

STUDIES IN THE HOLY BIBLE

GENESIS

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*ENGLISH EDITION
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**Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ King of Kings and
Lord of lords**



**THE BEHOLDER OF GOD
MARK THE EVANGELIST
SAINT AND MARTYR**



*H.H. Pope Shenouda III, 117th Pope of
Alexandria and the See of St. Mark*

*Dedicated to the soul of our blessed father,
Father Bishoy Kamel*

Preface to the Arabic Edition

More than 25 years have passed since my series *Studies in the Holy Bible* was first published (in Arabic). In resuming this series, I feel that I am greatly indebted to my beloved spiritual father, Father Bishoy Kamel, who lived among us with the true evangelical spirit. He loved the Holy Bible and was extremely attached to Its sweetness, using It as a spiritual weapon that gave his soul victory and triumph. His Bible always accompanied him in his worship, preaching, and even his daily activities.

The library of St. George Church in Sporting (Alexandria), by the grace of God, resumed publication of parts of this series under Father Bishoy's name ... so I truly felt the spirit of the unity between us that transcends time. Father Bishoy first encouraged me to write this series before my ordination into the priesthood. I feel his prayers that the Lord may give me providence support me even today.

Much of this series has previously been printed several times. However, after having written commentaries on chapters from both the Old and the New Testaments based on the legacy of the patristic fathers and in their spirit, I felt that I had to rewrite the first simplistic series in some depth but still with a simplicity appropriate for lay people and in particular the youth.

I have chosen not to cite references for the sake of simplicity, but refer those who wish to study in greater depth to the series *From the Commentaries and Meditations of the Early Fathers*.

May the Holy Spirit use every means to reveal to every soul the glory of the Holy Name of God.

Father Tadros Yacoub Malaty
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In the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one God, Amen.

THE HOLY BIBLE: THE WORD OF GOD

THE WORD OF GOD AND HUMAN LIFE

+ The word of man expresses his thoughts and his own self. It is tied to his human existence, but is separated from his substance. In contrast, the Word of God is viewed by most religions as being eternal and inseparable from God, that is, it is not a supplemental matter ... there was never a time when God was without His Word.

Our belief is that God's Word is the Living God; He is not like man who articulates sounds and human letters.

+ Because of His love for man and his value for human life, God spoke to us through the centuries in our own human language; His Holy Spirit filled the prophets with specific words to guide us to truth, save us from wrong, and to record His Living Word with human culture so that It may be understood. Differences in writing style assure us of God's sanctity and of His appreciation for human culture, which He didn't scorn but used to express His Eternal Word.

ITS PURPOSE

- 1 - God desires that we encounter Him in mutual love: to see Him, to hear Him, to talk with Him and to embrace Him, accepting His glory in us. His Word is not a monologue, that is, a one way conversation from God directed towards us, but a dialogue of love between God and man, and man and God. This is what the dialogue between Abram and God clearly shows us (Genesis 18:17-33).
- 2 - The Holy Scriptures are not just commandments, but divine promises that empower us. The Bible is not only for us to study, but to experience, to live,

and to worship by It. Thus the Holy Scripture came down to us in a style that the illiterate could understand and the literate could admire. It does not cover scientific facts, yet It does not contradict them. The purpose of the Bible is to invite man into a complete life in God (2 Tim 3:16).

- 3 - In essence, the Bible acquaints us with the person of the Lord Christ as the Word in flesh with Whom we unite as a body with a head, and a bride with the Heavenly Groom Who carries us into the arms of the Father. Both the New and Old Testaments concentrate on the Lord Christ who saves us from our human nature, and sanctifies and renews us with His Holy Spirit and by His Blood on the cross.

ITS ATTRIBUTES

- 1 - The Bible is a book unique in kind: it includes history, poetry, literature, wisdom, prophecy and messages - written by prophets, philosophers, wise men, kings, shepherds, and fishermen in different eras that span 16 centuries, and yet is homogenous in thought and purpose - capable of translation into the all world's languages without losing its vitality. It was written by over 35 people inspired by the Holy Spirit.
- 2 - The greatness of the Holy Bible is glorified by the fulfillment of its prophecies after thousands of years with distinct accuracy and without doubt. It is possible to find a complete description of the Lord Christ, His life, and His divine work from the Old Testament alone.
- 3 - Creation is described simply but in detail, not in the form of the fairy tales that, without exception, had filled the world; even modern scientific discoveries have come to agree with what is contained in the Bible.
- 4 - Every year archeological discoveries verify the historical events found in the Bible even those that had been doubted by some researchers.

Principles of Interpretation:

- 1 - Literal or simple historical explanations.
- 2 - Behavioral or moral interpretations
- 3 - Spiritual or symbolic explanations, for example finding the person of the Lord Christ and His Mysteries behind the text (Old Testament) and meeting Him.

THE CHURCH'S BOOK

The Holy Bible is a book for the entire church, given by God to all holy communities so that they may be one heavenly bride for the Divine Groom. Through It, the believer enjoys the personal love of God and feels that It is his own private book, sent to him personally from God, not as an isolated individual but as a living member in the holy community. The relationship between God and the church today can not be understood except in light of God's relationship with His people in the Old Testament, because the church is the new Israel which inherited the Word of God and all its promises, appointments, prophecies and commandments.

HOW TO STUDY THE HOLY BIBLE

- 1 - It is your own personal book, so study it in light of your own life and your relationship with God. Whatever is found in it, whether it is promises, commandments or contempt, is for you. Underline verses that contain promises so you can concentrate on them in prayers.
- 2 - Search in what you read for our Lord Jesus and how He treats others, and see where you stand with Him.
- 3 - Read with compassion and modesty, because God resists the conceited but gives understanding to the humble.
- 4 - Get a notebook and summarize what you read, your thoughts, the verses you like, and don't forget to memorize at least one verse every day, to keep for yourself a treasure or weapon that may save you in times of trouble.

A COMPARISON OF THE TWO TESTAMENTS OF THE HOLY BIBLE

Christ is the Foundation Which binds the two Testaments together

The Old Testament

I. The Pentateuch

- Called the Law
- Declared the need for a Savior for liberation from bondage
- Encompassed the story of humanity from its fall until the it stood on the threshold of the divine promise

II. The Historical Books

- A history of God's work with His people in the new land
 - (a) The period prior to kings
 - (b) Era of judges
 - (c) Era of the kings
 - (d) Division and captivity

III. The Books of Wisdom

- Give us practical understanding of faith for life with God, to support us until we traverse this life

IV. The Books of Prophecy

- Appearance of prophets in a spiritually dark period, urging people to repent and ascertaining the need for the coming of Christ

The New Testament

I. The Four Gospels

- Represent the Law of the New Testament
- Describe the coming of the Savior Who calls for all nations, and grants life
- Lead us to the new life - the true promised land that God gave us

II. The Acts of the Apostles

- A history of God's work with the new Israel through His Holy Spirit
 - (a) He does not ask for an earthly kingdom
 - (b) Christ is the Judge
 - (c) Christ is the King
 - (d) We are free of divisions

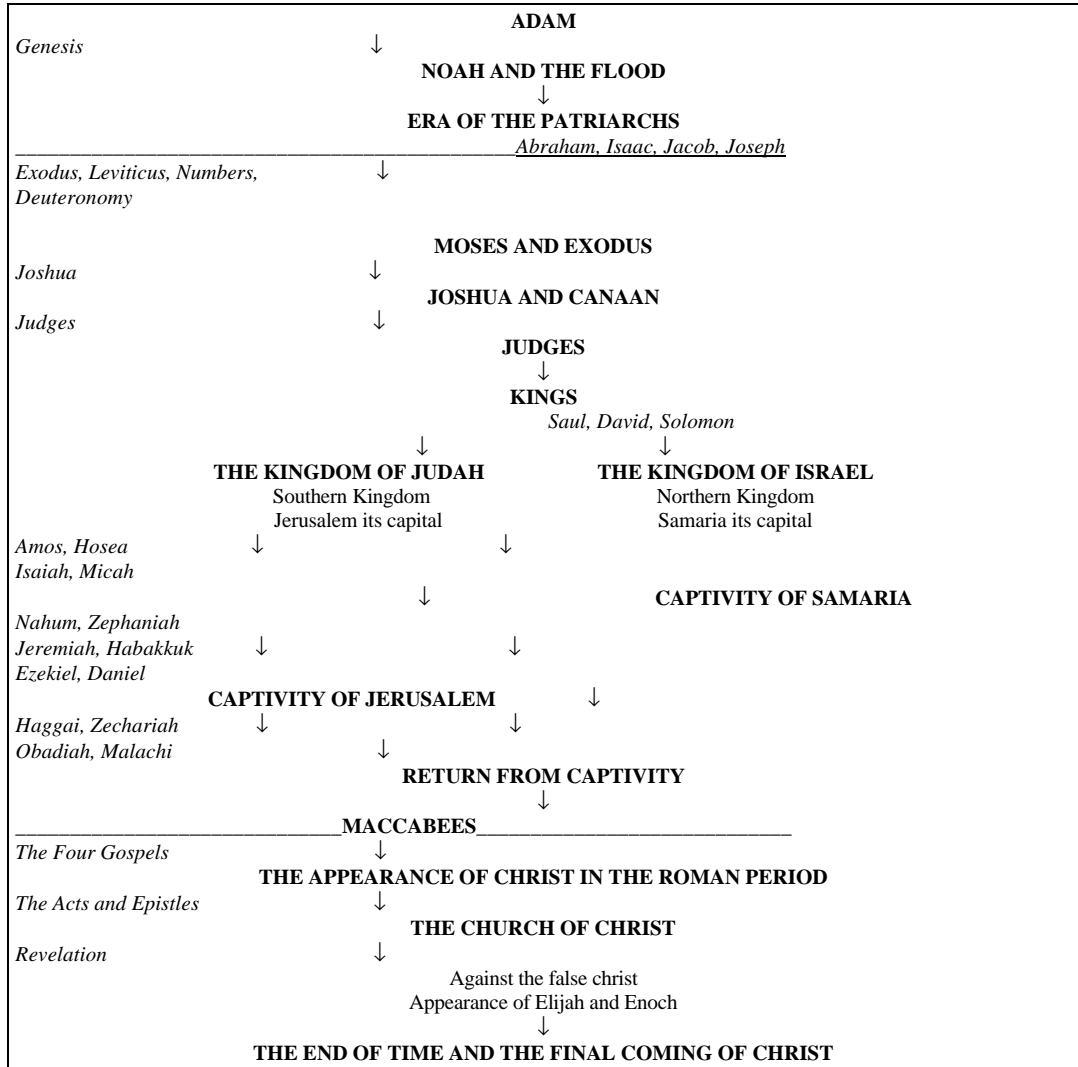
III. The Epistles

- Give us practical understanding of theology and faith, that support us in life with God in His Son through the Holy Spirit, the path to Heaven!

IV. The Book of Revelation

- The book of prophecies in the New Testament, urging us to persevere in the Lord, awaiting the final coming of Christ.

A CHRONOLOGICAL OUTLINE



THE FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES

THEIR TITLE

They are called the "Pentateuch" in Greek, meaning the "five containers" or the "five books". Jews called them the "Torah" or the "Law" (Joshua 1:8).

THEIR UNITY

These books represent a part of history, that begins with Creation and ends on the eastern bank of the Jordan River as Moses, representing the Law, turns over his leadership to Joshua, representing Jesus; the Law leads us to Christ (Romans 10:4).

In these books, history mixes with faith, so that the history becomes inseparable from religious belief ... nonetheless this history is preparatory for the coming of the Savior.

These books are united together by four principles which work together as the threads woven into a fabric. These are "The Divine Promise", "God has chosen us", "The Divine Covenant", and "The Law."

THEIR AUTHOR

The author is Moses the prophet according to the testimony of the two testaments: the Old (Exodus 17:14 & 24:4 and Numbers 33:2) and the New according to the Lord Christ and His apostles (John 5:46).

THEIR OUTLINE

I. Preparing for Salvation: The Book of Genesis

1 - Creation: As an introduction to the history of salvation	1-11
2 - The Patriarchs: As preparation to announce the Incarnation of the Savior	
+ Abraham	12-25
+ Isaac	25-26
+ Jacob	26-36

+ Joseph	37-50
II. Choosing His People: The First Part of the Book of Exodus	
Choosing His people and liberating them from slavery by the blood of the lamb	1-18
III. Supporting His People	
A - The Second Part of Exodus	
+ By introducing the Law and a covenant	19-24
+ By accepting a tabernacle amongst them	25-31
+ By renewing two tablets	32-34
+ By establishing a tabernacle	35-40
B - The Book of Leviticus	
+ Sacrifices as symbols of the Cross	1-7
+ Priesthood, a symbol of Christ the Priest	8-10
+ By the canon of circumcision as a symbol of the work of Christ	11-16
+ By Mosaic worship	17-26
+ By His acceptance of their offerings and tithes	27
IV. His people in the Wilderness: The Book of Numbers	
The Struggle for God	
+ Consensus of the people and organization	1-10
+ The trip from Sinai to Moab	11-33
+ Events in Moab	33-36
V. Moses in Moab: The Book of Deuteronomy	
Looking for the Savior	
+ Moses prepares for the events	1-4:33
+ Explaining the meaning of the covenant	4:34-11
+ The Law	12-26
+ The blessings and the curses	27-30
+ The selection of Joshua	31
+ Praying for victory	32
+ The blessing of the tribes	33
+ The death of Moses and his burial	34

MOSES THE PROPHET AND HIS FIVE BOOKS

MOSES AS THE AUTHOR

1. The testimony of the Old Testament

Exodus	24:4 & 25:1
Deuteronomy	31:9 & 31:24-26
Ezra	3:2 & 6:18
Nehemiah	13:1
Malachi	4:4

2. The testimony of the New Testament

Matthew	8:4
Acts	15:21
Corinthians	3:15

3. It is apparent from their chapters that Moses, who was brought up in Egypt and had learned the wisdom of the Egyptians, was the author:

- (a) Addition of many Egyptian words (Genesis 41:45 & 47:11 and Exodus 1:11).
- (b) Inclusion of many Egyptian customs in detail, such as: the marriage of eunuchs; presenting a ring and placing a gold chain around the neck of someone to be honored with authority (Genesis 41:42); the forbidding of Egyptians from eating with Hebrews (Genesis 43:32).
- (c) Knowledge of the writer about the land of the priests in Egypt (Genesis 47:22).
- (d) Familiarity of the writer with the banks of the Nile and with the wilderness of the desert, Egyptian papyrus (Exodus 2:3), and Egyptian geography (Exodus 13:20; 14:2).
- (e) Canons associated with Leviticus fit Moses' era, mixing religious, civil, social, and economic laws. The mixture of canon with narrative history indicates that it was written during the wandering in the wilderness. Some befitting nomadic tent dwellers. It is noticeable that the narrative avoids

- any flattering remarks about the sun, so that his audience does not fall into sun worship like the Egyptians.
- (f) The solution in the Book of Deuteronomy to expel the Canaanites from the cities, fits the time of Moses, not the that of the kings (Deuteronomy 20:10-20).
4. Moses was the most capable human that God's Spirit could use in writing these books, for he had learned the wisdom of the Egyptians (Exodus 2:10 & Acts 7:21) including writing; he had received the details of Creation through an oral tradition from Adam; and his experience as a shepherd for 40 years gave him the vigor to contemplate on God's love and His design, and kindled his heart to write. In the wilderness, he concerned himself with the pragmatic leadership of his people, and considered writing these books part of his leadership, especially after he left small matters to the elders on the advice of his father-in-law (Exodus 18:13-26).

