17, 27.) Human frailty stands rebuked by divine omnipotence.

2. Abraham Intercedes for Sodom (Gen. 18:16-33).

What interesting reason did the Lord give for revealing His plans to Abraham? Verses 17-19. (Compare Isa. 41:8.)

"Abraham's affection for his children and his household led him to guard their religious faith, to impart to them a knowledge of the divine statutes, as the most precious legacy he could transmit to them, and through them to the world. . . .

"How few there are in our day who follow this example! . . .

"Not until parents themselves walk in the law of the Lord with perfect hearts will they be prepared to command their children after them."
—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 142, 143.

In what way do verses 20 and 21 assure us that God's punishment of the Sodomites was not arbitrary?

What sublime traits of Abraham's character are indicated in verses 23 through 33?

Compassionate justice filled the heart of Abraham, who was conscious of his own need for grace. The people whom he rescued once before (Genesis 14) were again the object of his pity. As Moses and Daniel did on later occasions, Abraham implored the Lord to forgive and spare. (See Ex. 32:32; Dan. 9:3-19; compare with Luke 23:34.)

DAY 5 IV. THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH

(Gen. 19:1-38).

1. Heavenly Visitors in Sodom (Verses 1-11).

What description does Ezekiel 16:49, 50 give concerning the state of the Sodomites? See also Gen. 13:13.

How would you describe Lot's reaction to this wickedness? See 2 Peter 2:7, 8.

Wealth, pride, and leisure generated the sins that caused the destruction of the cities of the plain. God had not left Himself without a witness. Abraham's victory and magnanimous disposition must have caused admiration, even in the wicked cities, and gave evidence of the superiority of his religion. Even Lot's somewhat muffled witness was used providentially to draw attention to the true faith. Tragically, all the rays of light had been rejected by a people enslaved by their passions. Mercy, perpetually slighted, finally ceased to plead.

What was behind Lot's concern for the visitors? Gen. 19:1-8.

Although the Hebrew word translated "to know" in verses 5 and 8 designates mental recognition in the majority of its uses, it also is employed to indicate the intimacy of sexual relations. (See Gen. 4:1, 25.) The inhabitants of Sodom were not so much interested in making the acquaintance of the two visitors as in abusing them sexually. (See Jude 7.) This is particularly clear when verse 5 of Genesis 19 is compared with verse 8 and we take into consideration Lot's comment, "I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly" (verse 7). This biblical incident gave rise to the later term "sodomy." God's law described this practice as heinous and condemned it alongside incest and bestiality. (See Lev. 18:22-30; Rom. 1:26, 27; 1 Cor. 6:9.)

How was Lot saved from the immoral, incensed, raging mob? Verses 9-11. (Compare 2 Kings 6:18-20.)

DAY
6**2. The Visitors' Purpose Disclosed; Sodom Destroyed (Gen. 19:12-29).**

As the angels intervened in behalf of Lot and acquainted him with their mission, he must have realized that he was entertaining heavenly visitors.

What was to be Lot's task? Verses 12, 13.

Read verse 14 and try to figure out why Lot's relatives seemed to think that he was joking? Verse 14.

Had Lot's inconsistent witness dulled the effect of his appeals? Not even the desperate visit at night could arouse his family. Lot's children "laughed at what they called his superstitious fears. His daughters were influenced by their husbands. They were well enough off where they were. They could see no evidence of danger. Everything was just as it had been. They had great possessions, and they could not believe it possible that beautiful Sodom would be destroyed."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 160.

How do you explain Lot's incredible delay when urged by the angels to leave? Verses 15-17.

How is the Lord's mercy and patience revealed in verses 16 through 22?

"Living in that wicked city, in the midst of unbelief, his faith had grown dim. The Prince of heaven was by his side, yet he pleaded for his own life as though God, who had manifested such care and love for him, would not still preserve him. He should have trusted himself wholly to the divine Messenger, giving his will and his life into the Lord's hands without a doubt or a question."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 161.

What tragic note does Moses add in verse 26 as he describes the ensuing conflagration? Verses 23-26.

"If Lot himself had manifested no hesitancy to obey the angels' warning, but had earnestly fled toward the mountains, without one word of pleading or remonstrance, his wife also would have made her escape. The influence of his example would have saved her from the sin that sealed her doom. But his hesitancy and delay caused her to lightly regard the divine warning."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 161.

In what sense can we still be tempted to make the same kind of wrong decision that Lot's wife did? Luke 17:28-32.

What does the destruction of Sodom tell us about the limits of divine patience and the certainty of God's announced judgments? Compare 2 Peter 2:6-9 with Jude 7.

THINK IT THROUGH: In view of the fact that the overthrow of the cities of the plain are an example of the final destruction by fire, what lessons ought we to learn from the words, "Escape for thy life"?

DAY 3. Lot and his Daughters (Gen. 19:30-38).

7

What blot does the incident related in verses 30 through 38 leave on the character of Lot?

Lot paid an exorbitant price for the few years that he spent in Sodom. The immorality that surrounded him there had left its stamp upon his daughters. After the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah these girls became the mothers of two idolatrous nations that constantly feuded with God's people. Lot began his career with possessions so extensive that "the land was not able to bear" them (13:5, 6). However, all this was soon reduced to a house in Sodom (19:3) and finally a cave in Moab (19:30). What a pathetic sight and what a price to pay for his wrong choice!

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 137-144 and 156-170; *S. D. A. Bible Commentary* on Genesis 16 through 19.

SUMMARY: This week we observed the results of unwise choices made by both Abraham and Lot. However, we also noted the shining example of Abraham whose relationship to God was not only manifested in faith and obedience but also in his compassionate intercession for the sinful.

APPLICATION: The temptation to run ahead of God's purposes for our lives is as real today as it was for Abraham and Sarah. In our impatience we still need to hear, "I am Almighty God, walk before me and be thou perfect," while in our frailties it is well for us to remember, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

- In view of the story of Sodom, is it possible that, because I live in the midst of indifference, my horror of sin has been dulled?
- At a time when it is unpopular to speak of obedience, law, and transgression could I be caricaturing God's love?
- Might inconsistency and indecisiveness in my words and actions contribute to the loss of someone's eternal salvation?

The Triumph of Faith

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Genesis 20:1 through 25:10.

DAY 1 **MEMORY TEXT:** "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me" (Gen. 22:12).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: In the supreme trial of faith Abraham and Isaac revealed a commitment and submission to God that could be surpassed only by that of the Son of God.

OVERVIEW: Gen. 20:1-25:10

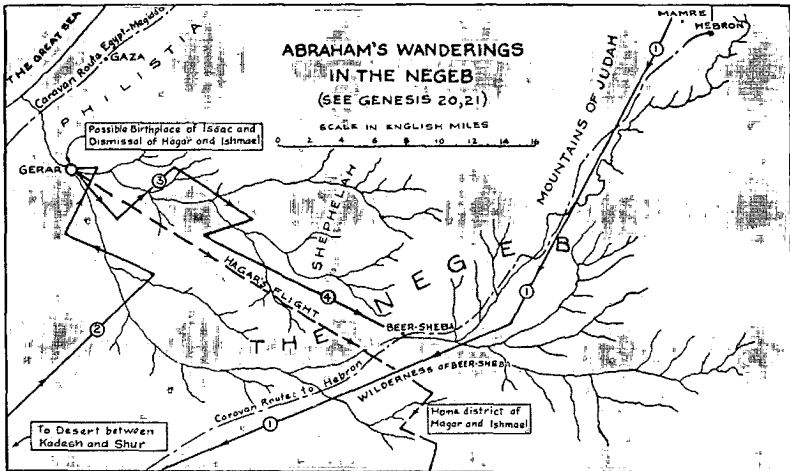
Isaac's Birth (20:1 - 21:34)	The Ultimate Test of Faith (22:1-24)	Death of Isaac's Parents and His Marriage (23:1-25:10)
The promise in jeopardy (1-18) Birth of Isaac (21:1-7) Expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael, and treaty at Beersheba (8-34)	Divine summons and journey to Moriah (1-5) God's initiative and provision (6-14) Repetition of promise and return (15-24)	Death of Sarah (23:1-20) Eliezer chooses a bride (24:1-67) Death of Abraham (25:1-10)

INTRODUCTION: Chapters 20 through 25 depict the last 55 years of Abraham's life, a period brightened by the presence of his heir. However, these years were not without shadows. Once more Abraham nearly jeopardized the fulfillment of the promised seed (20:1-18). With moist eyes and heavy heart he had to send away Ishmael (21:8-20). Then his faith was tested severely when God commanded him to sacrifice the long-awaited son of promise (22:1-18). It was in the region of Moriah, where later the temple stood and near where Golgotha's cross was planted, that both father and son reached the height of faith and the Lord demonstrated the way that He was to provide for sinners. Once more dark clouds gathered when Sarah was laid to rest. But beautiful and kind Rebekah helped bring back the sunshine. Thus the stage was set for Jacob, whose story and that of his son, Joseph, will take up the remaining chapters of the book of Genesis.

I. ISAAC'S BIRTH (Gen. 20:1-21:34).

1. The Promise Once More in Jeopardy (Gen. 20:1-18).

Soon after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham moved to a region near the border of Egypt, approximately 80 miles southwest from Hebron, before traveling north to Gerar located in a fertile valley south of Gaza. (See map.) The city state of Gerar was then ruled by a Philistine prince whose name or title was Abimelech.



After Abraham had reached another summit of faith, what incident caused him to fall? Verses 1-13.

How does this account illustrate the words recorded in 1 Corinthians 10:12?

How did the incident recorded in Genesis 20 give Satan opportunity to thwart God's plan to bring about the birth of the promised seed?

With years of patient waiting behind him, and now on the verge of the birth of Isaac, Abraham and Sarah surrendered once more to deviousness (verse 12). (See Gen. 12:10-20.) Had God not interposed to secure Sarah's release (verses 3, 6, 7, 18) Abraham would have lost both his wife and the prospects of the promised seed. Again lack of faith jeopardized their hopes.

What is so ironical about Abraham's prayer for Abimelech? Gen. 20:17.

