

IT WAS ALL THERE

From the Beginning

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PREMISE

The entire book of Genesis may be looked at as a logically organized prophetic sketch of God's dealings with man on earth. After an introductory summary of the general principles of the plan, God seems to be detailing four ways in which He would relate with fallen man through the accounts of four individuals whose life histories occupy the majority of the book.

SECTION I--Introduction

The first section of the book of Genesis is an introduction to the principles of God's dealings with man. It consists of chapters one through nine, which establish man's responsibility to God as his creator, his fall into sin, God's mercy in spite of his sin, and the fact that God will finally cleanse this sin-cursed earth of unrepentant sinners by catastrophic judgment on the unrepentant.

Chapter 1

Chapter one narrates the creation of the universe. It establishes God's rights as creator of everything. God seems to take special delight in reciting that He made man in His own image. We were obviously created for a special relationship with Him. Exodus 20:11 confirms that the time-frame of the account was meant to be taken literally. He made it all in six days. God rested the seventh day (2:1-3), and hallowed it as a probable hint that His prophetic schedule provides a rest from six thousand years of toil and turmoil that sin brought on the world through the millennial kingdom of Christ.

Chapter 2

Chapter two places man in the garden of Eden before his fall into sin. The river that divided four ways after passing through the garden may suggest four ways in which God would dispense His blessings to a sinful world after the fall, conceivably righteousness through faith, redemption by grace, sanctification, and restoration through repentance (I Cor 1:30). The last of these rivers, the Euphrates, will finally dry up to allow the two-hundred million strong army of the East to participate in the end times scenario when God's call to repentance is exhausted (Rev 9:13-17 & 16:12).

Man's creation was special in that after he was made from the dust of the earth, God breathed the breath of life into his nostrils. We move and live and have our being in God (Acts 17:28). Adam was given dominion over the animal creation (1:28), and made responsible for the garden of Eden. The search for a suitable companion for Adam intimates that the purpose of creation was to fulfill Christ's yearning for appropriate companionship through man, who was made in His own image. As Adam's bride was made from a rib taken from a wound in his side, so Christ would obtain the church as His bride through a wound in His side some four thousand years later.

Chapter 3

Chapter three describes man's fall into sin. The Devil (Rev 12:9) beguiled Eve into transgressing God's command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil by intimating that God was withholding something good from them. The man and his wife immediately recognized their nakedness, and set about to correct it by sewing fig leaves together to cover themselves. But they hid when they heard the Lord God in the garden. Man's own conscience tells him that he can not make himself morally fit for the presence of God simply by turning over new leaves.

The man was sentenced to death by the sweat of his brow in a thorn-cursed earth; the woman by tears in childbirth and subjection to her husband. Their sinful nature would be passed along to bring death to their offspring (Rom 5:12). The serpent would grovel on his belly, bruising the heel of the seed of the woman that was prophesied to bruise his head. Christ wore the thorns of the cursed earth on His brow, sweat great drops of blood, and subjected Himself to His Father's will in bruising the serpent's head some four thousand years later. He suffered the brunt of the curse of sin in bringing many sons to glory (Heb. 2:10) at Calvary.

Though Adam and Eve could not adequately cover their own shame, the Lord Himself covered them with coats made from the skins of animal which had to die for that purpose. Blood would have to be shed to make sinners presentable to God, eventually the blood of God's only begotten Son.

Chapter 4

Chapter four established the only way by which a righteous God could accept the approaches of sinful men before the death of Christ. Abel was accepted on the basis of the sacrifice of an animal's life. God could righteously accept such substitutional offerings of faith in anticipation of the time when Christ would die on the cross as the real substitute for sinners (Rom 3:23-26). Cain's offering of the fruit of a cursed earth was rejected because it did not involve a sacrificial death that acknowledged the justice of the sentence of death imposed on him for sin. Cain demonstrated his lack of repentance by killing his brother, and the sinful nature of man was confirmed as the first man born on earth became a murderer.

When Cain complained that his punishment for murdering his brother was too great, God graciously put His mark of protection on him. God's mercy extends even to the unrepentant.

