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What You Need to Know About the Book of Genesis: Part 1

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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE BOOK OF GENESIS

HOW THE AUTHOR MIGHT HAVE INTRODUCED GENESIS

If only I could have known them, even to interview them for an hour! What questions I would have loved to ask Adam, Noah, Abraham, (especially Abraham), Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph! In fact I've often framed some of them in my mind:

- **Adam:** What was it like to possess a sinless body in a perfect world, to never experience problems or pain, sin or sorrow, despair or death? Or, to actually walk and talk with God Himself in the cool of the day? But, the most puzzling of all questions, why on earth and in heaven's name did you trade and trash all this for a piece of forbidden fruit?
- **Noah:** Were you ever seasick? Did the howling wind and crashing of those mighty waves cause even a little concern about your safety? Did all the noise of the animals keep you up at night? Was it difficult to maintain a harmonious relationship with your family in that limited living quarters for an entire year?
- **Abraham:** What did Melchizedek look like? Did he speak with a human voice? Indeed, was he a human? Was this encounter one of the highlights of your life? If so, what about the failures? Was marrying Hagar the worst mistake you made? Did you and Sarai have a happy marriage before this? If so, was it resumed following Hagar's departure? In retrospect, could you have done anything different to prevent the tragic downfall of nephew Lot?
- **Isaac:** Why did you permit your father to bind you on that Mt. Moriah altar? Didn't you realize why he did it? Did you believe he would actually go through with it? Were you surprised the way things turned out? One final inquiry—why did your faith seem to go down hill from that point on?
- **Jacob:** What was it like to wrestle with God, and most amazingly, to actually win the contest? Did you later conclude He had no doubt allowed you to win? In fact, were you aware of His identity at the time and why He had instigated the match in the first place? Was it truly a life-changing experience?
- **Joseph:** God never actually spoke to you as He did with your father, grandfather, and great-grandfather yet you often displayed more sheer faith than did they. What kept you both confident and cheerful during those dangerous and difficult days, being sold into cruel slavery, falsely accused of rape, and thrown into prison? Did you share this secret with your friends and family?

But of course all these will remain unanswered questions for the present. The last of them, Joseph, passed from the scene some 300 years before I was born. However, I have been privileged by the Almighty to record those facts He has revealed in regard to their lives. After examining my own life perhaps the greatest unanswered questions of all is why the infinite, sinless Creator would choose finite, sinful creatures to do His will! Why indeed!

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS

This book records the Creation of all things, the Fall of Man, the Universal Flood and the Tower of Babel. It also overviews the lives of four all-important Old Testament individuals, namely, Abraham, his son Isaac, one of Isaac's two sons, Jacob, and one of Jacob's 12 sons, Joseph.

BOTTOM LINE INTRODUCTION

AMAZING INDEED! THE WHEN, WHO, HOW, AND WHAT OF ALL THINGS EXPLAINED IN TEN SHORT WORDS!

- In the beginning (the when)
- God (the who)
- Created (the how)
- The heavens and the earth (the what)

FACTS REGARDING THE AUTHOR OF THIS BOOK

1. Who? **Moses**. He was the older brother of Aaron and Miriam (Ex. 6:20; Num. 26:59) who led his people Israel out of Egyptian bondage (Ex. 5-14) and gave them the law of God at Mt. Sinai (Ex. 20).
2. What? The books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.
3. When and where? 1405 B.C., from the eastern bank of the River Jordan in Moab.
4. Why?
 - a. **Genesis**. To record the origin of the world and the nation Israel.
 - b. **Exodus**. The supernatural deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage.
 - c. **Leviticus**. The purpose and functions of the tabernacle.
 - d. **Numbers**. The failure of Israel to enter Canaan.
 - e. **Deuteronomy**. The review of the Law for that generation about to enter Canaan.
5. To whom? Israel in particular, all believers in general.

