

The Book of Genesis

The Old Testament in the Context of the Bible

1. HOLY SCRIPTURE IN THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH

1. Analogy with the Word made flesh

1. According to the *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation* from Vatican II, what do Jesus and the Bible have in common; how are they similar?

2. What, or more properly speaking, who is the lens through which we properly understand both the Old and the New Testament?

3. The text on p. 11 tells us that Christianity is not a “religion of the book.” This is what Muhammed called Judaism and Christianity. He saw them having an advantage of having an authoritative written standard they could return to in order to keep their way. Yet our text tells us that Christianity is not a “religion of the book.” If Christianity is not based on the Bible, upon what/whom is it based? (See John 1:1)

4. What does the Bible share with the very nature of the Person of Jesus?

5. What two things do we need to employ to authentically interpret the Scriptures?

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2. God speaking to His Church

6. “Docility,” especially docility to the Church, is a term that would make many people uncomfortable. In our culture driven by social media, Hollywood, and the universities, how would “docility to the Church” be interpreted?

- Simply put, if we are asked to be docile to the teachings of the Church, what precisely is being asked of us?
- Interestingly enough, how does the alliance that consists of the gay movement, the climate change crowd, the abortion supporters, the teachers' unions, etc. expect people to react to their beliefs and demands?

7. What does it mean "to be faithful to the Church?"

8. What two things constitute the Deposit of Faith?

① _____ ② _____

9. When it comes to applying the Scriptures to the to the cultural and historical circumstances in which the faithful find ourselves, who has the God-given charge to authentically interpret the Sacred Writings? (For example, who can decide that the biblical approval of slavery cannot be used to justify slavery in our times, while at the same time appealing to Scripture to condemn homosexual behavior?)

10. What are the two areas of life in the Church where Holy Scripture is most directly interpreted and presented to us?

① _____ ② _____

11. We acknowledge Jesus a present in the Eucharist. How is He also present in the proclamation of the Scriptures (especially the Gospels) at Mass?

12. When a Christian reads the Scriptures, how is it that it cannot be said that (s)he reads them alone?

2. THE OLD TESTAMENT AND ITS INTERPRETATION

13. Under what three headings are the books of the Old Testament organized in Catholic editions of the Bible?

① _____ ② _____
③ _____

14. The books of the Old Testament contain a lot behaviors that we find abhorrent today such as slavery, killing people in the name of God, and many other disordered human behaviors. Some people take this as cause to simply reject the Old Testament as being out-dated and irrelevant to our times.

- How does the Church respond to this?

- What advantage does the Catholic have in answering these difficult questions/accusations (refer back to #9 above)?

2. Interpreting the Old Testament

15. In the simplest terms, how does the Catholic Church interpret the Old Testament?

16. Some say that as Christians we should simply jettison the Hebrew Scriptures and adhere only to the New Testament. How does our answer in #15 preserve the integrity of the Old Testament?

We have already referred to *Dei Verbum* (The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation) from the Second Vatican Council. It can be found in many Catholic Bibles. It is not that long of a document and is a fairly easy read. No one should attempt studying the Scriptures without first reading this important guide to understanding the Bible. The rest of this section of the text contains some teachings from *Dei Verbum* regarding the proper understanding of the Scriptures.

17. What are the two basic principles to be borne in mind to properly understand the Old Testament?

(a)

- To a casual reader, the Old Testament can look like a random collection of writings instead of a single, coherent work. How does the Church answer this?

- How does the New Testament help to show the cohesion of the Old Testament books?

- What saying, attributed to St. Augustine, summarizes the relationship between the Old and New Testaments?

(b)

- In the briefest of terms, how did we get the Bible? Who determined which books would be considered the inspired Word of God and which would not?

- Our text tells us that there is a close connection between Tradition, Scripture, and the Magisterium. What function does each fulfill?

Tradition:

Scripture:

Magisterium:

- With all of this in mind, how should the faithful Catholic approach the reading and interpreting of Sacred Scripture?

Introduction to the Pentateuch

1. The word “Pentateuch” comes from a Greek word meaning:

2. The Jewish people refer to the Pentateuch as:

3. What books of the Bible make up the Pentateuch?

- ① _____ ③ _____
② _____ ④ _____
⑤ _____

1. STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

4. In general, what is covered in the books of the Pentateuch?

- Genesis:
- Exodus:
- Leviticus:
- Numbers:
- Deuteronomy:

5. The Pentateuch is a continuous narrative that runs from _____ to _____ . It begins with _____ and ends with _____ .

6. As we noted earlier, the Jewish People refer to the Pentateuch as “the Law.” From where do these laws originate or derive?

7. What is the result of the proliferation of sin and evil throughout creation after the sin of Adam and Eve?

8. The Genesis narrative follows Noah’s son _____ whose descendants continue down to _____ .

9. Abraham has two sons _____ and _____. The latter, for the most part, is ignored for the rest of the Bible.

10. Isaac then has two sons (fraternal twins) named _____ and _____.

11. Jacob becomes the father of twelve sons who become the chiefs of _____.

Of these sons, most of the attention in the latter half of the Book of Genesis is focused on

_____ and _____.

12. Once we get to the Book of Exodus, who is the main protagonist or character in the story?

2. COMPOSITION

13. Traditionally among the Jewish People and the earliest Christians, who has been credited with writing the Pentateuch?

14. Moses was born about 1390 BC and would have died around 1280 BC. Our text tells us that the Pentateuch in its current form comes from what period of history?

15. What do scholars tell us about how the Pentateuch came to be as we have it now?

16. So how does Moses figure in to the Pentateuch as we have it now?

17. The Bible is without a doubt the most translated, studied, dissected, and commented upon book in all of human history. As scholars have combed through the Sacred Texts, they have theorized about who did the redactions.

- The people from the Northern Kingdom of Israel who fled the Assyrian conquest of their land to the southern kingdom of Judah brought with them their own interpretations of the Hebrew tradition. Their contribution to the Hebrew Scriptures is called the _____ because they use the name _____ to refer to God.

- By the 7th Century BC only the southern kingdom of Judah remained. Under the reforms of good kings _____ and _____,

the book of _____ played a central role in writing down the history of Israel from the conquest of the Promised Land until the destruction of Jerusalem (in the books of _____, _____, _____) and is referred to as the _____.

• A later editor who tried to weave the whole ancient tradition of the history of salvation into a harmonious whole is called the _____ because of the use of the proper name _____ for God..

• The details about efforts to keep the Israelites' faith alive during the Babylonian Exile as well as in elaborate collections of laws about worship, priestly purity, and the purity of the people belong to what scholars refer to as the _____ tradition.

3. THE FIVE BOOKS FORM A UNITY

18. The Y(J)awhist, Elohist, Deuteronomist, and Priestly editors of the Old Testament is the result of academic studies done on the Old Testament over the centuries. Regardless of any scholarly conjecture, why do we take the Pentateuch seriously to this day?

19. What is the primary question that the Book of Genesis answers?

20. In the Hebrew Bible, the names of the books of the Pentateuch are taken from the first few words of that book. The Hebrew term *bereshit* (בראשית) means:
Jos

21. How does the Book of Genesis end?

22. The name of the Book of Exodus implies it is about the people leaving or exiting Egypt, which is true. But the Hebrew name for the book *wa eleh shmot* (ואלה שמות) which means?

23. As long as the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, Egyptian culture and law provided the structures necessary for them to live in an ordered society. Once they left Egypt, they still needed to have these structures. What book of the Pentateuch provided this?

24. What part of Israelite history does the Book of Numbers present to us?

25. In Hebrew, the Book of Numbers is called *ba-midbar* (במדבר) which means?

26. Looking ahead, the first Book outside the Pentateuch is the Book of Joshua. What does the name Joshua mean in Hebrew?

- Joshua is a popular name for boys/men. But by what other rendering do we commonly know it?

27. The last Book of the Pentateuch is the Book of _____. The English root for this name comes from “Second Law.” Again, in the Hebrew Bible, the name would come from the first few words of the Book, which is *eleh ha-dibbarim* (אלה הדברים) which means?

28. What is the theme of the Book of Deuteronomy?

4. MESSAGE

29. What does the Pentateuch tell us about:

- God’s actions?

- Israel’s response?

30. Today it is common to hear people try to discredit religion by saying things such as, “There are thousands of religions in the world each claiming to have the truth and that their G(g)od is the one true God. Why should I believe one over the other?”

- What gives the Jewish faith more credibility than Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism, for example?

- This is not in the text, but how do we answer the same question about Christianity/Catholicism? Why pay any more attention to Jesus than we would to Buddha, Mohammed, Ghandi, Confucius, etc.? Why not just celebrate diversity? After all, aren’t we all climbing the same mountain, but just taking different paths to the top?

31. What is the particular teaching of the Pentateuch as to how God acts in human history?

32. People in our time make a big name for themselves by rejecting laws and rules, particularly *religious* laws and rules. But what do Jews demonstrate by accepting the Law of Moses and what do Catholic demonstrate by adhering to what is revealed to us in Scripture and the Tradition of the Church?

5. THE PENTATEUCH IN THE LIGHT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

33. The Pentateuch is the first stage in Salvation History. Understood in the light of the New Testament we see the promises of the Old Testament fulfilled beyond anyone's wildest dreams through what two great acts on God's part?

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34. How is God's plan that all nations would be blessed through Israel fulfilled?

35. In Galatians 3:23-26 St. Paul writes:

Before faith came, we were held in custody under law, confined for the faith that was to be revealed. Consequently, the law was our disciplinarian for Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a disciplinarian. For through faith you are all children of God in Christ Jesus.

The word "disciplinarian" is also variously translated as "pedagogue" or "guardian." What does St. Paul mean when he says that the Law of Moses is our pedagogue?

6. INTERPRETATION

36. What two dimensions of teaching does the Pentateuch offer?

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37. Instead of checking to see whether events took place in a certain way, what is the most important thing to look for in the Pentateuch?

38. What category of meaning is referred to when *Dei verbum* speaks of “the meaning which the sacred writers really had in mind, that meaning which God had thought well to manifest through the medium of their words...”?

39. What category of meaning is referred to when we look to the meaning of the Scriptures where we find universal truths in specific events; the meaning that the Holy Spirit is presenting to us?

40. For example, the fact that the Israelites were deported to Babylon in the 6th Century BC would be an example of the _____ meaning. Applying this event to our lives understanding that when we disobey God we find ourselves slaves to sin would be an example of the _____ interpretation.

41. To what great reality does the Pentateuch and the rest of the Old Testament point?

Introduction to the Book of Genesis

1. In their attempt to discredit the Bible, opponents of faith take cheap shots at the Scriptures saying things like, “Science proves that the universe is billions of years old and took billions of years to come to its current form. How can anyone believe that it was created in six days? The Bible is a fairy tale.” What is the proper response to this?

1. STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

1. Read through this section and then list some names and events under the following schema for the Book of Genesis:

Chapters 1-11 (Pre History)

Significant People

Significant Events

Chapters 12-36 (The Great Patriarchs)

Chapters 37-50 (Joseph and his brothers in Egypt)

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2. What does the first part (Pre-History, Chs. 1-11) of Genesis address and how does it do so?
3. What does the second part (The Great Patriarchs, Chs. 12-36 & Joseph in Egypt, Chs. 37-50) address and how does it do so?
4. Roughly what years are covered in the second part of Genesis?

3. COMPOSITION

5. In most peoples' minds and in common conversation, the word "myth" means something that is untrue or at least very doubtful. In fact, what is a myth?
6. So if we say that Genesis has "mythic qualities" or uses "mythical images" what are we saying? That it is a fairy tale?
7. In the genealogies of Genesis (e.g., Genesis 5), there are lists of people whose lives are hundreds of years long.
 - How would the modern "scientific scoffer" respond to this?
 - In fact, what is Genesis trying to accomplish?
8. What is the major turn in human history ushered in by Abraham?
9. What is the challenge in trying to situate the historical context of the events of the second half of Genesis?
10. What two possible criteria does Genesis use to gauge the sacredness of a given place?