Chapter 5

Chapter five logs the genealogy of man from Adam to Noah's flood. All but one entry before Noah ends in death. Enoch alone was snatched away into the presence of God without dying, just as the church is to be caught up to heaven to be with the Lord before God's tribulation judgment for sin falls on this earth.

Chapters 6-9

Chapters six through nine describe the cleansing of an earth full of violence and corruption by the waters of the judgment of God. The story of Noah's flood completes the introductory section of the Book of Genesis with the prophetic assertion that God is not going to allow sin to taint His creation forever.

Although the rainbow guarantees that God will never judge the earth by water again, the flood is a grim warning of the judgment of God that is coming on this rebellious earth. Noah and his family

were carried safely through the waters of death, just as a faithful remnant will survive the coming tribulation period by availing themselves of God's salvation by faith in Him.

This introductory section ends with an account of Noah's failure. This righteous man became intoxicated and exposed his own shame. The incident revealed the character of his son, Ham, whose offspring were cursed because of the way he despised his father. Nimrod, the first recorded son of Ham, is more or less considered to be the father of idolatry.

SECTION II--Righteousness by Faith

The second section of Genesis consists of chapters ten through twenty. It revolves around Abraham's life. God gave those who did not care to consider Him over to their own unrighteousness (Rom. 1:28), and concentrated His attentions on Abraham and his descendants, who would respond to His grace by faith.

Abraham believed in the Lord, and it was counted to him for righteousness (Gen.15:6). This principle of God imputing righteousness on the basis of faith in Him may well correspond to the first branch of the river that dispensed God's blessings on this cursed earth "after Eden." It flowed where there was gold, the standard symbol of divine righteousness in the Scriptures. The bdellium of that watershed probably represents manna (Num. 11:7), a symbol of the Bread of Life that was to come down from heaven (John 6:48-51).

Abraham's life of faith has inspired the faithful of every generation. He is called the "Father of all those who believe" (Rom. 4:11). As the patriarch of Judeo-Christianity, he is the literal father of the Jews and the spiritual father of the Christians (Rom. 4:11-12).

This section of Genesis prophetically embraces the Jews from the call of Abraham to the time of Christ. They were justified by faith in God, but temporarily placed under the Mosaic Law as represented by the son of Abraham's bondwoman (Gal. 4:21-31), to demonstrate that they could not justify themselves by their own efforts at righteousness. Man is a hopeless sinner apart from the grace of God!

Chapters 10 & 11

Chapter ten introduces this section of Genesis with the repopulation of the earth after the flood. Chapter eleven shows that the re-peopled earth was just as rebellious as it was before the flood. Mankind united at Nimrod's city of Babel to reach up to heaven by their own efforts. Their rebellious attitude will culminate in the end times as a wicked religious system called Babylon the Great, whose sins will reach up to heaven (Rev. 17 & 18). God put a stop to their godless project by confusing man's ability to converse together. This resulted in separate nations with different languages and nationalistic goals.

Chapter 12

Chapter twelve begins with the call of Abraham from the idolatry around him to a land which God would show him. God promised to make him a great and divinely blessed nation through which all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Abraham believed God, and his faith was counted to Him as righteousness (Rom. 4:3). But true faith is operational. He was justified by responding in faith to God's

call (Jas. 2:20-24). Abraham's altars testify that he truly worshiped God.

Abraham's faith was not perfect. He drifted away from the land of promise when things got difficult. He did not build any altars outside of the position of faith. It was only the grace of God that delivered Sarah from the royal harem of Egypt after Abraham's callous lie about her real identity. The man of God, was sent away in disgrace, justly reprovved by the world.

Chapter 13

In chapter thirteen Abraham returned to the promised land a wealthy man. His walk of faith was renewed as he called on the name of the Lord at the altars which he had made at the first. But faith is an individual relationship with God. The area would not support both Abraham and Lot. Although the whole land was promised to Abraham, when strife broke out between their herdsmen he generously gave Lot his choice of which way to go. Lot pitched his tent towards the well-watered plains of Sodom, while Abraham took the portion the Lord would reserve for him. The Lord urged him to contemplate all the land that was his, encouraging him to walk throughout its length and width--to lay hold on all the blessings of faith. He built an altar virtually everywhere he went in the land of promise.