Abraham, the embarrassed and erring prophet of God, was reprimanded by a Philistine king who seemed more righteous than the patriarch (verses 5-10).

DAY 2. The Birth of Isaac (Gen. 21:1-7).**3**

Only when Abraham's human schemes and ingenuity had failed could God's intervention be appreciated fully and what seemed laughable become believable reality. Abraham, the centenarian (verse 5), finally received the long-awaited son and heir.

How did Sarah respond to the birth of her child? Verses 6, 7.

The birth of Isaac (whose name means "he laughs" and reminds readers of Abraham's and Sarah's laughter, see 17:17; 18:12, 13) became the occasion for great joy.

3. Hagar and Ishmael Expelled; the Treaty at Beersheba (Gen. 21:8-34).

To what did the tensions developing between Ishmael and Isaac finally lead? Verses 8-10.

In view of the fact that Sarah had initially instigated the union between Abraham and Hagar, her demand to expel Hagar appears cruel.

How did God ease Abraham's trauma over the banishment of Ishmael? What assurance did He give the anxious father? Verses 11-13.

Ishmael had lived for about 17 years with his father Abraham. How could Abraham abandon Ishmael? What a price the old patriarch had to pay for his compliance with the hasty wishes of Sarah!

How did Paul describe the incompatibility between Abraham's natural and spiritual descendants, and what application did the apostle make? Gal. 4:28-31.

"Sarah saw in Ishmael's turbulent disposition a perpetual source of discord."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 146. The later history of clashes between the two descendants of Abraham bears out her concern.

Notice the contrast in attitudes between God and Sarah toward the outcasts. Gen. 21:14-21.

What observations led Abimelech to enter into a friendship treaty with Abraham at Beersheba? Verses 22-32.

II. THE ULTIMATE TEST OF FAITH (Gen. 22:1-24).

1. The Divine Summons and the Journey to Moriah (verses 1-5).

In spite of the admirable trust that Abraham often displayed (12:1-4; 15:1-6) his faith had not been perfect. On a number of occasions Abraham had shown a lack of trust. He had deceived Pharaoh and Abimelech and had had a liaison with Hagar. In order for him to become truly the "father of all them that believe" (Rom. 4:11) Abraham had to experience one of the most severe trials of faith that anyone ever has experienced.

What harrowing test was laid upon the aged Abraham? Gen. 22:1, 2.

This was the eighth scripturally recorded message from God to Abraham. (See Acts 7:2; Gen. 12:1; 13:14; 15:1; 17:1; 18:1; 21:12.) Consequently, he had no doubt as to who it was that spoke to him.

REACT: Read the following and try to imagine the thoughts that raced through Abraham's mind and the emotions that filled his heart.

"The loss of such a son by accident or disease would have been heart rending to the fond father; it would have bowed down his whitened head with grief; but he was commanded to shed the blood of that son with his own hand. It seemed to him a fearful impossibility."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 148.

Tormented by doubt, despair, and anguish, and subjected to satanic insinuations, Abraham sought for a divine confirmation. (See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 148.) But God remained strangely silent. There was no relief. Not even Isaac's mother could be told for fear that she might hinder the patriarch. Abraham knew God's voice and was aware that he must obey without delay.

What do the words that Abraham spoke to the two servants indicate about his faith? Gen. 22:5.

Although tortured by questions and heartbreak, Abraham strengthened himself for his unwelcome task by dwelling upon the evidences of God's goodness and faithfulness in the past. Tested to the breaking point, he rose to an incredible height of faith and thus became the "father of the faithful." His love and faith for God was manifested in his journey to Mount Moriah.

2. God's Initiative and Provision (Gen. 22:6-14).

How is Abraham's faith further revealed in verses 6 through 8? (Compare with Heb. 11:17-19.)

Isaac's endearing address, "my father," and his question concerning the whereabouts of the sacrifice (Gen. 22:7) pierced the old man's heart and

elicited a response full of prophetic hope (verse 8). Tremblingly, Abraham's faith reached out, clutching the hope that the same miraculous power that had given life to Isaac would restore him to life again.

What do verses 9 and 10 disclose about Isaac?

"It was with terror and amazement that Isaac learned his fate, but he offered no resistance. . . .

"And now the last words of love are spoken, the last tears are shed, the last embrace is given. The father lifts the knife to slay his son, when suddenly his arm is stayed."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 152.

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What did the Lord do at that critical moment to save Isaac and provide a substitute? Verses 11-14.

"Abraham was human; his passions and attachments were like ours; but he did not stop to question how the promise could be fulfilled if Isaac should be slain. He did not stay to reason with his aching heart. He knew that God is just and righteous in all His requirements, and he obeyed the command to the very letter."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 153.

Isaac's ready submission typified the future submission of the Son of God. Once more in the region of Moriah, on a hill called Golgotha, a Father was to surrender His life in His Son. While Moses, looking forward by faith, wrote, "On the mountain of the Lord it *will be* provided" (verse 14, NIV), we can exclaim in adoration and gratitude, "On the mountain of the Lord *it has been* provided."

THINK IT THROUGH: How is the proper relationship between faith and works revealed in this experience?

"There are many who fail to understand the relation of faith and works. They say, 'Only believe in Christ, and you are safe. You have nothing to do with keeping the law.' But genuine faith will be manifest in obedience. Said Christ to the unbelieving Jews, 'If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.' John 8:39."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 153, 154.

3. Repetition of the Promise and the Return to Beersheba (Gen. 22:15-24).

How did God reward Abraham's supreme demonstration of faith in action? Verses 15-18.

The "angel of the Lord" called attention twice to Abraham's obedience as the reason for the blessings pronounced (verses 16, 18). Because Abraham had demonstrated that he was trusting and trustworthy, God was able to bless him. For the first time, God mentioned possession of "the gate of

his enemies" (verse 17). Subsequent to Abraham's and Isaac's joyful return to Beersheba, news about their relatives in Mesopotamia reached the patriarch, thus introducing contact that led to Rebekah becoming the wife of Isaac (verses 19-24).

DAY 6 **III. THE DEATH OF ISAAC'S PARENTS AND HIS MARRIAGE TO REBEKAH (Gen. 23:1-25:10).**

1. The Death of Sarah (23:1-20).

Under what sad circumstances did Abraham acquire his first piece of real estate in the Promised Land? Verses 1-20.

Abraham had returned to the land of Canaan and lived at Kiriath-arba, later known as Hebron. While Amorites had been in control of this region during Abraham's earlier residence, now Hittites dominated the territory. This changeover of nationalities is evidenced in the trading customs mentioned during the purchase of the burial ground for Sarah.

Sarah can be included among those whose faith looked forward to dwelling forever in a "better country." (See Heb. 11:13-16.)

2. Eliezer Chooses a Bride for Isaac (Gen. 24:1-67).

What request did Abraham make of his faithful servant, Eliezer? Verses 1-9.

Three years after the death of Sarah, Abraham made preparations for the marriage of his son. Isaac trusted divine providence and his father to find a suitable wife.

Why did Abraham advise Eliezer to choose a wife from among his relatives rather than from the daughters of Canaan? Gen. 24:3, 4. (Compare with Deut. 7:3, 4; 1 Kings 11:4; 2 Cor. 6:14.)

"The happiness and prosperity of the marriage relation depends upon the unity of the parties; but between the believer and the unbeliever there is a radical difference of tastes, inclinations, and purposes. They are serving two masters, between whom there can be no concord. However pure and correct one's principles may be, the influence of an unbelieving companion will have a tendency to lead away from God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 174.

What does the sequel of this story reveal about Eliezer's character? Gen. 24:12, 26, 33, 52, 56.

How was Abraham's faith and Isaac's trust in the providence of God rewarded? Verses 16, 19, 58, 67.

Rebekah was beautiful, kind, resolute, and both loving and lovable. "Let parents seek, in their own character and in their home life, to exemplify the love and beneficence of the heavenly Father. Let the home be full of sunshine. This will be worth far more to your children than lands or money. Let the home love be kept alive in their hearts, that they may look back upon the home of their childhood as a place of peace and happiness next to heaven. The members of the family do not all have the same stamp of character, and there will be frequent occasion for the exercise of patience and forbearance; but through love and self-discipline all may be bound together in the closest union."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 176.

DAY 7 3. The Death of Abraham (Gen. 25:1-10).

After Abraham had appointed Isaac as his undisputed legal heir, and had sent his other sons away richly laden with gifts, he died at the age of 175 (verses 1-8). Ishmael and Isaac buried their father in the purchased tomb where Abraham had buried Sarah (verses 9-11).

Before proceeding with the line of the faithful, the writer of Genesis, in his characteristic fashion, first lists the generations of those who will fade from our view (verses 12-18). In the next lesson we begin to take up in detail the story of Isaac and his descendants.

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 145-155 and 171-176; *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, comments on Genesis 20:1-25:18.

SUMMARY: Abraham and Isaac stand out as the ancestors of the faithful, demonstrating that, regardless of the cost, God and His will had preeminence in their lives. God can be trusted, for He provided a ram, and ultimately the Supreme Sacrifice to assure the redemption of the lost race. How different is the early life of Jacob, which we will begin to study next week.

APPLICATION: Consider how distrust in God's power can jeopardize the plans and purposes He has for our lives and thus bring heartache to others.

- While I may never be asked to demonstrate the heights of Abraham's faith, how willing am I to manifest my commitment to God?
- Am I ready to reveal my love to God in obedience and exhibit my faith by my actions?
- Am I willing to be guided in the choice of a life partner or friends and associates?
- Does my home exemplify the love and beneficence of my heavenly Father, and is it full of sunshine?
- What values do my children derive from their home?

The Price of Duplicity

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Genesis 25:19 through 29:30.

DAY 1 **MEMORY TEXT:** "Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" (Gen. 28:15).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: His deception in obtaining the birthright blessing not only revealed a blemish in Jacob's character but also cost him his peace for years to come. However, divine grace sought out the repentant sinner and assured him of acceptance, forgiveness, and guidance.