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11. Within the context of the Pentateuch, what is the purpose of the Book of Genesis?

12. The land of Canaan, where the Patriarchs live out their histories will later become the Promised Land where the Israelites settle after the Exodus. What person and story from Genesis bridges these 400+ years of history?

4. MESSAGE

13. What is the central idea or theme of Genesis and the rest of the Pentateuch?

14. How does your answer to #13 begin?

15. What are some other basic truths found in Genesis?

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16. In the Creation Story, the narration that we have in English reads that “the world was without shape or form.” Other translations say, “the world was a formless void.” Hebrew is much more descriptive and even playful using an onomatopoeia describing the world as *tohu va bohu* (טְהוֹ וּבְהוּ) which could be describes as “topsy turvy” or chaos. What brings order to the *tohu va bohu*?

17. What are the other manifestations of *tohu va bohu* from which the Word of God delivers us beginning with Abraham and with him the People of Israel?

5. GENESIS IN THE LIGHT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

18. List some of the Old Testament stories and prophecies that can be understood in their fullness only in the light of the New Testament:

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The Book of Genesis

PART ONE

The Creation and the First Age of Mankind

1. THE ORIGIN OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

Chapter 1

1:1-2:4a

1. What is the spiritual meaning of the Creation Story?
2. There are actually two creation stories in the first three chapters of Genesis.
 - What does the first story emphasize and to which ancient editor is it ascribed?
 - What characterizes the second creation story and to which ancient editor is it ascribed?
3. Much noise is needlessly and uselessly made trying to reconcile the Creation Story with modern science. What is the purpose of the Creation Story?
4. What does the Creation Story tell us about:
 - God?
 - Man?
 - the world or creation itself?

1:1

5. What three things does the *Catechism* tell us is affirmed in the first verse of Genesis?

① _____

② _____

③ _____

6. “In the beginning marks the start of _____ and the _____.

7. We often see the words create/creation/creator **wrongly** applied to people. Someone may say that a certain artist creates beautiful paintings or sculptures. In the final credits of television shows and movies in addition to the writer and director, it will say “created by...” Properly speaking, what does it mean “to create” something and why is it impossible for people to do so?

•Again, properly speaking, what can we do? If we bake a cake, build a house, or write a song, why is this not an act of creation?

8. How does God differ from the gods of the Near Eastern religions?

9. Why, according to the *Catechism* did God create the universe in the first place?

10. The term the “heavens and the earth;” Hebrew: *ha-shamaim wa ha-aretz* (הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ) is used throughout the Bible. What two meanings does it have?

① _____

② _____

1:2

11. The English lexicon has around 900,000 words. The Hebrew lexicon of the Old Testament only has about 6,000 or so. This means that there is a lot of ambiguity in the Old Testament as one word must necessarily have many meanings which must be gleaned out of the context in which that word is being used. What are some of the translations we have for the Hebrew word *ruah* (רוּחַ):

① _____ ② _____ ③ _____

④ _____ ⑤ _____ ⑥ _____

This is also a tremendous opportunity for prayer and reflection. Substitute each word that you came up with and think and meditate on how each of these words flavors the rest of the verse:

“...and the _____ of God was moving over the face of the waters.”

12. With whom do many of the Church Fathers associate the ruah (רוח)?

1:3-5

13. What two things do the six days of creation teach us?

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14. Jews observe the Sabbath on _____ because:

Christians moved the Sabbath to _____ because:

15. Why is it that God creates light, but not darkness?

16. What does it mean that God assigns names to what He creates?

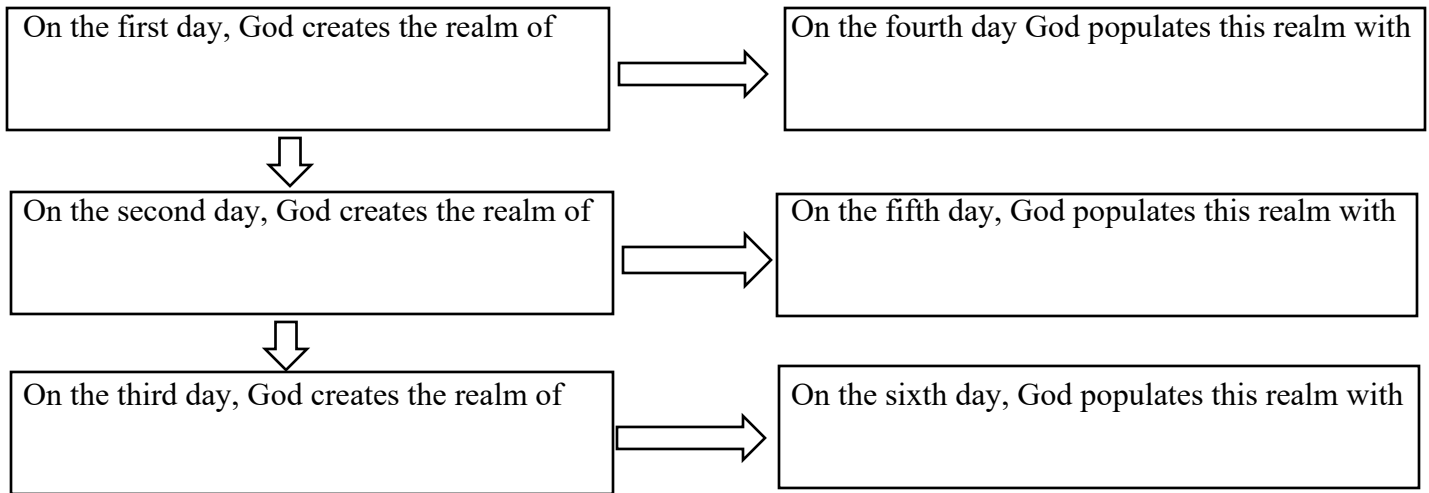
17. One of the truths that the Creation Story conveys to us is that creation is good. How so?

1:6-8

18. The ancient Hebrew idea that there was water above the sky that poured down when floodgates were opened is obviously no longer believed. But what timeless truth proceeds from this ancient biblical image?

1:11

19. The creation story is a form of ancient Hebrew poetic narrative that uses poetry to convey the profound truths about creation that we have referred to previously. Again, detractors of people of faith will point to the creation story and say things like, “How can God create light on the first day, but then not create the sun, moon, and stars until the fourth day?” Look on the next page as we arrange the order of God’s creation.



20. As we can see, far from being a confused, pre-scientific jumble, there is a deliberate, thoughtful, and purposeful method to what the ancient writer is trying to teach us about creation. In the end, what does the Creation Story invite/demand of its reader?

1:14-17

21. How does the Genesis story present the celestial bodies as opposed to how they were regarded by ancient pagan religions?

22. What other teaching do we derive from the fact that God made all of these things and that they are not gods unto themselves?

1:26

23. What three explanations does our text give us for God saying, “Let us create man in our image after our likeness...” (Emphasis added)

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24. What does it mean to say that we are created in God’s image and likeness?

25. What other capacity do human beings have as a result of being created in the image and likeness of God?
26. What does it mean for God to tell us that we have dominion over His creation?
27. What unique place do we have in God's creation?
28. In the Second Creation Story in chapter 2, we are introduced to Adam and Eve. In the First Creation Story, we are told that God creates human male and female human beings as part of the grander creation. What is being taught to us regarding men and women in this context?
29. What great divine reality does People St. John Paul the Great tell us that the communion of man and woman reveals?
30. God is neither male nor female. Yet in the Judeo-Christian tradition God is primarily referred to in masculine terms. Why is this?
31. By saying that "*in the image and likeness of God he created him; male and female he created them*" what concept is introduced to humanity for the first time?
32. What else have Jews and Christian inferred from this verse?

1:28

33. What is assumed in God's command to men and women to "*be fruitful and multiply?*"
34. To what aspect of our human existence does God's command to "*fill the earth and subdue it*" refer?

35. What five things does St. Josemaría Escrivá tell us that work allows us to do in life?

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36. Certain individuals have wrongly accused the Judeo-Christian tradition of feeding the notion that since pollution, and over exploitation of natural resources is a result of God having told us to “*fill the earth and subdue it.*” How is this wrong?

37. As God reviews His creation at the very end, how does He evaluate it as a whole as opposed to the lesser components of it?

Chapter 2

1:1-3

1. What do we acknowledge by our observing the Sabbath rest?

2. What practical ends does the Sabbath rest achieve according to the *Catechism* and Pope St. John Paul the Great?

3. There is no morning or evening mentioned with the Sabbath Day. What does this mean?

4. In the Bible, what three meanings can the word “festival” or “feast” have?

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2:4b-4:26

5. Chapter 2 begins a new Creation Story. There is no transition from the first story in Genesis 1. It just starts as a different story. Since it is of the _____ tradition, what is suggested about this particular story?

6. Continuing through chapter 4, what three main themes are covered?

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7. Back on page 12 of these notes under section 3 (composition), we talked about *myth*. Why are the three themes in number 6 above described using such vivid symbolic language?

2:5-6

8. How does the Biblical description as to the purpose of creation differ so starkly from the contemporary climate activists?

9. Is Catholic theology opposed to the Theory of Evolution?

10. What element of the secular Theory of Evolution is opposed to Catholic Theology and Anthropology?

2:7

9. The man *ha-adam* (הָאָדָם) is made from *adamah* (אֲדָמָה). It is a kind of play on words. What is an English pair of words whose root refers to people and to the earth?

10. Is *ha-adam* male or female?

11. In Genesis 2, all of the trees, animals, etc., are all called forth by God from the soil (*adamah*). Using symbolic or mythic language, how does Genesis mark out the difference between people and other forms of life?

12. Remember that biblical Hebrew does not have that many words. What are some ways that *adamah* gets translated in different Bibles?

- ① _____ ② _____ ③ _____
④ _____ ⑤ _____ ⑥ _____

13. When God makes the earthling out of the earth, He is acting like a potter making something out of clay. Where will this image appear again in the Bible and what does it mean?

2:8-15

14. What are the two trees in the middle of the garden, and what do they symbolize?

Tree	What it symbolizes

15. What are the names of the four rivers that flow out of the garden?

- ① _____ ② _____
③ _____ ④ _____

16. Even before sin entered into the world, what were people supposed to doing in the Garden of Eden?

17. What is the covenant that God makes with Adam and Eve?

2:16-17

18. The worn-out rallying cry of opponents of faith is that there cannot be an all powerful good God if evil exists. Why did God make the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil?

19. How does current moral method of America (if it can even be called such a thing!) deal with right and wrong?

20. What is the moral method outline in Genesis 2?

21. The culture of America through our universities, courts, legislatures, media, etc., has set itself up as its own arbiter of right and wrong. We decide through popular vote, court decision, and simply what was hip in a Hollywood movie what is acceptable or not (think abortion, same sex “marriage,” legalized drugs, etc.). What does God’s command to the Adam not to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil imply?

22. We behave as if we are our own god and can make up our moral code as we go along. Yet even we do not believe this. For example, when asked about the nature of freedom, people wrongly reply that “Freedom means I can do whatever I want.” But if I punch that person in the face, justifying my action with their own logic, “Punching you in the face is what I wanted to do...” How will they respond?

2:18-25

23. At this point, the creation of Adam (the earthling) is incomplete. What is still needed?

24. After the creation of the woman (אִשָּׁה) the man (אָדָם) replies:

“This one at last is flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bone...”

25. What is the man recognizing about what God has done for him?

2:19-20

26. There is a debate even among well intentioned believers as to whether there are any animals in heaven. What would the Book of Genesis say and how would it explain it?

2:21-22

27. What two things does the ancient write explain by saying that God formed the woman out of one of the man's ribs?

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2:23

28. What does the man's delight and acclaim for the woman show?

29. What does authentic conjugal love presuppose on the part of the man (male human being at this point in the story; no more "earthling")?