Chapter 14

Chapter fourteen shows that the life of faith is not an easy one. Besides periodic famines, Abraham had real battles to fight. His nephew, Lot, had not remained as intended in the well watered plains near Sodom. He was actually living in Sodom when that wicked city was carried into captivity. Abraham's own trained army delivered his righteous nephew from bondage. The patriarch refused to take so much as a shoestring of the booty from the wicked king of Sodom, as a public declaration that all his blessings came from God.

The victory was celebrated over bread and wine provided by Melchizedek, priest of God Most High, to whom Abraham gave a tithe of all he had. Can there be much doubt that this was the same Priest that celebrates a similar feast with Christians today?

Chapter 15

Chapter fifteen reveals that Abraham's seed would not receive the blessings of faith immediately. God presented Himself as Abraham's shield and exceedingly great reward. But Abraham had been promised an offspring as copious as the sand of the seashore, and as yet he had no child. Despite God's reassurances, Abraham insisted on knowing how God would fulfill this promise. He drove off the vultures that would snatch away his sacrifice of communion with the Lord until he fell into a horror-stricken trance. The Lord divulged that Abraham's offspring would be held in bondage without the promised land for four hundred years. Then, after four generations of affliction, they would return with great riches to inherit the blessings of faith that Abraham now possessed. Although this would be fulfilled literally in Egypt, this may be a prophetic introduction to the dreadful bondage that the Law would impose on the Children of Israel until their Messiah came to deliver them from it by the new covenant

Chapter 16

Chapter sixteen introduces Hagar, the bondwoman. When it appeared impossible to have a child by Sarah, Abraham fathered a child through her slave, who was probably obtained while they were out of the Lord's will in Egypt. But trying to obtain the blessings of God on any grounds other than faith simply puts man under the bondage of the Law.

Hagar fled from Sarah's wrath at her own haughtiness, but God found her in the wilderness and sent her back to her mistress. She still had a prophetic role to fulfill. The Scriptures leave no doubt that the bondwoman and her child typified the children of Abraham under the bondage that the Law would impose on them until Christ delivered them from it (Gal.4:21-25).

Chapter 17

Chapter seventeen introduces circumcision. It was originally given to Abraham and his descendants as their way of acknowledging God's covenant with them, and eventually became symbolic of Israel's obligation to obey the law of Moses. Circumcision was the removal of the flesh of the people of God (Col. 2:11-15). It corresponds to Christian baptism, where the recipient symbolically reckons himself dead to sin and risen with Christ (Rom. 6:1-14). It declares that the Lord expects His people to keep themselves holy.

Some of the early Jewish Christians insisted that circumcision was necessary for the salvation of the Gentile members of the church. But the apostles and elders at Jerusalem found this to be false. We are saved by grace (Acts 2:10-11), and our circumcision is an attitude of the heart (Rom. 2:28-29). Like Isaac, we are the children of the free woman (Gal. 4:26-31).

Although God would fulfill His covenant with Abraham through an actual child for Sarah, He still promised to bless Ishmael for Abraham's sake. All the prophetic promises made to Israel under the bondage of the Law will eventually be fulfilled to Israel, and should not be confused with the blessings of the church. Israel's blessings are earthly, centered around Zion. God has provided something better for us. (Heb. 11:39-40). Our blessings are more heavenly (Eph.1:3).

Chapter 18

Chapter eighteen finally revealed when God would answer Abraham's walk of faith. Although their previous lack of faith caused them a lot of sorrow, their temporary unbelief did not alter God plans at all. The son of the free woman was to arrive in about a year. Sarah laughed at the natural impossibility of having a child after the change of life, but the Lord rebuked her unbelief. With God, all things are possible.