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS

OUTLINE

Primeval history	1-11
The God's relationship with the first patriarchs	12-50
Abraham	12-25
Isaac	21-27
Jacob	25-50
Joseph	37-50

ITS PURPOSE AND CHARACTERISTICS

This book opens the door for correctly understanding God.

- 1 - God is the Father, who created everything for man his beloved son, and established him as master of the earth and what surrounds it.
- 2 - He cares that every human should enter with Him into a personal relationship, and offers humans His Divine Mysteries.
- 3 - He gave to man the commandment to practice love with obedience and exchange love with love, respecting his sacred free will.
- 4 - He pointed out the sanctity of the body, marriage, human life and material creation, and declared man's need for salvation and renewal of his creation.
- 5 - Moses the prophet wrote it in historical form not as poetry in order to show us the truth with simplicity and clarity, unlike the fairy tales that had spread all over the world.
- 6 - It is the book of beginnings: the beginning of creation (1:1); the beginning of man (1:27); the beginning of the Sabbath (2:2,3); the beginning of marriage (2:22-24); the beginning of sin (3:6); the beginning of sacrifice or salvation (3:15); the beginning of prophecy (3:15); the beginning of human authority (9:1-6); the beginning of nations (11); and the beginning of God's people (12:1-3).

PROPHECIES IN GENESIS

- 1 - The coming of Christ by birth from a woman without a man's seed (3:15)

- 2 - On the descendants of Abram (12:3)
- 3 - On the descendants of Judah (49:10)

SYMBOLS OF CHRIST IN GENESIS

- 1 - In objects: the Tree of Life (3:22); the coat of skin (3:21); the ark (1 Pet 3:20,21); and Jacob's ladder (28:12).
- 2 - In people: Melchizedek (14:18-20 and Hebrews 8); the sacrificial Isaac; and Joseph.

Primeval History	"over 2000 years"	The First Patriarchs	"200 years"
God the controller of events		God concerned with personalities	
1-Creation for man	1-2	1-Abraham	2-25
2-The fall and promise of salvation	3-4	2-Isaac	12-37
3-Noah and renewal of the world	5-10	3- Jacob	25-36
4-Tower of Babel and start of nations	11	4- Joseph	37-50

PRIMEVAL HISTORY

GENESIS 1-11

Genesis 1

CREATION OF THE WORLD

Creation and Modern Science

- + Many research publications have found agreement between modern science and what is found in these verses concerning Creation and its stages. The word "create" in Hebrew does not mean getting something from nothing, but "to make" or "to manufacture," implying God had first created the elements and then gave them form and beauty. The meaning of the word "day" does not mean 24 hours, but a period that may be millions of years (St. Jerome).

- + How can we explain the presence of human bones one million years old... and the existence of artifacts that predate Adam?
 1. Using mathematical calculations, man cannot be more than 6000 years old. Assuming that every family had three children (a low number compared to previous centuries) and after accounting for natural death, catastrophes, and wars, we find that the world's population would approximate what it actually is now. If human history goes back to a million years, then the world's population today would have needed several thousand times the land space we have now.
 2. The ancient bones found were those of mammals that resembled humans and that had their own abilities.

God the Creator (1:1)

The writer used the Hebrew word "Elohim" which is plural, and then uses the verb create in the singular form in the phrase "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (1:1) in order to prepare the mind to accept the mystery of the Holy Trinity which assures our salvation by unity through the Divine Substance. One time he calls Him "Yahweh" to confirm that God is above all considerations; and another time he calls Him "El Shaddai" for he is the Almighty who is concerned

with matters both large and small in the lives of His children; and "Elyon" or the highest, so he raises our hearts high; and "El Awlam" meaning eternal so he takes us beyond time in order that we may enjoy His eternal presence.

Stages of Creation

The First Period: The Appearance of Light:

- + The appearance of light was considered the beginning of Creation, so that God's work could be seen and glorified. He confirms that He existed before and had created the elements. He stated "The earth was without form and void" (1:2). The writer does not explain the theory of Creation but reveals the love of the Creator, and information pertaining to life and salvation, truths that are not for scientific research. (God gave man a mind to explore science in concordance with faith). The Holy Bible is not a history of the earth, but that of man, specifically his salvation.
- + We find that before Creation, the spirit of God moved upon the surface of the waters (1:1), and in the renewal of Creation we find that the Spirit of God works through water in baptism to give us a new world as children of God. The Spirit of God still ripples in our hearts as it did over the earth which was without form and void (1:2) harboring the kingdom of God.
- + Light appeared before the sun ... new research confirms that light existed before the complete formation of the sun, while it was still in its primordial haziness.
- + From the symbolic point of view, God's work began with the appearance of light so that those in heaven (angels) would see what he created and glorify Him; He still gives us light through the water of baptism (the mystery of light) so that we may glorify Him for His work in us in His renewal of our creation.
- + God separates between light and darkness, and we as children of God have to possess this sense of distinction and wisdom.

- + Darkness is not a created element, but is deprivation from light.

The Second Period: The Firmament (Heaven or Dome)

- + What is meant by firmament is not space, but what is above the earth, for it is a high or supreme place.
- + When the earth cooled, the temperature dropped, and the weather cleared, the firmament appeared, separating the earth with its oceans from the clouds.
- + This is the heaven of the second day, which the modern believer can not first comprehend, let alone understand the planets and stars, except by growth in his faith and his association with God. It should be noted that there was only one body of water; today's oceans and seas were later formed as a result of various natural events. All seven oceans have scientifically been shown to have a common origin, sharing a similar bottom.

The Third Period: The Appearance of Vegetation on Earth

What Moses states is that simple plants (grasses) appeared first, then grains, then trees bearing fruit; and then, in sequence, marine creatures, birds, wild beasts, and finally man. This order concurs with biological studies. Who taught Moses what we know only now in the twentieth century?!

God in his compassion first created plants so that animals could feed when they were created, then made the animals to serve man when he was created; Creation was not haphazard but according to God Almighty's plan.

The Fourth Period : The Creation of the Solar Systems

- + Some may wonder "How did God create the sun in the fourth period when the earth was already created and science assures us that the sun preceded the earth by millions of years?" The sun was created in the fourth period but was in a state of haziness during prior periods, because light had appeared the first day of Creation as rays emanating from a haze prior to complete formation of the sun.

- + Our Christ is the Sun of Righteousness (Malachi 4:2). He shines on His church with His Light so that it becomes a moon (Revelation 12:1) and each member a star (Daniel 12:3).
- + "God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth" (1:17). Each spiritual star wants to preserve its nature as a bright star, and must shine on others with love and truth, so that it preserves the Spirit of God in heavenly life, and carries the new nature in the Heavenly Christ.
- + We thank God for the sun which brightens the day so that we may work, and for the stars that light the night and give it wonder and special beauty, without depriving us from the blessing of rest and sleep, as long as our souls are awake spiritually.

The Fifth Period : The Creation of Fish and Birds

- + About fish He said: "Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures" (1:20). The waters then produced living beings by the Word of God; in the same way the water of baptism produces living beings (children of God) by the Grace and Word of God.
- + Reptiles represent evil thoughts that make us crawl upon the ground, so that our hearts are soiled by dust, unlike the birds which soar in the proximity of heaven. He who looks at a woman with lust becomes as a snake crawling in the dust; only if we leave in her hands the Egyptian garment (like Joseph) can we fly with the wings of the Holy Spirit and be saved from her trickery and soar in the heavens (39:7). He who steals crawls with his heart, but he who gives charity flies in the heavens.

The Sixth Period: The Creation of Animals and Man

- + God prepared everything to create animals and then created man, giving him all his needs, seen and unseen.
- + In creating man, He said "Let Us make man in Our image according to Our likeness" (1:26).

- 1 - God did not create man similar to an unlimited number of other creations, but rather in His own image in order to establish a personal and loving relationship, not as some modern unholy philosophies suggest: that God dissociated himself from the world, made man a slave, and took away his free will. This point is clear throughout the entire Holy Bible, especially after the Incarnation because the Word of God came down to us and assumed our nature so that we may enter with Him into a loving relationship.
- 2 - We do not find in Creation the word "We make" except in reference to man, for the Holy Trinity desired to use the plural form to reveal to us Their work in the very beloved man.
- 3 - God made us in his image, bearing one soul (existent, articulate, and alive) the image of the Holy Trinity (Divine Being, Divine Word, and Divine Life).
- 4 - He made man the king of all creation, giving him authority over everything (1:26).
- 5 - From the beginning, God sanctified sex: "male and female He created them" (1:27) similarly, marriage and birth (Hebrews 28). [Refer to my book *Let Me Grow*].
- 6 - God did not see "everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (1:31) until after He had created man.

+ + +

Genesis 2

ADAM IN PARADISE

This chapter reveals God's purpose in His Creation:

1. Sanctification of the Sabbath (2:1-3)

The word "Sabbath" means rest; rest for God does not mean that He stopped working, as the Lord Christ said "My Father has been working until now and I have been working" (John 5:17); His rest is to find his beloved man in paradise not

in need of anything. He rested after having created everything for our sake; He placed us in a joyful heavenly life and gave man a purposeful married life. Therefore our reverence for the Sabbath is us sanctifying our lives so that God may rest in us. We find that there is no night on the seventh day, because God's rest is in us and ours is in Him, and leads us to an eternity without end, the Lord's eternal day.

Christ is the true Sabbath in Whom the Father rests, because He finds us His children sanctified in truth, and in Christ we also rest because we find communion with the Father and enjoyment of Divine Fatherhood; we find His arms open to us! When we unite with Christ, we become ourselves a "Sabbath" that the Lord may rest in, and all our life becomes a "Sabbath", a continuous joyful feast.

2. Adam in Paradise (2:4-14)

God rested by creating his beloved man, and man rests in heavenly life which is in essence his existence with God.

- (a) The Garden of Eden was in northern Iraq and its river was the Euphrates.
- (b) God made man to work the earth (2:5), not to be bound by a heavy obligation, but as a chance to enjoy work and feel its fruits. Work is a divine commandment, and at the same time, a divine gift that pleases the heart.
- (c) The tree of life is a symbol of the Lord Christ, who gives life (John 3:15), and wisdom (Proverbs 3:18).
- (d) The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is in itself good, but disobedience is what brought us death.
- (e) The river in Eden is God's Spirit which floods our earth, changing our desolate nature to a paradise that pleases God's heart (John 7:38). Its division into four riverheads, signifies the flood of the Holy Spirit over the church throughout the world, from East to West and from North to South.

3. The Divine Commandment (2:15-17)

Before giving His commandment to man, God gave him the garden of Eden and flooded him with love, so that the commandment would not be forced authority on another, but an opportunity that God gave his beloved man to reciprocate love for

love through obedience. Without the commandment, man would not have been able to reciprocate God's love as he should, and exercise his freewill.

With the commandment, He gave man the ability to fulfill it, and gave him authority and a noble nature so that he would not feel deprivation or humiliation.

Along with the commandment, He made clear the price of disobedience: "you shall surely die" (2:17) ... this is not a divine revenge because God does not avenge Himself, but it is the fruit of man's separation from God, the source of his life. The severity of the punishment is proportional to man's freedom and the abilities given to us, and it gives prominence to the power of salvation which is given by the Father through the sacrifice of His One and Only Son.

4. Creation of Eve (2:18-25)

- + God reveals the sanctity of sex by saying "It is not good that man be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him" (2:18). Man is in need of woman to support him physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually (exchange of thoughts). She is his equivalent on every level.

- + Marriage in paradise took place between one man and one woman, a symbol of the union of Christ with the church (Ephesians 5:32).

- + Eve was created from Adam's side while he was in a deep sleep, to ensure Adam's need for her when he awoke, and that they may work together. The church was created through Christ's Blood as He slept on the cross.

- + "And they were both naked, man and his wife, and were not ashamed" (2:25). They were not ashamed of their bodies, because the body is God's good creation. All its members are sanctified in God. Shame is the fruit of disgrace which came to us through our deviation and our sins.

+ + +

Genesis 3

THE FALL OF MAN

God gave man everything, especially human freedoms, but man misused it.

1. The Deceitful Snake (3:1-7)

- + The enemy of good (Satan) used an unadulterated creature (the snake) as an instrument to destroy man; the defect was not in the instrument but in the man who engaged in a futile conversation with the snake. We wish to escape from foolish, destructive discussions (2 Timothy 2:23). The devil has no power over us, but he has the right to tempt us; if we give him access to our mind and let him control our thoughts we will find difficulty in expelling him, but by the grace of God we are capable of everything.
- + Adam was tempted in heaven and fell, and we inherited the seeds of corruption, therefore the Word of God became incarnate as a second Adam, was tempted in the wilderness (Matthew 4) and was victorious so that we may inherit spiritual victory.
- + Their eyes were opened (3:7) and they acquired the new knowledge of wickedness which mixed with human life and corrupted it, as indicated by the feeling of nakedness or shame which is something alien to the nature of the body.

2. God's Concern for Man (3:8-24)

- + "And they heard the sound of the Lord walking in the garden in the cool of the day" (3:8) ... it is the Word ("sound") of God Who descended to us in the midst of His day of love, breaking on us and shining His light over those sitting in darkness (Matthew 4:16) searching for us: "Where are you?" (3:9). He wants us not to be afraid (3:10) but to be with Him.
- + Man blamed someone else (3:12-13): Adam did not say "the woman tempted me" but "gave me" because he knew that what he did was wrong and was for his love of woman which was external to the Lord's commandment, similar to Solomon worshipping the gods of the women he loved (I Kings 11:4); in spite of that, God gave salvation to both sexes: man and woman.