2:24

30. When did God establish the institution of marriage?

31. What does the statement, "*the two shall become one flesh*" presuppose about marriage?

2:25

32. What destroys the harmony that God intended for men and women to share?

Chapter 3

3:1-24

1. Explain the relationship between the figurative/mythic nature of the Fall of Man and its historicity:

2. What is the basic religious truth conveyed to us in Genesis 3?

3. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, what two things make up all sin:

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4. Read the citation from St. Josemaría Escrivá at the end of this section (beginning with “The eyes of our soul grow dim....”) Where do we see the dynamic described by St. Josemaría Escrivá illustrated in our own times?

5. In the tragic Supreme Court decision of *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* Justice Anthony Kennedy of unhappy memory stated the following in his statement writing for the majority:

“These matters, involving the most intimate and personal choices a person may make in a lifetime, choices central to personal dignity and autonomy, are central to the liberty protected by the Fourteenth Amendment. ***At the heart of liberty is the right to define one’s own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life.*** (Emphasis added) Beliefs about these matters could not define the attributes of personhood were they formed under compulsion of the State.”

(When the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* with *Dobbs v. Jackson*, *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* was also pushed to the side, but Kennedy’s legacy of moral relativism remains.)

How do we see Kennedy’s perverse vision and definition of liberty prophesied in Genesis 3 and by St. Josemaría Escrivá?

3:1

6. What is the strategy that the serpent uses to get Adam and Eve to sin?

7. Given that the demons were created good by God, what sad trait to we as human beings share with them?

3:2-5

8. Consider these two passages from Genesis:

2:16-17 *The LORD God gave the man this order: You are free to eat from any of the trees of the garden except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. From that tree you shall not eat; when you eat from it you shall die.*

3:1 *Now the snake was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He asked the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You shall not eat from any of the trees in the garden’?”*

What is the devil's threefold strategy to get Adam and Eve to rebel against God?

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9. How is this dynamic manifest to this day according to St. Augustine?

10. Why, according to Pope St. John Paul the Great to atheistic ideologies seek to root out God and religion from the modern world?

3:6

11. The common understanding of the creation story is that Adam and Eve take a bite out of an apple. In fact, what does Genesis 3 tell us?

12. What is the three part description of the temptation that Genesis presents to us?

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13. Compare:

Genesis 3:6 *The woman saw that the tree was ①good for food and ②pleasing to the eyes, and the tree was ③desirable for gaining wisdom (emphasis added). So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it*

1 John 2:15-17 *Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world— ①the lust of the flesh, ②the lust of the eyes, and ③the pride of life (emphasis added) —comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.*

This is for St. John an ancient truth. How is this outline of human behavior alive in our own times? (We will see this again in Chapter 11 in the story of the Tower of Babel.)

3:7-13

14. What are the 3 effects of original sin as described in this passage?

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15. What harmonies are destroyed by original sin as described in *the Catechism of the Catholic Church*?

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3:14-15

16. Genesis 3:15 is called the “First Gospel” (*Protoevangelium*).

- Who/what is the “seed” or descendants of the serpent?

- Who/what is the “seed” or descendants of the woman?

So how is Genesis 3:15 understood as a prophecy of the coming of the Messiah?



17. Why according to the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas did God not stop the devil from tempting the first couple?

3:16

18. What two burdens of sin are laid upon the woman?

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19. Our biblical fundamentalist will point to this passage and say, “There you have it! The husband rules over the wife! It’s in the Bible!” Why is this an illegitimate interpretation of Scripture (see 1 Corinthians 7—the whole chapter, but especially v. 4 and v. 16.)

13:17-19

20. What is the immediate effect of original sin on Adam?

21. What are the continuing effects of this on mankind throughout the centuries according to *Gaudium et spes* from Vatican II?

3:21-24

22. How does God continue to care for Adam and Eve after they sin (v. 21)?

23. What 3 aspects describe Man’s place in history after expulsion from the garden?

①

②

③

24. What exactly is the original sin transmitted to all people through the ages?

Chapter 4

4:1-26

1. In Chapter 3 we saw how sin alienated Man from God and from creation. In the story of Cain and Abel from whom is Man now alienated?
2. According to St. Augustine:
 - Who does Cain represent?
 - Who does Abel represent?
3. How do we identify with both Cain and Abel? What do we have in common with them?

4:1

4. Explain the rich meaning of the Hebrew term “to know” regarding the sexual relationship between man and wife?
5. What is the conflict that we see between the ancient biblical understanding of children and human fertility as opposed to how these are viewed by our contemporary society?

4:3-8

6. What is the origin of Cain’s sin?
7. Cain is obviously not very happy, yet God loves him as well. What does God counsel Cain to do (4:6-7)?
8. Cain is the prototype for what?
 - For what is Abel the prototype?
9. In the Letter to the Hebrews, whom does Abel prefigure and why?
10. And whom does Cain symbolize?

4:9-16

11. We have here the first of a catechetical tradition of the Sins that Cry to Heaven. See the *Catechism of the Catholic Church 1867* or look them up in the Bible. The first is:

1. Genesis 4:10 The murder of the innocent.

2. Genesis 18:20; 19:13

3. Exodus 3:7-10

4. Exodus 22:21-24

5. Deuteronomy 24:14-15; James 5:4

12. What are the two contrasting actions that God takes with Cain after the murder of Abel?

①

②

13. What does it mean that Cain is driven out from God's presence?

4:17-24

14. What is the writer of Genesis telling us through the genealogy of Cain?

15. What is the perennial temptation to which the descendants of Cain succumb?

16. Cain's descendant Lamech is bad news. He introduces two more evils into the world. What are they?

① (4:19)

② (4:24)

17. With what crafts are Lamech's sons credited?

•Jabal:

• Jubal:

•Tubal-cain:

4:25-26

16. Seth and his line are still connected to God. What great benefit do they bring to the ancient human race?

2. ADAM’S DESCENDANTS FROM SETH TO NOAH

Chapter 5

5:1-32

1. In this genealogy, why is only the line of Seth, and not Cain, described?

2. What is the take-home lesson that we are to extract from the ages of the descendants of Adam?

3. Why was it critical that ancient peoples obey God’s command “to be fruitful and multiply?”

- How would the same apply to us?

4. How does St. Luke accentuate the universal scope of redemption in the genealogy found in his Gospel?

5:3

5. God made humanity in His image and likeness. How is this trait passed on through the generations and what ramifications does it have for all humanity?

5:21-24

6. In what three ways is Enoch different from the other patriarchs?

①

②

③

5:29

7. Why is Noah regarded as a figure of Christ?

5:32

8. Who are the three lines of people who will descend from Noah?

① _____

② _____

③ _____

Chapter 6

6:1-8

1. What sad reality is set before us in the opening verses of Chapter 6?

6:1-4

2. According to St. Augustine and St. John Chrysostom, who are:

- “The sons of God?”
- “The daughters of men?”

3. What particular evil does this intermarriage breed?

6:5-8

4. The notes make mention of the absolute sovereignty of God; that He has the power and the right to wipe all life off the face of the earth. This is not in the notes, but think about it. Why is it not a crime or immoral for God to take human life?

5. Read v. 6 carefully. Is this even possible? What is the ancient writer trying to accomplish here?

6. What are the two themes we see in this passage that have a high profile in the Bible?

①

②

7. How does Jesus use the story of Noah to exhort us to be in a constant state of readiness for the Lord's coming either at the end of time or the end of our life?

3. THE STORY OF NOAH AND HIS DESCENDANTS

6:9-8:22

8. Using the poetic narrative language of the Creation Story, how does God cause the Great Flood?

9. Review Genesis 1:1-2:

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth and the earth was without form or shape, with darkness over the abyss and a mighty wind sweeping over the waters—

א: בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ
ב: וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ
אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם:

“without form or shape” (תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ) (*tohu va bohu* in Hebrew) a term describing disorder or chaos. What does the Great Flood do to God's creation?

10. Our text reads, “The Bible is offering us an impressive lesson about the destiny of mankind when it turns its back on God and rejects the laws that are stamped on creation itself.” Consider the following passage from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans (1:18-32):

The wrath of God is indeed being revealed from heaven against every impiety and wickedness of those who suppress the truth by their wickedness. For what can be known about God is evident to them, because God made it evident to them. Ever since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes of eternal power and divinity have been able to be understood and perceived in what he has made. As a result, they have no excuse; for although they knew God they did not accord him glory as God or give him thanks. Instead, they became vain in their reasoning, and their senseless minds were darkened. While claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for the likeness of an image of mortal man or of birds or of four-legged animals or of snakes. Therefore, God handed them over to impurity through the lusts of their hearts for the mutual degradation of their bodies. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie and revered and worshiped the creature rather than the creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. Therefore, God handed them over to degrading passions. Their females exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the males likewise gave up

natural relations with females and burned with lust for one another. Males did shameful things with males and thus received in their own persons the due penalty for their perversity. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God handed them over to their undiscerning mind to do what is improper. They are filled with every form of wickedness, evil, greed, and malice; full of envy, murder, rivalry, treachery, and spite. They are gossips and scandalmongers and they hate God. They are insolent, haughty, boastful, ingenious in their wickedness, and rebellious toward their parents. They are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know the just decree of God that all who practice such things deserve death, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

This passage needs to be interpreted in two levels. First of all, how does St. Paul say that we are able to understand the mind of God? Do we need a Bible?

Secondly, what is St. Paul's case-in-point? What kind of behavior is he talking about here that contradicts the Natural Law and what is the result on those who embrace it?

11. The self-agrandized "enlightened" of Western intelligencia will try to minimize the significance of the Bible by relegating it to equal status with other ancient writings. They will try to say that the Creation Story and the story of the Great Flood are no different than other ancient myths and should therefore not be given any serious credibility. What is the main difference between the story of Noah and the flood and the other stories from pagan myths about their gods destroying significant parts of creation?

12. Once the evil people of the world are eliminated, who eventually will come from the surviving family of Noah?

6:19

13. Why does Noah collect a pair of every animal on the earth to put into the ark?

Chapter 7

7:4

1. What does St. Ambrose remind us of regarding the 7 days' downpour of rain?

7:5

2. What is the great contrast between Noah and Adam?

7:7

3. To what do the following elements of the Noah story correspond in regards to the Church?

The Ark symbolizes _____.

The Ark is made of wood which foreshadows _____.

The dimensions of the Ark symbolize _____.