KEY EVENTS

1. The creation of man
2. The institution of marriage
3. The fall of man

4. The births of Cain and Abel
5. The removal of Enoch
6. The universal flood
7. The Tower of Babel
8. The call of Abraham
9. The giving of the Abrahamic Covenant
10. The institution of circumcision
11. The offering up of Isaac
12. The marriage of Isaac and Rebekah
13. The births of Jacob and Esau
14. The marriage of Jacob to Leah and Rachel
15. The elevation of Joseph in Egypt
16. The move of Jacob and his family from Canaan to Egypt

KEY INDIVIDUALS

1. **Adam:** history's first human being
2. **Eve:** the first woman and wife of Adam
3. **Cain:** the evil son of Adam
4. **Abel:** the godly son of Adam who was murdered by his brother Cain
5. **Methuselah:** who lived longer than any other human being, reaching the age of 969
6. **Enoch:** a godly preacher who was taken to heaven without dying
7. **Noah:** whom God told to build an Ark of safety to protect his family from the universal flood
8. **Shem, Ham, and Japheth:** Noah's three sons and the three ancestors of all people today
9. **Canaan:** son of Ham who was punished for some undisclosed sin
10. **Abraham:** who would become the founder of the Jewish people
11. **Isaac:** the obedient son of Abraham
12. **Jacob:** the son of Isaac who would later father 12 sons who became the founders of Israel's 12 tribes
13. **Joseph:** the favorite and godly son of Jacob who was sold into slavery by his jealous brothers but who later became the prime minister of all Egypt
14. **Sarah:** wife of Abraham and mother of Isaac
15. **Lot:** Abraham's foolish and immature nephew
16. **Hagar:** an Egyptian handmaiden given to Abraham by her barren mistress Sarah that she might present him with a son
17. **Eliezer:** faithful servant of Abraham
18. **Ishmael:** the son Hagar bore for Abraham
19. **Rebekah:** the wife of Isaac
20. **Esau:** the elder twin brother of Jacob and son of Isaac and Rebekah
21. **Rachel:** the beloved wife of Jacob and mother of Joseph and Benjamin
22. **Leah:** the unloved wife of Jacob, older sister to Rachel and mother to six of Jacob's twelve sons
23. **Laban:** Rachel and Leah's father and troublesome father-in-law of Jacob
24. **Dinah:** immoral daughter of Jacob

25. **Potiphar's wife:** who falsely accused Joseph of rape
26. **Pharaoh:** who elevated Joseph over all Egypt

KEY PLACES

1. **Garden of Eden:** original home of Adam and Eve
2. **Land of Nod:** area where Cain lived following the punishment from God for murdering Abel
3. **Mt. Ararat:** where the Ark of Noah rested following the Great Flood
4. **Land of Shinar:** location of the Tower of Babel
5. **Ur of the Chaldees:** city where Abraham lived prior to his conversion
6. **Bethel:** place where Abraham built his first altar in Canaan
7. **Egypt:** country visited by Abraham during a famine in Canaan
8. **Sodom:** wicked city near the Dead Sea that was destroyed by God
9. **Salem:** place where Abraham met Melchizedek, probably an early name for Jerusalem
10. **Mt. Moriah:** place where Abraham offered up his son Isaac
11. **Cave of Machpelah:** burial place of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph
12. **Jabbok:** brook where Jacob wrestled with God
13. **Bethlehem:** where Rachel died while giving birth to Benjamin
14. **Land of Goshen:** area in Egypt occupied by Jacob and his descendants