- + Adam blamed God because He created Eve for him (3:12), instead of blaming himself for succumbing to sin. All this did not stop God's stream of love towards him.
- + The first prophecy dealing with the coming of the Savior is: "And I will put enmity between you (the snake) and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed: He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise His heel" (3:15). The Lord Christ came from a woman without a man's seed.
- + Woman's punishment: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow in your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children: and your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you" (3:16). The punishment turned into a blessing, when the new Eve - the church - gave birth to spiritual children of God through her pains (Galatians 4:19), and she longed for her man - the Lord Christ - Who flooded her with love.
- + Man's punishment (3:17-19): The earth (the body) produced thorns and thistles, as the body lost its holiness and life turned into bitterness. It was said "For dust you are, and to dust you shall return", but regarding the Heavenly Christ we are told "you are a heaven, and to heaven you shall return."
- + God gave them coats of skin not silk, a symbol of the toils of repentance. Perhaps the skin may have come from the sacrifice of a lamb so that God might teach Adam and Eve sacrifice, symbolic of Christ's sacrifice on the cross.
- + In our disobedience we expelled ourselves from paradise, but God gave us back a greater paradise by shedding the Blood of the Incarnate Word of God, for He said "today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). God put a cherub on guard after expelling man, until the One who sits on the cherubim came Himself to carry us on his wounded side and allow us entry into the heavenly paradise.

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Genesis 4

CAIN & ABEL

The story of Cain and Able came after the narrative on the fall of man to show that sin had seeped down to Adam's descendants.

Differences Between Cain and Abel

- 1 - Eve, realizing that her child was a gift from God, called him Cain (4:1). Following his birth, she thought that the coming of the promised Savior was near, and she was expecting Him.
- 2 - Cain was her firstborn by the flesh, but Abel represented her spiritual firstborn, whose sacrifice was acceptable and his life a comfort to God. Cain represented Adam_who destroyed humanity by his own hand, but Abel symbolized the Lord Christ who gave us a spiritual first-birth (Hebrew 12:23).

Paul, the apostle, said: "However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterwards the spiritual" (1 Corinthians 15:46); this is the difference between the first Adam and the second Adam, the Lord Christ. It was repeated with Abraham and his brothers (he was not the firstborn); Ishmael and Isaac; Esau and Jacob; and Zerah and Perez. Zerah fought and beat Perez (his twin) out of the womb in order to become the firstborn (Genesis 38:27-30). Similarly, we, the church of all the nations, won firstborn status from the earthly Israel.

Abel's Offering

Why was it accepted while Cain's was not?

- 1 - Because Abel gave his sacrifice in faith (Hebrew 11:4); he believed in salvation and was awaiting the coming of the promised sacrificial Messiah. With such faith the soul is justified (Romans 5:1) and the heart is purified (Acts 15:9), and we shall overcome the world (1 John 5:14).
- 2 - Cain presented to the Lord fruits of the land that were not from the first harvest, an insincere offering of material things, but Abel gladly gave firstlings from his flock and their fat (4:3-5). He was sincere in his sacrifice. The first gave his offering hesitantly, for it was said "in the process of time."

- 3 - Cain was "a tiller of the land", unlike Noah who was a "farmer" (9:20). The first expression connotes a person who is preoccupied by worldly affairs, whereas the second connotes someone who manages worldly matters with the Spirit of God, so that he may be fruitful as a spiritual farmer.

Abel's Murder

- + As a result of sin (his insincere offering), Cain lost his peace and his face was full of sadness (4:5); in spite of that, God gave him His love and left him hope, warning him against succumbing to anger (4:7).
- + Cain thought that he would find peace by killing Abel, but the voice of Abel still echoed, as did the voice of God asking about his brother Abel so that Cain might ask for forgiveness (4:8-10).
- + God said that the voice of Abel's blood could be heard in heaven, symbolic of the Lord Christ's Blood which intercedes on behalf of those on earth so that He may lead them into heaven.
- + Where is your brother Abel? Still the voice of God continues to call us: Where are our brothers? Do you search for those who died in sin, or do you not care that Jesus's Blood was shed for them?
- + The price of what Cain committed:
 - 1 - "When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you." (4:12) because of the crime, the land (body) acquired a kind of bleakness, thus the body became a burden on the soul.
 - 2 - "I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth" (4:14). The soul became restless and was without peace, in a state of loss and fear. It was said: "Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod on the East of Eden" (4:16); that is to say the soul left the embrace of the Lord, its source of tranquillity, to dwell in Nod which means "the banishment" or "wandering." Nonetheless, the Lord gave him a mark to alleviate his fear (4:15); it was the symbol of promise and reconciliation, namely the sign of cross.

Cain's Children

- + Cain built a city for his children so that they would not be lost ... a human solution for the problem.

- + Lamech stated "For I have killed a man for wounding me, even a young man for hurting me." (4 :23); it was said that Lamech became very old and his sight had deteriorated such that his grandson used to guide him in hunting which he liked; his grandson pointed to a prey and shot an arrow that hit his grandfather Cain, who was inadvertently killed; when the grandson screamed that Cain had been killed, Lamech beat the boy and killed him - believing that if he killed, he deserved to be killed.

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Genesis 5

DEATH

As a result of sin, both spiritual and bodily death entered human life; for no matter how long a man lives, he cannot escape death. In the midst of this dark period lived Enoch who was taken up (translocated) to God because of his purity (5:21-24).

Enoch represents members of the church who will not see death at the coming of our Lord Jesus, but will be elevated with Him over the clouds to enjoy with other members glorious eternal life (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17).

Enoch also symbolizes the evangelic life that conquers death (Matthew 16:18) and is considered a living example of those who are quickly translocated to the Lord, if they reject the love of earthly matters.

Regarding Methuselah, his name means "man of arms"; he had the longest life recorded in the Holy Bible.

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Genesis 6-10

NOAH AND RENEWAL OF THE WORLD

"Noah" or "rest" (also "comfort") came during the renewal of the world through the water of the flood, as with the water of baptism.

Noah's Ark (Genesis 6)

The fifth chapter tells of the bodily death of Adam and his children, but the story of Noah tells of inner spiritual death as a result of corruption and of the need for salvation through the ark.

Marriage became open lust, as the sons of God took for themselves women from the daughters of men - that is the children of Seth, who were supposed to live as God's angels and as sons of the Most High, married the wicked daughters of Cain because of their physical beauty - so the earth was corrupted (6:11) and full of darkness (6:13).

Within this corrupt environment lived Noah who represented what remained of what was of God. God ordered him to build an ark that symbolized the cross which gives salvation or redemption. The flood symbolizes the baptism that is sanctified by the cross. We therefore encounter water, wood (the cross), a dove (the Holy Spirit), and a raven (sin).

The ark also represents the church, the body of the crucified Christ, made of wood from square boards (Septuagint). These boards are the prophets and the apostles, through whom the library of Divine Knowledge was established. Its measurements may be described as: its length is faith, its width is love, and its height is hope.

Its length was 300 cubits. The number 300 represents Christ's flock (Luke 15:4-5) who were sanctified by their belief in the Trinity.

Its width was 50 cubits. The number 50 represents the enjoyment of forgiveness from sin and liberation (Jubilee) by the Holy Spirit (Pentecost), the Spirit of Love.

Its height was 30 cubits. The number 30 reminds us of Joseph who left prison for the palace at the age of 30, as if from earth to heaven; it was said as "our road to heaven."

St. Augustine saw the measurements (300 x 50 x 30) as representing those of the perfect man: the perfect Christ who was incarnated and lay on the cross like an ark in the midst of the currents of the world, to rescue us. The ark is symbolic of the Lord Christ because:

- 1 - Whoever is outside will perish; that is, whoever does not believe in Him will be judged (John 3:18).
- 2 - Whoever believes in Him will be saved, and those in Christ find peace (Romans 5:1).
- 3 - It has an entrance, and Christ is the door; whoever enters through Him will be saved (John 10:9)
- 4 - The ark withstood the storms of judgment as Christ withstands our judgment (Psalms 69:2 & 42:7), and his church passes through difficult times without movement (Psalm 46:5) and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18).

The ark was painted inside and outside with pitch (tar), symbolizing renunciation (the exterior paint) and purity (the interior paint); by them, man is preserved by the Holy Spirit to glorify God.

The side door is the wound in Christ's side as he lay on the cross.

The three levels represent interpretations of the Holy Bible: literal interpretation (the lower), behavioral or moral interpretation (the middle), and spiritual or symbolic interpretation (the top). As we climb to the top level, we find the church containing eight people (1 Peter 3:20, 21) where the number 8 signifies what is beyond time (because the number 7 refers to the days of the week which repeat themselves), as if through spiritual interpretation the believer enjoys a heavenly ecclesiastic life that transcends time. But for those who do not enjoy spiritual biblical thought, "as it was in the days of Noah, ... They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all" (Luke 17:26, 27). Their sins were not eating or drinking, but their involvement in these matters without regard to their spiritual life or to heavenly thought.

The Flood (Genesis 7)

- + God was saddened that people had turned away from Him (6:7), but was pleased with Noah's righteousness (7:1) which was based on faith (Hebrews 11:7) and obedience (7:5), even in the face of mockery from others. God saw his righteousness (7:1) and cared for his salvation through the ark, specifying every last detail about the ark and what it should contain, even the number of unclean animals, in order to establish with him a new covenant (6:18).
- + How did Noah know which animals were clean and which were not clean? He knew this through the oral tradition that preceded the Law.
- + The flood lasted 40 days and nights. The number 40 represents our life on earth; consequently, we must spend all the days of our sojourn on earth in the protection of Jesus Christ, in order to withstand the storms around us, and at the same time enjoy the continuous effect of baptism through perpetual repentance and renewal.
- + The procession moved towards the ark for seven days ... Noah, his wife, his children and their wives, the animals, the caged birds, etc. ... is a vivid picture of the ceaseless activities of the church throughout time to lead every soul into Christ, the Savior of the world, and give renewal to everyone. It never stops working and hoping for the salvation of man, even to his last breath.
- + The spiritual man bears an endless flood in a life of continuous repentance, so that God may break open from his land (body) exceptionally deep fountains (7:11) that wash away and destroy everything, and his heaven (soul) opens up with unending spiritual rain (7:11). Thus the body is reconciled with the soul in order that both may work in the guidance of God's Spirit to crush the deeds of the ancients and enjoy a new life with the Lord.
- + "And the Lord shut him in" (7:16). He had David's key (Revelation 3:7) Who opens for us the doors of paradise by His cross, and closes them for us to be with Him forever, so evil never seeps back into us and He Himself keeps us safe.
- + "And the waters prevailed on the earth" (7:17-24), so the ark was lifted up and moved upon the surface of water. Similarly, the waters of baptism cover and inundate us, submerging everything that is earthly and elevating our lives high so we may ask for the heavenly. The waters also represent the

temptations that push the ark of our lives moving against fierce waves, but they elevate us above the love of the worldly matters to enjoy that which is heavenly.

The Salvation of Noah through the Ark (Genesis 8)

- + The raven represents the worldly man who finds his pleasure in putrid and unclean places, but the spiritual believer never remains in an evil place and cherishes the promise of the new life.
- + The raven represents sin that goes away and does not return if we live in the righteousness of Christ.
- + The dove flew out 3 times: The first time, it symbolizes the soul that is aflame with the Spirit of God and never rests on anything putrid or wicked, but returns to find Christ's hands out and safety in His embrace; the second time, it returns to declare Christ's peace; and the last time, it flies to the new land (eternal life).
- + After 600 years of life, Noah removed the cover of the ark to look for the new world - similarly we pass 6 days to look for the last, eternal Sabbath, heavenly life.

+ The Events of the Flood:

Noah enters the ark and the flood begins on 2/17/ 600 (according to his age)	
Rain falling and flooding	40 days
Water prevails over the earth (150 days, includes 40 days of flood)	110 days
Appearance of the mountain tops	74 days
Sending the raven after 40 days (Genesis 8:6-7)	40 days
Sending the dove the first time after 7 days	7 days
Sending the dove the second time	7 days
Sending the dove the third time	7 days
From sending the dove until removing the cover (1/1/601 his age)	29 days
From removing the cover to leaving (2/7/601 his age, Genesis 8:14)	57 days
Total	<hr/> 371 days

- + Noah began the new life by building an altar to the Lord; so the Lord expressed his satisfaction with humanity (8:20-22).

Renewal of the Covenant (Genesis 9)

- + God blessed Noah as He had blessed Adam and Eve, saying "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth (9:1); it was as if man started over again in a new world. This blessing symbolizes the blessing that was given to the church in Christ, a New Noah Who gives comfort or rest, and by Whom the church became fruitful with children of God.
- + Noah was given a new law, man was permitted to eat animal meat (9:3-4). He was warned against drinking blood [to be apprehensive of brutality, and emphasize the awesome nature of the Blood that was shed for us (Hebrew 9:22 & 1 Peter 1:19)].
- + Since the punishment that took place was through nature, in the form of a flood, the new covenant was given with a sign of nature, the rainbow. Christ our Lord is the bow with which we overcome sin and conquer Satan. God declared that He was pleased with His covenant with man, so He called it "My covenant" (9:9, 11, 15), and "My rainbow" (9:13).
- + God gave his children a sign to remind them of His covenant, and at the same time He wanted to forget their sins.
- + The sign of the covenant appears in between dark clouds, as the cross appears in the midst of our sins to disperse them.

Noah Drinking Wine (Genesis 9)

- + How weak is our nature?! For we fell from grace in the garden of Eden; we fell after expulsion; we fell in the new world (with drunkenness and nakedness); we fell in the land of bondage; we fell in the wilderness (worshipping of the calf); and we fell in Canaan (worshipping the gods of other nations). Truly, we were in need of someone to renew our nature!
- + The descendants of Ham were cursed because he exposed the indecency of others; but he who is discrete with the impropriety of his brethren, will receive blessing and his own improprieties will be covered. (Ham himself was not cursed but rather his descendants, because Ham's son greatly mocked his grandfather).
- + Ham sinned because he exposed his father's indecency, an act that is forbidden by natural law and that of Moses which followed.

- + Noah did sin but God, in his love, transformed the sin into a blessing, symbolic of the Lord Christ who drank from the cup of our sins and was bared on the cross for our sake.
- + Shem, from whose line of descent came Abraham and consequently the Lord Christ, was blessed; Japheth, whose name means "may (God) enlarge or fill", was also blessed such that God opened the dwellings of Shem to receive Japheth, that is, to receive all nations, meaning the church (9:27).

Population of the New World (Genesis 10)

- + The lineage of Noah's children reveals the origins of ancient nations. Professor Kautysch of Haile has stated "It is an absolutely unequaled register of the origin of nations and their development, confirmed by all previous archaeological discoveries."
- + The purpose of this chapter is not to show how nations were established, but to prepare for the establishment of the old nation from which the Lord Christ was to come as a savior for all nations.

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Genesis 11

THE TOWER OF BABEL

- + Some have tried to search for the language that people first used before division into nations. Was it Hebrew, or Chaldean (Syriac)? We can say that the language by which the world lived was love, a language that has no boundaries. With love, man can converse with God, heavenly beings, saints, and all humanity, in joy and happiness. Love is the language of Heaven. This was the gift of the Holy Spirit, on the fiftieth day, which returned all nations and all peoples into one body with Christ as the head.
- + It was stated that Nimrod, who was from Ham's lineage, founded the city of Babel, which was built by man to protect himself from God's anger. Thus, Babel became a symbol of man's arrogance and corruption.