Abraham's communion with the Lord became the occasion for a further revelation of His plans. He was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah for their wickedness. The man of faith interceded for the condemned cities for the sake of the righteous people dwelling there. The Lord agreed to spare the cities if as many as ten righteous people could be found in them. It may well be the presence of the Lord's people, despite their failures, that saves the world from judgment.

Chapter 19

Chapter nineteen details the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Their homosexuality is demonstrated as proof of their extreme wickedness. Although four people were delivered, Lot appears to have been the only just person there (II Pet. 2:6-10). His reluctance to leave such a sinful

environment is no less amazing than many Christians' fascination with this ungodly world today.

Lot's wife became a pillar of salt as she looked wistfully back towards Sodom. This monument to judgment for despising God's deliverance may suggest that salt symbolizes a testimony to impending judgment in the Scriptures.

Though sent to the mountains, Lot insisted on seeking safety in Zoar ("Little"). But what he preferred to label as a little city was really Bela ("Destruction" Gen. 14:2). He soon learned to fear even the smallest citadel of godless man, and moved on to the mountains. The incestuous behavior of his daughters there likely resulted from attitudes developed from their upbringing in Sodom.

Chapter 20

Chapter twenty recounts the second time Abraham lied about the identity of his wife. He selfishly jeopardized Sarah to insure his own safety, but God stepped in and warned the King of Gerar not to touch her. At Abimelech's rebuke, Abraham excused his lie as technically true; but the incident was another humbling blight on his testimony of righteousness. Could these references to Abraham's denial of his spouse reflect God's disappointment at the chronic tendency of the Children of Israel to deny Him by turning to idolatry?

SECTION III--Redemption through Grace

The third section of the Book of Genesis consists of chapters twenty-one through twenty-six. It revolves around the life of Isaac, the son of the free woman. Prophetically, it embraces the "Church" period of salvation by grace, stretching from the crucifixion to the rapture. Abraham generally typifies God the Father while Isaac typifies His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, in most of this section of Genesis.

The principle of salvation by grace is based on the principle of redemption, which may correspond to the second branch of the river that flowed "after Eden." The redemptive sacrifice of Christ vindicates God's righteousness in remitting the sins of the pre-crucifixion saints on the principle of faith (Rom. 3:21-26).

Chapter 21

Chapter twenty-one introduces Isaac. Abraham's life of faith in the promises of God is finally vindicated. His delight in the son of the promise is reflected in the name, "Laughter." The great feast that Abraham made on the day that Isaac was weaned may symbolize God the Father's complete delight in His only begotten Son (Mat. 3:17 &tc.).

When Ishmael scoffed, presumably at Isaac's status as son of the free woman, Sarah demanded that Abraham cast out the bondwoman and her son. Though this was naturally difficult for Abraham to do, God confirmed its propriety. The bondage of the Law and the principle of justification by grace are mutually exclusive of each other. The son of the bondwoman could not be heir with the son of the free woman. God would bless Ishmael for Abraham's sake, but it was in Isaac that Abraham's seed was to be called. The Law, which was to be given four hundred and thirty years later, could never disannul the covenant made with Abraham's rightful seed (Gal. 3:15-18).

Chapter 22

Chapter twenty-two symbolizes the Crucifixion. Abraham was called to give his only son, whom he loved, as a sacrifice on Mount Moriah. The Patriarch split the wood for the offering and went three days journey to the place God directed him to. The three days may correspond to the three years of Christ's public ministry in fellowship with the Father. They went alone to the site, where Abraham prepared the altar and bound his son to it. God stopped the ordeal just before Abraham plunged the knife in to kill his son. A ram caught in a thicket by its horns became the substitute for Isaac, but no substitute was provided for Christ on Calvary. If He had come down from the cross, our redemption would not have been accomplished. Abraham statement, "In the mount of the Lord it shall be provided," confirms the prophetic significance of the incident. As the reader empathizes with Abraham's emotions, he enters vividly into the very heart of God concerning Calvary.