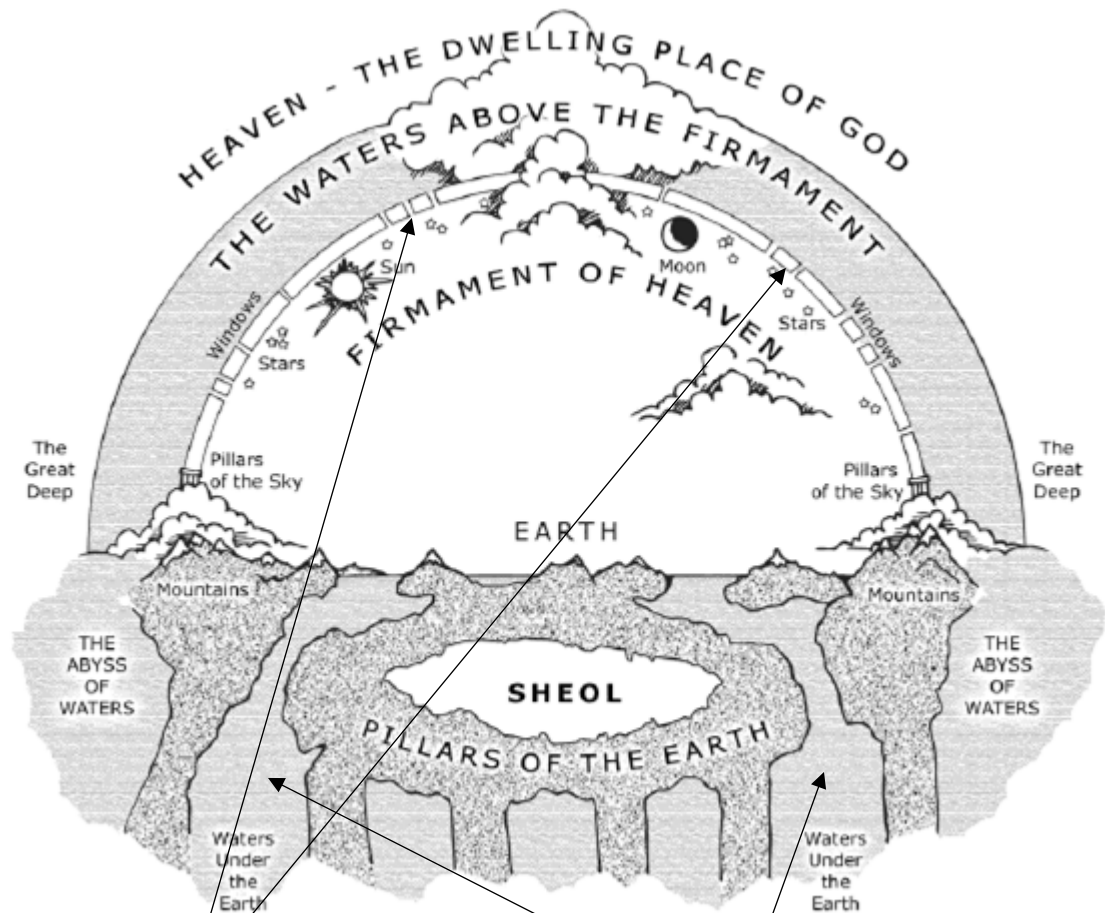
The door on the side of the Ark symbolizes _____ and also

_____.

Chapter 8

1:1-5

1. The ancients saw the universe as this:



The flood was the result of the windows or flood gates in the dome of the sky opening allowing the waters above the firmament to gush through. The waters also came up from the below the earth. According to v. 2, how did the flood stop?

2. Where does Noah's Ark come to rest after the flood begins to recede?

8:6-12

3. What is the symbolism of the dove with an olive branch from this passage that exists to our present day?

4. How many times does Noah send out the dove to find out if there is any dry land yet?

5. How does Rupert of Deutz explain this passage in his *Commentarium in Genesim*?

What happens when Noah sends out the dove?	Three-fold graces of the Holy Spirit	When does the Christian experience this?

8:13

6. "In the six hundred and first year..." In the 601st year of what?

8:15-19

7. In v. 15 God orders Noah to go forth from the ark and to turn all of the animals loose. What does this signify?

8. What is the double significance of water in:

The Great Flood → ① _____
→ ② _____

The Red Sea → ① _____
→ ② _____

The Waters of Baptism → ① _____
→ ② _____

8:20-22

9. How does God express His contentment with Noah's sacrifice?

10. One of the primary duties of a creature is to worship the Creator. What is the pattern for this worship that is established by Noah after the flood?

11. How does the Bible describe the right relationship that Noah and Enoch had with God because of their sacrifices that were offered with a sincere heart?

12. The sacrifices of old were offered repeatedly for atonement for sins. How is the perfect and enduring sacrifice of Jesus on the cross any different?

13. _____ consecrated the start of the _____ of the world by his sacrifice to God. _____ began the _____. These two along with the sacrifices of Melchizedek, Abraham, and the patriarchs, kings, and priests all prefigure _____.

Chapter 9

1:1-7

1. What are the two blessings that God bestowed upon Adam and Eve that are now renewed/repeated with Noah?

①

②

2. Back in Genesis 1:30, we are told that God gave to people and animals all of the green plants to eat. Now, after the flood, God allows man to eat other animals with certain restrictions. What does it mean that in the original creation all creatures including people and carnivores would eat green plants?

What would it mean now after the flood that people could eat animals?

Then in Isaiah 11:6-9 we read:

⁶ *The wolf will live with the lamb,
the leopard will lie down with the goat,
the calf and the lion and the yearling together;
and a little child will lead them.*

⁷ *The cow will feed with the bear,
their young will lie down together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.*

⁸ *The infant will play near the cobra's den,
and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest.*

*⁹ They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.*

What is the point of this prophecy?

3. What are the two prohibitions that God imposes on Noah and his descendants?

①

②

9:8-17

4. What is the sign with which God ratifies His covenant with Noah?

5. God will make successive covenants with _____ which affects only him and his descendants. Later God makes a covenant with _____ which is also confined to only the people of Israel. How do the Israelites show that they are unable to keep the Sinai Covenant (see Exodus 32)?

6. How does God propose to rectify this sad situation?

7. How do the ancient Church fathers explain Noah's rainbow as the first proclamation of the New Covenant made by, with, and through Jesus?

9:18-28

8. What two features of the nature of mankind after the flood does this passage illuminate?

①

②

4. THE ORIGIN OF PEOPLES: THE TOWER OF BABEL

Chapter 10

1:1-32

1. Many people complain when reading the Bible they get confused by the long lists of names that frequently come up. They get lost in the forest because of all the trees. What are the two points that this list of names is trying to convey to us?

①

②

Chapter 11

1:1-9

1. It is best to think of the Tower of Babel as a parable of human arrogance. What is the significance of the people using kiln fired bricks (much like we use to this day) to build their “tower with it top in the heavens?”

2. The mentality that attempted to build the Tower of Babel is still alive and well. What are similar “towers” that we have tried to build over the last 300 years or so?

3. What style of building would the Tower of Babel had been?

4. Most everyone who tries to learn another language other than their native tongue quickly learns that it is not an easy thing to do. How does this parable explain the existence of so many languages and dialects?

5. How is Babel the opposite of Jerusalem, most especially after Pentecost?

11:4

6. How is the Tower of Babel a continuation of the sin of Adam and Eve?

7. Back in Chapter 3 on p. 26 of these notes, we saw the blueprint of the sin of Adam and Eve:

Genesis 3:6 *The woman saw that the tree was ①**good for food** and ②**pleasing to the eyes**, and the tree was ③**desirable for gaining wisdom** (emphasis added). So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.*

The Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:4) *And they said, “Come ①**let us build a city for ourselves** ②**with its top to the heavens**, ③**and let us make a name for ourselves** lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.”(emphasis added).*

1 John 2:16-17 *Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world— ①**the lust of the flesh**, ②**the lust of the eyes**, and ③**the pride of life** (emphasis added)—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.*

God expects us to use the resources of the earth for our benefit and ultimately for our eternal salvation. What do the builders of the Tower of Babel get wrong and how is their error repeated to this very day?

8. What is the solution, according to St. José María Escrivá?

9. Why is pride so deadly?

10. What would be the proof from the Archangel Gabriel that Mary was indeed a paragon of humility? (See Luke 1:28)

5. THE SEMITES

11:10-26

11. Whenever we come to a genealogy in the Bible it signals that a new covenant is about to be made between God and man. The genealogy found in vv. 10-26 connects _____ to _____.

12. Why do these 10 Patriarchs have such long lifespans when God said in Genesis 6:3 that men would only live to be 120 years old?

PART TWO

The Origin and Formation of the Chosen People

6. THE STORY OF ABRAHAM

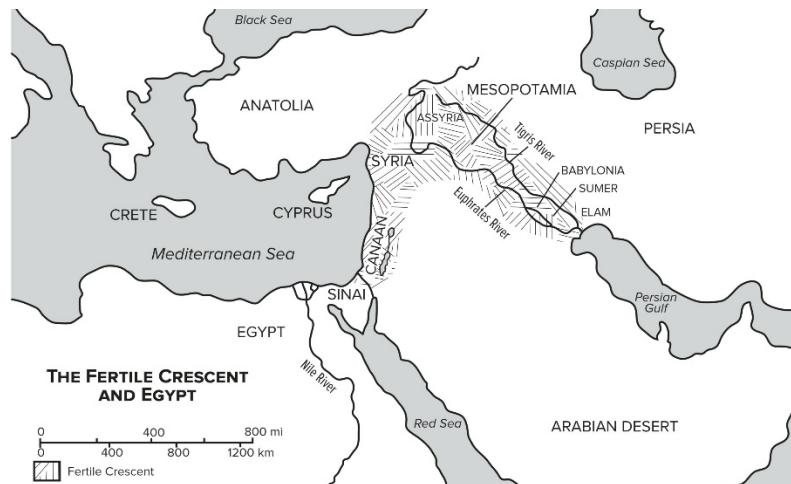
11:27-50:26

13. Who are the three Great Patriarchs who will play a key role in the formation of God's Chosen People?

① _____ ② _____ & ③ _____

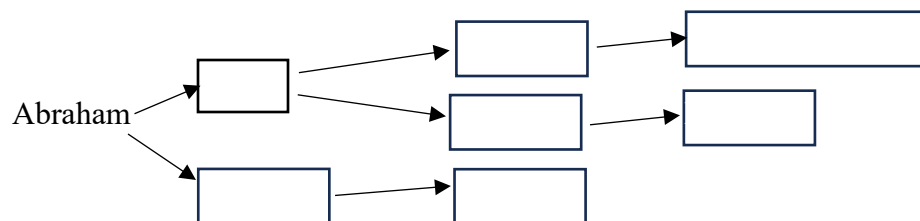
14. Below is a map of the Fertile Crescent which consists of the territories of

① _____ ② _____ & ③ _____



15. What is the area in the Middle East that encompasses Mesopotamia, Palestine, and Egypt called (see the map above)?

16. Complete the following family tree:



17. What are the oral histories of these ancient peoples designed to show?

①

②

③

18. Back on pp. 11-12 we saw that chapters 1-11 of the Book of Genesis are referred to as “Pre-History” where through poetic narrative, various truths about creation, human nature, and our relationship with God are related to us. Beginning in Chapter 12, we have a number of “cycles” that tell the histories of various people from Genesis. Who are they?

Chapters 12-25: _____

Chapter 26: _____

Chapters 27-35 _____

Chapters 37-50 _____

19. What is the Bible trying to teach us through the history of the Patriarchs?

20. Below is a graphic representation of the various Covenants that God make with various people in the Bible. We will fill out the blank boxes during class. It can be a handy way for us to organize in our heads the flow of events from the Bible:

Covenant Mediator	Adam	Noah	Abraham	Moses	David	Jesus
Covenant Role						
Covenant Form						
Covenant Sign						