- + God confused their speech so that they could not agree on evil deeds, using His punishment to establish nations and peoples.
- + After the narrative concerning Babel and its tower, the chapter deals with the descendants of Shem (11:10-26) including Abraham, from whose lineage came the Incarnation of the Word of God, who will erect a heavenly city in order to gather His church from all peoples and nations (Revelation 7:9).
- + At this point, the narrative focuses on Abraham and Lot (11:27-33) who lived in Ur of the Chaldeans; no one but Abraham worshipped God.

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THE FIRST PATRIARCHS GENESIS 12-50

Genesis 12-25

GOD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH ABRAHAM

This book does not portray the life of Abraham but rather the interaction between God and Abraham. Abraham's life with the Lord may be divided as follows:

- 1 - Before reaching Canaan: He was in Ur of the Chaldeans. He had married Sarai his half sister who was not from his mother (20:12). He left Ur and went to Haran as God had urged him (11:31), where his father Terah died. At the age of 75, he was called to go into Canaan most probably by way of Damascus.
- 2 - His travels in Canaan: He dwelt in Shechem (12:6) then went to Bethel (12:8) then to the Negeb (12:9). When there was a famine he went to Egypt (12:10-20); he then returned to the South in Palestine (13:1), then to Bethel, where he and Lot parted, and headed for the terebinth trees (oaks) of Mamre in Hebron (13:12-18).
- 3 - His stay by the terebinths of Mamre (between 15 to 20 years): He made a pact with the Amorite kings (14:13). He defeated Chedorlaomer to save Lot (14:1-16). On his way back, Melchizedek blessed him (14:17-24).
- 4 - His stay in the South: Abimelech, the king of Gerar, sent to take Sarah for his wife, but God prevented him (20). God tested Abraham, asking him to offer Isaac as a sacrifice on a mountain in Moriah; he returned with his son to Beersheba (22:1-19).
- 5 - In Hebron: Sarah died and was buried in the cave of Machpelah.
- 6 - Perhaps in the South: He sent to bring a wife for Isaac (24); he took Keturah as his wife. He died when he was 175 years old and was buried in the cave of Machpelah (25:1-9).

Abraham's Call (Genesis 12)

Mankind collectively, even after the flood, regarded God as an adversary, but God in His love searched for a single person worthy to enjoy the call to be a father to His people and through whose descendants all nations would be blessed. He was called Abram ("exalted father") and then his name was changed to Abraham ("father of a multitude").

Abram lived on a wealthy commercial coast full of disgraceful idol worship (Ur of the Chaldeans); it seemed that even his father was a pagan (Joshua 24:2,3). He lived honestly, so God appointed him the rock from which God's chosen people would be carved (Isaiah 5:1-3), and they would be called Abraham's children. God was pleased to be associated with him (the God of Abraham), considering "Abraham's embrace" His heavenly paradise.

This call is for every soul to follow the example of Abraham in:

- 1 - Practical faith (12:4); faith in a God who supports him (Hebrews 11:8, 9) and his family. Faith that he is a stranger in this world (dwelling in tents), awaiting for the heavenly city (Hebrews 11:10).
- 2 - A call not to leave a place but to release one's heart from Babel (the confusion) and to leave behind love of the world and ego, in order to find the divine embrace.
- 3 - A spiritual call for man to abandon his land (bodily desires), his people (old traditions) and his earthly father's home (attachment to worldly matters), so he may rush towards his heavenly Father's home.
- 4 - A call realized through the Holy Spirit by the waters of baptism, when we are extracted from our land (our old human nature), our people (evil habits), and our father's house (the devil) so we can enter our new heavenly Father's house, bearing our new humanity.
- 5 - A call to the land to which God leads us (12:1), the new heaven which God has declared to us, and which we cannot see by our own human efforts.
- 6 - A call that becomes a blessing to others (12:2), by carrying Christ within us so we can introduce Him to others.

Abraham's Faith and his Weakness

Abraham was the father of the fathers; a man with the greatest faith (Hebrews 11:8-10). He had full obedience in his heart, but did not execute it fully in action. He first left Ur of the Chaldeans with his father but the caravan stopped for

approximately 15 years in Haran, probably because Terah's old age slowed their movement so the caravan stopped. Abraham left Ur of the Chaldeans (the light and attractive glitter of the Chaldeans) for Haran, that is to a mountainous area instead of hastening to Canaan which overflowed with milk and honey.

He went to Shechem, which means "shoulder" and was inhabited by Canaanites who had turned a cold shoulder to God. He probably pitched his tent nearby then went to the terebinth tree of Moreh (12:6) which is the place where, for the first time, Abraham made an altar in Canaan. It was also where Jacob buried the foreign gods and the earrings (35:4), and where Joshua set up a great stone to bear witness to God's Words to his people (Joshua 24:26, 27). In the place where an altar is placed (worship) evil is buried, righteousness is preached, and God reveals Himself and His promises (12:7). After this he moved to Bethel (where he built an altar) then to the South (Negeb).

Nevertheless, this great man of faith had his weakness:

- 1 - He was afraid of famine and went down to Egypt (12:10) without consulting God, so he was temporarily deprived of his wife when Pharaoh desired her, and he feared Pharaoh - but God was kind to Abraham even in his weakness.
- 2 - His attachment to his father made him reluctant to hasten towards Canaan, so he stayed in Haran (Acts 7:2-4).

Abram and Lot Separate (Genesis 13)

Abram 's experience (his trip to Egypt) was beneficial; God turned his weakness into strength. Abram became "very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold" (13:2). His wealth did not affect his faith, in contrast to Lot whose heart was in his worldly wealth and possessions. There was strife between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot, but out of love Abram let his nephew choose whatever pleased him. The latter's choice was based on the fertility of the land without regard for the behavior of its inhabitants, thus his righteousness suffered because of them and eventually he lost everything, even his wife; as for Abram who was in the company of the Lord, he received more blessings here as he would be blessed in heaven.

Lot shared with Abram the same trip of faith, but he did not possess the same spirit that communed with God.

Abram enjoyed the promise: "Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you," (13:17). It is a call for a life of meeting ("arise"), continuously being moved by the Spirit of the Lord.

The Battle of Chedorlaomer (Genesis 14)

- + Lot was captured, so Abram rushed with his men to save him from the hands of Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, who was accustomed to demanding for what belonged to others. [Abram's servants numbered 318; the number 300 in Greek begins with "iota" (symbol of Jesus); 18 begins with "eta" (name of the Savior); as if those with him were those who accepted the Lord Jesus our Savior and carried His symbol and name].
- + God rewarded him with an encounter with Melchizedek who symbolized the Lord Christ (Hebrews 7).
 1. His name "Melchizedek" = king of righteousness (Romans 3:24).
 2. His position "king of Salem" = king of peace (John 16:33).
 3. He was both a king and a priest, something that could not exist amongst the Jews, because each of these belonged to a different tribe, but the Lord Christ fulfilled both.
 4. The offering of Melchizedek (bread and wine) was unique, and referred to Christ's Offering.
 5. We do not know anything about his father or mother, or the beginning or the end of his rule - the Lord Christ is without an earthly father nor a divine mother, and He is eternal.
 6. Christ came with the same rank as Melchizedek to declare an end to the priesthood of the tribe of Levi and the beginning of a new priesthood.
 7. Abraham, the progenitor of the Levites who collected tithes, himself offered the tithe (one tenth) to Melchizedek, the symbol of Christ; what if it was the Lord Christ Himself?!
- + According to natural and Mosaic law, it was Abram's right to take his reward, but he refused, declaring his richness was in God, and did not deny his servants their share (14:21-24). This was a living example of spiritual thinking and maturity.

The Divine Covenant (Genesis 15)

Abram became closer to God by refusing human rewards, so the Lord reciprocated by giving him a promise of "exceedingly great reward" (15:1). He became nearer to God through practical love towards his brethren, so God came closer declaring He was his shield (15:1).

Abram's life was a series of encounters with God and the enjoyment of promises. He believed in God who creates from nothing (Romans 4:17-19), and in resurrection from death. He therefore offered his son Isaac as a sacrifice (22); through his faith he attained righteousness (15:6) and gained divine promises.

Abram asked for a sign, not because of doubt, but in order to understand the mysteries of God; so God asked Abraham to split a heifer, a female goat, and a ram, all three years old, and then to sacrifice a turtledove and a young pigeon without splitting them. Vultures came down on the carcasses so Abram had to drive them away. As the sun went down, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and was told that his descendants will be enslaved for four hundred years in a foreign land; then a burning torch passed between the split pieces.

- 1 - The heifer, the female goat, and the ram, refer to the church of all the nations that believed in the Trinity, but is split into the worldly and the spiritual.
- 2 - The birds (Psalms 55:6) which were not split refer to the true undivided church (Acts 4:32) that is headed towards heaven (Philippians 3:20).
- 3 - The predatory birds are the evil thoughts that hover around us but can not take away our sacred offerings.
- 4 - The deep sleep before sunset refers to Christ laying on the cross.

Abraham and Hagar (Genesis 16)

Anxiety impedes faith; it forced Sarai to expedite the divine promise in a human way, thus she suffered pain and sadness from her maidservant and her child (16:4). Instead of repenting she blamed her husband, telling him "my wrong be upon you", and she asked him to solve the problem resulting from her human intervention through a human solution (dismissal of the maidservant).

Hagar was headed towards Egypt (symbolic of the love of the world) and at the spring in the wilderness (baptism) the angel of God appeared to her to redirect her

from the wilderness to the heavenly Canaan, that is to Sarai a symbol of the church.

Ishmael was born when Abram was 86 years old, and Isaac was born approximately 14 years later.

Covenant of Circumcision (Genesis 17)

Sarai used human means to fulfill the divine promise, but God had established with Abram a spiritual covenant. That was the covenant of circumcision, a symbol of baptism, where the old human is cut off in order that we can enjoy becoming a new human in the image of our Creator (Colossians 3:9, 10). In it God offered Himself in a "covenant" (17:4), for He is our peace and fulfillment.

- 1 - Circumcision is the seal of the righteousness of the faith (Romans 4) which is accompanied by internal circumcision, such as of the heart, etc.
- 2 - It is performed on the 8th day after birth, as the number 8 refers to what is beyond time, that is heavenly life.
- 3 - Abram received the promise of a son from Sarai, whose womb had become like stone [Children will be raised to him from stones (Matthew 3:9)].
- 4 - Abram's name was changed to Abraham so he may bear a fatherhood to all, and Sarai ("my princess") was changed to Sarah ("princess") so that both would become large enough in heart for all men. This is the effect of baptism: directing us to unlimited love, and a complete renewal of our personalities.

The Unique Feast (Genesis 18)

As Abraham entered into a covenant with God, a friendship developed between them, as revealed during several occasions; thus Abraham was called "God's friend" (Isaiah 41:8 & James 2:23) and became worthy to receive God and two angels.

- 1 - His proceeding to the door of his tent refers to the release of the soul above bodily desires, to receive God who consecrates both the soul and the body.
- 2 - The terebinths (oaks) of Mamre refer to the cross of the Lord Christ, on which we meditate at noon (in the midst of the pains of this world) because the word Mamre means "revelation" or "vision." Through the cross, our inner

vision is opened in purity so that the Lord finds in us an acceptable banquet (Song of Solomon 2:3).

- 3 - Some Jewish scholars explain that this banquet took place three days after Abraham's circumcision, and that God came to heal him. Circumcision was symbolic of baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity, through which the Lord comes into our hearts which become his heaven (Song of Solomon 4:16).
- 4 - Through our love for giving and hosting, we receive God and his angels (Hebrews 13:2 & Matthew 25:36).
- 5 - Abraham shared with Sarah his work of love (18:6) as he did with his young men (18:7). Thus let our souls hasten to work and share with our bodies (Sarah) and our energy (young men).
- 6 - Abraham hastened in his work of love (18:6), generously offering fresh bread; he himself stood to serve it in spite of his advanced age, a wonderful example of a soul aflame with love!
- 7 - Abraham and Sarah gave a banquet of love to God, so God gave them Isaac ("laughter"), a spiritual pleasure.
- 8 - Abraham enjoyed conversing with God in love, after God declared: "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing?!" (18:17). Abraham conversed with love and politeness "Would you also destroy the righteous with the wicked?!", and "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Be honest with God with all humility.

Burning of Sodom (Genesis 19)

Abraham enjoyed hosting God and the two angels, but Lot received only the two angels who came to rescue him. To some degree Lot must have been materialistic, though he was eager to accommodate the strangers (19:1-3). Thus, we find differences between the two encounters:

- 1 - Abraham hosted God at noontime in the full light of the Bible, but Lot hosted in the evening because of weakness in his faith.
- 2 - Abraham enjoyed having God come to him (18:2), but the two angels met Lot on the road.
- 3 - As soon as Abraham invited them he heard "Do as you have said" (18:5), but Lot had to press upon the angels repeatedly (19:3).

- 4 - Abraham got to know the mystery of the Trinity, as he asked Sarah to prepare "three measures of fine meal."
- 5 - Abraham and his wife were blessed with the promised child Isaac, but Lot was barely saved and lost his wife.
- 6 - The banquet ended with Abraham intervening for others, but Lot had to beg for himself and his daughters to dwell in Zoar [he doubted God's promise and did not go to the mountains (19:19)].
- 7 - Abraham's banquet represented the serene era of Grace, but Lot's banquet represented the era of the Law when the people dissented (exposure of evil).

Lot's faith is not deniable. God permitted him to stay in Sodom and Gomorrah to be a witness against the sinners, but his faith was small so Lot chose Zoar (little). God investigated the problem of Sodom and Gomorrah Himself: "I will go down now and see" (18:21), and did not send brimstone and fire until Lot had entered Zoar (19:23, 24), a sign of his remarkable guardianship.

Lot chose to dwell in the wicked Sodom, thus his daughters absorbed the spirit of wickedness and had two sons from their father, Moab and Ammon, each a leader of deceitful and wicked nations that opposed God's work and His people.

Sarah and Abimelech (Genesis 20)

After about 23 years, Abraham left the terebinths of Mamre and went to Gerar where its king took Sarah to be his wife with pure intentions and all innocence. God gave him an infirmity so that he could not sin with her, and asked him to return her to her husband and plead for his intervention. Sarah represented spiritual wisdom, or the exemplary life, for she was attached to Abraham who possessed a great heart; thus, Pharaoh could not win her over because of the impurity in his heart, and neither could Abimelech who represents the wise men of the world (20:2).

The Birth of Isaac (21)

Isaac was born as a son to fulfill God's promise, not as a natural offspring to Abraham; thus, God brought forth from Sarah's hardened womb a child as a blessing.

Isaac was circumcised on the eighth day as God had commanded (21:4), and there was a great feast on the day he was weaned. He grew after he was weaned, therefore the feast was a sign of happiness for continuous growth (Ephesians 4:13).