Chapter 23

Chapter twenty-three reminds us of the heavenly character of the people of God after the crucifixion. Though wealthy Abraham dwelt by faith in the promised land with Isaac and Jacob, he did not actually own any of it (Acts 7:4-6). When Sarah died, he had to purchase a parcel of ground for a family burial plot. They dwelt in tents as living witnesses that they were pilgrims and strangers seeking a heavenly city which God would prepare for them (Heb. 11:8-16). This contrasts with Babel (Babylon,) the earthly city established by Nimrod (Gen. 10:8-10), whose culmination will be utterly destroyed (Rev. 17-19:4) before the New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven (Rev. 21:9-27).

Chapter 24

Chapter twenty-four corresponds to God the Father sending the Holy Spirit into the world to find a suitable bride for His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. It parallels Luke 14:15-24. When it was determined that Rebekah was to be the bride, the servant gave her clothes fit for the daughter of Abraham. So the church is provided with everything that pertains to godliness as the bride of Christ (II Pet. 1:3). Rebekah chose to start right out on the journey to meet Isaac without delay, as the church should eagerly anticipate that meeting with our divine bridegroom instead of clinging to the things of this world. And Isaac rushed to meet her as the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout to meet us in the air (I Thes. 4:16, 17).

Chapter 25

Chapter twenty-five finishes the narration of Abraham's life and describes the condition of Isaac's bride. Isaac pled with the Lord for her fruitfulness, and she became pregnant with twins. Troubled by the struggle within her, she inquired of the Lord, "If all is well, why am I like this?" This corresponds to the Christian dilemma, "What I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do." (Rom. 7:15-16). The Lord told Rebekah that the problem was that two nations were within her womb, and two peoples would be separated from her body. The two people within us as Christians are our old sinful natures that we received from Adam by natural birth and our new natures that we received from Christ when we were born again. They struggle for control of our attitudes and behavior (Gal. 1:17). As Rebekah was told that the elder was to serve the younger, so we are to see to it that our new natures prevail over our old natures in the struggle going on within us.

Chapter 26

Chapter twenty-six views Isaac as the faltering church. He lied about his wife just as his father had (The church was no more faithful to it's divine spouse than the Children of Israel were). As a second generation man of God, he had to re-dig the wells that Abraham had dug. Each generation must excavate the truths of the Word of God for itself if those truths are to remain precious to them. And despite the opposition of the world, their persistence will lead them into an even wider appreciation of the truth. Christian parents should be aware of how their lives impact the lives of their children.

This section closes the same way the last one did, with the world recognizing that the blessings of God were with His people.

SECTION IV—Sanctification

The fourth section of the Book of Genesis is composed of chapters twenty-seven through thirty-six. It revolves around the life of Jacob. When the Jews rejected Christ, they were cut off from the root of God's blessing because of their unbelief, and the Gentiles were grafted in. But after the true church is caught up to heaven, the unbelieving Gentiles that never valued the blessings of faith will be removed from the root in preparation for the Children of Israel to be grafted back into their natural position again (Rom. 11:13-24). Prophetically, this section of Genesis details God's preservation of the children of Israel throughout their estrangement from Him because of their rejection of the Messiah during the church age, and on through Daniel's seventieth week of "Tribulation" (Dan. 9:24-27) while they are being restored to favor with God.

The Law was given as a tutor to bring us to Christ (Gal. 3:23-25). Although Christ is the end of the law for those who believe (Rom.10:4), the gospel did not profit the Jews because it was not mixed with faith (Heb. 4:2). There is a sense in which the unbelieving children of Israel are still under the Law because they keep themselves under it's bondage by rejecting the gospel.

Jacob's life exhibits how God sanctifies His people to repent of their own self will and learn to love the will of God. This process of sanctification may well correspond to the third branch of the river that flowed "after Eden."

Chapter 27

Chapter twenty-seven switches the focus of Genesis to the life of Jacob. Esau had despised his birthright, selling it to Jacob for a single meal (Chapter 25:29-34). This corresponds to the way the Gentiles have largely despised the grace of God dispensed to them in during the church period.