UNIQUE FEATURES

1. Genesis spans a total time period of at least 2,200 years. In light of this, note God's priority here. He employed 20 percent of the book (1-11) to describe the first 1,800 years. This covers Creation, the Fall, the Flood, and Babel. He employed 80 percent of the book (12-50) to describe the final 400 years. Here we read of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. This means approximately 80 percent of the total time period is covered in only 11 chapters, while 20 percent of the time is described in 39 chapters. The priority point is simple—in the mind of God, Abraham is more important than the universe.
2. It is the only book which describes God as resting (2:2, 3).
3. It gives the first prophecy of the coming Messiah, of his suffering and eventual victory (3:15).
4. It provides his first two names (Seed of the woman and Shiloh) (3:15; 49:10).
5. It pin points the tribe from whence he would come (Judah) and is the first book to mention the city where he would be born (Bethlehem) . See 49:10; 35:19.
6. It gives us the first human to be created (Adam) and the first human to be born (Cain) (1:26; 4:1).
7. It records the first man to die (Abel) and the first man not to die (Enoch) (4:8; 5:24).
8. The glory of God in creation (1:1) and the grace of God in salvation (Noah) (6:8) are both clearly seen.
9. We see the world's earliest civilization (Cainite) and the world's oldest citizen (Methuselah) (4:17; 5:27).

10. The first three of four divine institutions as found in Genesis:
 - Marriage (2:21-25)
 - Human government (9:6)
 - The Nation Israel (12:1-3)
 The fourth is the Church (Mt. 16:18, 19)
11. It provides the first illustration of human religion (the fig leaves), and the first example of divine redemption (the coats of skin) (3:7, 21).
12. Here a city is destroyed on the plains (Sodom) and a boy is spared on a mountain (Isaac) (19, 22).
13. Here a son (Jacob) deceives his father (Isaac) and is later himself deceived by his sons (brothers of Joseph) (27, 37).
14. Here we read of the first barren mother (Sarah) and the first dying mother (Rachel) (16, 35).
15. Jerusalem (a type of the heavenly) and Egypt (a type of the worldly) are first mentioned in this stage (13, 14).
16. Here we first learn of a king called Melchizedek and a cave named Machpelah (14, 25).
17. Here the first of three great biblical covenants is introduced (12:1-3). These covenants are:
 - The Abrahamic Covenant (12:1-3). This has to do with a land (Canaan) and a people (Israel).
 - The Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:4-16; 1 Chron. 17:3-5). This has to do with a king to rule in that land over that people.
 - The New Covenant (Jer. 31:31). This has to do with changed hearts so that the people in the land will allow the king to rule over them.
18. In its pages sinners are drowned, and a saint (Noah) is drunken (7:21, 9:20-21).
19. A ship settles on a mountain and a tower rises on a plain (8:4, 11:1-4). This tower is but the beginning of three satanic attempts to consolidate religion around a project. Two more will follow. One was built near Babylon (Dan. 2), and the final one will be placed in the Holy of Holies (Rev. 13).
20. History's first rebellion (Babel) and revival (Bethel) occurred in this book (11:4; 35:2-4).
21. Here Abraham climbs a mountain where God's Lamb would someday die (22:2). On this occasion Isaac asks his father a question that would be answered by John the Baptist some 20 centuries later. The question asked by Isaac: "*Where is the Lamb?*"(22:7). The answer given by John: "*Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world*" (John 1:29).

COMPARISON WITH OTHER BIBLE BOOKS

1. Revelation:

- Genesis records humanity's first rebellion against God (3:1-6); Revelation records the final rebellion (Rev. 20:7-10).
- Genesis records the entrance of sin (3:1-6); Revelation records its exit (Rev. 20:10; 21:4-8).

- Genesis records the imposition of the curse (3:9-19); Revelation records the lifting of the curse (Rev. 22:3).
- Genesis records the beginning of death (3:19); Revelation records the end of death (Rev. 21:4).
- Genesis records the creation of the present heavens and earth (1:1); Revelation records the creation of the new heavens and earth (Rev. 21:1).

2. Romans:

- In Genesis, Abraham is the patriarch of Israel; in Romans, he is the patriarch of all who believe (Rom. 4:16).

3. John, 1 John:

- All "*begin at the beginning,*" but their beginnings are different: Genesis begins with Creation; John and 1 John begin *before* Creation, with the preexistent Word.