The feast affected the hearts of Hagar and Ishmael, and so God told Abraham "Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice" (21:12). He cast out the son born according to the flesh (symbolic of the Jewish church) so that the son born through the promise (symbolic of the church of the New Testament) may inherit (Galatians 4:23-31). Therefore, dismiss the material to accept the spiritual.

Hagar represents the literal Law; she gave her son water from the skins of dead animals so she could only satisfy his thirst for a while, and thus he remained thirsty and feeble. A well of water (the well of the Law and the Prophets) was beside her but she could not see it because she was concerned with the literal and not the spiritual.

On the other hand, we find Abraham making a covenant with Abimelech asking for Beersheba (21:30) which represents the church that is flooded by the Holy Spirit. He planted trees around it, symbolizing the believers who are gathered around the waters of baptism.

The Sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 22)

God tested Abraham to make him even more pure, calling for the sacrifice of Isaac as a representation of the sacrifice of the Lord Christ:

Abraham, undoubtedly, must have been aware that God does not accept human sacrifice, but when he was ordered to sacrifice his son, he obeyed believing in the fulfillment of the promise that "In Isaac your seed shall be called" (21:12) and in the resurrection of Isaac from death (Hebrews 11:12), a characterization of the Lord Christ Who rose from the dead and resurrected us with Him. He offered Isaac on the land of Moriah, where he later made an altar and sacrifices were continuously offered; some say that it was the same place where the Lord Christ was crucified.

Abraham was an obedient man so God gave him Isaac the obedient son, in true love; Isaac surrendered to the sacrifice without resistance.

Abraham displayed his true faith when he proceeded to execute the order without hesitation; he did not ask God how the promise that in Isaac's seed all

nations will be blessed could take place, when He is now asking for Isaac's sacrifice. He moved quickly, not consulting anyone, and awoke very early in the morning so no one would delay him. He had sincere intentions, so he was considered to have sacrificed his son by intention.

Abraham walked for three days to find a place for the burning; the number three refers to the resurrection of Christ. He was therefore aware during the darkness (of his time) of the ability to resurrect his son Isaac in Christ Who rose from the dead, so Abraham was exalted (John 8:56).

Father Kyserios saw that leaving behind of the young men (with the donkey) refers to the failure of the Jews to enter the mystery of sacrifice and the implications of the cross (1 Corinthians 23, 25).

Isaac carried the wood for the burning, just as the Lord Christ carried the wood of the cross (Isaiah 9:5, 6).

They went together to where the sacrifice was to be offered; it was Abraham's sacrifice because he freely offered his son, and at the same time Isaac's sacrifice because he freely offered himself. Similarly, the sacrifice of Christ is a sacrifice where the Father freely offered His Son (Romans 8:32), and the obedient Son sacrificed Himself in love (Galatians 2:20).

Isaac returned alive, and the Lord Christ rose from the dead.

Abraham was given a renewal of the covenant (15-19), enjoying new knowledge of God's dealings with him.

The departure of the young men with Abraham and Isaac to Beersheba, perhaps refers to the return of the Jews to the faith by their acceptance of Christ's sacrifice which they could not before grasp in meaning or achievement (Romans 11).

The Death of Sarah (Genesis 23)

- + Sarah represents the body which accompanies the soul. She accompanied Abraham in his spiritual struggles, shared his faith, and supported him; thus she was not a burden to him. Now Sarah died and her man had to bury her with the hope of resurrection.
- + Sarah lived 127 years full of the fruits of the Lord, so she became a mother to all believers (Isaiah 51:2) and a living example for all holy women (1 Peter 3:6).

- + Abraham expressed his deep love towards his wife, and buried her, not beside her family but in the cave of Machpelah in Canaan, the promised land. In spite of his belief that all the land (Canaan) would be inherited by his descendants, he refused to take the burial site as a free gift from another man (sons of Heth). He waited patiently for the fulfillment of God's promises. This great man of faith displayed graciousness in his dealings with the sons of Heth, thus he bowed to them in gratitude.
- + We find that Abraham did not buy anything except the grave. He bought it with silver, for he did not ask for the earth but for the burial of the body with the hope of resurrection. In other words, he possessed only what could be bought by the words of God (silver is a symbol of God's Words in Psalm 12:6).

Isaac's Marriage (Genesis 24)

Abraham's oldest servant was called upon to bring Rebekah as a wife for Isaac from the city of Nahor in Haran; this symbolizes the work of the Holy Spirit in drawing the nations away from their evil land (idol worship) to make them a bride to the True Isaac.

- + The eldest servant putting his hand under Abraham's thigh to swear probably refers to the oath of the Incarnate from his line.
- + He took with him 10 camels bearing his master's blessings, a symbol of the Holy Spirit Who offers us divine blessings through spiritual commandments (the number 10), enriching us generously and endowing us with glory.
- + The man met Rebekah near the well in the evening, symbolic of the church being blessed by marriage through the waters of baptism and the Word of God throughout the ages.
- + He learned from Abraham the need for God's intervention. We find him praying when he arrives at the well, and after the decision he does not forget to thank God Who made his mission a success (24:52).
- + Rebekah accepted the offer of eternal glory; that is the heavenly marriage: a gold nose ring symbolic of the Divine Words, the two gold bracelets symbolic of the reconciling Holy Works, the silver and gold vases symbolic of heavenly life, and the clothes symbolic of sanctification of the body.
- + Even though Laban and his father felt that this was God's will, they left the girl to decide freely.

- + Rebekah left her father and family to join her groom; similarly the church leaves everything for the sake of her Christ.
- + Isaac went out into the field to wait for his bride, and then led her into his mother Sarah's tent; this is symbolic of the Word of God coming in the flesh into the world to lead us into his mysteries instead of the Jewish community.

The Passing of Abraham (Genesis 25)

Abraham died leaving all of what the Lord had promised him in his son Isaac's heart, so that Isaac would carry on his faith and beliefs. This is how we must deliver, in the spirit of love, custody of the living faith that works through love onto coming generations. We bestow onto them spiritual wealth through love.

After Abraham's death, Isaac dwelled by Beer Lahai Roi (25:11), that is, the well of revelation. Thus, if we pass on the faith in the spirit of love, our children's vision will be opened so that they may live by the spirit of true revelation to see the mysteries of the Kingdom; their vision will be opened to the Word of God and be devoted to It.

After approximately twenty years of marriage to Isaac, Rebekah gave birth to sons: Esau who was firstborn according to the body, and Jacob who usurped firstborn status. The two began feuding even in the womb (25:22); they formed two nations (Edom and Israel) which were always feuding. They represent the struggle between the old human and the new human who is renewed in Christ.

The older one was named Esau ("hairy" or "rough") because of the hair that covered his body, just as he was called Edom ("blood" or "red") because he sold his birthright for a plate of red lentils (25:29-34). As for the younger one, he was named Jacob for he was holding his brother's heel at birth and supplanted him.

Esau fell because of his recklessness and lawlessness (Hebrews 12:16, 17). The defect was not in the lentils but in his reckless heart.

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Genesis 21-27

GODS RELATIONSHIP WITH ISAAC

The narrative has already told us in Chapters 21-25 of God's relationship with Isaac who was the fruit of a divine promise:

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 1 - Isaac the promised son, bringing happiness to his parents | Genesis 21 |
| 2 - Isaac the obedient son, the burning of God's love | Genesis 22 |
| 3 - God chooses Rebekah as a wife to comfort him | Genesis 24 |
| 4 - Isaac begets Esau and Jacob | Genesis 25 |
| 5 - Isaac sojourns in Gerar and searches for wells | Genesis 26 |
| 6 - Jacob usurps the blessings of his father Isaac | Genesis 27 |

Isaac Sojourns in Gerar (Genesis 26)

Isaac faced the same problem that his father experienced. There was a famine in the land, so he consulted God and left for Gerar; thus he was blessed with a renewal of the covenant with God (26:1-6).

Isaac also bore the weakness of his father. Fearing that he might be killed because he was her husband, Isaac claimed that his wife was his sister, but Abimelech reprimanded him politely and ordered that no one should touch either the man or his wife. The Lord sent a pagan king to reproach Isaac in his weakness, and did not hold back His generous blessings to him. The Philistines envied him to the point that Abimelech asked him to leave after he made a pact with him. Even those who envied Isaac testified that God was with him.

The Philistines filled with earth the wells that Abraham's servants had dug in Gerar (26:18) and so Isaac dug them again and also dug new wells. The word "Gerar" meant "walled," thus our True Isaac came to remove the separating wall (Ephesians 2:4), uncover the old wells (that is the wells of the Law and the Prophets) which were filled with the earth of deadly literal interpretation, and dig the heavenly and spiritual wells of the New Testament. The book reveals that the third well dug by Isaac was not disputed, so he called it Rehoboth (open spaces) for it symbolizes the faith in the Trinity that reveals there is room in the Kingdom for all the world, in other words, the divine arms welcome every serious believer.

Isaac Blesses Jacob (Genesis 27)

Jacob usurped firstborn status from his brother Esau, and now he usurps the blessing from his brother with the aid of his mother, who intervenes in a human way to serve God's plan; she knew that the older would serve the younger (25:23). Esau represented the Jewish nation - firstborn in knowing God - but Jacob who symbolized the church of the New Testament took the blessing. The latter offered two young goats representing the coming together of some Jews with the other nations. Rebekah dressed Jacob in Esau's clothes like the church of the New Testament carried the promises and books of the Jews. The flight of Jacob away from Esau symbolizes the persecution of the church.

Isaac did not rebuke them because he was probably aware that they were justified. However, both had to bear the fruit of their deception: Rebekah was saddened by her son's departure, and Jacob suffered repeatedly from the deceptions of his uncle Laban and his children. He who sows deception will reap of the same seed.

Isaac smelled a refreshing aroma on Jacob's clothes. Similarly, the soul that bears the pure aroma of Christ becomes a holy spiritual paradise that pleases the Father. As for Esau, he was denied because of his own carelessness, and he became full of anger .

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Genesis 25-50

GOD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH JACOB

Jacob received the Lord's blessing from his father to live through his struggles with undying hope:

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------------|
| 1 - | Jacob struggles in his mother's womb | Genesis 25 |
| 2 - | Jacob usurps his father's blessings | Genesis 27 |
| 3 - | Jacob enjoys Heaven opening | Genesis 28 |
| 4 - | Jacob struggles at his uncle's home | Genesis 29-30 |
| 5 - | God supports him against his uncle | Genesis 31 |
| 6 - | Jacob wrestles with the angel | Genesis 32 |
| 7 - | Jacob defeats Esau with love | Genesis 33 |
| 8 - | Shechem defiles Dinah, Jacob's daughter | Genesis 34 |

- 9 - Jacob leaves for Bethel
- 10 - Jacob and his beloved son Joseph

Genesis 35
Genesis 37-50

Jacob and Heaven Opening (Genesis 28)

Jacob did not enjoy a view of Heaven opening while he was still enjoying his mother's attention and the easy life, but rather in the midst of his anguish as he struggled to escape during sunset and while feeling endangered.

Instead of using a pillow, he rested his head on a stone (the Lord Christ) so he saw Heaven open.

Isaac represents the Father and Jacob symbolizes the Lord Christ, Who was asked to leave the daughters of the area (the Jewish community) in order to marry from a distant region (the church of the nations).

The ladder is the cross with which we can be elevated to heaven, while unbelievers descend to hell. Let us not concern ourselves with how many steps it has, but with climbing upwards to find our Christ extending His hands to receive us.

The ladder also symbolizes St. Mary through whom the Word of God became flesh.

In this location, Jacob recognized the awesome nature of God's house as the door to Heaven, so he named it Bethel.

Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel (Genesis 29)

The vision evoked a fervor that propelled him towards his uncle Laban in the land of Padan Aram, east of Canaan. When our eyes are opened to Heaven, we strive even harder to receive the spiritual marriage.

Jacob met Rachel at the well as he conversed with shepherds of three flocks:

- 1 - The encounter took place after removal of the covering stone, symbolic of Rachel (the church of the New Testament) entering through the waters of baptism (the well) into the mysteries of union with her Heavenly Groom. As for the three shepherds, they represent the patriarchs, the men of the Law, and the prophets; they were waiting for the Messiah who would remove the stone of darkness.
- 2 - The removal of the stone reminds us of the resurrection of the Messiah, as we are resurrected in Him as a holy bride.

- 3 - He kissed Rachel, raised his voice and wept; this is the kiss of love that worked through the cross.
- 4 - The union was proclaimed: "Surely you are my bone and my flesh", so she took him to her father's house.
- 5 - He openly dwelt in her father's house, symbolic of our union with Him during all the days of our sojourn until He carries us onto His glories.

Jacob asked for Rachel (meaning "ewe") who was sanctified by the blood of the Lamb, because Leah (meaning "ox") had lost her beauty due to the weakness of her inner vision, that is, her spiritual sickness. Jacob struggled for years that seemed to him as if just a few days because of his love for Rachel (29:20). His uncle deceived him just as he had deceived his own father, but God turned this into a blessing. Jacob's marriage to Leah and Rachel symbolizes the Lord Christ embracing a bride from both the Jews and the other nations. The Lord Christ came into the tribe of Judah who was born to Leah (29:35), symbolic of his Jewish line of descent.

The Struggles in Jacob's Life (Genesis 30)

Jacob struggled all his life. His struggles began in the womb with Esau, then with Laban, and now in his family life with the feuding between Leah and Rachel, each wanting to have more children than the other; its significance:

- 1 - Perhaps, each one was expecting to be blessed by having the Savior (the Messiah) come from her line of descent.
- 2 - Leah felt that Jacob was more attached to Rachel, so she thought that having many children would win him over to her. On the other hand, Rachel felt that she was barren, so she asked for children remove her shame. The latter represents the church of the New Testament that was barren and then bore Joseph (meaning "growth"); she would bear unending growth and steadily increasing fruit.

Rachel erred by becoming desperate. In her despair, she rebuked her man saying "Give me children, or else I die!" She also hastened in asking her man to give her children from her maid, accepting the erroneous belief that offering bait (the apple of the devil), brings out a husband's love towards his wife.

THE NAMES OF JACOB'S CHILDREN AND THEIR MEANINGS

Mother	Name	Meaning	Circumstances of the naming
Leah	Reuben	son of a sight	the Lord saw her affliction (29:32)
Leah	Simeon	has heard	the Lord heard she was unloved (29:33)
Leah	Levi	attached to me	her husband will be attached to her because she bore three sons (29:34)
Leah	Judah	praise (acknowledge)	the Lord was praised for He gave her four sons (29:35)
Bilhah	Dan	judge	the Lord judged her case and gave her a son from her maid (30:6)
Bilhah	Naphtali	broad (wrestler)	the Lord gave a (broad) victory by giving her maid another son (30:8)
Zilpah	Gad	vigorous (fortune)	Leah struggled for her many children (30:11)
Zilpah	Asher	happy (enviable)	Leah became enviable (30:13)
Leah	Issachar	reward	God gave me my reward [my hire] (30:18)
Leah	Zebulun	dwelling	now my husband will dwell with me as I gave him six sons (30:21)
Rachel	Joseph	will add	the Lord added to me another son (30:24)
Rachel	Benjamin	son of the right hand	During labor his mother called him "Ben-Oni" ("son of my sorrow") because of the severity of the pain (35:18), but Jacob called him "Benjamin" ... he was the son of pain and sorrow but would enjoy being on the right hand of God.