11:27-30

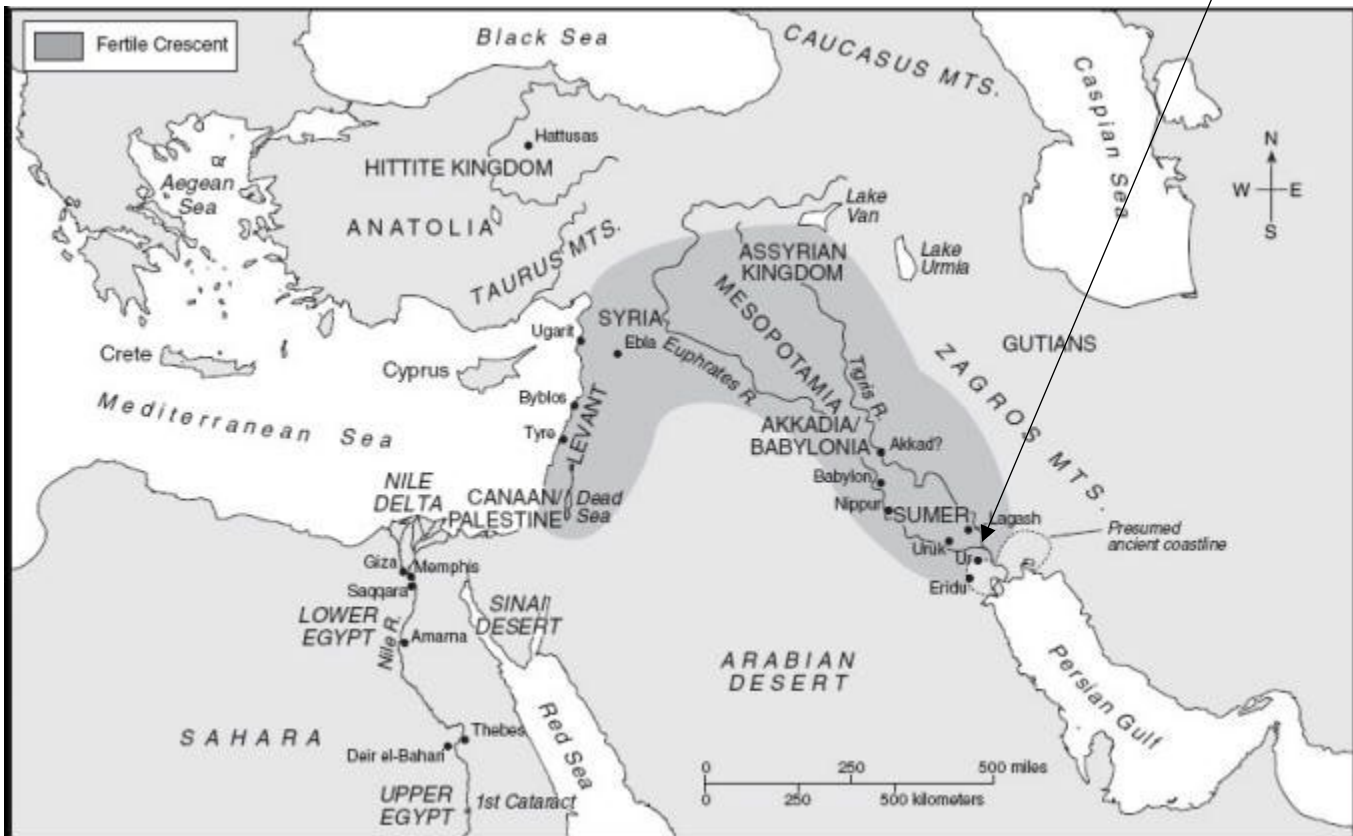
21. Back in question 18, we referred to the “Pre-History” section (chapters 1-11) of Genesis. What are some significant aspects about chapters 12-50?

①

②

11:31

22. On this map we have an approximation as to where the archeologists believe that Ur was situated. Again, notice the Fertile Crescent.



When does it seem most likely that Abraham left Ur for Haran?

Chapter 12

1:1-6

1. What three components make up the promise that God is making with Abraham?

①

②

③

2. What was the pagan god that Abraham’s people probably worshipped?

3. The Bible rightly sings the praises of Abraham's obedience to God which is in stark contrast to what other previous disasters in the Book of Genesis?

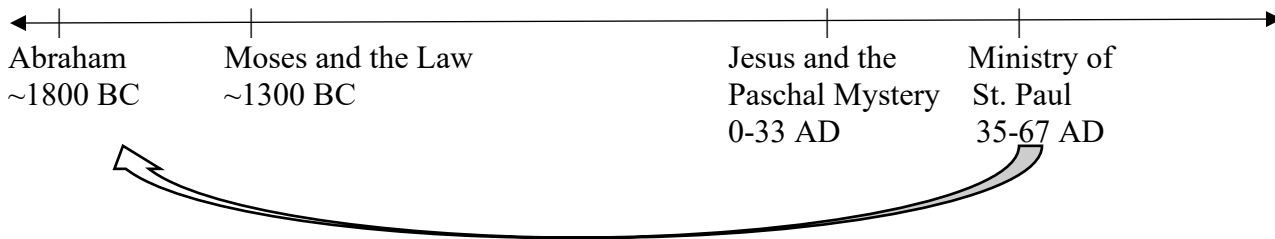
4. Abraham sets the People of Israel on a trajectory of obedience to God. Where does this culminate?

5. What is required to be considered to be a child of Abraham?

6. This turns out to be exceedingly significant if we are to properly understand the New Testament. In the earliest days of Christianity, a vociferous debate arose as to what was necessary for someone to become a Christian. Some Jewish Christians insisted that for a pagan/gentile to become a Christian, they had to adopt the Jewish Faith in its entirety (referred to as "the Law" or "circumcision"). Others like St. Paul and eventually St. Peter insisted that repentance from sin and the former pagan way of life and belief in Jesus as the Messiah were all that were necessary to receive Baptism. A good-sized chunk of the Acts of the Apostles and the writings of St. Paul is dedicated to resolving this issue. To those who said that it was necessary to adopt the Law or circumcision, St. Paul cites Genesis 15:6 when he writes to the Galatians 3:6:

Thus Abraham "believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

Consider the following time line:



What is St. Paul's point regarding faith versus the adopting the Law of Moses to find favor with God?

7. What are the three significant things that Abraham has to give up in favor of his faith in God?

①

②

③

8. As Abraham journeys through the wilderness what does he do to demonstrate his faith in God?

9. How are God's promises to Abraham ultimately fulfilled?

10. Notice how long it takes for God to make good on all the promises He made to Abraham. In the Letter to the Hebrews 11:1-14 we read:

Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen. Because of it the ancients were well attested. By faith we understand that the universe was ordered by the word of God, so that what is visible came into being through the invisible. By faith Abel offered to God a sacrifice greater than Cain's. Through this he was attested to be righteous, God bearing witness to his gifts, and through this, though dead, he still speaks. By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and "he was found no more because God had taken him." Before he was taken up, he was attested to have pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him, for anyone who approaches God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. By faith Noah, warned about what was not yet seen, with reverence built an ark for the salvation of his household. Through this he condemned the world and inherited the righteousness that comes through faith. By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; he went out, not knowing where he was to go. By faith he sojourned in the promised land as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs of the same promise; for he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and maker is God. By faith he received power to generate, even though he was past the normal age—and Sarah herself was sterile—for he thought that the one who had made the promise was trustworthy. So it was that there came forth from one man, himself as good as dead, descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sands on the seashore. ***All these died in faith. They did not receive what had been promised but saw it and greeted it from afar*** (emphasis added) and acknowledged themselves to be strangers and aliens on earth, for those who speak thus show that they are seeking a homeland.

Why does the Judeo-Christian faith tradition therefore hold Abraham in such high esteem?

12:10-20

11. What do we learn from Abraham's sojourn in Egypt?

Chapter 13

1:1-18

1. Abram and his nephew Lot have accumulated a lot of livestock. So much so that there is not enough grazing land for them to both inhabit the same territory. What solution does Abram propose?

2. In which city does Lot settle?

3. What is the ominous foreboding that we are given in v. 13?

4. Once Lot is gone what does God do regarding Abram?

Chapter 14

1:1-16

1. In vv. 1-9 we have a list of the ancient kings of various city-states in the region. Which city-states are defeated in a series of battles and tribal wars?

2. Who is among those who are defeated and he, his goods, and his family are carried off as spoils of war?

3. How does Abram respond to this news?

14:13

4. It is in this verse that in the Bible we are first introduced to the term “Hebrew.” What are the three possible ancient roots of this word?

①

②

③

14:18-20

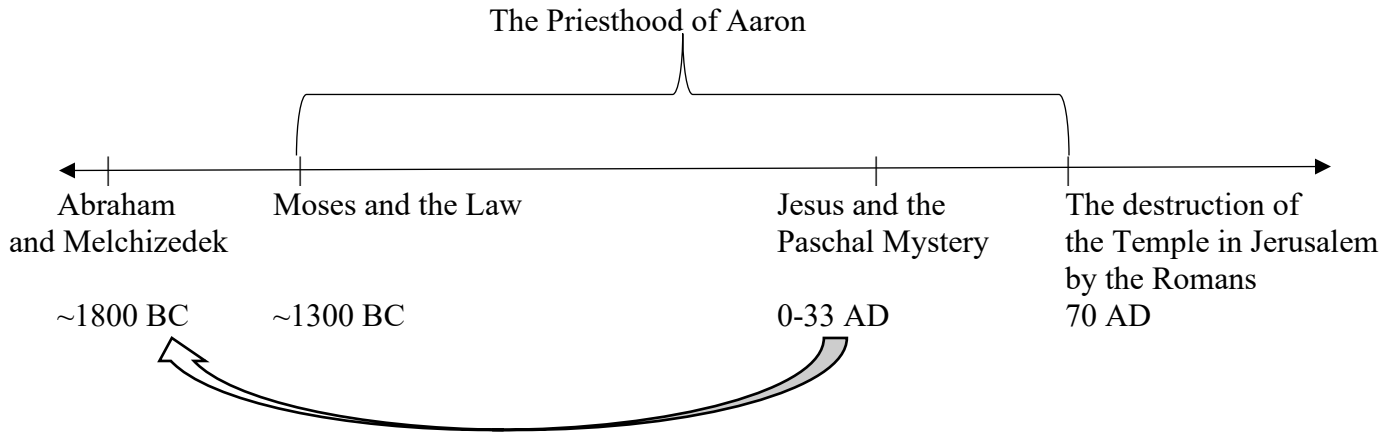
5. Melchizedek is mentioned throughout the Bible, particularly in the Book of Psalms and in the Letter to the Hebrews. But this is the only place in the Bible where we are actually introduced to him. In his world, surrounded by pagan cults, what was unique about Melchizedek and his worship?

6. Melchizedek is the priest/king of the city of _____ which later becomes known as _____.

7. What is significant about Abram receiving a blessing from Melchizedek here?

8. What does Abram do in v. 20 and what precedent does that set for the ensuing ages?

9. The significance of the priesthood of Melchizedek ripples through the ages. Back in chapter 12 we saw this timeline



The Letter to the Hebrews connects Jesus' eternal High Priesthood to the priesthood of Melchizedek and not that of Aaron. Why?

10. In rescuing/liberating Lot, Abram has also restored the kingship to the king of Sodom. What does the king offer Abram and how does he respond?

Chapter 15

1:1-21

1. For what to actions of Abram does God reward him?

①

②

2. What does God promise to Abram?

①

②

③

3. What does God require of Abram for God to fulfill these promises?

15:2-3

4. What is the topic of the dialogue between Abram and God at this point?

5. What is the tone of the dialogue between Abram and God and what can this teach us?

15:4-6

6. We saw this in #6 back in Chapter 12. In Genesis 15:16 we read:

“And Abram believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.”

In other words, by Abram taking God at His word, God now puts Abram in a right relationship with Him. Why is it critical for Christians to understand Genesis 15:6?

7. St. James writes that Abraham’s acts of obedience put him in right relationship with God. Which works specifically?

①

②

15:7-21

8. Here we have the actual covenant that God makes with Abram (soon to be re-named Abraham). What does God require Abram to do in preparation for the covenant ceremony (vv. 9-11)?

9. How does God make the covenant with Abram? Reflecting the practice of Abram’s time, what does God do?

10. What does God prophesy to Abram in vv. 13-14?

11. What is the significance of v. 16?

Chapter 16

1:1-6

1. Sarai, Abram's legal wife, becomes impatient waiting for God to fulfill His promise of offspring for the couple. What is her solution?
2. In what sense can this behavior be understood or even pardoned?
3. In what sense is it still unacceptable?
4. How is God at work when men are practicing immoral acts?
5. While polygamy is practiced in the Scriptures, it always carries with it problems and disorders including rape, incest, and murder. What happens between Sarai and Hagar once Hagar conceives a child through Abram (vv. 4-6)?

16:7-16

6. What does Abram name the son who is born of Hagar? _____
7. In various places in the Old Testament we will read of an angel of the LORD appearing. In other places it will say that the angel of the LORD appeared. What is the difference between them?
8. By Abram and Sarai not waiting for God, but taking things into their own hands, they now put God in a tough spot. God does not act out of cruelty or selfishness in dealing with the people He creates. How does God deal with the existence of Hagar and her son?

Chapter 17

1:1-27

1. What are the three duties that God imposes on the Great Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and on their descendants?