OVERVIEW: Gen. 25:19-29:30

Esau and Jacob (25:19-34)	Isaac and Abimelech (26:1-35)	Faithless Schemes (27:1-46)	Jacob's Flight (28:1-29:30)
Birth of twins (19-26) Contrast between twins (27-34)	Deceit and treaty (1-33) Esau's marriages (34, 35)	Jacob asks for the blessing (1-29) Esau's arrival and results of duplicity (30-46)	Departure and dream (28:1-22) Arrival and marriage (29:1-30)

INTRODUCTION: The story of Jacob begins with a divine oracle and the birth of the twins, Esau and Jacob. Although Jacob's life virtually spans the rest of the book of Genesis, the more specific story of his life may be divided into three broad sections that can be designated the Jacob-Esau episode (chapters 27, 28), the Jacob-Laban episode (chapters 29-31), and another Jacob-Esau episode (chapters 32-35). These episodes are linked together by two major encounters that Jacob had with the Lord. The first of these occurred at Bethel when Jacob left the Promised Land and fled from Esau (28:10-22). The second encounter took place when the patriarch wrestled with a divine Being as he reentered the Promised Land to face Esau (32:6-30). At that time the Lord changed Jacob's name to Israel and reaffirmed the Abrahamic blessing to him (35:9-12).

Our study of the story of Jacob will be divided into two parts. This week we will focus on the first 80 years or so of Jacob's life.

DAY 2 I. ESAU AND JACOB (Gen. 25:19-34).

2

1. The Birth of the Twins (verses 19-26).

Verses 19 through 26 are out of place chronologically. They are placed at this point in order to preserve continuity in the account of Jacob's life. Although Abraham's death at 175 is mentioned in Genesis 25:7-11, the patriarch was 160 years old when the twins were born, for Isaac was 60 years old when Rebekah gave birth to Esau and Jacob (verse 26).

How long did Rebekah have to wait before her prayer for children was answered? (Compare verses 20, 21 with verse 26.)

How did God explain to Rebekah the worrisome jostling that she experienced during pregnancy? Verses 22, 23.

The prediction that the older (Esau) would serve the younger (Jacob) explains to some extent Rebekah's desire to see Jacob receive the birthright and helps us understand Isaac's ultimate decision not to renege on his blessing (27:33; compare with Rom. 9:10-12). The name *Esau* probably is related to the Hebrew word for "hairy" (verses 24, 25), and *Jacob* means literally "he grasps the heel" and figuratively "he deceives." (See Gen. 25:26; 27:36.)

2. Contrasts Between Jacob and Esau (Gen. 25:27-34).

What difference in life-style between the two brothers is indicated in verse 27?

What does the birthright incident reveal about the characters of Esau and Jacob? Verses 28-34. (Compare Heb. 12:16, 17.)

While Jacob's conduct was deplorable as he endeavored by his scheming to secure the privileges that had been promised in the Lord's prediction (verse 23), Esau's trifling attitude also must be deplored. The birthright was a status normally enjoyed by the firstborn that entitled him to both material and spiritual blessings. (Compare Deut. 21:17.) However, to the restless, unrestrained, self-indulgent, and impatient Esau the momentary satisfaction of his immediate desires and needs was of greater value than any far-off blessing hidden as yet to sight. All that he cared for was that which presently satisfied his senses of sight and taste (Gen. 25:30-32).

Esau demonstrated that he was unworthy of the birthright privilege not only by bartering it away in a most flippant manner but also by reinforcing his choice through an oath (verse 33) and by his unperturbed departure (verse 34). His calm and deliberate rejection of the birthright marked him as a "profane person." (See Heb. 12:16.)

DAY II. ISAAC AND ABIMELECH (Gen. 26:1-35).**3****1. Isaac's Deceit and Treaty (verses 1-33).**

A famine, specifically distinguished from that which drove Abraham from Canaan to Egypt, led Isaac to the land of Gerar. Here the Lord renewed His covenant promises of divine guidance, descendants, land, and blessing (verses 3-6).

NOTE once again the close relationship between grace and obedience. (Compare verse 5 with verse 24.)

How is Isaac's lack of a fully developed faith demonstrated by the sad episode that followed the renewal of God's covenant of grace? Verses 7-11.

Sometime later Isaac's wealth increased to the point that it elicited the jealousy of the Philistines. In order to preserve peace, Isaac moved to the valley of Gerar and later moved again to Beersheba (verses 12-22). This illustrates the hardship and tensions to which believers are exposed in this sin-darkened world.

What patriarchal practice did Isaac follow after the second divine revelation was accorded to him? Verses 23-25.

READ Genesis 26:26-33.

Nearly a century after the treaty that Abraham had entered into with Abimelech, the ruler of Gerar, a later Abimelech, accompanied by a friend and the chief captain of his army invited Isaac to enter into another sworn peace treaty.

2. Esau's Marriages (verses 34, 35).

What do verses 34 and 35 indicate about the character of Esau?

Esau's marriages outside his family and religion added considerable heartache to his parents and gave further evidence of his willful and independent spirit. These character indications justify God's choice of Jacob as covenant heir and demonstrate Isaac's injudiciousness in attempting to bestow the birthright blessing upon Esau.

DAY III. FAITHLESS SCHEMES (Gen. 27:1-46).**4****1. Jacob Deceives His Father Into Blessing Him (verses 1-29).**

Isaac, who was then about 137 years of age, must have felt that he was on

his deathbed, even though Scripture indicates that he lived for another 43 years. (See Gen. 35:28.)

Upon what course did Isaac decide although it was contrary to the Lord's instruction at the birth of the twins? (Compare Gen. 27:1-4 with 25:23, 28.)

Isaac permitted his taste buds to influence his heart and conscience. He determined to bestow the birthright blessing upon his older son in spite of Esau's deliberate disregard of the birthright and his ill-disposed choice of Hittite women for wives.

Realizing that her husband's plan was contrary to God's revealed will, what scheme did Rebekah devise? Gen. 27:5-13.

As Rebekah discovered Isaac's plan to bestow the irrevocable blessing upon her first-born, she was driven to do that which displayed her lack of faith. Her preference for the more quiet and home-loving Jacob (25:27, 28), combined with her knowledge of his choice by God and her recognition of Esau's irreligious and flippant disposition, led her to resort to the scheme she developed.

How did Rebekah relieve the anxiety of Jacob who feared that his deceit would be discovered and that his father would curse him? Gen. 27:11-13.

Bent on her immediate designs Rebekah was prepared to endure whatever adverse results might come. The price she paid was heavy, for she never was to see her favorite son again.

THINK IT THROUGH: What concerned Jacob more, his sin or the consequences he received as a result of his sin? Which am I most concerned about when I sin?

How did one wrong lead to another as Jacob became more deeply involved in his deception? Verses 14-26.

Throughout this episode Isaac relied more on his physical senses than on God. Jacob lived up to his name. Premeditated and calculated deceit and lies were followed even by blasphemy (verse 20).

What blessing did the deceived father bestow upon the deceiver? Verses 27-29.

As Isaac smelled the clothes Jacob wore, his mind was carried from the present to the future. The smell of the fields suggested to him an abundance of crops and a bounty of grain and wine (verses 27-29, 37). Jacob was

promised ultimate dominion over the nations, a plan that was reiterated and enlarged upon by later prophets and poets of Israel. Under inspiration the prophetic eye envisaged the ultimate success and supremacy of God's people.

What vital truth seemed to have escaped the attention of the anxious mother and her son as it appeared that the long-awaited blessing was about to elude Jacob? Psalm 37:7, 34.

“Jacob and Rebekah succeeded in their purpose, but they gained only trouble and sorrow by their deception. God had declared that Jacob should receive the birthright, and His word would have been fulfilled in His own time had they waited in faith for Him to work for them. But like many who now profess to be children of God, they were unwilling to leave the matter in His hands.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 180.

2. Esau's Arrival and the Results of Deception (Gen. 27:30-46).

How was Esau's earlier choice concerning the birthright confirmed? Verses 30-40.

Pathos and pain characterize these verses as father and son recognized Rebekah's and Jacob's deception. However, Esau still was more concerned about the result of his frivolity than he was about his sin. Although Jacob had deluded both father and brother, he merely had claimed the blessing that Esau had bypassed so carelessly.

ILLUMINATION: “As Esau awoke to see the folly of his rash exchange when it was too late to recover his loss, so it will be in the day of God with those who have bartered their heirship to heaven for selfish gratifications.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 181, 182.

What startling recognition led Isaac to cooperate with God? (Compare verses 33-36 with Gen. 25:23.)

Although Isaac's words concerning his sons were predictive of their future, the blessing upon Jacob did not represent a divine approval of Jacob's deception, “for God is not dependent upon artifice to accomplish His will. God did not ordain the act of deception, He overruled it. The blessing came to Jacob, not because of deception, but in spite of it.”—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 379.

What led to Rebekah's suggestion that Jacob should leave for the land of her origin? Gen. 27:41-46.

Afraid that she might lose Jacob at the murderous hands of Esau, Rebekah suggested her youngest son's exile. Pretending to fear Jacob's

marriage to a Hittite woman, Rebekah persuaded Isaac to send Jacob on his way.

DAY IV. JACOB'S FLIGHT (Gen. 28:1-29:30).**6****1. Departure and Dream at Bethel (Gen. 28:1-22).**

Note the fatherly instruction and blessing with which Isaac sent Jacob to Mesopotamia. Verses 1-5.

Based on Jacob's age when he joined his son Joseph in Egypt, it would appear that Jacob was 77 years of age when he left Beersheba for his mother's homeland. While the precise location of Paddan Aram is not certain, it appears to designate a region in northwest Mesopotamia and may even coincide with Haran.

What do verses 6 through 9 demonstrate about Esau's desire to please his parents?

Describe the content and significance of Jacob's dream at Bethel as he left the Promised Land. Verses 10-15.

After a journey of approximately 50 miles, Jacob fell asleep at Bethel fearing that God had forsaken him. The Lord approached him there with a dream of a staircase linking heaven and earth. Thus God assured Jacob of an uninterrupted fellowship between the human family on earth and the divine Father in heaven. (See John 1:51.) Most important to Jacob, troubled by remorse, was the assurance of God's presence and God's promise to bring him back to his homeland.

How did Jacob respond to this remarkable dream? Gen. 28:16-22.