Thus began the descent of Jacob with the firstborn by the flesh, Reuben, who proclaims that God saw our humiliation so He gave us fruit, and continued to give us until we were blessed with Benjamin; that is to say, through pain we attain the right hand of God and become worthy to share in eternal glory.

After Rachel bore him Joseph, and Leah was fulfilled by her many children, Jacob asked to leave Laban for a three day journey; he was not blessed without the blessing of the resurrection (3 days). Let us also leave the world to be in close

association with the Lord Who rose from the dead, so that we may gain the wealth and blessing of the Lord.

The Return to Canaan (Genesis 31)

Jacob was away for a long time for he spent about 20 years with his uncle; however, his heart was always in Canaan, so he had prepared his two wives and children for the return. The caravan moved under Jacob's command (symbolic of Christ) with Rachel (the church of the New Testament) and Leah (the church of the Old Testament) towards Canaan (Heaven). Laban (symbolic of Satan), who liked to prevent anyone from going to heaven, was enraged; but Jacob was committed to pulling Rachel and Leah away from their old father, Satan, and depart with them to the heavenly Father (to the heavenly Canaan). Rachel and Leah then realized how their old father had treated them as strangers, robbed them of their rights, and sold them. Let us escape with them under the guidance of the New Jacob!

Rachel stole her fathers household idols, symbolizing the church of the New Testament destroying idol worship.

Laban followed Jacob for seven days; in other words, the enemy (Satan) continues to fight us every day of our alienation, but God defends us: "Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad" (31:24), for it is His battle!

Laban rebukes Jacob, highlighting Jacob's honesty in serving him for twenty years, and providing us a vivid example for the true believer. The course of events concludes with a covenant between them, and Laban returns to Haran while Jacob returns to the promised land; each went to where his heart was set.

Preparation to Meet Esau (Genesis 32)

As Jacob left for Canaan he was troubled because of his brother Esau, but God prepared his heart with what Laban had said, namely that God appeared to him declaring that Jacob is not to be harmed, and now the encounter with God's angels so he said "This is the camp of God" (32:2). They appeared as an army so that he would be courageous and not afraid. The place was called "Mahanaim" meaning two camps. Jacob and his caravan represented one army and the angels represented another unseen army.

Jacob sent his brother messengers in humility to implore him (32:3-8), without consulting God. When he felt lost and was not sure how to proceed, he prayed to God (32:9-12) in a personal dialogue reminding God of His promises, kindness, and beneficence towards him. He said that he had crossed the Jordan with his staff and now had become two armies [companies] (32:10). This is symbolic of the Lord Christ who gained His bride by the staff of the cross and His munificent love. In humility he sent gifts to his brother to appease his anger (32:13-23).

An angel of the Lord appeared to him, so he wrestled with him; Jacob held on to the angel forcing the blessing (32:24-32). Jacob said "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved" (32:30). He was told "you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed" (32:28). The angel of Lord appeared defeated, but Jacob who appeared victorious pleaded to receive the blessing. This incident symbolizes the Lord Christ coming down into our world as if in weakness and bearing our shame as if defeated, while He grants victory and blessing through the cross. The dislocation of Jacob's hip refers to him sharing in the pains of the Lord Christ Who was to be incarnated in Jacob's line of descent.

The angel of God gave a new name, "Israel", to his new struggling people.

Jacob's Encounter with Esau (Genesis 33)

In spite of God's promises to protect him, Jacob was still afraid of his brother. He therefore divided those with him according to his love for them: the two maids with their children, then Leah and her children, and finally Rachel and Joseph. He walked in front of them bowing down in front of his brother seven times to disperse his brother's anger. How weak is man's nature?! God, on His part, prepared Esau's heart by arousing feelings of brotherly love and an eagerness to meet his brother, acquaint himself with Jacob's sons, and host him without the need for the offered gifts.

Jacob was similar to the Lord Christ, leading the caravan as an honest shepherd with a spirit of sacrifice on behalf of everyone.

Jacob left for Succoth which is east of the Jordan and about one mile south of the Jabbok river; and from there he went to Shalem which borders the land of Shechem, the son of Hamor. The first thing he did was to build an altar (32:20), and he called it "El Elohe Israel" for he came to be within God's embrace during the sacred offering.

Dinah and the Killing of the People of Shechem (Genesis 34)

When Dinah, Leah's daughter, went out to see the daughters of the land, Shechem, Hamor's son, defiled her; he humiliated her and asked to take her as his wife, thinking that he could have Dinah because of his land and wealth. However, Simeon and Levi deceitfully pretended to accept on the condition that Hamor and all the men in his city circumcise themselves; then, they took up their swords and killed (all the men while they were in pain), and plundered - together with their brothers - the city and took the women and children captive. This saddened Jacob's heart.

Jacob blamed his two deceitful sons (34:30), not realizing that they had learned the deception from him. He reaped what he had sown.

Dinah and Sarah were completely different. Both represent "the body", but Sarah who was in the tent (18:9, 10) symbolizes the body that is tempered by a wisdom which supports the soul and brings forth happiness (Isaac). In contrast, Dinah symbolizes the body whose eyes are left uncontrolled - going to watch the daughters of the land - so it loses its sanctity, ruins the tranquillity of the soul, wastes human energy, and causes destruction to many.

Jacob 's Departure to Bethel (Genesis 35)

Jacob lived all his days in Padan Aram dreaming of the day he would return to Bethel, where he had seen the heavenly ladder, felt the awe of the house of God, and made a solemn vow to God. God now fulfills Jacob's wishes and calls for him ascend to Bethel (35:1-15).

- 1 - Jacob asked that all the foreign gods be cast away, such as the idols that Rachel had stolen, the gods that were with his slaves before the divine covenant, and the statues plundered from Shechem. The house of God can not be declared holy while the congregation is not.
- 2 - He asked them to change their garments, symbolic of sanctification of the body.
- 3 - He hid their earrings which were probably thought to bring about good fortune and ward off the evil eye. He hid them under the terebinth as a symbol of burying all evil thought beneath the wood of the cross.

- 4 - The city of "Bethel" had been called "Luz" which symbolized the Word of God. The house of God is founded on His Living Word Who draws us into His divine embrace.
- 5 - The adjoining nations could not pursue him (35:5) for they felt the terror of God in his life.
- 6 - As the caravan departed Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died; thus Bethel unites those who struggle and those who repose in victory.
- 7 - God appeared there to give promises and strength (35:9-15).
- 8- Jacob consecrated the first house of God by setting a pillar (a symbol of Christ), and pouring on it wine (an offering of joy) and oil (symbolic of anointing).

Near Bethel Rachel gave birth to "Ben-Oni" ("son of my sorrow") whom Jacob called "Benjamin"; she then died and was buried there. Why did God permitted her death during labor?

- 1 - To emphasize that birth and death go together.
- 2 - Rachel represents the church of the nations, giving birth to God's children and departing to live in His heaven forever.

Reuben, the firstborn in the flesh, dared to sleep with Bilhah, Rachel's maid; so he lost the blessing of the firstborn because of this disgrace. He defiled his father's bed (49:4).

Isaac died at the age of 180 years, old and having lived a full life (35:29).

The Descendants of Esau (Genesis 36)

After Isaac dies and his sons Esau and Jacob bury him, the Holy Bible gives us the family trees of Esau's descendants, princes from his line, descendants of Sier, and the kings of Edom - so that the believer, by knowing the origin of every peoples or nation, can understand the events that follow thereafter and span the different eras. These peoples entered the faith when the old Israel rejected its Savior.

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Genesis 37-50

GOD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH JOSEPH

Joseph and the Lord Christ

In our encounters with the forefathers (patriarchs) Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, we felt that they were older fathers who enjoyed personal and deep relationships with God for the sake of all humanity. As we now discuss Joseph, we envision a young man who symbolically resembles the Lord Christ in many ways:

- 1 - Joseph was the very beloved son of his father (37:3); the Lord Christ is the Only Beloved Son of the Father (Matthew 3:17).
- 2 - His father made him a tunic of many colors (37:3); the Lord Christ put on His church which clung to Him like a colored garment of many gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4, 5).
- 3 - Joseph was hated by his brothers, and they could not speak peaceably to him (37:4); the Lord Christ opened His Heart in love only to be wounded in the house of his friends without cause (Zechariah 13:6).
- 4 - His dreams of glory were revealed so his brothers envied him (37:11); in His baptism and transfiguration, Heaven revealed Christ's glory so the Jews envied Him.
- 5 - Joseph 's father kept the matter in mind (37:11); as for the Lord Christ, His mother kept all these things and pondered them in her heart (Luke 2:19).
- 6 - His father sent him to Shechem (shoulder) to check on the safety of his brothers and their sheep, but they met his love with hatred; the Father sent His Son to those who had wandered away (the inhabitants of Shechem) to save humanity, but they crucified Him.
- 7 - When they saw him, they conspired to censure him severely (37:18-20); the Jews censured the Lord.
- 8 - Joseph found his brothers in Dothan (37:17), which means "revolt"; the Lord Christ came and found the Jews in a revolt against Him.
- 9 - They stripped the colored tunic from Joseph (37:23); Christ was bared on the cross.
- 10 - Joseph was thrown in the pit (37:24); Christ descended to Hades to save us (1 Peter 3:19).

- 11 - Joseph was sold for silver (37:28); Judah betrayed Christ for silver (Matthew 26:15).
- 12 - When they threw Joseph into the pit, they sat to eat (37:25); when the Lord was crucified, the Jews returned to eat the old Passover.
- 13 - Joseph's brothers tried to deceive their father by staining his tunic with a goat's blood to indicate that a wild beast had killed him; Christ's church (His colored tunic) was stained by the Blessed Blood. (Note that Jacob had deceived his father, so his children deceived him).
- 14 - The favorite son was sold as a slave in Egypt; the One and Only Begotten Son came as a slave (Philippians 2:7) into Egypt to save us, sharing in the bondage of the slaves to shed their disgrace.
- 15 - Joseph left his garment in the hand of the Egyptian woman (39:11-38); the Lord left his garment in the tomb.
- 16 - Joseph was sent to prison as a result of the lust in Potiphar's wife; the Lord came down to us and suffered because of our sins. There Joseph met the king's two attendants (40); Christ was raised on the cross between two thieves (Matthew 27:38). The first attendant - the head butler - enjoyed the glory of returning to the palace to serve wine, whereas the other servant perished; the thief on the right was worthy of the Blood (wine) and received paradise as a palace whereas the thief on the left perished.
The first saw a vine with three branches that had sprouted, and the second saw three baskets on his head. The number three represented the resurrection; thus the first enjoyed resurrection as a sacrament for his life, while the second perished for not accepting it practically, so he had the aroma of death to death (2 Corinthians 2:14-16).
On Pharaoh's birthday, the two dreams with their interpretations came true. It was a new birthday in which the new human (head butler) is blessed with life in Christ, while the old human (head baker) dies in arrogance as he put the bread in the upper basket.
- 17 - Joseph shaving and changing the prison clothing to meet with Pharaoh (41:9-16) refers to Christ's entry into His glory after removing our shame and renewing our nature (the prison clothing).
- 18 - Joseph unveiled the symbols in the dreams; the Lord Christ came to reveal and fulfill what was found in the Law and the Prophets in the form of symbols

and hidden meanings, and to lead us in our lives and establish spiritual stores of grain within us (Romans 10:4).

- 19 - Pharaoh felt that Joseph was the only wise man that could manage his affairs with sound judgment; when we encounter the Lord Jesus, we feel our need for Him to take charge of our inner life with His divine heavenly wisdom. We give him our palace (heart) to satisfy the hunger of all our people (sensitivities, thoughts, feelings, abilities, etc.).
- 20 - Joseph asked for observers to manage the land under his supervision, symbolizing the sanctification of our senses so they may be under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- 21 - He ordered the gathering of food for storage during the plentiful years, so that the land would not be affected by famine (41:36); similarly, when we accept Christ's work in us, famine can not afflict our soul, and we are able to withstand times of trouble without perishing.
- 22 - Joseph who was rejected by his own people, became like a king in Egypt. The Lord Christ who was rejected by his own is King over our hearts. He left prison, for our sake and in our name, to liberate us from bondage; He received the ring, as a sign of our filial relationship with Him, and accepted the fine garments (white linen) as a sign of our righteousness in Him. The gold chain represents association in heavenly glory, and the royal chariot symbolizes enjoyment of heavenly life so we may become kings.
- 23 - Pharaoh called Joseph "Zaphnath-Paaneah" which means food of life. The Lord Christ was called the Bread of Life (John 6:35); whoever eats of It is never hungry forever.
- 24 - Pharaoh married him to Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah who was priest of On, symbolic of the union of Lord Christ with His bride who came from the nations and whose father was pagan.
- 25 - Joseph had two sons from Asenath: Manasseh and Ephraim; thus whoever associates with the Lord Christ forgets (Manasseh = forgetful) life's worries and his father's old house, and brings forth plentiful fruit (Ephraim = fruitful) in the Lord. A passive position is not enough, which is only forgetting evil, whereas an active attitude is blessed with fruit.
- 26 - The arrival of Joseph's brothers into Egypt asking him for grain (Genesis 42) represents the Jews returning at the end of the world to the church of the nations (Egypt) to meet Christ Who satiates souls.