Although God had already declared that Jacob would prevail over his brother, Jacob entered into a plot with his mother to steal Esau's blessing. They were blatantly dishonest, attempting to obtain Esau's blessing by fraud rather than by faith. From the early church period, the Jews have rejected the concept that God would ever bless the Gentiles except through themselves (Acts 22:21-22, &tc.).

Chapter 28

Chapter twenty-eight narrates Jacob's flight from the promised land to avoid Esau's revenge. God met him at Bethel, forlornly crouched alone in the dangers of the wilderness night with only a stone for a pillow. Though his exile was the result of his own behavior, the Lord confirmed his covenant to Jacob, promising not only to be with him wherever he went, but also to bring him back to the promised land. Jacob vowed that if God would indeed care for him and bring him back to his father's house in peace, the Lord would be his God.

The children of Israel have been scattered throughout the earth without a land to call their own for most of the church age. But despite the fact that they brought the judgment of God upon themselves by crucifying His Son, God has indeed been with them and preserved them in their dispersion, and has already begun bringing them back to the promised land.

Chapter 29

Chapter twenty-nine recounts Jacob's treatment during his exile from the promised land. He served Laban seven years for his daughter only to be duped into marrying the wrong woman. He had to serve another seven years for the wife of his love.

The Jew has been mistreated and taken advantage of throughout the world, by Islam and false Christianity in the dark ages right up to the Holocaust in modern times. And the Arab world is still attempting to eliminate them from the face of the earth.

Chapter 30

Chapter thirty describes the struggle for fruitfulness between Jacob's wives. Each desperately sought his approval by trying to bear him more fruit. Both sought children through fleshly means, as Sarah had before them, by giving their slaves to be their husband's concubines.

Romans declares that Israel, being ignorant of God's righteousness (*The righteousness of faith*), and seeking to establish their own righteousness (*Through the Law*), has not submitted to the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:3). Orthodox Jews still vie, as the Pharisees in the times of Christ did, for God's approval by self-righteous (fleshly-Gal. 3:3) means through imagined obedience to the Law.

Meanwhile, Jacob and Laban strove to outwit each other for the material wealth of the herds. Jacob doubtlessly credited God's intervention on his behalf to his own useless cleverness. He seems to fit the stereotype of the crafty Jewish merchant, whom God has indeed blessed.

Chapter 31

Chapter thirty-one is Jacob's call to return to the promised land (Verses 11-13). At this point His hostile environment probably contributed more to his compliance than any real desire to obey the Lord. The Lord himself curbed Laban's resistance to Jacob's return to his rightful heritage. Although Laban could not prove it, Jacob's wife was bringing Laban's idols back to the land with them.

The Bible prophesies over and over again that Israel will be brought back to their own land (Isa 51:11, Jer 30:3, Hos 6:1-3, Zec 8:7, &tc.). These prophecies are beginning to be fulfilled during the present time. After much Gentile opposition, the Nation of Israel was established in 1948, and more and more Jews are returning to their land. But as prophesied, the Jews are returning in unbelief, still idolizing the ancient traditions that caused them to crucify their Messiah two thousand years ago.

Chapters 32 & 33

Chapters thirty-two and thirty-three demonstrate that Esau was the greatest hindrance to Jacob's return to the land. As he came into the land, Jacob wrestled earnestly with God for His blessing, and came away with a promise of blessing and an acute awareness of his own frailty. He had to lean on his staff to worship at the end of his life (Heb. 11:21). Jacob went to great lengths to appease Esau, but God had dissipated his wrath before they ever met. Jacob built his first altar when he came back into the Promised Land.

Although the Gentiles struggled unsuccessfully for centuries to take the "Holy Land" from the Muslims and keep it under "Christian" control, God moved the Gentiles themselves to establish the Nation of Israel when He chose to bring them back to the land. Jacob's wrestling with God, though he did not know His name, probably corresponds to the earnest desire of the sincere orthodox Jews for the blessings of their Messiah without knowing that His name is Jesus. Jacob's first altar in the promised land may correspond to the rebuilding the temple and resumption of the daily sacrifices, which will have to occur before the image of the Beast can be set up in the Temple to stop it (Dan. 9:27, Mat. 24:15, Rev. 13:15, &tc.).