4. Galatians:

- Both show that salvation is by faith (15:6; Gal. 3:6).
- Both show God's desire to redeem all humanity (12:2-3; Gal. 3:8).

TITLES FOR AND TYPES OF JESUS

1. The Seed of the woman (3:15).
2. Adam and Eve's Lamb (3:21).
3. Abel's Lamb (4:4).
4. The Angel of the Lord (16:7).
5. Abraham and Isaac's Ram (22:13).
6. Shiloh (49:10).

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE MAJOR EVENTS IN GENESIS

GOD'S WONDERFUL WORK WEEK Genesis 1-2

"*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*" (Gen. 1:1). Of the 23,214 Old Testament verses, this is without doubt the most important. *First* of all, it serves as a factual summary verse. In 10 short, simple, but sublime words we are informed concerning the WHEN, WHO, HOW, and WHAT of all things.

"*In the beginning.*" That's the WHEN!

"*God.*" That's the WHO!

"Created." That's the HOW!

All things, "*the heaven and the earth.*" That's the WHAT!

The only question not answered in this first verse is the WHY of all things. David would later answer that question:

"*The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork*" (Psa. 19:1).

Secondly, Gen. 1:1 is a corrective verse, for it refutes many false isms today. It denies both polytheism (the belief in many gods) and atheism (the belief in no god). The grievous errors of pantheism, evolutionism, materialism, and fatalism are also soundly condemned.

Thus, the very first verse in Genesis gives us the *theology* of Creation, while the remaining 30 verses provide us with the *chronology* of Creation. In a nutshell we are clearly informed that in six days the Almighty God created all things, from electrons to galaxies, from dandelions to dinosaurs, and from apples to Adam!

But mighty Creation was not the end, only the means to something even more wonderful. God's workday schedule now gives way to His wedding-day schedule. Watch carefully, for here comes the bride!

THE AGONY OF ADAM IN THE GARDEN **Genesis 3**

What a difference a day can bring! Genesis chapter 2 ended so beautifully and blissfully. Earth's first bride and groom were seen with hands and hearts perfectly knit together, strolling toward Eden's magnificent sunset. What a place for a honeymoon! The sights, sounds, and sensations of that glorious hour can scarcely be imagined by their present-day sons and daughters. Perhaps they were serenaded by the music of angels. Certainly they knew the majesty of an unfallen Creation. All the splendor and serenity of that past paradise, however, would soon end, for two hateful and horrible events took place which immediately and eternally changed things, both for the Creator and for His creatures.

The first evil action may have occurred between Gen. 2 and 3, while the second definitely transpired in the middle of chapter 3. What was the nature of these twin tragedies? Both have to do with one word, the worst of all words—SIN! The very sound carries with it the hiss of the serpent.

In Isa. 14 and Ezek. 28 we read of an unholy and unsuccessful attempt by a powerful angelic being to take over God's throne. Lucifer was that angel who then became the devil. This was the heinous crime which may have happened between the second and third chapters of Gen. 3 enticing Adam and Eve to do what he had previously done—disobey God!

A final thought. Everything that God has ever done, or is doing today, or ever will do, can be placed in one of two categories. These are His work in *Creation*, and His work in *Redemption*. Gen. 1 and 3 provide the account of His work in Creation. But with the advent of man's sin in Gen. 3, God rolled up His spiritual sleeves and began His second—and greatest—work, that of redemption! That work still goes on today!

THE STORY OF TWO SONS **Genesis 4**

"And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bore Cain"(Gen. 4:1). What a family they were! There would never be another like it. Each member had come to live on this earth by a different method. The husband suddenly appeared without father or mother. The wife had no mother. But then came their son, history's first baby to be born through the union of both father and mother. Centuries later the Creator would choose His fourth and final method of bringing an individual to this planet. This time a Babe would be born without a human father!