2. Jacob's Arrival and Marriage (Gen. 29:1-30).

Encouraged by the dream of the staircase and God's assurances, Jacob traveled the remaining 450 miles to the region of Haran (verses 1-6). Here he met his future wife, Rachel, and his father-in-law, Laban (verses 7-14).

Compare and contrast the arrival of Jacob with that of Eliezer some 97 years before. (Compare Gen. 24:10-60 with 29:1-13.)

Having recognized the economic advantages in retaining a promising worker such as Jacob, what proposition did Laban submit and what agreement did both reach? Gen. 29:14-19.

What does verse 20 tell us about the affection of this 77-year-old suitor for Rachel?

Jacob may have suggested the rather long period of seven years' service to give himself time for uncomfortable relations back home to heal. Laban saw the advantage and determined to exploit it, even forgetting the termination of the period. (See verse 21.)

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Why did Jacob's dream of marrying Rachel turn into a nightmare? What do verses 22 through 24 reveal about both Laban and Leah?

Darkness of night and the bridal veil prevented Jacob from discovering the identity of his bride. It is not impossible that Leah had developed an affection for Jacob and therefore consented to conspire with her father against Jacob.

After Jacob's discovery of the deception and his remonstrance with Laban, how did the two resolve their differences? Verses 25-30.

In Laban Jacob had met his match. Laban's avarice, meanness, and greed became a means of discipline that Jacob never forgot. Disregarding the feelings of his daughters and his son-in-law, Laban thought only of his own advancement. The entire story is a sad comment on the material God had to use for the ancestors of His chosen people. Jacob the deceiver learned how cruel deception can be. Leah who craved love and recognition found that she could not take her sister's place in Jacob's affection. Nevertheless, the story equally testifies to the triumph of God's grace and love. It demonstrates that God can use faulty, failing, and repentant humans and change them by His love and power.

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 177-189; *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, comments on Genesis 25:19-29:30.

SUMMARY: As this week's study detailed the intrigue, duplicity, and faithless schemes in the family of Isaac during the first half of Jacob's life, we have been led to wonder at God's patience and His willingness to mold us into what He wants us to be. Our next lesson will complete the life journey of Isaac's youngest son, who began as Jacob and ended as Israel.

APPLICATION:

- How would I have acted in Rebekah's and Jacob's place when Isaac attempted to defy God's wish and bless Esau?
- Is it ever right to resort to wrong means to bring about right ends?
- Do I find it difficult to trust God to accomplish His purposes in His own time and in His own way?
- What lesson is conveyed by the fact that God demonstrated His interest and concern to fearful and despondent Jacob at Bethel?
- What have I learned this week that will help me to be a better Christian witness?

Jacob Becomes Israel

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Genesis 29:31 through 35:29.

DAY 1 **MEMORY TEXT:** "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed" (Gen. 32:28).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The chapters to be considered this week trace Jacob's experience from his marriage to Leah and Rachel to his return to Bethel. His pilgrimage which began with his being a dejected man at Bethel ends with his being an overcomer at the "house of God (Bethel)."

OVERVIEW: Gen. 29:31-35:29

Jacob's Family (29:31-30:43)	Jacob's Flight (31:1-55)	Jacob and Esau (32:1-33:20)	Jacob at Shechem and Bethel (34:1-35:29)
Jacob's children (29:31-30:24) Jacob's wages (30:25-43)	Plans for return (31:1-21) Laban's pursuit (22-55)	Preparations to meet Esau (32:1-21) Jacob becomes Israel (22-32) Jacob and Esau (33:1-20)	Dinah and Shechem (34:1-31) Jacob returns to Bethel (35:1-29)

INTRODUCTION: Jacob's 20 years of service in Mesopotamia were characterized by jealousy, contention, and intrigue. One sister sought to outdo the other in the number of sons she bore as both vied for first place in their husband's affections. Son-in-law and father-in-law shone in their game of one-upmanship with Laban manifesting interest only in his own advancement. The biblical story notes more faith in potions and human schemes than in God. Yet, these same chapters also reveal how groundless is trust in human power and how certain is the reality of the divine promises of mercy, forgiveness, and acceptance. At the Jabbok repentant Jacob became Israel, and God's plan triumphed in spite of the apparently unpromising human material with which He had to work.

DAY 2 I. JACOB'S FAMILY (Gen. 29:31-30:43).

1. Jacob's Children (Gen. 29:31-30:24).

Jacob's marriage to two sisters, which later Mosaic law prohibited

while the first sister was alive (Lev. 18:18), was marred by a great deal of intrigue, jealousy, bickering, and sadness.

How did God seek to foster Jacob's appreciation for Leah? Gen. 29:31-35.

In a society in which children signified God's favor and attracted the husband's love, God blessed Leah with several children. The names given to the children of both wives and maidservants reflect the feelings of Leah and Rachel at the birth of those infants and testified to the contention which existed between them. The names either are derived from or resemble the sound of the Hebrew verbs associated with the names.

What emotions are reflected by the names of Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah? Verses 32-35.

Reuben ("see, a son") is a play on the word "[the Lord] has seen."

Simeon ("hearing") relates to "the Lord has heard."

Levi (sounds like "attached") and alludes to "my husband [will be] joined."

Judah (sounds like "praise") and expresses the conviction, "I [will] praise the Lord."

What contention arose between Rachel and Jacob, and how did she seek to resolve it? Gen. 30:1-5.

Even though Rachel enjoyed all of her husband's affections, her childlessness attracted shame and resulted in jealousy and petulance (30:1-5). Frustrated by her barrenness and unwilling to be outdone by her sister, she presented her husband with her maidservant, a custom followed earlier by Sarah.

What do the names Dan ("he has vindicated") and Naphtali ("my struggle") exhibit about Rachel's feelings? Verses 6-8.

Not wishing to be excelled, Leah gave her maidservant Zilpah to Jacob. Gad ("fortune" or "truth") and Asher ("happy") were born to this union (verses 9-12). The names reflect Leah's fortune and happiness.

To what superstitious practice did the two sisters resort according to verses 14 through 17?

It was an ancient belief that has persisted to our day that the plum-like berry and fleshy root of the mandrake plant stimulate sexual desire and induce human fertility. It is ironic that, in spite of the superstition, the herb did not benefit Rachel. Actually, Rachel's scheme only advantaged Leah, who was prepared to part with her son's mandrakes. The story demonstrates that God blessed in answer to prayer in spite of superstition.

What significance did Leah attach to the birth of Issachar (the name sounds like the Hebrew for “reward” or “wages”) and Zebulun (“honor” or “gift”)? Verses 18-20.

Once more God blessed, not in order to sanction Leah’s wrong action, but in spite of her false belief. Leah craved her husband’s acceptance and attention. The reference to Dinah in verse 21 prepares the reader for the unhappy incident recorded in chapter 34.

Having abandoned human schemes, to what did Rachel finally resort and how did God respond? What hope did Rachel express in the name, Joseph (“may He add”)? Gen. 30:22-24.

Joseph probably was born at the end of the 14 years of service to which Jacob was committed in return for Leah and Rachel (verse 25).

DAY 2. Jacob’s Wages (Gen. 30:25-43).

3

How did the schemers, Laban and Jacob, attempt to outsmart each other after Jacob had requested permission for himself and his family to return to his native country? Verses 26-34.

The form of payment agreed on extended Jacob’s stay for another six years (31:41). Jacob’s request appears magnanimous when we realize that in the Near East “goats, as a rule, are black or dark brown, rarely white or spotted with white, and that sheep are for the most part white, seldom black or speckled.”—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 394. As Laban would be left with all the pure-color animals the deal seemed advantageous to Jacob’s father-in-law.

How did Laban seek to prevent any off-color characteristics being bred back into the pure-color stock? Gen. 30:35, 36.

To what ancient superstition did Jacob resort after any possible attempt at selected breeding had been thwarted by Laban’s separation of the stock? Verses 37-43.

Jacob as well as Laban seemed to be unaware of the fact that even those animals which appeared to be pure-color still carried in them recessive color characteristics that could be transmitted to their offspring. Being at a loss as to what he should do, Jacob took refuge in the mistaken belief that vivid sights experienced by a mother during conception or pregnancy would mark her offspring.

While to all intents and purposes Jacob's stratagems appeared to meet with success (verse 43), what message did God convey to the patriarch in a dream? Gen. 31:7-12.

Jacob attributed his success to God's blessing (verses 7, 9), and the Lord blessed him in spite of his superstitious beliefs (verse 12). Indeed, the dream of verses 10 through 12 may have been intended to explain to the patriarch how the recessive off-color characteristics were passed on by the pure-color parents. God used the occasion for a miracle and blessed Jacob, not because of his skill or ingenuity but in order to thwart Laban's exploitation.

DAY II. JACOB'S FLIGHT TO CANAAN (Gen. 31:1-55).

4

1. Jacob Plans his Return (verses 1-21).

What circumstances suggested to Jacob that he should return to his homeland? Verses 1-3. How many years did he work for Laban? Verse 41.

How did Leah and Rachel respond to Jacob's plan? Verses 4-16.

As a result of his greed Laban alienated his daughters and changed Jacob's wages ten times. Laban's absence provided the opportunity for Jacob to leave Mesopotamia (verses 17-21). Rachel's theft of her father's household deities may testify to the fact that her beautiful appearance concealed a half-converted heart. After 13 years of marriage she still had not submitted fully to the God worshiped by her husband (verse 19).

2. Laban Pursues Jacob (Gen. 31:22-55).

What sanctimonious accusation did Laban level against Jacob when he overtook him after covering a distance of more than 275 miles? Verses 22-30.

Conscious of his innocence, Jacob invoked the death penalty upon the one in whose possession the household gods were to be found (verse 32). While such a penalty was in harmony with Mesopotamian law, it was as foolish and rash a decision as was that of Jacob's sons years later (Gen. 44:9). Rachel's ruse demonstrated that she was the daughter of Laban, partaking of his character (Gen. 31:32-35). Since Laban was unable to support any of his charges, Jacob reprimanded his father-in-law angrily and attributed his own success to the God of his father (verses 36-42).