Chapter 34

Chapter thirty-four recounts the children of Israel's revenge on the inhabitants of the land when one of them wronged their sister. This may correspond to Israel's attitude as they are being re-established in the promised land. Their post-Holocaust determination to savagely avenge every wrong against their nation has often turned world opinion against them. As Jacob said, "You have made me obnoxious among the inhabitants of the land."

Chapter 35

In chapter thirty-five God called Jacob to Bethel ("The house of God."). The house of Israel purified themselves, and Jacob buried all their idols under a tree at Shechem. They were finally sanctified from every kind of idolatry and ready to worship the true God. They journeyed to Bethel under the protection of the terror of God, where Jacob built an altar at the place where God had met him at the beginning of his exile. There Jacob worshiped the Lord as his fathers had, fully restored to the blessings of the covenant.

This likely corresponds to the time when the Children of Israel will finally gaze on the wounds of Him whom they had pierced, acknowledging Jesus as their long-rejected Messiah. Their idols (of self-righteousness?) will be forgotten and their false prophets will be removed (Zec. 13:1-2).

Chapter 36

Chapter thirty-six finishes the fourth section of the book of Genesis with the genealogy of the descendants of Esau. When their combined possessions were too great for the land of Canaan, Esau moved on to Mount Seir to make way for his brother, Jacob. Although Edom is prophesied for total destruction (Jer. 49:17-18), this chapter may symbolize the millennial peace that will be brought about through Israel's restoration to the promised land, when the East will finally make room for the Children of Israel.

SECTION V--Restoration through Repentance

The fifth section of the book of Genesis consists of chapters thirty-seven through fifty. It is centered around the life of Joseph, and seems to be prophetic of Christ's dealings with the Children of Israel primarily during the "Tribulation" period in preparation for their role in the millennial kingdom where Christ will rule the world from Israel. Joseph is a type of Christ throughout most of this last section of Genesis, while his brothers typify the Jews that (still) reject Him.

This section on the book of Genesis shows how God leads His people to repentance. The divine work of restoration through repentance in the heart of man may well correspond to the fourth river that flowed "after Eden."

Chapter 37

Chapter thirty-seven introduces Joseph as the beloved son of Jacob. The coat of many colors that his father gave him represents the many beauties of Christ's character that are displayed in the Scriptures. Joseph's dreams that implied sovereignty over his brethren parallel the Old Testament prophecies of the coming Messiah. His brothers' enmity corresponds to the envious attitude of the Jewish leaders towards Christ while he was on earth (Mat. 27:18, Jn 11:47-48).

Joseph's father sent him to his brethren as God the Father sent His Son into the world. Joseph was rejected when he came to his brothers, just as Christ came unto His own, and His own did not receive Him (John 1:11). His being thrown into the pit represents the crucifixion while preserving his life for the rest of his prophetic role. His removal from the pit represents Christ's resurrection, and his being sold into slavery represents the fact that He was still despised and rejected, especially by the Jews, even after He was raised from the dead.

Chapters 38 & 39

Chapters thirty-eight and thirty-nine reveal the real characters of Joseph and the brother that sold him into slavery. Judah committed adultery with a supposed prostitute, and then self-righteously sentenced her to death when she was found to be pregnant by harlotry. This corresponds to John 8:1-11. Joseph went to prison rather than committing adultery under duress. It is as though God contrasted the character of His Son with the hypocrisy of the Pharisees that condemned him as unfit to live centuries before they ever crucified Him.

Chapter 40

Chapter forty narrates the dreams of the butler and the baker. Joseph interprets that the dreams indicate the restoration of the butler and the destruction of the baker when they were to stand before Pharaoh in three days.