But the unity of Adam's unique family would not last. Soon a fourth member was added, another baby boy. Before the story ended the oldest son would, without reason or remorse, brutally murder his younger brother!

A previous passage (Gen. 2) recorded the blessing of the world's original wedding. This passage (Gen. 4) relates the bitterness of earth's first funeral. From this point on, the second ceremony would be conducted by the sons and daughters of Adam far more often than the first ceremony.

THE DAY BEFORE DESTRUCTION **Genesis 5:1-6:8**

"This is the book of the generations of Adam"(Gen. 5:1).

The world's oldest and most unusual obituary column is recorded in Gen. 5. Ten names appear on the list. The column is unique because of the ages of the nine and the agelessness of the tenth. The average life span of the nine was 912 years. But the tenth never died!

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death"(Heb. 11:5). As the obituary record closes we read of the birth of Enoch's great-grandson, who later became even more famous than his great-grandfather. The boy's name was Noah. In 1983 ABC televised a controversial movie titled, *The Day After*, a fictitious account of events after a nuclear holocaust. Genesis 6 could rightfully be titled, *The Day Before*, for it provides a factual account of human activities just prior to the Great Flood. *"And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually"*(Gen. 6:5).

So the divine decision that had to be made, was made: the earth would be destroyed by a worldwide flood! But would all mankind perish? Could anyone possibly survive?

No, and yes! No, all mankind would not perish. Yes, one man and his family would be saved.

"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (v. 8).

A FAMILY AND A FLOOD **Genesis 6:9-9:29**

"And the Lord said unto Noah, 'Come thou and all thy house into the ark' " (Gen. 7:1).

How simple the solution back then. Physical salvation from the Flood judgment came about through a ship. How simple the solution today. Eternal salvation from the fire judgment comes about through a cross.

In the midst of the Flood we are told:

"And God remembered Noah and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark" (8:1).

How wonderful the little phrase, *"God remembered."* As He did for this dedicated patriarch, He would later do for a dying thief: *"And he said unto Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom'. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:42-43).*

One final thought about the Great Flood. There are 774,745 words in the Bible. God spoke two particular words to Noah at that time which, by themselves, summarize the remaining 774,743. One word was spoken before, and the other following the Flood. The one before: *"And the LORD said unto Noah, 'Come thou and all thy house into the ark' " (Gen. 7:1).* The one after: *"And God spake unto Noah, saying, 'Go forth of the ark' " (8:15-16).*

Here it is—the Scriptures summarized by two words! To the *sinner*, the word is *Come*—*"Come into the ark of safety."*

To the saint, the word is *Go*—*"Go ye into all the world."*

THE TRAGEDY OF A TOWER **Genesis 10-11**

So many different kinds of language, spoken by so many different kinds of people! That's the way it is today. But this was not always the case. People once enjoyed a common oral unity which would amaze us today. What happened to change this? It all began sometime after the Great Flood. A fabulous and feverish religious project was begun at the plain of Shinar on the banks of the Euphrates River, near where ancient Babylon would later be built. The Shinar project included both a city and a tower. The rebel architect behind all this was Nimrod, a religious apostate, who was a grandson of Noah himself. So much concerning the WHAT and WHO. But now for the WHY of the

project. Archeological findings strongly indicate the Tower of Babel was in reality a temple given over to the worship of the stars. Listen to the actual words as taken from that dedication address.

"And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth"(Gen. 11:4).

Note the pronouns "we" and "us" appear five times in this one sentence. This was nothing less than an arrogant and unholy attempt to exclude the Creator and exalt the creature. But it didn't work. God separated the Babel workers in small groups by altering the structure of their common language. This divine action directly answers the question of present-day language differences. The Babel judgment also indirectly answers a second question, for as human beings began to marry in smaller groups, the genetic variations leading to the distinctive characteristics of skin color, height, hair texture, facial features, etc. would develop swiftly.

FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL (Part One) **Genesis 12-16**

Whatever could have happened to one of Ur's leading citizens? Not only had he forsaken the worship of the moon goddess for that of an invisible monotheistic Being, but he was actually planning to leave this famous, fruitful city for a forsaken, far-off country. Had Abram taken leave of his senses? More than one eyebrow must have raised as the future father of the faithful started his pilgrimage toward Canaan. He was 75 years old at the time. Marvelous and mysterious things would befall him during the next 100 years before his death. He would win a war with a small band of servants, father a child through a barren wife, entertain angels unaware, and be visited by God Himself.

The importance of Abraham's life cannot be overestimated. In fact, the very relationship between heaven and earth changed drastically with the advent of Abraham. Prior to this, as seen in Gen. 1-11, God had used, as it were, the shotgun method in His approach to the world, dealing in a general way with nations, peoples, and entire civilizations. But beginning in chapter 12, He laid down the shotgun and employed a rifle, training the sight in on one man and his immediate descendants. Or, to use another analogy, with Abraham, heaven's floodlight gave way to a brilliant spotlight!

FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL (Part Two) **Genesis 17-25**

His parents first named him at birth in the city of Ur. God renamed him at age 99 in the land of Canaan. From Abram ("honored father") to Abraham ("founder of nations"). Quite a difference! His wife also was renamed. No longer would she be known as Sarai (contentious) but now, Sarah (a princess). The divine timing was perfect, for in less than a year the founder of nations and the barren princess would conceive and bear their first child—Isaac.

Wonder of wonders! God's promise had come true. There awaited, however, one final test for Abraham. It took place on Mount Moriah, right outside ancient Jerusalem. Here, obeying the command of God, Abraham prepared to offer up His only son. But the scheduled execution was stayed at the last moment. A substitute was found. God who had previously changed Abraham's and Sarah's names, chose this occasion to give His obedient servant a new name for Himself: *Jehovah-jireh*, "the Lord will provide!" So He did with Abraham. So He will with us, if we obey Him.

Twenty centuries later, another Father led His only Son up similar mountain slopes for the identical purpose. This time, however, there was no last-minute reprieve.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

THE CHILD OF THE COVENANT (Isaac) **Genesis 25-27**

In 1990 B.C., Abraham died. The man of God was gone but the mission of God would go on. The torch would pass on to his son Isaac, then to his grandson Jacob, and finally to his 12 great-grandsons, particularly to Joseph.

In addition to death and taxes, a third thing is certain. The message and mission of God will be heard and experienced as long as the world stands. One of the primary purposes for the writing of the Old Testament was to prepare the way for the coming Messiah.

The life of Isaac serves to illustrate three factors that would be fulfilled by the prophesied Savior.

The first was Isaac's supernatural birth. He was conceived by an old barren woman. Jesus was conceived by a young virgin girl.

The second factor was Isaac's obedience. He agreed to be offered up by his father. Two thousand years later Christ would demonstrate that same obedience to His Heavenly Father.

The third factor was Isaac's marriage. He was content to await the coming of his bride from a foreign land, as Christ in heaven awaits His bride, the Church.

THE JOURNEYS OF JACOB (Part One) **Genesis 25; 27-31**

The younger son definitely had a spiritual edge over his slightly older twin brother. Both parents could easily see that. But there was a deceitful trait about him that troubled them. Oh, well, perhaps he would grow out of it. After all, God Himself had predicted the older would serve the younger. But as the years went by, the father apparently forgot about this promise and attempted to give the family blessing (a

spiritual responsibility) to his eldest son. This only triggered more deceit in the family, as both mother and younger son successfully tricked the father, resulting in an angry vow from the older to murder his younger twin! Few soap operas could design a more twisted plot. The parents in this true story of course were Isaac and Rebekah. Their two sons were Esau and Jacob. To say the least, this was not the happiest of families.