What was the last contact mentioned in the Bible between the family members in Mesopotamia and Canaan? Verses 43-55.

DAY
5

III. JACOB AND ESAU (Gen. 32:1–33:20).

1. Preparations to Meet Esau (32:1-21).

Before returning to Bethel Jacob prepared to be reconciled with his brother. (Compare Matt. 5:23, 24.)

How did God attempt to comfort Jacob, who was burdened by guilt and fear? Gen. 32:1, 2.

Frightened by the reported advance of Esau with 400 men, what preparations did Jacob make in order to be reconciled with his brother? Verses 3-21.

THINK IT THROUGH: Was Jacob's strategy a substitute for faith or a tool in the hands of faith?

2. Jacob Becomes Israel (Gen. 32:22-32).

Another significant encounter with God took place as Jacob stood on the borders of the Promised Land and prepared to face his brother again.

What is the significance of the unusual experience Jacob had after he had sent his family and possessions across the river Jabbok? Verses 22–26. (Compare Hosea 12:4.)

Standing on the borders of Canaan, suffering with guilt, remorse, and doubt, Jacob longed for a sense of total acceptance with God and his brother Esau. Jacob knew that it was his past sin that had now put at risk his loved ones, who already had crossed the waters of the Jabbok. As he recalled the scenes of the past he suddenly was attacked. (See Gen. 32:24-26.)

What hints in verses 25 through 30 indicate Jacob's gradual recognition of the true identity of his opponent?

As Jacob perceived that he had struggled with a supernatural being, he pleaded for a blessing (verse 26). His petition and perseverance were rewarded by a change of name. No longer would his name be Jacob ("to seize the heel" and by extension "to overreach" or "to deceive"). Now it would be Israel ("he strives with God"). (See verse 28.)

Why did Jacob call the location of this experience Peniel ("face of God")? Verse 30.

Jacob had met God face to face and lived to tell about the encounter. Both at Bethel 20 years earlier and now at Peniel he received the assurance of God's presence. However, the much more intimate experience at Peniel prepared Jacob to enter the Land of Promise as a man of faith. This last encounter with God was memorialized in the names Israel and Peniel, and in the custom of not eating a specific sinew of animals slaughtered for food (verses 31, 32).

3. Jacob and Esau (Gen. 33:1-20).

What touching scene is recounted in verses 1-7? (Compare Luke 15:20.)

Jacob's name had been changed to Israel because he had struggled "with God and with men" (Gen. 32:28). His encounter with God was followed by his meeting with his brother. How sweet was the sense of grace and forgiveness that Jacob felt. Former hostilities were washed away by a flood of tears as the brothers embraced in love and reconciliation. Esau's acceptance of the droves of animals that Jacob had sent ahead of his group sealed the brothers' reconciliation (Gen. 33:8-11).

What was behind the way Jacob expressed his relief at Esau's forgiveness and acceptance? Verse 10. (Compare with 32:30.)

"Esau's friendly greeting called to mind the divine promise so recently accorded Jacob, and in Esau's face he could read its gracious fulfillment. These words of Jacob reflect his profound gratitude for the obvious Presence that attended him on his way."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 409.

In what way is Jacob's exemplary concern for those in his care worthy of emulation by both parents and church leaders today? Gen. 33:12-14.

DAY 6 IV. MASSACRE AT SHECHEM AND ISRAEL'S RETURN TO BETHEL (Gen. 34:1-35:29).

1. Dinah and the Shechemites (34:1-31).

While living in Succoth and Shechem Dinah grew into womanhood. What sad incident in the city of Shechem led to treachery, massacre, and renewed fear? Gen. 34:1-31.

The events recorded in chapter 34 are a sad commentary on Jacob's delay in fulfilling completely the vows He had made to God at Bethel. (See Gen. 28:20-22.)

2. Return to Bethel (Gen. 35:1-29).

In direct answer to the divine summons Jacob prepared to return to Bethel where his pilgrimage had begun many years before (verse 1).

What call for revival and reformation did Jacob address to his family before returning to Bethel? How did he make good his earlier vow at Bethel? Verses 2-7.

How did God honor His returning son? Verses 9-15.

It is obvious that even after the encounter with God at Peniel Jacob still was given to the failures common to man. The cost he had to pay for spending so much time living close to the Canaanites at Shechem might have been avoided had he repaired to Bethel immediately. The remainder of chapter 35 records the birth of Benjamin ("son of my right hand"), Rachel's death and burial, Reuben's heinous sin that cost him his birthright privileges, the joyous reunion between Isaac and Jacob, and an advance notice of Isaac's death. In fact, Isaac lived another 12 years after Jacob's return.

To the Jacob-Esau episode is appended a genealogy of Esau (chapter 36) in which the writer of Genesis summarily lists in characteristic fashion the generations of that part of the family that will fade out of the picture before the story of the chosen family is resumed.

DAY
7

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: "The greatest victories to the church of Christ or to the individual Christian are not those that are gained by talent or education, by wealth or the favor of men. They are those victories that are gained in the audience chamber with God, when earnest, agonizing faith lays hold upon the mighty arm of power."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 203.

Read also *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 190-203 and *S. D. A. Bible Commentary*, comments on Genesis 29:31-35:29.

SUMMARY: After many years of anxiety, distress, and character growth, Jacob concluded his pilgrimage where it had begun. The deceiver had become an overcomer who had discovered that God and His word can be trusted.

APPLICATION:

- When tempted to succumb to the burden of guilt and remorse, what lesson can I learn from Jacob's experiences at Bethel and Peniel?
- Am I sustained in my daily conflicts by the assurance that heaven and earth would sooner pass away than the divine promises fail?
- In what sense does Jacob's night of wrestling and anguish represent a trial through which God's people must pass before Jesus returns? (Compare *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 203.)
- What can I learn from the concern Jacob had for the welfare of his children and the young among his flock?

From Prison Cell to Palace

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Genesis 37:2 through 41:40.

DAY 1 **MEMORY TEXT:** "There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee: because thou art his wife; how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen. 39:9).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Although cruelly treated by his brothers, harshly repaid for years of dedicated service to Potiphar, and forgotten by one he had sought to comfort, Joseph never lost faith in the God who "was preparing him in the school of affliction for greater usefulness, and he did not refuse the needful discipline."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 218.

OVERVIEW: Gen. 37:2-41:40

Dreams and Deportation (37:2-38:30)	Potiphar's Home and Prison (39:1-23)	Cupbearer and Baker (40:1-23)	Pharaoh's Dreams of Cows and Corn (41:1-40)
Hated by brothers (37:2-11) Sold by brothers (37:12-36) Judah and Tamar (38:1-30)	From slave to chief steward (1-6) Joseph's temptation (7-12) Joseph in prison (13-23)	Incarcerated officials (1-22) Forgotten hero (23)	Content of dreams (1-24) Meaning of dreams (25-32) Need for action (33-40)

INTRODUCTION: Although chapters 37 through 50 continue the history of Jacob and his family (37:2) it is Joseph who predominates as the central figure in the narrative. Although special mention is made of Jacob, he remains in the background until his death (49:33). Special attention also is given to Reuben (37:21, 22; compare with 42:22, 37), Judah (37:26, 27; 38:1-30; 43:3-10; 44:16-34), and Simeon (42:24, 36; 43:23). However, the focus throughout these chapters rests on Joseph, the older son of Jacob's favorite wife, Rachel.

In this lesson we examine Joseph's life, beginning with the reasons for his sale into captivity as a 17-year-old (37:2) and ending with his release 13

years later (41:46). At the time Joseph was sold into slavery his father Jacob was 108 years old, while Isaac his grandfather was 168. The narrative tells of three sets of double dreams in which the second pair (chapter 40) sets the stage for the third, and the third leads to the fulfillment of the first set of dreams. The accurate fulfillment of Joseph's interpretation of the cupbearer's dream led the cupbearer to introduce Joseph to Pharaoh. Then the fulfillment of the prediction of the years of plenty followed by the years of famine, that was given in Pharaoh's dreams, led to Jacob and his sons coming to Egypt.

However, cruel depths of servitude and imprisonment preceded the lofty heights that Joseph achieved in Pharaoh's palace. Joseph's faith in God, his unflinching patience when cruelty came in spite of impeccable integrity, and his readiness to accept divine discipline trustingly opened the way for the future prosperity and honor that came to Joseph and his family.

DAY 2 I. DREAMS AND DEPORTATION (Gen. 37:2-36).

2

1. Hated by His Brothers (verses 2-11).

THINK IT THROUGH: What lay behind the jealousy and hatred that Jacob's sons demonstrated for Joseph? Was their enmity totally unjustified?

2. Sold by His Brothers (verses 12-36).

The hostility noted in verses 2 through 11 forms the background to the actions recorded in the remainder of the chapter. In search of new pastures, the sons of Jacob traveled more than 70 miles north from Hebron past Shechem to one of the best grazing areas of Palestine near Dothan. Jacob, remembering well the cruel massacre of the Shechemites (chapter 34), feared for the safety of his sons and sent Joseph to inquire into their welfare (verses 12-14).

With unabated hatred, aggravated by Joseph's dreams and intensified by the favor shown in the gift of the special tunic (verse 23), Joseph's brothers decided to rid themselves permanently of the source of their irritation.

How did the suggestion of Jacob's son, Reuben, modify their plot? Verses 20-22.

Callously disregarding their brother's piteous pleas for his life (Gen. 42:21, 22), the brothers settled down to a meal. Then they noticed a caravan of traders passing by on the nearby trade route linking Palestine and Egypt via Dothan.

What incredible plan that Judah initiated did the brothers agree upon and why? Gen. 37:26-28.

This is the first slave sale recorded in Scripture. Its cruelty exceeds that of most sales into slavery. Jacob's sons, ignoring the terror in their brother's

eyes, traded one of their own kin. Similar barbarity was endured by our Elder Brother centuries later when, betrayed by one of His brothers, He was sold unto death for the price of a slave.

What can we learn from the additional way that the lack of Joseph's brothers' natural affection was manifested? Verses 29-35.