①

②

③

17:1

2. What are the three possible meanings of Hebrew name “El-Shaddai”?

①

②

③

3. What two things is the Bible telling us by recording the names by which the Hebrews referred to God?

①

②

3. What two things does God ask of Abraham and how does one make the other possible?

①

②

17:5

4. God changes Abram’s name to Abraham, which means _____.

5. In Christian practice, names are changed and added. For example, when someone takes solemn religious vows as a nun or a monk, they often change their names. We have the practice of taking a Confirmation name. What does the change of name mean?

6. Looking forward to the New Testament, what does Abraham’s name prophecy?

17:10-14

7. What are two possible reasons why circumcision was practiced in the Ancient Near East?

①

②

8. Why did the Hebrews/Israelites/Jews practice it?

9. In the New Covenant inaugurated by Jesus, circumcision would no longer serve any purpose. But what did it pre-figure or foreshadow?

17:15-22

10. God repeats the tremendous promise He is making to Abraham who falls on his face and laughs because it seems so impossible. At this point in the story, Ishmael is about 13 years old. What does Abraham ask of God regarding the boy and what can we conclude about Abraham's relationship with Ishmael from v. 18?

11. What promise from Chapter 16 does God reiterate regarding Ishmael?

12. What is the new act of faith that God asks of Abraham?

17:23-27

13. How does Abraham react to God's demand that he, and all the males in his sphere of influence be circumcised?

Chapter 18**18:1-19:38**

1. God promises that Abraham will be a blessing to all people. How does this promise begin to be fulfilled?

18:1-15

2. The appearance of the three men is very mysterious.

- How does Abraham refer to them in v. 3?

- How does he refer to them in v. 4?

3. How did some Early Christian Fathers explain this?

4. How does the Jewish Tradition explain it?

18:6

5. The "bread" or "cakes" that are referred to often in the Old Testament were flat pieces of dough that were cooked on hot rocks, somewhat akin to pita bread or tortillas. Given the information from the notes, how much bread would Sarah have made?

6. In those days, an average meal might have consisted of perhaps one or two of the above mentioned pita breads, some water, maybe some fruit/dried fruit (dates, figs) and some soup/gruel made of mashed garbanzo beans or other beans. How does that compare with the spread that Abraham and Sarah put out for their guests?

18:16-33

7. Back in Chapter 4, page 30, question 11 of these notes we were introduced to the “Sins that Cry to Heaven.” Here in v. 20 we have the second one. What is it?

8. One aspect of human existence that has vexed us from the beginning is the innocent suffering because of the acts of the guilty. Back in 2008, many people suffered financial losses because of the acts of a relative small number of businessmen and politicians; acts over which those suffering had no control. Abraham sees that his nephew Lot will be destroyed along with the rest of the evil-doers in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, so he haggles with God. What great central aspect of our Christian faith does this foreshadow?

9. In the end, how effective are Abraham’s efforts to bargain with God?

10. Looking ahead in the Old Testament, at the time of the destruction of the Northern Kingdom of Israel by the Assyrian Empire (721 BC) and then the Southern Kingdom of Judah, including the city of Jerusalem and Solomon’s Temple some 130 years later in 587 BC, the good and the evil are punished together. What does our study notes say about this in reference to the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel (and also the Book of the Prophet Daniel)?

Chapter 19

19:1-38

11. What is Lot’s mistake?

19:4-5

12. What is doubly evil about that the men of Sodom demand to do with Lot’s guests (v. 5)?

①

②

13. What is the teaching of the Catholic Church, based on what we read in the Old and New Testaments regarding:

① Homosexual acts?

② Homosexual persons?

14. In efforts to “force-fit” homosexual acts with the Scriptures, gay activists have tried to claim that the real sin of the Sodomites was not seeking to force themselves sexually on Lot’s guests but violating the norms of hospitality of their culture (#12 above). By your reading of 18:20 and 19:1-11 what do you think?

15. Look specifically at v. 8. Using some acerbic hyperbole, what is Lot really saying here?

16. How do Lot’s future sons-in-law respond to his warning to get out of the city before it is destroyed (v. 14)?

17. Even Lot drags his feet in obeying the warnings of the two angels. What do the angels do (v. 16)?

19:24

18. Where might we find the ruins of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah in our times?

19. What are we supposed to learn from the destruction of these cities?

19:26

20. To this day, there are formations of pillars of salt around the Dead Sea that are called “Lot’s Wife.” What 3 things do we learn from this very brief mention of this event in Genesis?

①

②

③

19:30-38

21. What happens in these verses that serves to explain to the ancient peoples the inferiority of the Moabites and the Ammonites?

Chapter 20

20:1-18

1. This entire chapter is a kind of parable. What is it trying to tell or illustrate for the reader?

2. In what sense is Abimelech guilty of a grave sin?

- In what sense is he innocent?
- How does God take all of this into consideration?

Chapter 21

21:1-7

1. What does Isaac's name mean in Hebrew?
2. The Bible is full of examples of remarkable births to women who were thought to be barren or otherwise could not have children (Jacob's wife Rachel, Samuel's mother Hannah, Samson's mother, Elizabeth the mother of John the Baptist, Mary the mother of Jesus). To what do all of these births point?
3. How do we see Abraham's trust in God growing at this point in the story of his life?

21:8-21

4. Let's try some reconstruction from the texts.
 - At this point in the story about how old would Ishmael be (Refer back to 17:25)?
 - At this point in the story, about how old would Isaac be (21:8)?
 - What kind of a relationship does it seem reasonable to assume that Isaac and Ishmael had (vv. 8-9)?
5. How does Abraham react to Sarah's demand that Ishmael and his mother be expelled from the clan (v. 11)?
6. Why does Sarah demand that Hagar and Ishmael be expelled from the clan?
7. Look ahead to St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 4:21-31. St. Paul refers back to this story to explain our inheritance from God. What does he say?

8. Things look dire for Hagar and Ishmael in the desert when their provisions run out. What does God do?

21:22-23

9. What is the moral of the story of Abraham and Abimelech?

Chapter 22

22:1-19

1. According to Hebrews 11:19, why would Abraham be willing to sacrifice Isaac to God?

2. The near sacrifice of Isaac is seen as a biblical type or foreshadowing of the crucifixion of Jesus. List some of the elements of the stories of Isaac and Jesus that make this connection:

①

②

③

3. People who oppose faith in God will often point to the near sacrifice of Isaac as their proof of the irrational nature of people of faith. Why would God ask anyone to kill their child as an act of worship to Him? Then why would He change His mind at the last second and jerk poor Abraham around like that? With the near sacrifice of Isaac, Abraham both succeeds spectacularly and fails miserably.

- In what sense does Abraham succeed?

- In what sense does he fail?

We see here how the story of the near sacrifice of Isaac is a reflection of the complexity of our lives and how we are all works in progress.

22:2

4. What is one of the possibilities as to the actual location of the mountain where Isaac was almost sacrificed?

22:12

5. How are God's love, mercy, and generosity manifested in the aftermath of the near sacrifice of Isaac?

6. What is the main difference, according to St. Paul, of the near sacrifice of Isaac and Jesus' sacrifice of ③Himself on the cross?

22:13-14

7. How does the ram caught in the thicket pre-figure or foreshadow Jesus?

22:20-24

8. What is the significance of the family tree of Nahor that is presented to us here?

9. What is significant about the descendants of Nahor, Ishmael, and Jacob?

Chapter 23

23:1-20

1. Back in Genesis 12, God promised that He would give Abraham ①Land and a nation, ②Kingship and a name and ③ that He would make Abraham a blessing to all nations. Sarah has died and Abraham, being a nomadic herdsman, has no land where he can bury her. How does he solve this problem and what does it mean?

23:11

2. Abraham wants only a piece of land that contains a cave to use for his family tomb. Why does Ephron require Abraham to buy the surrounding land as well, and why does Abraham agree to it?

23:19

3. As we read on in Genesis, who do we will find out is buried in this tomb?

① _____ ② _____ ③ _____
④ _____ ⑤ _____

4. What is the current status of this place?

Chapter 24

24:1-67

1. How does telling the story of Isaac's marriage to Rebekah before Abraham's death affect the flow of the story?

2. What are the 5 scenes in this story?

① vv. 1-9

② vv. 10-28

③ vv. 29-53

④ vv. 54-61

⑤ vv. 62-67

24:1-9

1. Why does Abraham want a wife for Isaac from his own homeland?

2. Why is Abraham so adamant that the servant not allow Isaac to return to Mesopotamia?

3. What quality does St. Ambrose tell us that Abraham was searching for in the woman who would be his son's wife?

24:10

4. What is significant about the servant taking 10 of Abraham's camels?

5. How faithful is Abraham's servant in carrying out his instructions?

6. We will be re-introduced to Rebekah's brother Laban later in on Genesis. He is a scoundrel and swindler. For what two possible reasons does he show Abraham's servant great deference and hospitality.

①

②

24:66-67

7. In vv. 55-67, Rebekah takes leave of her family and goes with Abraham's servant to meet her future husband. How do Isaac and Rebekah react to one another?

Chapter 25

25:1-18

1. What details of Abraham's life are recorded in these verses?

① vv. 1-6

② vv. 7-11

③ vv. 12-18

2. We are told that Isaac and Ishmael buried Abraham in their family tomb (v. 9). What does this suggest about the relationship between Isaac and Ishmael?

3. How does Abraham deal with the many other children that he had through his concubines and what does this mean?

25:7-11

4. What does the phrase "Abraham...was gathered to his people" mean?

- Compared to our understanding, what is missing from this ancient statement about death?

- According to the text and to the understanding of ancient peoples, what was Abraham's reward?

5. At this point, to whom does God's promise of land and many descendants pass?

7. THE DESCENDANTS OF ISHMAEL

25:12-18

6. Here we have the last mention of Ishmael in the Bible. Why is he no longer mentioned?

8. THE DESCENDANTS OF ISAAC THE STORY OF JACOB

25:19-37:1

7. What is Isaac's primary purpose in the story of the Great Patriarchs?

8. What does the narrative about Jacob and Esau tell us?

①

②

③

9. What two nations descend from:

Jacob: _____

Esau: _____

25:21-23

10. Rebekah, who was barren, gives birth to twins. What is ironic about their births and later relationship as we read in v. 23?

25:24-26

11. The twin boys born to Isaac and Rebekah are named:

_____ which means:

and

_____ which means:

12. Jacob was _____ years old when he began to pray to God for a son. He was _____ years old when the twins were born. What lesson should we take from this according to St. John Chrysostom?

25:29-34

13. These brief verses tell us quite a bit. First of all, how is Esau's name associated with the soup that Jacob is making?

14. Back in vv. 27-28 are told:

When the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country; whereas Jacob was a simple man, who stayed among the tents. Isaac preferred Esau, because he was fond of game; but Rebekah preferred Jacob.

Based on this,

•What kind of a guy was Jacob?

- What kind of a guy was Esau?

How do these qualities of these two men come to the fore in vv. 29-34? Look at v. 32. Was Esau really about to die from hunger?

What does Jacob “charge” Esau for a bowl of lentil soup and a piece of bread?

15. Both men are in the wrong.

- What was wrong with what Jacob did?

- What did Esau do wrong?

16. What lesson does St. John Chrysostom tell us that we should take from this exchange between Jacob and Esau?

Chapter 26

26:1-35

1. What are the three episodes from Abraham’s life that are similar to what happens to Isaac and Rebekah in chapter 26?

①

②

③

2. What is this supposed to show or demonstrate to the reader?

3. What is significant about vv. 3 & 5?

4. What does the figure of Isaac teach us?

26:7-11

5. Abimelech does not believe in the God of Abraham and Isaac. He probably does not even know that such a God exists. Pagan though he is, what very redeeming quality do he and his people have as evidenced in v. 10?

26:12-14

6. As we will see in other parts of the Bible, material wealth here on earth is understood by biblical personalities as a blessing from God. What are the two sources of Isaac's wealth?