When corrective action was finally taken by the father it proved too late, for Esau married an unbeliever and became a desert wanderer. Jacob would eventually fare much better, but not before experiencing many painful trials, the majority of which were self-inflicted.

THE JOURNEYS OF JACOB (Part Two) **Genesis 32-35; 38**

There was no doubt about it. The aging patriarch was walking differently. His wives, children, and servants all agreed. What they could not agree on was just how his walk had changed. Perhaps it could be best described as a confident limp. But was that possible? How could he possess any confidence whatever? Had he forgotten that an angry Esau and his 400 men would catch up with their little camp today and get even for past injustices? Would anyone in Jacob's group live to see another sunset? They would indeed—every one of them. Esau's attitude would be drastically altered from that of fierce revenge to friendly reunion.

None of the frightened people in that early morning camp could know any of this, or that their survival that day was directly connected to Jacob's limp. It all began at the Brook Jabbok where Jacob and God engaged in an all-night wrestling match. The results? Both a new walk and a new name. Jacob now would be known as Israel and the one who wrestled with God.

JOSEPH: THE FIRST YEARS **Genesis 37; 39-44**

Just how long their consciences troubled them is not known. But surely the 10 brothers spent more than one sleepless night, tortured by memories of the past. Selling their younger brother into cruel Egyptian slavery was bad enough. That crime, however, had been compounded by lying to their father. The old man was led to believe that a wild animal had attacked and killed his beloved son, Joseph.

Could that evil event in the past ever be forgotten? This would prove impossible, for in the near future all 10 brothers would be confronted with their crime in a totally unexpected and unpleasant manner. Be sure your sin will find you out!

This, in a nutshell, is the story of Joseph and his 10 brothers. No other Old Testament character in matters of personal purity and unjust sufferings so foreshadows the person of Christ as does Joseph. But his sufferings, like those of Christ, served merely to prepare him for "*the glory that should follow*" (1 Peter 1:11). In one simple day Joseph was promoted from a prisoner in Egypt to the Prime Minister over Egypt.

JOSEPH: THE FINAL YEARS

Genesis 45-50

Joseph could scarcely believe his eyes. But how could he deny what he saw? There they stood, all 10 of them. How long had it been? His mind quickly flashed back some 23 years to the small Canaanite town of Dothan. That was the day they sold him into slavery. Watching them now, he felt absolutely no anger, but awe, as he thought of a mysterious dream he experienced as a boy. It had probably been a mistake telling them about it.

"And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf" (Gen. 37:6-7).

Who would have thought the dream would be fulfilled under the present circumstances? But here they were, subdued and, no doubt, somewhat hungry, requesting food in a foreign land. The irony of course was they did not recognize him. But then, how could they? In their minds he was either dead by this time, or was serving as a slave somewhere.

Yes, he would reveal himself to them, but not yet. The following few weeks became a nightmare for Joseph's 10 brothers, as they were made to sweat, fret, and regret their past crime. Finally, the agony was over and the announcement was made: "Don't you recognize me? I am Joseph, your younger brother!" Never one to harbor a grudge, Joseph would on two occasions reassure his brothers, still plagued by guilt:

"Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life" (Gen. 45:5).

"But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive" (Gen. 50:20).

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO ABOUT THE BOOK OF GENESIS

Okay, so much for Genesis back then. But my life is right NOW! Is there the slightest connection?

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. 10:11).

PAUSE AND PONDER:

- Adam (and you) did not evolve from some muddy glob, but was created by the mighty God!

- And, most amazingly, both (Adam and you) were not only made **by** the hand of God, but in the very image **of** God. Weighty words indeed!
- How glorious to realize the same blessed Holy Spirit who once "*moved upon the face of the waters*: (1:2), now actually dwells within the hearts of believers (1 Cor. 3:16)!
- We note that as His creative work was well planned and perfect, so it is with His redemptive work in regard to us. This wonderful truth is declared in many biblical passages. Here is but one:

"It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect"(Psa. 18:32).