Although Reuben was distraught over Joseph's disappearance, he chose to cooperate in the wicked plot to hide the deception. Because courage and cruelty seldom mix, Jacob's sons apparently sent someone else to deliver Joseph's tunic to their father (verse 32). The erstwhile deceiver was deceived once more as he looked upon the torn and bloody garment that he had given to his favorite son. Although Jacob's sons "had looked forward to this scene with dread, . . . they were not prepared for the heart-rending anguish, the utter abandonment of grief, which they were compelled to witness."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 212.

DAY
3

II. JOSEPH IN POTIPHAR'S HOME AND IN PRISON (Gen. 39:1-23).

1. From Slave to Chief Steward (verses 1-6).

The caravan holding Joseph captive passed the hills where Jacob's tents stood. For a time the teenager "gave himself up to uncontrolled grief and terror."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 213. However, Joseph, remembering Jacob's stories about God's love and constancy shown to Abraham, Isaac, and himself, decided to trust the Lord and act as a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. With Joseph's descent into Egypt divine Providence prepared the way for the deliverance of Jacob's family and for the foreign domination that Abraham's children were to experience until the sin of the Amorites in Canaan had reached its full measure (Gen. 15:13-16).

What kind of person was Potiphar? (Compare Gen. 39:1 with 37:36.)

Potiphar, a name also found on Egyptian monuments, was a high court official and chief of Pharaoh's bodyguard. The fact that Potiphar is said to be an Egyptian suggests that Joseph's abduction took place when a non-Egyptian dynasty ruled the region of the Nile. If the dynasty were Egyptian, there would be no point in mentioning that an officer was an Egyptian.

How is Joseph's growing success in Potiphar's household indicated in verses 2 through 6, and to whom is it attributed?

Repeatedly, Moses draws attention to the fact that the Lord was with Joseph (verses 2 and 3), that He gave him success, and blessed the Egyptian's household because of his Hebrew slave (verse 5).

2. Joseph's Temptation (Gen. 39:7-12).

Rachel's son was as attractive as his mother had been (compare verse 6 with Gen. 29:17), and his handsome appearance did not escape the notice of his master's wife. At the height of Joseph's success, Potiphar's wife sought to seduce the young man by exerting persistent pressure through flattery, daily advances, and finally an open attack.

How did Joseph respond to the sudden strong and seductive advances of Potiphar's wife? Gen. 39:8-12.



DAY READ Genesis 38.

What if a Reuben or a Judah had been in Joseph's place? Genesis 38 interrupts the Joseph story in order to contrast the immorality of Joseph's betrayer, Judah, with the rectitude of the betrayed. Chapter 38 also helps us understand "that the sons of Jacob, forgetting the sacred vocation of their race, were in danger of perishing in the sins of Canaan. Had not God in mercy interposed to bring about the removal of the whole house of Jacob to Egypt, the chosen race might have succumbed to the corrupting influence of Canaanite customs. Thus, ch. 38 is an integral part of the early history of Israel."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 434.

Joseph determined to preserve his purity and integrity regardless of the cost. His only safety lay in distancing himself from the source of temptation.

What principle that Joseph expressed still helps preserve us from falling prey to temptation? Gen. 39:9.

"Joseph's answer reveals the power of religious principle. He would not betray the confidence of his master on earth, and, whatever the consequences, he would be true to his Master in heaven. Under the inspecting eye of God and holy angels many take liberties of which they would not be guilty in the presence of their fellow men, but Joseph's first thought was of God. 'How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?' he said."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 217.

3. Joseph Placed in Prison (Gen. 39:13-23).

How were Joseph's faithful service and integrity rewarded? Verses 13-20. (Compare Ps. 105:18, 19.)

Her advances repeatedly rejected, the immoral infatuation of Joseph's temptress turned to hatred and scorn. Not only did she hold her husband responsible for the alleged assault but she also spoke derisively of Joseph as "the Hebrew slave" (verse 17). The fact that Potiphar spared his servant's life for a crime punishable by death may indicate that he questioned the accusation.

Instead of succumbing to abject despair and harboring bitterness to God and to the people who had wronged him for this renewed injustice, what attitude did Joseph display in the prison cell? Verses 21-23.

It is significant that Joseph's trust in the Lord enabled him to make himself useful in prison. The fact that the Lord was with him, blessed him, and gave him success, first recorded in verses 2 through 6, is repeated in verses 21 through 23 and surrounds, like an envelope, the episode with Potiphar's wife. As Potiphar before, so now the prison warden entrusted his affairs to Joseph, knowing that success would attend his management.

DAY 5 III. THE CUPBEARER AND THE BAKER (Gen. 40:1-23).

1. Dreams of Two Imprisoned Officials (verses 1-22).

Both the baker and the cupbearer were high-ranking officials at Pharaoh's court. (Compare Neh. 1:11.) They may have been accused of a plot to overthrow Pharaoh and for this reason had been placed in the custody of Potiphar, the commander of the royal bodyguard. (Compare verses 3 and 4 with 39:1.) Potiphar placed them in the same prison where Joseph was held. Joseph had just been promoted to manager of the prison, but because the cases of these two "were still under investigation, and they themselves were high officers of the state, he charged Joseph to wait upon them and act as their attendant."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 442.

What further light do verses 6 through 8 shed upon Joseph's character and disposition? (Compare also *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 218.)

THINK IT THROUGH: Were I like Joseph innocently imprisoned, would I display the same kindly attitude and interest in the welfare of those I might be asked to serve?

Upon hearing and interpreting the dream (verses 9-13), what request did Joseph offer and what reason for his petition did he present before the cupbearer? Verses 14, 15.

Having heard Joseph's favorable interpretation of the cupbearer's dream, the baker recited his dream also and asked for an interpretation (verses 16-19). Three days later when the interpretations were shown to be accurate (verses 20-22) Joseph's words to the cupbearer "to lift up thine head" were fulfilled in the cupbearer's happy release (verses 13, 20; compare with 2 Kings 25:27). But similar words used in interpreting the baker's dream meant tragic beheading for the baker (verses 19, 22).

2. The Forgotten Hero (Gen. 40:23).

In what way does Genesis 40:23 illustrate a common human failing?

The cupbearer's release not only must have raised Joseph's hopes for his own release but also must have strengthened his expectations of seeing the fulfillment of his own dreams. How devastating, then, must have been the realization, confirmed by the passing days, months, and years, that he had been forgotten.

Misfortune seems to have dogged Joseph's footsteps, and questions about the leading or even the presence of God must have come often to his mind. How many promises made under unfavorable circumstances have been forgotten when situations have changed. Sadly, sometimes when people are promoted to positions of importance today they tend to forget their "humbler" friends and circumstances.

DAY IV. PHARAOH'S DREAMS OF COWS AND CORN (Gen. 41:1-40).

6

1. Content of the Dreams (verses 1-24).

This chapter introduces us to a typical Egyptian setting. We read of cows cooling off as they stand half submerged in the river. Reed grasses are mentioned. And Joseph shaves as he leaves prison (Semites are identifiable in Egyptian drawings because they wear beards). Because Egyptians regarded the Nile as the source of life, the portrayal of lean cows coming up from the river must have presented a real problem.

Read the dreams and note the reasons for Pharaoh's frustrations. Verses 1-8.

How did Joseph's interpretation of the dreams two years before in the prison set the stage for his introduction to Pharaoh? Verses 9-15.

Why did Joseph give the testimony recorded in verse 16? (Compare also Gen. 40:8 and Dan. 2:26-28.)

2. The Meaning of Pharaoh's Twin Dreams (Gen. 41:25-32).

What interpretation did Joseph offer, and what did the repetition of the dream in another form to Pharaoh signify? Verses 25-32.

THINK IT THROUGH: Was this predicted famine a divine judgment that was brought about as the result of sin and apostasy, or did God send it because He had some other specific purpose in mind?

DAY
7

3. Need for Action (Gen. 41:33-40).

"The interpretation was so reasonable and consistent, and the policy which it recommended was so sound and shrewd, that its correctness could not be doubted."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 221.

What led to Pharaoh's choice of Joseph to become his second in command? Verses 37-40.

"How was Joseph enabled to make such a record of firmness of character, uprightness, and wisdom?—In his early years he had consulted duty rather than inclination; and the integrity, the simple trust, the noble nature, of the youth bore fruit in the deeds of the man. . . . Faithful attention to duty in every station, from the lowliest to the most exalted, had been training every power for its highest service."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 222.

What parallels can you discover between Joseph and Daniel? (Compare Genesis 41 and Daniel 2.)

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: "From the dungeon Joseph was exalted to be ruler over all the land of Egypt. It was a position of high honor, yet it was beset with difficulty and peril. One cannot stand upon a lofty height without danger. As the tempest leaves unharmed the lowly flower of the valley, while it uproots the stately tree upon the mountaintop, so those who have maintained their integrity in humble life may be dragged down to the pit by the temptations that assail worldly success and honor. But Joseph's character bore the test alike of adversity and prosperity. The same fidelity to God was manifest when he stood in the palace of the Pharaohs as when in a prisoner's cell. He was still a stranger in a heathen land, separated from his kindred, the worshipers of God; but he fully believed that the divine hand had directed his steps, and in constant reliance upon God he faithfully discharged the duties of his position."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 222.

Read also *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 209-223 and *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, comments on Genesis 37 through 41.

SUMMARY: Joseph's early years were full of trials, indignities, ingratitude, and cruel treatment. Yet, when troubled by doubt and temptation, Joseph took refuge in the love and care of the God of his forefathers. Faith sustained him in his darkest moments, and the resolve to be faithful and patient opened the way for future honor. In the next lesson we will discover more fully the reasons why God permitted the experience recorded in the chapters we studied this week.

APPLICATION: Few of us will ever be called upon to suffer that which Joseph endured. When tempted to succumb to doubt and despondency let us recall Joseph's faith and courage. When we find it difficult to see God's smiling face through the mists of problems, let us remember that God is "faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13). Joseph's resolve to be faithful to the little duties and to remain pure at all costs should be reflected in our grateful response to our greater Brother who was sold by one of His own for the price of a slave.

Favor and Faith

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Genesis 41:41 through 50:26.