①

②

7. How should this be interpreted in our own times?

8. According to the Scriptures and the teachings of the Church, how are we to understand the proper use of material goods (see also 1 Timothy 6:10)?

26:15-33

9. In vv. 15-22 Isaac gets into a series of squabbles with the locals over water rights. What do the names that Isaac gives to the wells that he digs mean?

•Esek

•Sitnah

•Rehoboth

10. At first Abimelech and his people run Isaac and his clan off of their land. But then they come back looking for him. Why do they do this? What are they seeking?

11. The chapter closes with a brief note of Esau and the woman he marries. What is the result of this?

Chapter 27**27:1-45**

1. What are the three things Jacob would get possession of by taking the birthright from Esau?

①

②

③

2. As the story unfolds, it looks like Rebekah and Jacob (remember back from vv. 27-28 what Genesis said about the relationship between Rebekah and Jacob and Isaac and Esau) pull off a massive deception against Isaac and Esau. Yet how does the commentary explain this? (Refer back to 25:23.)

27:5-17

3. What appears to be motivating Rebekah as the mastermind of the deception of her husband? (Review 26:34-35)

27:20

This is a little confusing. The commentary says that the reader is left to assume that getting the meat for Isaac's meal was somehow Rebekah's doing. Genesis says clearly in 27:9 that Rebekah got the meat from two goats from the family's herd.

27:26-29

4. What are the three things connected with the call of Abraham evoked in the blessing Isaac bestows upon Jacob?

①

②

③

5. Regarding the great deception of Jacob and Rebekah, we are told in v. 1 that Isaac was old (probably some dementia) and that his eyes were dim (probably cataracts).

- Why would Rebekah prepare the food?

- Why does she put pieces of goat hide on Jacob's wrists and the back of his neck?

- If Isaac can barely see, why put Esau's clothes on Jacob (v. 27)?

27:33

6. Once the ruse becomes known, why does Isaac not simply call his wife and sons to his presence, bawl Isaac and Rebekah out for their treachery, and then bestow the blessing on Esau as custom would demand?

7. What does this conviction of blessings and curses mean?

8. What does St. Ambrose tell us that this teaches all of us to this day?

27:45

9. Esau is understandably furious and plots to kill Jacob. Rebekah hears about it and warns Jacob to flee. In so doing, how does she save:

- Jacob?

- Esau?

10. What lesson does St. Ambrose tell us that we can learn from Rebekah?

27:46-28:9

11. Why does Rebekah insist to Isaac that Jacob not marry one of the Hittite women?

12. From where is Jacob to get a wife?

13. How does Esau react to all of this (vv. 6-9)?

14. What is the problem with Israelite men marrying Canaanite women?

Chapter 28**28:10-22**

15. Bethel (בֵּית-אֵל) in Hebrew means “House of God.” This becomes an significant place in the Old Testament. What three events take place here?

①

②

③

16. After his dream at Bethel, Jacob will not have any visions of God for a long time. What does St. José María Escrivá tell us that this means?

28:12

17. How do later Christians interpret Jacob’s Ladder?

18. To whom does St. Bernard apply the symbolism of the ladder?

28:14

19. What is God's purpose in choosing the Israelites over all the other people of the world?

28:20

20. Look up 1 Timothy 6:6-10. Compare that with Genesis 28:20, the Lord's Prayer, and with St. John Chrysostom's teaching from the commentary. What are we being taught here?

Chapter 29

29:1-32:3

1. What 4 things does Jacob do in this section?

①

②

③

④

29:1-14

2. What two people does Jacob finally meet on his journey to "the land of the east?"

① _____ ② _____

3. How do Jacob and his uncle Laban initially hit it off? (As the story develops, we will see that things do not end well between Laban and Jacob.)

29:12

4. How is Jacob related to Rachel?

29:15-30

5. Of Laban's two daughters, _____ and _____, _____ is the eldest and not as beautiful as _____ who is the youngest.

6. What is the agreement between Laban and Jacob in order for Jacob to marry Rachel?

7. What does Laban do to Jacob regarding his marriage to Rachel?

8. What does this force Jacob to do?

9. Remember that in the Scriptures, numbers have symbolic meanings. Three means perfection, seven means fulfillment, 12 means complete, 40 indicates times of trial and purification. This being the case, how might we describe the amount of time that Jacob spent working for Laban to marry his daughters?

10. What is the irony between Jacob and Laban?

11. Who is Jacob's favored wife? _____

12. Yet who will be the ancestor of King David (and Jesus)? _____

13. The story is plagued with trickery, polygamy, and favoritism. But Genesis seems to overlook all of these shortcomings. Why?

14. Who are the four women (two wives, and two concubines) in Jacob's life?

① _____ ② _____

③ _____ ④ _____

29:31-30:24

15. What does the writer of Genesis want to show us through telling the story of the birth of Jacob's sons?

29:31

16. Echoing the tension between Sarah and Hagar, what is the conflict between Rachel and Leah?

17. How does the Biblical text explain Leah's fertility and Rachel's barrenness?

18. What are the names of the six sons that Leah bears? (Look ahead to vv. 16-20.)

① _____ ② _____

③ _____ ④ _____

⑤ _____ ⑥ _____

Chapter 30

30:1-13

1. There is polygamy throughout the Bible. Why do you think the Holy Spirit allows it to be displayed in the Scriptures?

2. How does Rachel propose to remedy the fact that she cannot have children and where have we seen this before?

3. Who are the sons that Jacob has through Bilha?

① _____ ② _____

4. Who are the sons that Jacob has through Zilpah?

① _____ ② _____

5. Finally, who are the two sons born to Rachel?

① _____ ② _____

See Genesis 35:16-20

30:25-43

6. How does Jacob now become rich at Laban's expense?

Chapter 31

31:1-32:3

1. As the story unfolds, we see the crooked nature of both Laban and Jacob on full display. What are the four scenes described for us as Jacob makes his escape from Laban?

①

②

③

④

31:1-16

2. What are Jacob's two reasons for leaving Laban that he gives to his wives for going back to the land of Canaan (vv. 4-7)?

①

②

3. What is meant by the Angel of God and the “God of Bethel?”

31:13

4. What sounds familiar in this verse?

5. What is the difference between the way Abraham received the promise of land from God and the way Jacob receives it?

6. How is Jacob’s return to the land of Canaan a symbol of the Christian life?

31:14-16

7. Now the family of Laban airs its dirty laundry. What do his daughters say about him?

8. What is the net effect of Jacob selectively breeding his and Laban’s flocks so that Jacob’s would increase and Laban’s would decrease?

31:19

9. Why would Rachel take her father Laban’s household idols/gods?

31:22-54

10. After three days, Laban is told that Jacob has skipped town with Laban’s daughters and grandchildren. Who intervenes so that Laban does not act rashly or harshly?

31:26-30

11. Now all of the pent-up frustrations and emotional ill-will between Jacob and Laban is on full display. While Laban is definitely a crook what are his main concerns in vv. 27-28?

12. What other sore point does Laban bring up in v. 30 and how does Jacob respond?

31:35

13. How does Rachel prevent Laban from searching her person and tent for his idols/gods?

14. In vv. 36-41, it all comes out. Jacob unloads all of the years of anger and frustration on Laban. What are some of his complaints?

①

②

③

④

31:42

15. Instead of seeing God as a force of nature or being linked to certain sacred places, how do the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) see God?

31:43-54

16. Jacob and Laban part each other's company on more-or-less peaceful terms. They make a pact or a covenant that serves to smooth over their respective grievances. What are the two aspects of this covenant?

①

②

Chapter 32**32:1-2**

1. What, according to St. José María Escrivá, is the significance to Christians of Jacob recognizing the angels they he sees as he travels along?

32:3-33:20

2. Jacob has gotten himself out from under Laban's control. Now he has to deal with another difficulty from his past?

3. In vv. 3-8, the scene for the story is set up for us. What happens and how do you as the reader react?

4. Why would Jacob be “greatly afraid and distressed?”
5. What does Jacob do in vv. 9-12?
6. How does Jacob attempt to make amends with Esau (vv. 13-20)?

32:22-29

7. Jacob spends the night unknowingly wrestling with whom?
8. In the end, the wrestling match is a draw, and Jacob tells his opponent that he will let him go if he blesses him. How does the opponent respond?
9. What does this new name mean?
10. What does St. Ambrose say that this struggle with God means to the faithful Christian?

32:31

11. What is the meaning of the word Peniel?
12. What is the hagiographer trying to accomplish by telling the background of why the Israelites would not eat a certain part of an animal based on what happened to Jacob/Israel?

Chapter 33

33:1-20

1. Jacob/Israel has yet to face Esau. As we read the story the tension is high. What does Jacob do in vv. 1-3?
2. What is the significance of Jacob bowing to the ground seven times as he approaches Esau?
3. In the great climax of the story, how does Esau respond to meeting Jacob?
4. Considering Esau’s personality (review Genesis 25:27-34) why is this really not a surprise?
5. What happens regarding the gift of livestock that Jacob presented to Esau?

6. What is the significance of Jacob insisting that Esau and his clan move ahead, leaving Jacob and his family behind?
7. What is the lesson we can all take from this exchange between Jacob and Esau according to St. John Chrysostom?

Chapter 34

34:1-31

1. So far, we are seeing that the majority of people that we come across in the Book of Genesis are **not** good and moral people! What happens between Dinah (Leah's daughter) and Shechem?
2. Look at v. 4. What kind of a guy is Shechem and what kind of a relationship does he appear to have with his father, Hamor?
3. How does Jacob first respond to the news that his daughter had been raped by Shechem?
4. What arrangement does Hamor offer to Jacob and his sons for the marriage between Shechem and Dinah?
5. What is the condition upon which the sons of Jacob will agree to Hamor's offer (vv.14-17)?
6. What do Hamor and Shechem say to the members of their clan (vv. 18-24)?
7. What do the sons of Jacob do in vv.25-29?
8. Evidently, Jacob did not know about what his sons were planning. How does he respond to what they have done (v. 30)?
9. Once Jacob expresses his displeasure with what his sons have done, what is their defense?

Chapter 35

35:1-15

1. What are the features of a religious pilgrimage that we find in Jacob's trek from Shechem to Bethel?

①

②

③

④

⑤

2. God is now speaking quite a bit with Jacob/Israel. What does this demonstrate to us?

35:16-29

3. What happens to Rachel?

35:17-18

4. Initially, Rachel's second son is named _____ which means:

•But Jacob changes his name to _____ with means:

5. What reprehensible thing does Rueben do (v. 22)?

6. In vv. 27-29, Isaac dies at a ripe old age. What can we conclude about the relationship between Jacob and Esau?

9. THE DESCENDANTS OF ESAU

Chapter 36

36:1-43

1. Why do Jacob and Esau part company (v. 7)?

36:1-5

2. Why do the names of Esau's wives not match up in this chapter?

Chapter 37

37:1

1. Where is Jacob living during this time?

10. THE DESCENDANTS OF JACOB. THE STORY OF JOSEPH

37:2-50:26

2. What story do these final chapters of Genesis tell us?
3. What does Joseph do that sets the stage for him not getting along with the rest of his half-brothers?
4. We will read in this story how the Israelites found their way to living in Egypt. About when does it appear that this happened?

37:2

5. What are the elements of the story of Jacob/Israel settling in Egypt that are relayed to us in chapters 37-50?

①

②

③

④

37:3-4

6. What are some of the results of Jacob giving Joseph the robe with long sleeves (or the coat of many colors—depending on the translation)?

①

②

③

④

37:5-11

7. What role do Joseph's dreams fill in the story?
8. How does Jacob respond to Joseph's dreams?
9. How do Joseph's half-brothers respond?

10. How is the hand of God ultimately at work?

37:12-36

11. Joseph's half-brothers conspire to kill him.

- What is their initial plan (vv. 19-20)?
- Who initially intervenes?
- Which other brother finally comes up with the plan to sell Joseph to the Ishmaelite/Midianite traders?
- How much do they sell Joseph for and of what is this reminiscent?