The chapter may pass over the two thousand year church period during which Christ has been rejected by the Jews, to the middle of the tribulation period. In the second half of the tribulation God will especially afflict the nation of Israel as the time of "Jacob's trouble" (Jer 30:7). This judgment will be for the purification of God's people. At the end of that final three-and-a-half years of the tribulation

period, God will judge the Gentile nations on the basis of how they treated the godly remnant of His people during that time. Those nations that mistreated them will be destroyed and those that supported them will be preserved to share in the millennial blessings of the kingdom. This is announced by the Lord himself in Matthew 25:31-46.

Chapter 41

Chapter forty-one recounts Pharaoh's dream that foretold of seven terrible years of famine that were to come upon Egypt. Joseph was brought out prison as the acknowledged savior of the land after he interpreted the dream. His marriage to a gentile bride before renewing his dealings with his natural brothers symbolizes the unique closeness of Christ's eternal love relationship with the church.

The seven years of famine correspond to the tribulation that is to come on all the earth. The seven good years that precede it may occur before the rapture, or possibly suggest a time of seeming affluence between the rapture and the tribulation. The personal involvement of the Lord Himself in the tribulation judgements is noted repeatedly in the book of Revelation.

Chapters 42-45

Chapters forty-two to forty-five detail Joseph's relationship with his brothers during the prophesied seven years of famine. His actions were calculated to convict their hearts of their guilt in rejecting him in order to get them to repent. The purpose of the tribulation judgments will be to cause men to repent, though the majority of them will not do so (Rev. 9:20-21 & 16:9,11).

Joseph wept as he finally revealed his identity to his brothers. When Christ finally reveals Himself to the Jews, they will look on Him Whom they pierced, and mourn for Him (Zec. 12:10-12). But their tears of repentance will hardly exceed His emotion at their eventual acceptance of Him as their Messiah.

Chapter 46

Joseph sent the carts of Pharaoh into the wilderness to bring the rest of house of Israel back to him. Judah was sent before them to chart the way to Goshen.

It is the Jews--made up mostly of the tribe of Judah--that are being brought back into the promised land now. The other tribes will largely remain unidentifiably scattered throughout the world during the tribulation. When the Lord establishes His millennial kingdom with the Jews, He will gather up the scattered descendants of Israel from all over the world and bring them back to the promised land (Isa. 66:20.) He will judge any rebels among them at the borders of Israel, and bring the rest into the blessings of the kingdom (Ezk. 20:33-38).

Chapter 47

Chapter forty-seven pictures the children of Israel settled in the best of the land of Egypt. Joseph sustained them there from the wealth of Pharaoh, which was at his disposal. He also saved the rest of the land of Egypt, claiming it as part of the kingdom.

This depicts the millennial reign of Christ through the nation of Israel. Every man will rest under his own fig tree (Mic 4:1-4), and all the rest of the world will bring their wealth to Israel (Isa. 60:11-12), and worship the Lord as king (Zec. 14:16-20).

Chapters 48-50

Chapters forty-eight through fifty finish the narration of Jacob and Joseph's lives. The sons of Joseph and Jacob received their respective blessings from Jacob before he died. After Jacob died, Joseph's brothers questioned his goodness to them, but he confirmed his covenant with them. This may suggest the eternal state that will follow the millennial kingdom of Christ (I Cor. 15:24-28). Jacob was buried in the promised land, and Joseph left instructions that his bones were to be carried there too, after the prophesied sojourn of four hundred and thirty years in Egypt. They died in faith, looking for that city whose builder and maker was God (Heb. 11:10). May it come soon!

DISCLAIMER

Dogmatism in the study of Scriptural typology is unacceptable. Few Christians would argue against the typical implications of Abraham's offering Isaac on the altar. More might question the premise that the entire Book of Genesis is a prophetic sequence. Nevertheless, New Testament references to the typical significance of such obscurities as Hagar representing the Law suggest that the Old Testament is more symbolic than is casually obvious. Either way, little harm is done as long as whatever is illustrated from any proposed type is taught elsewhere in the Scriptures. But human imagination molds the interpretation of symbolism to fit its own preconceptions too easily to allow doctrinal derivations solely from typical suppositions. Scriptural typology should not be stretched beyond what is taught more definitively elsewhere in the Bible.

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