DAY 1 **MEMORY TEXT:** "God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance" (Gen. 45:7).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Through all the play and counterplay of human affairs the child of God may trust the Lord whose plans and purposes cannot and will not be frustrated.

OVERVIEW: Gen. 41:41-50:26

Joseph, the Governor (41:41-43:34)	Joseph's Test and Revelation (44:1-45:25)	Children of Israel Enter Egypt (45:26-49:28)	Death of Jacob and Joseph (49:29-50:26)
Joseph prepares for famine (41:41-42:5)	The silver cup (44:1-17)	Jacob's family travels to Egypt (45:26-46:27)	Jacob's death and burial (49:29-50:21)
Surprise encounter (42:6-38)	The test passed (18-34)	Jacob's family before Pharaoh	Joseph's death (50:22-26)
The brothers' second journey (43:1-34)	Joseph reveals himself (45:1-25)	Jacob's blessings (47:28-49:28)	

INTRODUCTION: The predicted years of plenty and famine (Genesis 41) set the stage for both the travels of Joseph's brothers (chapters 42 to 45) and their final migration to Egypt (chapters 46 through 50). To the eyes of faith their journeys are not merely the travels of a hungry, extended family but the fulfillment of God's plan announced to Abraham: "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years. . . . But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (Gen. 15:13-16).

The chapters we study this week contain many spiritual jewels. They demonstrate the change in the hearts of Joseph's brothers as well as Joseph's own ability to perceive providential guidance behind what was happening.

As we close the book of Genesis, we hear again the pilgrim chorus on the deathbed of the fathers as they close their eyes in the hope of the Promised Land.

DAY
2

I. JOSEPH AS GOVERNOR MEETS HIS BROTHERS (Gen. 41:41-42:38).

Joseph was 30 years of age when Pharaoh invested him with the insignia of high office (41:41-44). He was given an Egyptian name and the daughter of the priest of the sun temple of On for a wife.

1. Joseph Prepares Egypt for the Coming Famine (41:46-42:5).

What measures did the former Hebrew slave take during the years of plenty? Gen. 41:46-49, 53-57.

Before the years of plenty ended how did God aid Joseph in forgetting the hardship of his former years? Verses 50-52.

The names Joseph gave his two sons reflect his own experience. The name *Manasseh* is related to the Hebrew verb "make to forget" and reflects the thought that his firstborn boy helped his father to forget the cruel past. *Ephraim*, the second son's name, seems to mean "twice fruitful" and represented Joseph's joyous feelings and the opening of a new chapter in his life.

How did God bring members of Joseph's family to Egypt? Gen. 42:1-5.

2. Surprise Encounter (Gen. 42:6-38).

More than 20 years after the brothers' cruel betrayal of Joseph they were unable to recognize the thoroughly Egyptianized adult brother who addressed them in the Egyptian language (verses 6-9).

What ruse did Joseph apply in order to elicit information about his family? Verses 7-17; 43:7.

While Joseph's firmness evidenced in chapters 42 through 44 may give the impression of vengefulness, several hints indicate that he was far from being vengeful. He considered the desperate need of the starving household and permitted his brothers to return with both their food and purchase money (42:25). On several occasions Joseph was unable to contain his emotions and burst into tears (42:24; 43:30). (Compare 45:1.) His threats were followed by leniency (42:6-19; 44:9, 10), and he did not tantalize his

brothers at the feast as they had done to him years before when he was imprisoned in a cistern. (Compare 37:24, 25 with 43:31-34.)

How did Joseph finally propose to verify the truthfulness of their statements about their aged father and younger brother? Gen. 42:16, 19, 20, 24.

3. The Brothers' Second Journey to Egypt (Gen. 43:1-34).

As the famine in Canaan intensified, supplies became exhausted and another journey to Egypt became imperative (verses 1, 2).

What do Judah's negotiations with his father tell us about the former betrayer of Joseph? Verses 3-9. (Compare with 37:26, 27.)

As the men set out with choice gifts, the former purchase money, and Benjamin, the patriarch prayed for the successful mission of his sons (verses 11-14). Upon seeing Benjamin, Joseph invited the brothers to his home for a feast and released Simeon (verses 15-31).

What was Joseph's intent when he provided Benjamin with extra tokens of favor? Verse 34.

Egyptian exclusiveness at meals prevented Egyptians from associating freely with foreigners. This custom provided Joseph with the unique opportunity of observing his brothers.

DAY
3

II. JOSEPH'S ULTIMATE TEST OF HIS BROTHERS AND THE REVELATION OF HIS IDENTITY (Gen. 44:1-45:25).

While the brothers' lack of resentment to Benjamin at the feast (43:33, 34) manifested that they had undergone a change of heart, Joseph decided to apply one final and clinching test that would reveal incontrovertably whether their love for their father and brother would outweigh personal consideration. The use of Joseph's silver cup outlined in chapter 44 essentially presented a situation that could have issued in another betrayal.

1. The Silver Cup (Gen. 44:1-17).

REVIEW the preparations Joseph made for his final test. Verses 1-6.

What characterized the way Jacob's sons responded to the steward's charge? Verses 7-9.

Although convinced of their absolute innocence, their answer was impetuous. After finding the purchase money in their sacks on the previous return from Egypt (42:27, 28, 35) they should have been more judicious. Foolishly, they committed the "guilty" one to death.

How did the steward modify the brothers' offer, and what was the result of the search? Verses 10-12. Also note Joseph's reactions (verses 14-17).

Both the steward and Joseph demonstrated leniency. Neither was prepared to take advantage of the brothers' rash words and to punish the innocent with the guilty.

2. The Test Passed (Gen. 44:18-34).

After politely reiterating the history of their dealings with the ruler (verses 18-29), what noble offer did Judah make? Verses 30-34.

The agonizing decision had been made. All ten were prepared to sacrifice their liberty (verses 13, 16). However, Judah, who had suggested that Joseph be sold to the Ishmaelites, determined to surrender his liberty and life for the freedom of his brothers. Joseph could expect no more. Judah offered, "Let *your* servant abide instead of the lad."

3. Joseph Reveals His Identity (Gen. 45:1-25).

How do verses 1 through 4 portray the amazement of the startled brothers as Joseph made himself known to them?

What interpretation of his past experience explains Joseph's complete lack of resentment, bitterness, and revenge? Verses 5-8.

These verses sum up one of the most significant lessons in the book of Genesis and in the Scriptures as a whole. In the same way that Joseph did, the believer today may detect two aspects to every event. Joseph explained, "*You sold me . . . God sent me.*" Joseph did not lightly dismiss his past sufferings and the questions his trials must have engendered about God. Yet, he saw a significance in these events that was more important; namely, the overruling plan of God. In and through the play and counterplay of human affairs he discerned God's control of history and His care for individual lives (verses 5, 7-9).

As the famine was to last for another five years, what request did Joseph present to his brothers? In what way would this present an additional test to them? Verses 9-25.

Imagine the return of Jacob's sons. Their carts and donkeys were laden with provisions, food, clothing, and the best that famine-stricken Egypt could offer. The brothers had several days to formulate the confession they would have to make to their father.

DAY

4

III. THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL ENTER EGYPT (Gen. 45:26-49:28).

1. Jacob's Family Travels to Egypt (Gen. 45:26-46:27).

After his decision to leave Hebron for Egypt, what did Jacob do on the way? Gen. 45:26-46:7.

Beginning the two- to three-hundred-mile journey, Jacob stopped at Beersheba where his grandfather, Abraham, had worshiped and his father had erected an altar subsequent to a divine repetition of the covenant blessings (21:33; 26:23-25). As Jacob sacrificed and renewed his covenant commitment to the God of his father Isaac, the Lord reassured him of the covenant promises made at Bethel, with the added detail that Jacob's family would grow into nationhood in Egypt.

After Jacob and his family reached Egypt a glad reunion took place. Gen. 46:29, 30. What suggestion did Joseph make to his brothers and why? Verses 31-34.

2. Joseph's Family Before Pharaoh (Gen. 47:1-12).

What did Joseph's brothers say that indicates that they only expected to stay in Egypt temporarily? Verse 4. (Compare Heb. 11:13-16.)

THINK IT THROUGH: What advantages did the isolation in the land of Goshen afford God's people, and what implications, if any, does this have for God's people today?

While Joseph attended to the affairs of his own relatives (Gen. 47:12) and to those of a hungry nation (verses 13-26), what significant note about the growth of the family of Israel is recorded? Verse 27. (Compare with 46:3.)

3. The Patriarchal Blessings (Gen. 47:28-49:28).

After spending 17 happy years in Egypt surrounded by those dearest to him, Jacob felt the hour of death approaching. He called his sons to him for a last farewell.

How did the dying patriarch express his trust in God's promises concerning the land of Canaan? Gen. 47:29-31. (Compare with Heb. 11:13-16.)

What was behind Jacob's adoption of Joseph's two sons as tribal heads along with the rest of his sons? Gen. 48:5, 6.

DAY

5

“The adoption of his two elder sons placed Joseph in the position of the first-born, so far as the inheritance was concerned.”—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 476.

What was so strange about the order in which Jacob blessed Joseph's sons, and what did the order signify? Verses 12-20. (Compare with Heb. 11:21.)

READ Genesis 48:21, 22.

REVIEW Jacob's testamentary and prophetic blessings upon his sons in Genesis 49:1-28.

As divine inspiration rested upon the dying patriarch, the future of his descendants unfolded before him. The power of God constrained him to declare the truth, however painful to himself. Jacob withdrew the rights of the firstborn from Reuben and uttered a curse for the crime of Levi and Simeon. Levi's later history illustrates how a curse can be turned into a blessing.

God's Word ever reveals both the virtues and vices, the failures and successes of men. The pages of Scripture are realistic and conceal neither the faults of its most revered and admired heroes nor their victories attained through the power of God. God's men and women are depicted as “subject to like passions as we are” (James 5:17). (See also Acts 14:15.)

DAY IV. DEATH OF JACOB AND JOSEPH (Gen. 49:29–50:26).

6

1. Jacob's Death and Burial (49:29–50:21).

Where did Jacob request to be buried? Gen. 49:29-33.