12. What lie do the half-brothers concoct to explain Joseph's disappearance to Jacob?

Chapter 38

38:1-30

1. We take a little detour here to read the story of the tribe of Judah. Why is he important?

2. Why is Tamar a significant figure in the history of Israel and in salvation history?

3. What happens to Tamar's first husband Er and why?

38:8-10

4. So how does Judah propose to solve this problem and how does it work out?

5. So now what does Judah require of Tamar?

6. God draws straight with crooked lines. We saw with Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar; Lot and his daughters, Jacob and Esau, Jacob and Laban, Hamor and Shechem, etc., that the people through whom God is working are not moral people. What is the great deception of Tamar and yet how is it in a strange sense justifiable?

38:24

7. Why would it be notable that Judah would have Tamar killed by burning her instead of stoning her for adultery?

8. So in the end, what happens between Judah and Tamar?

9. The births of the twins Perez and Zerah is odd. Who appears to be born first? _____

- Yet who is actually born first? _____

- What is the take-home message of this strange event?

Chapter 39

39:1-23

1. We now return to the story of Joseph. He is purchased as a slave by a man named Potiphar. What happens to Joseph in Potiphar's house?

2. What later happens between Joseph and Potiphar's wife?

3. What are the virtues that St. Ambrose tells us the Patriarchs show us?

Abraham _____

Isaac _____

Jacob _____

Joseph _____

39:12

4. What do St. Caesarius of Arles and St. Josemaría Escrivá say that we learn from Joseph in regards to winning struggles with chastity?

39:21-23

5. What happens to Joseph while he is in prison (compare vv. 5-6 with vv. 21-23)?

6. How does St. Bernard compare Joseph the son of Jacob and our beloved St. Joseph?

Chapter 40**40:1-23**

1. What is the dream of the chief butler (sometimes referred to as Pharaoh's cup bearer)?

- What does Joseph say that the dream means?

- Once he would be reestablished in his previous position, what does Joseph request of the butler?

2. What is the dream of the baker?

- What does Joseph say that the dream means?

3. Once Joseph's interpretations of the dreams are proved to be true, what disappointment does Joseph face?

Chapter 41**41:1-57**

1. What is the author of Genesis showing us through Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams?

2. What is Pharaoh's first dream?

3. What was Pharaoh's second dream?

4. Since the Egyptians cannot interpret the dream, how is the issue resolved?

5. What does Joseph say that the seven fat cows and seven healthy ears of grain represent?

6. What do the seven gaunt cows and seven blighted ears of grain represent?
7. What does Joseph say is the meaning behind the fact that there are two different dreams?

41:33-36

8. Having interpreted the dreams, what does Joseph now do?
9. How is man expected to respond to God's plans?

41:37-45

10. How does Pharaoh respond to Joseph's recommendations?
11. What are the two religious teachings that come out of the story to this point?
- ① _____

② _____

12. What are the names of the two sons born to Joseph in Egypt?

① _____ & ② _____

The twelve sons of Jacob/Israel become the chiefs of the 12 Tribes of Israel. But when the Promised Land is settled in the Book of Joshua, only 10 of the tribes are allotted land. The tribe of Levi are the itinerant priests who do not have land since they travel throughout the land performing their priestly duties. The tribe of Joseph is not given land, but land is given to what are called the "half-tribes" of Ephraim and Manasseh so the land does get divided 12 ways.

13. What are the Egyptians told by Pharaoh to do and what does St. Josemaría Escrivá tell us to do?

42:1-47:12

1. Where does this part of the story of Joseph take us?
2. How many trips to Egypt to Jacob's sons make to buy grain?
3. How do Joseph's dreams from Genesis 37 come true?
4. What is the process that the sons of Jacob go through in their dealing with Joseph in Egypt?

5. What is the proof of the great brotherhood that exists among these half-brothers?

Chapter 42

42:1-7

6. What are the two aspects of the decision to go to Egypt to find food that Jacob has to confront?

①

②

7. What ironic thing happens in v. 6?

8. Why does Joseph treat his brothers harshly like strangers?

42:8-24

9. When Joseph's half brothers show up looking to buy grain, Joseph recognizes them, but they do not recognize him. What does Joseph accuse them of?

10. What does Joseph require of the brothers before he will let them return to the land of Canaan?

11. What do the brothers begin to realize in vv. 21-24?

42:25-28

12. What is the ruse or trick that Joseph plays on his brothers?

13. How do the brothers interpret this (v. 28)?

14. How does Jacob respond to the report given to him by his sons?

Chapter 43

43:1-10

1. With their food eaten, Jacob tells his sons to prepare for another journey to Egypt. What causes them to delay in making the trip?

2. Who solves the problem and how does he do so?

3. Properly speaking, who of the brothers should be stepping forward to take responsibility for getting food for the family?

4. Who takes the initiative, and what does this mean for salvation history?

43:11-14

5. What three things does Jacob tell his sons to do as they prepare to return to Egypt in preparation for their next meeting with Joseph?

①

②

③

6. How does Jacob make peace with sending Benjamin to Egypt?

43:18-23

7. The brothers are invited to Joseph's own home (vv. 16-17). How do they interpret Joseph's action?

8. The brothers speak to Joseph's steward and explain what happened with their money on the first trip. What does the steward tell them?

43:26-27

9. What is the significance of the story again narrating the brothers bowing down to Joseph?

43:30-31

10. Joseph provides for a great feast, yet he dines alone, the Egyptian servants of his house dine by themselves, and the sons of Jacob eat by themselves. Why?

11. How does Joseph show favor to Benjamin?

12. What is the great lesson we can learn from Joseph according to Pope St. Gregory the Great?

Chapter 44

44:1-34

1. What is the ruse that Joseph again plays on his half-brothers and Benjamin?

44:5

2. What was so special about the silver cup from Joseph's table?

44:9-17

3. When Joseph's servants catch up with the brothers and accuse them of stealing the silver cup, what unfortunate promise do the brothers make to them?

4. How do Joseph's servants respond to this proposal?

5. How do the brothers react when the cup is found in Joseph's sack of grain (v. 13)?

6. Returning to Joseph's house, the brothers are at a complete loss to explain what happened. What are the terms that Joseph lays down for them?

7. Again Judah steps forward and tries to take control of the situation. What does he tell Joseph and what is his counter-offer?

Chapter 45

45:1-28

1. When Joseph first reveals himself to his half-brothers, what is their initial response?

2. What great biblical virtue is on full display between Joseph and his half-brothers?

3. According to Pope St. John Paul the Great, what does forgiveness demonstrate to the world?

4. What does Joseph tell his half-brothers in vv. 5-8 which probably made it possible for him to forgive them?

5. Look back on Joseph's story. When he was being stripped by his brothers and dumped into the cistern; when he was being sold to the Ishmaelites; when he was brought as a slave to Potiphar's house and then falsely accused by his wife and put in jail; when the royal butler forgot about him for two more years, while he was suffering all of these things, was he comforted or consoled by thinking it was all part of God's plan? What can we learn from this?

45:7

6. To what is v. 7 an oblique reference?

45:10

7. What do we know about the Land of Goshen?

45:14-15

8. What do Joseph's gestures show to his half-brothers?

9. How does Pharaoh react to the news that Joseph's father and family are alive?

10. How does Jacob react to the news that Joseph is alive and viceroy of Egypt?

Chapter 46

46:1-47:12

1. What is the whole purpose (according to God's plan) of the experience of Joseph?

46:1-5

2. God makes His last appearance/communication with the Great Patriarchs when He calls to Jacob in the night. What does He tell Jacob?

46:8-27 is a census of all the family of Jacob that came down to Egypt from Canaan.

46:28-34

3. Joseph and Jacob have a tearful reunion. What is the great satisfaction that Jacob has now that all of his sons are back together?

4. Why does Joseph instruct his family to identify themselves to Pharaoh as keepers of livestock?

Chapter 47

47:5-12

1. How does Pharaoh receive the family of Joseph?

2. Now the stage is set for the Exodus. Israel went down to Egypt as a _____ and will later leave Egypt as a _____.

47:13-26

3. The famine is still raging. The people come to Joseph needing more food, but Joseph already has all of their _____ (v. 14). So now when they come to Joseph clamoring for more food he tells them to give him their _____ (vv 16-17). The following year the people come to Joseph for more food and offer _____ in exchange (v. 19). This has the effect of making all of Egypt indentured servants to Pharaoh. They still keep their animals and land, but it belongs to Pharaoh.

4. What do the Egyptians think about this arrangement (v. 25)?

47:27-31

5. What does Jacob make Joseph swear to him on his deathbed?

Chapter 48

48:1-22

1. Back in chapter 41, question 12 on page 76 of these notes we saw how the Half-Tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh figure into the 12 Tribes of Israel. What does this story explain to us?

48:5-6

2. What does it mean when Jacob says, "*Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine as Reuben and Simeon are.*"?

3. Joseph has many other children who are not adopted as sons of Jacob. Why are they mentioned?

48:12-20

4. What is the significance of Ephraim and Manasseh sitting on Jacob's knees/lap?

5. What odd thing happens as Jacob reaches out to bless his grandsons?

48:15

6. For the first time in the Bible, how is God referred to in Jacob's final blessing?

7. What other pious devotion does Jacob call to mind when he mentions the angel who redeemed him from all evil?

Chapter 49

49:1-28

1. This passage is often referred to as Jacob's final blessing on his sons, but it might more properly be thought of as what?

2. Why does the tribe of Judah enjoy a kind of pride of place?

49:3-4

3. Why does Reuben as the eldest not receive the more magnanimous blessing?

49:5-7

4. What happens to the Tribes of Simeon and Levi?

49:8-12

5. Remember that chapter 49 is more properly understood as Jacob uttering prophetic oracles about the various tribes that his sons will lead. So far (vv. 1-8), which tribes have lost their primacy because of their sin?

① _____

② _____

③ _____

6. Which tribe is now moved to the front? _____

7. What are the two noble traits that are ascribed to this tribe?

① _____

② _____

8. Who are the two great men whose coming is prophesied by Jacob in v. 10?

① _____ & ② _____

9. How do some Church Fathers interpret v. 11?

49:13

10. Where did the tribe of Zebulun settle?

49:14-15

11. To what does the “force labor” in v. 15 refer?

12. What does it mean to refer to Issachar as *“a strong ass crouching between the sheepfolds”*?

13. How is it that some Church Fathers see the tribe of Issachar prefiguring Jesus?

49:16-21

14. “Dan” in Hebrew means “to judge” or “justice.” The name Daniel means “God (El) judges” or “Justice of God. What is to be Dan’s role in Israel?

15. What do the following names mean from the Genesis text and how have the Church fathers interpreted them?

	Genesis text	Church Fathers' interpretation
Gad		
Asher		
Naphtali		

49:22-26

16. For what two reasons is so much said about Joseph?

①

②

49:27

17. Where will we read more about the warlike character of the Tribe of Benjamin?

49:29-32

18. Where does Jacob insist that he be buried?

Chapter 50

50:1-14

19. What arrangements does Joseph make for Jacob's funeral? Why would this be necessary?

Vv. 1-14 are interesting in that they contain a level of detail about the funeral arrangements for Jacob that is usually not found in Scripture.

50:15-21

20. Joseph's half-brothers are still worried that he might still have plans to wreak vengeance upon them for what they did. This would be a reasonable fear since it would be a natural human reaction and Joseph is the second most powerful man on earth. It would be nothing for him to order the deaths of all of his half-brothers. What is the lie they concoct to try to defend themselves?

21. How does Joseph respond to this and why (vv. 19-20)?

22. So Genesis ends with the Israelites living in Egypt, away from the land that God promised Abraham. For what does this set the stage?

50:22-26

23. How does God further bless Joseph?

24. What does Joseph prophesy in v. 25 and what does he require of the Israelites (look ahead to Exodus 13:19)?

25. What is the ultimate fate of Joseph's body after he dies?

The End