- 27 - Joseph recognized his brothers (Genesis 42) but they did not recognize him. The Lord of Glory came knowing us by our names, but his own people could not recognize Him; "if they knew the Lord of Glory, would not have crucified Him."
- 28 - Joseph asking about his younger brother (42:20) reveals the Loving Heart of the Lord Christ Which asks the church to be concerned about His brothers who are younger spiritually and materially (Matthew 25:40).
- 29 - Joseph's advice to his brothers: "Do this and live ... and you shall not die" (42:18-20); this is the call of the Lord Christ for us to enjoy the new life so death does not conquer us (1 Corinthians 15:26), and the power of His resurrection (Romans 6:5).
- 30 - Joseph's three meetings with his brothers symbolize our union with Christ in His pain, burial, and resurrection:
- (a) In the first meeting, he appeared to be harsh with them (42:7), but he turned away from them and wept (42:24), symbolic of man's inability to comprehend the mystery of God's love at the moment of crucifixion and suffering. This took place outside Joseph's house, as the Lord was crucified outside the camp (Jerusalem) so let us go to Him and bear His reproach (Hebrew 13:13).
 - (b) The second meeting, (43:15-34) took place in Joseph's house and symbolizes the Savior descending from the tomb into Hades to meet those who had died with hope, and to carry them as the prize of His love to Paradise (His house). Joseph went to his bed to weep, and then said "Serve the bread." As we meet Him in His entombment, we are washed by His Pure Blood, and are given His resurrected Body as bread for eternal life. In this encounter, Joseph had his own table, the Egyptians had their own table, and the Hebrews also had theirs; this symbolizes the union of the church of the nations and the church of the Jews with Christ at the head. Joseph seated his brothers according to their age so they were astonished (43:33); for He knows our secrets and our names (John 10:3), and He prepares for our salvation providing a place for every one of us (John 14:2), but "one star differs from another star in glory" (1 Corinthians 15:41). He gave them from his shares indicating that we will enjoy His inheritance and sharing in glory. As for giving Benjamin five fold, this represents sanctification of the five senses in the Lord.
- For this happy meeting to take place in Joseph's house (the church is the house of God) they had to: wash their feet with water (the blessings of

baptism and repentance), offer food to their donkeys (sanctification of the body and its satiety through a holy life), and lastly sit at the table (enjoyment of the Eucharistic sacrifice).

- (c) At the third meeting, Joseph made himself known (Genesis 45), a reference to Christ declaring Himself as the giver of life and the conqueror of death. This took place after all the strangers had left, for no one can be blessed by the resurrection of the Lord except for believers who eagerly await the coming life. The crucifixion took place openly, but the resurrection was only perceived by the faithful.

In this meeting he said "I am Joseph" as if he was the Lord Christ Who rose from the death, saying to Saul: "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9:5). Just as Joseph's brothers were frightened, so Saul of Tarsus was terrified and confused.

He reproached them kindly but firmly, leaving them some hope "But now do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life" (45:5). Humanity sold Him cheaply for the price of a slave, so He was crucified to give us, His slaves, eternal life.

They were terrified because they never expected to meet Joseph; they had cast Him away to die mercilessly, but He arose to give them life.

He called to them "Please come near to me" (45:4); for when we have sinned, we are far away, but through Christ's resurrection we are absolved and drawn near as members of the household of God (Ephesians 2:13-19).

He told them "He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt" (45:8); when the Lord Christ arose, He declared His fatherhood to all nations, His lordship over their inner lives through love, and His rule (control) over their bodies (the land of Egypt) through His Holy Spirit.

In this meeting he gave them clothing, symbolic of the sanctification of our bodies in Christ. Joseph gave Benjamin 300 pieces of silver, representing the words of the Gospel (silver) that concentrate on the cross (the number 300 in Greek is represented by the letter "T"), and five garments symbolizing the consecration of the five senses. He also gave them food for the road (45:23) like the Lord gave us His Body as food to support us and keep us in Him

- until we meet with Him face to face in His unspoken glory (1 Corinthians 2:9).
- 31 - When Jacob heard about Joseph his spirit was revived (45:27); the word "revived" in Latin came from "enlightened". It is as if, without our True Joseph, we are not blessed with light (John 1:4) and our spirit is quenched (1 Thessalonians 5:19). Let us be eager, like Jacob, to conclude our lives by seeing our Living Joseph (Christ) Who rose from the dead.
 - 32 - God promised Jacob that Joseph will put his hand on Jacob's eyes (46:4), meaning that the dearest relative closed the eyes of the departed. This bears the following symbolism: the Lord Christ - our True Joseph - puts His Hands on our eyes, which are spiritually blind, so that we may be blessed with spiritual vision to see Heaven open.
 - 33 - The sons of Israel went to Joseph, just as the church goes to its Christ. They carried their father (soul), their children (fruits of the spirit), their women (sanctity of the body), their livestock (talents), and their goods (energy) - all these work together in one spirit as a holy caravan.
 - 34 - Joseph presented five of his brothers to meet with Pharaoh (Genesis 47), symbolic of the Lord Christ taking us into His glory by sanctifying our five senses.
 - 35 - Joseph gave every house which they owned in the land of Egypt (in Goshen) according to the number of the children (47:12), as if he was the Lord Christ Who makes us kings so we may possess control over our bodies and exercise our power according to the fruit of the spirit (children).
 - 36 - Jacob bowing in front of the head of his bed [staff] (47:31 & Hebrews 11:21) symbolizes the church bowing to the cross of the Lord Christ.

Joseph the Son and the Slave (Genesis 37)

Review the comparison between the Lord Christ and Joseph (items 1-14).

Observe how the son became a slave in order to save those around him (Pharaoh, the Egyptians, and Jacob and his family). Thus, the Lord descended into our bondage to elevate us as children of God, and so that we may enjoy the heavenly plan to enslave ourselves to gain many others (1 Corinthians 9:19).

Potiphar means "related to Ra (god of the sun)." He was an officer and his title had to do with his position as a captain of the guard for Pharaoh (37:36 & 39:1, 20).

Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38)

Since Christ came into Judah's line of descent, the Holy Bible has to reveal to us the generations of Judah's offspring (38:1-5) so we can follow the genealogy of the Lord.

Judah was wrong in marrying the Canaanite woman, so his children came bearing the fruit of wickedness. When Er, his firstborn, died Judah asked his son Onan to marry his brother's wife to raise up an heir to his dead brother, but Onan used an unnatural way in his marital relations so Tamar (the widow) would not conceive; in all likelihood children of Er would not have inherited from Judah. Because of his selfishness, he refused to sire children for his dead brother, so God "killed him" (38:10).

Judah's third son, Shelah, grew up, but Judah did not give him to Tamar as a husband to produce heirs to his dead brother. She had to dress as a harlot in order for Judah to sleep with her (without him knowing her identity) and impregnate her, and afterwards she tricked him into giving her his signet ring and staff. When Judah judged that she should be burned (38:24), she showed him his own signet ring and staff so he confessed that "She has been more righteous than I" (38:26).

Tamar had wished, like every Hebrew woman, that the Savior, would come from her line. When she did not conceive from her man Er, and Onan corrupted their marital relationship so that she would not conceive, and Judah refused to give her Shelah, she endangered herself and accepted the role of a harlot to sleep with an old man (her father-in-law). She therefore enjoyed the blessing of being a grandmother to the Lord Christ; her name is mentioned in His genealogy (Matthew 1:3), whereas the names of the female Hebrew saints were not, such as Sarah, Rachel, etc..

Tamar was a symbol of all the nations which were barren and childless, an abandoned and despised widow without anyone to support or take care of her. She was not attached to the first authority, Mosaic law, but to the second authority, the "New Judah", meaning the Lord Christ Who came from the tribe of Judah.

Tamar covered her face with a veil, in the same way as the women who consecrated themselves to harlotry on behalf of pagan gods such as Ashtoreth for the only purpose of collecting goats as offerings to the altar. Thus, the word for

harlot in Hebrew derives from "qedesa", meaning "saint", or "consecrated to the gods."

Tamar sat at the entrance to Enaim [NRSV], (meaning "two springs") so she was blessed by both the Old and the New Testaments.

Perez usurped firstborn status from Zerah in the womb (38:27-30), a reference to the church of the nations grasping firstborn rights from the Jewish community. The Lord Christ came in Perez's line of descent so we would not depend on the righteousness of our grandfathers, and in order to break the thorn of arrogance and declare that He is a Savior to all nations.

Joseph and Potiphar's Wife (Genesis 39)

When Joseph was pampered in his father's house, we are not told that God blessed the household for his sake; but, when he suffered as a slave, God blessed Potiphar's household for his sake (39:5). He was like a bottle of perfume; when broken, its fragrance spreads.

Potiphar's wife did not love Joseph but wanted him only to satisfy her desires. Even after she caused his imprisonment, he must have truly loved her because he did not expose her or seek revenge, in spite of the high position he had attained. When he reproved her, he spoke with humility to steer her away from evil.

Joseph left her his garment, which was all he had acquired from her house, in order to courageously flee from evil and follow his God even naked (Matthew 24:17, 18). The woman could only grasp his garment; similarly, the tomb could not hold the Lord, for only His garment remained.

Joseph excelled in the practice of love:

- 1 - He offered his love freely to his brothers who had envied him, and devotedly went out to help them (Genesis 37).
- 2 - He loved his colleagues and superiors in his work, and the Lord blessed Potiphar's house (39:5).
- 3 - He loved the criminals and found favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison (39:21).

He went from the practice of love to owning the land (Genesis 41) and handing out love to everyone. That is how practical love (pain in love) became the road to glory.

Joseph in Prison (Genesis 40)

In prison, Joseph was as if he was still in his home, serving everyone like a member of his family. For a discussion of the servants, review the previous comparison between Joseph and the Lord Christ (item 16). They also represent the wise and the foolish virgins (Matthew 25:1-13).

Joseph Glorified (Genesis 41)

Joseph asked the chief butler to remember to tell Pharaoh about him, without any reference to Potiphar's wife. He forgot his unique human power until God spoke to Pharaoh through his two dreams (the cows and the heads of grain).

If the Nile symbolizes the waters of baptism through which the Lord propels His wealthy church (the seven cows, fine looking and fat), then the enemy of good (Satan) is like a sea monster that follows her wishing to kill her (the seven cows, ugly and gaunt). Likewise for heads of grain, for the false christ blows from the east like a hot wind that burns holy plants, attacking Christ's church in order to destroy it until the end of time (Matthew 24:22-25).

As for the meeting between Joseph with Pharaoh, review the comparison between the Lord Christ and Joseph (items 17-25).

Joseph's Brothers Go to Egypt (Genesis 42)

When Joseph's brothers deprived themselves of his company by selling him, all of Canaan lost its blessing and entered into a famine. Egypt was blessed because of Joseph, and became the source of sustenance for the hungry; thus, his brothers had to go into Egypt and encountered him.

Jacob asked his sons to go into Egypt to buy wheat (42:1-2). The Bible here deliberately uses the name "Jacob" and not "Israel", even though he had already received the divine promise and given the name Israel. In all likelihood, when the family was deprived of Joseph it lost its character as "Israel", God's people. He asked them to "go down to" Egypt, or to descend from their arrogance in order to be blessed by the church whose members came from the (other) nations. He said "Why do you look at one another?!" They should instead look to the source of sustenance. Those who went down numbered ten; they could not meet Joseph with

an open heart (the number ten represents the Law), until they brought Benjamin (symbolic of attachment to the Word of the Bible Who grants the privilege to be at God's Right Hand).

Joseph's brothers wronged both God and Joseph, and as the years passed by they forgot their sin and thought that all their deeds would be overlooked. When the plentiful years came, they were happy with the worldly blessings. God's love allowed them to forget their sin, and then He permitted seven dry years of famine and caused them to be thrown into prison until they repented. God used every means for their salvation: kindness as well as austerity, and abundant worldly blessings as well as famine.

In spite of his yearning for them (42:24), Joseph was unsympathetic to them until they brought him his brother Benjamin. He ordered that they be imprisoned for three days so they might remember the innocent blood that they had shed unjustly; he then reassured them: "for I fear God" (42:18-20).

Simeon being taken and bound before them means that they had lost their hearing (Simeon = hearing) to the voice of God and His will, while Reuben (son of a sight) rebuking them represents insightful, spiritual vision propelling the soul to repentance.

They returned to Canaan without Simeon, recounting what had happened and referring to Joseph as "the lord of the land", confirming what Joseph had seen in his dreams and what they could not bear to hear before.

The Second Meeting with Joseph (Genesis 43)

Judah had to offer himself to his father as surety for the return of Benjamin, in order for the father to allow them to take Benjamin down to Egypt. The Lord Christ, who came through Judah's tribe, similarly offered Himself to God as surety for the redemption of his younger brothers.

Joseph had said: "You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you" (43:3). It was as if our Father telling us that we will not see His face unless we appear in front of Him in Jesus Christ [our eldest brother] (Ephesians 1:4).

Jacob's children returned to Joseph carrying gifts representing the fruits of the soul and the silver, which they found in their sacs, symbolizing the Words of God (Psalm 12:6) and meaning the enjoyment of understanding the symbols, prophecies, and commandments which uncover the Messiah and His Work.

Review the discussion concerning this meeting in the comparison between the Lord Christ and Joseph (item 30b).

May we grieve and weep like Joseph for those who harm us without having malice towards them.

Joseph's Silver Cup (Genesis 44)

Joseph ordered that the cup be placed in Benjamin's sack. This was perhaps to make Benjamin come back for he could not bear his absence, and possibly to test his brothers to see if they would leave Benjamin behind or would hold on to him.

If the cup represents the pains of the Lord Christ, then whoever wants to be at the right hand of God (a Benjamin) should be willing to accept suffering in his or her life.

Judah offered himself for the redemption of his brother Benjamin.

Joseph Declares Himself (Genesis 45)

Review the discussion on the third meeting in the comparison between the Lord Christ and Joseph (item 30c).

Joseph excelled in not viewing the past through feeble human vision but with insightful, spiritual vision that directed him into action: "Hasten and go up to my father ..." (45:9), and then he asked them to tell his father "come down to me, do not tarry." It was not a time for talk but for work to rescue from famine and death, and to enjoy the glory (45:13).

He fulfilled for them a page from the past, giving them many gifts, blessings, and food, and advised them: "See that you do not become troubled along the way" (45:24). It is not the time to blame one another, but to hasten in returning.

Jacob did not become preoccupied with the carts and the blessings that came in them, but instead his soul was revived when he heard about Joseph: "I will go and see him before I die" (45:28). This is how we should be absorbed in our Lord Jesus, being eager to go to see Him, and not be preoccupied with His gifts to us.

Jacob Comes Down to Egypt (Genesis 46)

When Jacob consulted the Lord, the answer was "Do not fear to go down to Egypt; for I will make of you a great nation there. I will go down with you into Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes" (46:3, 4).

This was the last time that God appeared to Jacob. He did not appear to anyone else until he chose Moses to raise up His people for the exodus from Egypt. Here the summons to go down is like going into a spiritual battle, through which the believer becomes a great nation as he grows in his sufferings with the Lord; the Lord will declare His support during the battle, and the believer will emerge victorious.

Jacob was given these promises in Beersheba after he offered sacrifices to the Lord; in other words, through the waters of baptism (the well), we find worthiness for the redeeming sacrifice of Christ.

Jacob (symbolic of the church) sent his son Judah (symbolic of the Lord Christ who came into his tribe) to Joseph to point out the way to Goshen. Thus, the church cannot be without her Judah Who guides her in a foreign land, because He Himself is the way (John 14:6).

When Israel, who represents the church, met Joseph, who represents the Lord Christ, Israel fell on his neck, kissed him, and wept saying: "Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you are still alive" (46:30). The church similarly breaks down in love in front of her Christ Who rose from dead, longing for death in order to live with Him.