After the period of embalming and mourning had ended, Joseph, his brothers, and a large retinue of Egyptian officials escorted Jacob's body to Canaan where he was buried in the cave of Machpelah with Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, and Leah. (See Gen. 50:1-14.)

How did Joseph respond to the fear and distrust displayed by his brothers after Jacob's death? Gen. 50:15-21.

Joseph was reduced to tears because of his brothers' attitude. His kind reply contains some of the most admirable aspects of biblical faith. Joseph determined to trust God to right all wrongs and repeated his conviction that divine providence had overruled their human malice (verse 20). (Compare with 45:5-8.) Joseph repaid them with forgiveness *and* practical love, providing not only of his means but also pledging to personally care for them.

2. Joseph's Death (Gen. 50:22-26).

How did Joseph emulate his father's faith? Verses 24, 25.

Fifty-four years after Jacob's death Joseph died at 110 years of age. On his deathbed he placed his brothers under oath to bury him in Canaan when God should lead them out of Egypt. (Compare 48:21; 49:29-32.) Joseph died with hope and faith in God's promises. Canaan was his ultimate home, and his coffin was a constant reminder to the remaining Hebrews of their real homeland. The patriarchal history comes to an end with the patriarch's hopes fixed on the promised home. The next event would be a most marvelous display of God's grace as He redeemed His people, and through Exodus and conquest, led them to Canaan.

DAY 7 FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 224-240; *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, comments on Genesis 41:41-50:26.

SUMMARY: In this week's lesson we studied Joseph's life from his installment as governor to the preparations for his interment in a grave in Canaan. We observed the changes God had brought about in the life of one of His loyal and patient servants and noted the Lord's overruling power.

This quarter we have studied not only our beginnings but our belonging as revealed in the book of Genesis. Created in the image of God in a perfect world, we find ourselves in a world that has been sin-damaged to the extent that we have come to expect the worst in ourselves and in others. But God has intervened in our world and in our individual lives. We belong to Him not only by right of creation but because He has paid the price of our redemption and has covenanted with those who are willing to accept what He has done to restore all that was lost to sin. More than that, He is at work in our lives to help us live as He has made it possible for His sons and daughters to live, even in a sinful world. As did Joseph, we can have confidence that whatever comes to us comes through the hand of a God who loves us and who will see that all things work together for the good of those whom He loves so much.

APPLICATION:

- While I may not have to suffer as Joseph did, what can I learn from his experience about how to respond to malice and cruelty?
- Am I able to detect two aspects in every experience and identify with Joseph in his conviction that divine providence cannot be frustrated by human malice?
- Has my heart been mellowed by the love of Christ to the degree that I can do *more than* forgive those who have wronged me?
- Do I add practical love to my forgiveness, a love that gives of my means and also of myself?

Lessons for Fourth Quarter, 1985

Sabbath School members who have not received a copy of the Adult Lessons for the fourth quarter of 1985 will be helped by the following outline in studying the first two lessons. The title of this series is Ideals for Christians.

First Lesson:

PROMISES OF POWER

MEMORY TEXT: John 1:42.

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 2 Peter 1:1-4.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Those who have "escaped the corruption that is in the world" are to grow in grace and peace through the knowledge of God.

OUTLINE:

- I. Salutation (verse 1).
- II. Challenge to Continue Growing in Grace and Peace (verse 2).
- III. Gifts for Godliness (verse 3).
- IV. Promises With Power (verse 4).

Second Lesson:

PROGRAM FOR PROGRESS

MEMORY TEXT: Luke 2:40, 52.

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 2 Peter 1:5-11.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Spiritual growth is essential to spiritual life. Those who do not grow are on the way to death, or, at best, will remain stunted Christians.

OUTLINE:

- I. Peter's Ladder (verses 5-7).
- II. Benefits From Progress (verses 8-11).

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Born in Germany, Arthur J. Ferch migrated to Australia when he was nineteen years old. After completing his B.A. in Theology at Australia's Avondale College in 1965, he

served as a pastor-evangelist in Germany and in Victoria, Australia. Dr. Ferch taught religion at Avondale College, Pacific Union College, and Andrews University. After earning a Th.D. in 1979 from Andrews, he became chairman of Avondale College's Theology Department and later head of its School of Religious Studies. Currently, Dr. Ferch is Field Secretary of the Australasian Division. He has written for a variety of theological journals and denominational publications including *The Adventist Review*, *Ministry*, and *Signs of the Times*. He presently is working on a book manuscript entitled *Issues in Daniel*. Dr. Ferch and his wife Carole, a family life counselor and educator, have two sons, 17-year-old Ricky and 15-year-old Andrew. The family en-

joy traveling, hiking, and participating in outdoor activities together whenever they have the opportunity.

Information About the Writer of This Quarter's Lessons

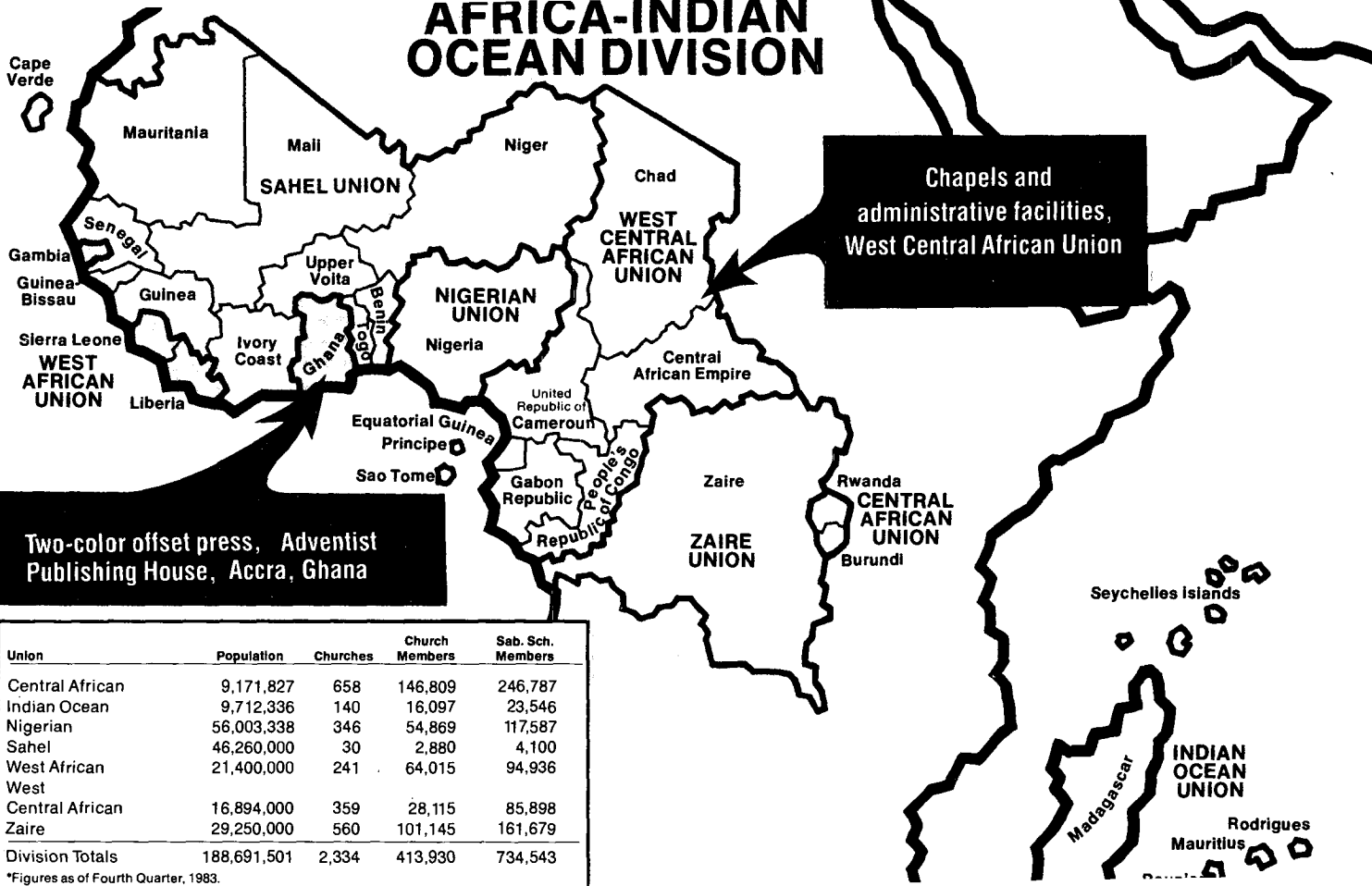
Supplemental Book: *In The Beginning* by Arthur J. Ferch is

published by the Review and Herald Publishing Association. It is available at your Adventist Book Center.

Genesis travels a winding path from a glorious creation to a closed coffin. It begins with fervent life, complete trust, and a sense of joyous fulfillment, and ends with tragic death, paralyzing suspicion, and hopeful expectations of a better future. The universal breadth and fathomless depth of its themes and the poignant descriptions of its heroes have challenged human minds and hearts since the events described took place. *In The Beginning* explores these themes and shows us that the very way in which the author of Genesis put his material together provides many spiritual insights.

Editor's Note: Because several have asked us to include background information on the lesson writers, the decision was made by the Sabbath School staff to begin doing so. Previously there had been some hesitation to provide this information, as the lessons reflect the input of the worldwide Sabbath School Lesson Committee and do not solely or necessarily represent the intent of the writer. The decision came too late to put this quarter's biographical note in the front of the quarterly where it belongs. In subsequent quarters the biographical note will appear on one of the front pages.

AFRICA-INDIAN OCEAN DIVISION



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Union	Population	Churches	Church Members	Sab. Sch. Members
Central African	9,171,827	658	146,809	246,787
Indian Ocean	9,712,336	140	16,097	23,546
Nigerian	56,003,338	346	54,869	117,587
Sahel	46,260,000	30	2,880	4,100
West African	21,400,000	241	64,015	94,936
West				
Central African	16,894,000	359	28,115	85,898
Zaire	29,250,000	560	101,145	161,679
Division Totals	188,691,501	2,334	413,930	734,543

*Figures as of Fourth Quarter, 1983.