- According to Gen. 1:26, God made a "take charge" creature (man), assigning him to serve as king over creation, having dominion over all nature. But, due to his sin (3:1-7), he was dethroned from this lofty position. The book of Hebrews aptly summarizes this sad situation:

"Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him"(Heb. 2:8).

- But not to worry, weary pilgrim, for the ultimate rainbow of redemption suddenly bursts from behind the dark clouds of sin into glorious light, as seen in the very next verse:

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man"(Heb. 2:9).

- In other words, Jesus came, not just to save us, but to restore our original destiny, namely, to rule over all things with Him!

In fact, lest we forget, God instructed John to end the final book in the Bible by reminding us of our future reign of righteousness with the Redeemer!

"They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years"(Rev. 20:6).

- So, what else can we learn from the life of history's first human? Five fast facts:

1. As Adam turned from God, so **have** we—"all we like sheep have gone astray"(Isa. 53:6).

2. As Adam came back to God, so **can** we—"*Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool*" (Isa. 1:18).
 3. As Adam then worshipped God, so **should** we—"*But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him*" (John 4:23).
 4. As Adam later died, so **must** we—"*And as it is appointed unto men once to die*" (Heb. 9:27).
 5. As Adam will eventually give an account before God, so **shall** we—"*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*" (2 Cor. 5:10).
- Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were, for the most part, pilgrims. There is a vast difference between a pilgrim and a homesteader. The first involves a journey; the second speaks of a permanent dwelling.
 - Both Old Testament and New Testament believers are described as pilgrims, but never as householders:
 1. **Old Testament**—"*These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth*" (Heb. 11:13).
 2. **New Testament**—"*Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul*" (1 Peter 2:11).
 - So what? So this! It assures present day pilgrims of the following in regard to their journeys:
 1. Where God leads—He feeds!
 2. Where God guides—He provides!
 3. Where God directs—He protects!
 - Need more proof?

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:4).

Here are but a few of these precious promises to pilgrims:

1. *"He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness ..."*(Psa. 23:3).
2. *"I being in the way, the Lord led me ..."*(Gen. 24:27).
3. *"Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron"*(Psa. 77:20).
4. *"And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them"*(Isa. 42:16).
5. *"He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them ..."*
(John 10:3).
6. *"For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes"*(Rev. 7:17).

A closing thought regarding God, bureaucracy, and global warming—

Could you possibly imagine the situation that might have developed had the Creator been confronted by the Environmental Protection Agency (E.P.A.) just prior to His creation? Consider—

God created the Heaven and the Earth. Quickly, He was faced with a class action suit for failure to file an environmental impact statement. He was granted a temporary permit for the heavenly part of the project, but was stymied with a cease and desist order for the earthly part.

Appearing at the hearing, God was asked why He began His earthly project in the first place. He replied that He just liked to be creative!

Then God said, *"Let there be light"* and immediately the officials demanded to know how the light would be made. Would there be strip mining? What about thermal pollution? God explained that the light would come from a huge ball of fire. God was granted permission to make light, assuming that no smoke would result from the ball of fire, and to conserve energy, the light would have to be out half of the time. God agreed and said He would call the light *"Day"* and the darkness, *"Night."* The officials replied that they were not interested in semantics.

God said, *"Let the Earth bring forth green herb and such as may have seed."* The Environmental Protection Agency agreed so long as native seed was used. Then God said, *"Let the waters bring forth the creeping creatures having life; and the fowl that*

may fly over the Earth." Officials pointed out that this would require the approval of the Game and Fish Commission coordinated with the Wildlife Federation Society.

Everything was okay until God said He wanted to complete the project in six days. Officials said that it would take at least 100 days to review the application and impact statement. After that there would be a public hearing. Then there would be 10 to 12 months before ...

At this point, God created hell!

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