Joseph chose for his father and brothers the land of Goshen for four reasons: (1) it was closest to Canaan (Northeast Egypt) so they would long for the return, (2) to prevent conflicts with the Egyptians who despised shepherds, (3) to keep them from being affected by Egyptian idol worship as much as possible, and (4) because Goshen means "to be near" or "related", so he wanted their hearts to be near God during their physical alienation.

Jacob Meets Pharaoh (Genesis 47)

Joseph's strength of character was highlighted by the fact that he was not ashamed of his family being shepherds, a disgraceful profession in the eyes of the Egyptians.

On the contrary, he proudly went out in his chariot to meet them, and asked them to be honest with Pharaoh.

His brothers spoke to Pharaoh as sojourners (47:4); this is the true feeling of every believer, that he is a stranger (in this world). This is why Jacob told Pharaoh "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life" (47:9). He spent all his life as a sojourner suffering every day. When famine came and persisted, the Egyptians came to Joseph volunteering to be Pharaoh's servants (47:20) in return for some wheat; they represent the wicked who voluntarily ask to be servants to Satan in return for a piece of bread or satisfaction of bodily desires. As for the Hebrews, they fell into bondage as a result of ruthlessness (Exodus 1:13); the enemy (Satan) also wants to enslave believers by his ruthlessness and deception.

Jacob asked Joseph to swear (47:29-31) after Joseph put his hand under Jacob's thigh, meaning by Christ who would come through his descendants, that he would be buried in his father's tomb, the cave of Machpelah in Canaan; as a result, he would bind the hearts of his children to the promised land. Israel bowed himself on the head of the bed (47:31) or "the head of his staff" (Septuagint); by this, he represents the church in a foreign land, bowing in front of Christ's cross and being joyful because He promised to take her to the heavenly Canaan.

Jacob Blesses Ephraim and Manasseh (Genesis 48)

As his last hours neared, those for which Israel had endured troubles throughout all his life, Joseph hastened to bring his two sons so that his father could bless them. Jacob blessed the younger one with his right hand and the older one with his left hand, deviating from tradition. He then declared the following:

- 1 - God appeared to him in Luz (Bethel) to confirm that the blessing he gives is not from himself but from the Lord. The church does not offer anything of her own, but only through the work of the Spirit of God in her and with the blessing of her Groom Who dwells in her.
- 2 - He declared that both Ephraim and Manasseh belonged to him, and so they became two tribes; thus, Joseph effectively received two shares of what his each of brothers were given. Each one of his brothers became only one tribe.
- 3 - He asked Joseph not to forget his mother Rachel who was buried in Bethlehem (48:7), so that he would tie Joseph's heart to Canaan and neither

his Egyptian wife, his wealth, his authority, nor his children would make him forget the promised land.

- 4 - By putting his hands in an unusual way (the right on the younger while the left on the older), they formed a cross during the blessing, so that the two sons would be blessed by the sacrifice of the cross. Favoring the younger over the older symbolizes us enjoying firstborn rights through the Second Adam not the first Adam, the firstborn of the Spirit not of the flesh. We mentioned that Manasseh represents the negative side (forgetting love of the world) and Ephraim, meaning "plentiful fruit" represents the positive side of spiritual life. The first represents the era of the Law, while the second represents the era of Grace, meaning that together they represent the church of both eras.

Jacob Blesses His Sons (Genesis 49)

With the ending of Jacob's life on earth, the era of the patriarchs came to a close. They were individuals who carried the church in their offspring, and with the end of their era began another with the church as tribes. The latter was to continue until the coming of the Messiah (from the tribe of Judah) to proclaim salvation for all nations.

Jacob spent 17 years in Egypt in silence and tranquillity, looking forward to his sons becoming tribes and forming the church of the Old Testament whose purpose was to prepare for the New Testament. He therefore spoke prophetically about every tribe:

- 1 - Reuben (49:3, 4): Jacob saw in him a person who was confident in being firstborn in the flesh, but in his arrogance defiled his father's bed (35:22); consequently, Judah spiritually took from him his firstborn rights. Reuben was defeated by bodily desire like water that boils and then cools again; he lost his precedence. He represents the Jews who lost their firstborn rights by refusing to believe in Christ; they attacked the Father's bed, meaning His bride, the church, to undermine her.
- 2 - Simeon and Levi (49:5-7): From the beginning, the scribes conspired with the Levites to kill the Lord Christ. The two brothers in their union did not honor God but killed and hamstrung the Savior, Who came as a man offering Himself in sacrifice (the ox) for their redemption. Literally, they quietly

conspired to kill every male in Shechem's clan (Genesis 34) by deception and troubled their father.

- 3 - Judah (49:8-12): He received the lion's share of the blessings, for Jacob saw in him the Lord Christ coming into his tribe. Thus it is Christ Who is deserving of praise and worship; with the cross, He would put His hands on the neck of his enemy (the devil) to destroy him, declaring His Kingdom, and believers would bow down before Him. He was the lion who lay on the cross, sleeping of His own freewill and bearing the power of resurrection. Thus Jacob said "who shall rouse him?!"

Judah's tribe would be the tribe of the kings (49:10) until Shiloh (the Giver of Peace) comes and brings together peoples from all nations into His Kingdom. He would call all the nations and the Jews (symbolized by the donkey and the colt, according to St. Hippolytus) to His vine, and purify His church with His Blood: "He washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes" (49:11).

His eyes shine by the Word of truth (49:12) and His teeth are whiter than milk for from His mouth comes a food that sustains children (milk) and adults.

- 4 - Zebulun (49:13): His tribe dwelt west of the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee, representing the union of Israel with the nations (many waters), or a call for other nations to enjoy Israel's spiritual promises.
- 5 - Issachar (49:14, 15): His tribe engaged in farming not politics, and was subjected to paying tribute. He was likened to the donkey who carries the burdens of others, bowing his shoulder in his love for the tired and enslaving himself to free others. When Saul of Tarsus experienced the world as an excursion (rich), he bowed his shoulders to serve humanity with sacrifice and love (2 Corinthians 12:15, 16), enslaving himself to gain many others (1 Corinthians 9:19).
- 6 - Dan (49:16-18): He was Jacob's first son from a maid (30:1-6). His descendants were known for shrewdness (Deuteronomy 33:22); his name meant "to judge." St. Irenaeus believed that the antichrist would come from Dan's descendants. Thus Judah represents Christ, while Dan represents the antichrist.
- 7 - Gad (49:19): Dad's tribe, together with the descendants of Reuben and Manasseh, chose the land east of the Jordan (Numbers 32), so they were

- most susceptible to being killed (2 Kings 10:32-33) and known for their might in battle (1 Chronicles 12:8-14), representing souls who struggle.
- 8 - Asher (49:20: Jacob prophesied that he would receive many blessings, and Moses prophesied that he would dip his foot in oil (Deuteronomy 33:24). He actually was blessed with fertile land, rich in the olive trees that produced the oil for anointing kings - symbolic of the inundation of blessings into the lives of those who struggle spiritually.
 - 9 - Naphtali (49:21): He was likened to a female deer who rushes into the open wilderness without hindrance, moving swiftly and lightly wherever she is. This freedom was not an opportunity for corruption and evil, but to establish good relations with the other tribes (Deuteronomy 33:23).
 - 10 - Joseph (49:22-34): He was twice called a branch of a tree that was fruitful, for the number two symbolizes the love that makes two become one. With love, our branches grow towards heaven over every wall or barrier, meeting every resistance and trepidation with an open heart. His father called for him to receive every worldly and eternal blessing. Jacob wanted Joseph to receive even more than what he himself had: spiritual blessings (blessings of heaven), bodily blessings (blessings of the deep beneath), and every power and talent (breasts and womb); thus, he would be worthy in the eyes of the Lord to intercede for his brothers.
 - 11 - Benjamin (49:27): He was known for bravery (Judges 20:12-16) and likened to a "ravenous wolf", a probable reference to Saul, the Benjaminite king who wanted to kill king David. This is also a representation of Saul of Tarsus who was driven in the beginning of his life to hunt down the church like prey, but he became a believer and her humble servant, offering himself as nourishment (spiritual food, Septuagint) to her by submitting to the work of Ananias (Acts 9:17).

The Burial of Jacob (Genesis 50)

Jacob died a stranger in Egypt after having asked to be buried in his fathers' grave in Canaan. It was as if he realized that the seed of God's people had taken root in Egypt and would grow and bloom, but that the heart of the people must be tied to the promised land. His concern about burial affirmed his respect for the body, which will rise to share with the soul the eternal inheritance. He specifically asked

to be buried with his fathers to affirm the need for each generation to commit itself to accepting the faith handed down to the saints, so that all may live as one spirit. The procession went up from Egypt into Canaan, ascending not descending to symbolize our journey towards heaven. The burial ritual was completed in three steps:

- 1 - The procession moved as "a very great gathering (company, KJV)" (50:9) with Joseph at the lead. This is the procession of the church with Christ at the head, moving towards the heavenly Canaan (2 Corinthians 2:14). It brought together Pharaoh's servants, the elders of his house, and the households of Joseph, his brothers and their father. The procession of the universal church brings together men of faith from both the nations and the Jews, and from servants and noblemen; they are a very great company that knows neither laxity nor self-indulgence but struggles spiritually against the powers of evil (Ephesians 6).
- 2 - When crossing the Jordan, in "the threshing floor of Atad", the Canaanites remarked "it is a grievous mourning" (50:11, 12); thus, baptism is associated with tears of repentance every day of our sojourn (the mourning continued for seven days).
- 3 - We are not told of tears or weeping in Canaan, for God wipes every ear from their eyes (Revelation 21:4). Jacob was placed in Abraham's cave so he could rest in his father's embrace.

Joseph succeeded and became great, not by attaining his position as the second after Pharaoh, but because of his large heart that was full of love. He did not reciprocate evil with evil, but fulfilled the evangelical commandment of love in telling his brothers "you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive" (50:20). With his love, Joseph understood the mysteries of God and His plan for salvation which turns evil into good.

Perhaps the return of his repentant brothers to him represents the Jews returning to believe in Christ at the end of time.

Finally, before his death, Joseph prophesied that they would leave Egypt to go to the promised land (50:24), and asked them to carry up his bones with them. The latter represents his desire to be with his people, if only in bones, when they leave the land of bondage.

Just as the book of Genesis began with Creation, God bringing forth life out of nothing, it ends with the death, the death of Joseph and his burial in a box in Egypt. In other words, man entered the shroud (eras) of embalming, mummification, pyramid building, the arts, and civilizations - all things that cannot give him back life after his soul was corrupted.

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The Travels of Abraham and Important Events

- 1 - From Ur of Chaldeans (his call) to Haran (11:31): his father dies.
- 2 - From Haran to Shechem (12:1-6): God appears; he builds an altar to God.
- 3 - Shechem to Bethel (12:8).
- 4 - From Bethel to Egypt (12:9-11): he denies that Sarah was his wife.
- 5 - From Egypt to Bethel (13:1-4).
- 6 - To Haran then to Damascus (14): he saves Lot from slavery.
- 7 - To Hebron (14-18): Melchizedek; Ishmael is born; he pleads for Sodom.
- 8 - To Gerar (20-21): Isaac is born.
- 9 - To Beersheba (21:27-34): he hastens for offering Isaac as a sacrifice.
- 10 - To Moriah Mountain (22:1-14): he offers Isaac.
- 11 - To Beersheba (22:19).
- 12 - To Hebron (25:8-10): he dies and is buried.

Questions for Personal and Group Studies

- 1 - Why did the Holy Bible begin with Creation? Compare what is described in the Bible and what modern science tells us. What is the significance of the chapters on the origin of the ancient peoples? What is meant by the word "day" in the Creation? (Genesis 1).
- 2 - How did Christ come as another Adam, as a Savior to him and his descendants, and as a solution to their problems? (Genesis 4 & Romans 5).
- 3 - Abel's blood cried out like a loud prayer. Compare it with the silent prayer of Hannah. (Genesis 4 & 1 Samuel 2).
- 4 - Compare the ark and the church of the New Testament. (Genesis 6-9 & 1 Peter 3:20).
- 5 - With the flood, humanity began anew. What are the meanings of renewal in baptism and perpetual daily renewal?
- 6 - In Babel, division and confusion took place (Genesis 11). Was this corrected by the Pentecost (Acts 2)? Does this contradict human efforts like church councils, scientific meetings, and the United Nations?
- 7 - What are the views of Christianity towards worldly possessions and family ties? (Genesis 12).
- 8 - Is Lot to be blamed for leaving Abraham?
- 9 - What does it mean that the priesthood of Christ was with the rank of Melchizedek? (Genesis 14 & Psalms 110:4 & Hebrews 5).
- 10 - What were God's promises to Abraham that are fulfilled in us as his children? (Genesis 15).
- 11 - How does baptism assure spiritual circumcision? (Genesis 17 & Galatians 6).
- 12 - What does the conversation between God and his friend Abraham reveal? (Genesis 18 & Isaiah 41:8 & John 15:15).
- 13 - Lot's heart was attached to having the biggest share. How did this affect his personal and family life, and the community (Ammon and Moab)? (Genesis 19).
- 14 - Compare between the burning of Isaac and the crucifixion of Christ? (Genesis 22 & Fraction of Maundy Thursday).
- 15 - How did Abraham, the father of the fathers, highlight his concern for family life for himself and his descendants afterwards (Genesis 23 & 24).
- 16 - What is meaning of the wells dug by Isaac? (Genesis 26).

- 17 - Jacob's life represents a struggle that was supported by God's blessings. How? (Genesis 25-33).
- 18 - The deception of Isaac resulted in deception. Explain.
- 19 - Why did God permit the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to have more than one wife?
- 20 - Leah and Rachel represent the churches of the Old and New Testaments. Explain.
- 21 - Dinah represents the unholy soul and the body which is spiritually corrupt. What was the result? (Genesis 34).
- 22 - Jacob continually longed to return back to Bethel. Why? (Genesis 28 & 35).
- 23 - Cite examples of how Joseph symbolized the Lord Christ? (Genesis 37-50).
- 24 - Joseph did not get his strength of character and success from his circumstances, but rather from his inner depths. Explain (Genesis 38).
- 25 - How did Tamar represent the church of all the nations? (Genesis 38).
- 26 - What is the difference between desires and love? (Genesis 39)
- 27 - How does the believer view prisoners? (Genesis 40 & Hebrew 13:3).
- 28.- Did glory ruin Joseph's big heart? (Genesis 42-45).
- 29 - What was the wisdom in Jacob coming down into the land of Egypt? (Genesis 46).
- 30 - Explain the blessings which Jacob prophesied for his children. (Genesis 48-49).
- 31 - Can we practice the faith of Abraham, the struggles of Jacob, the obedience of Isaac, and Joseph's love?
- 32 - Write an essay about human and family relations, in view of the faithful life of the early patriarchs.
- 33 - Why were Abraham, Isaac and Jacob called patriarchs? What was the purpose of portraying their lives in the Holy Bible?

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