

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	4
The Old Testament.....	5
Genesis.....	6
Exodus.....	9
Leviticus.....	12
Numbers.....	15
Deuteronomy.....	18
Joshua.....	21
Judges.....	24
Ruth.....	27
I & II Samuel.....	29
I & II Kings.....	33
I & II Chronicles.....	37
Ezra & Nehemiah.....	39
Esther.....	42
The Prophets.....	45
Pre-Fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.....	46
The Fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.....	51
The Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah.....	60
Judah in Exile.....	66
Exiles Return to Jerusalem.....	71
Poetry & Wisdom Literature.....	74
Psalms.....	75
Books of Wisdom.....	79
The Intertestamental Period.....	85
Introduction to the New Testament.....	87
The Gospels.....	88
The Book of Acts.....	97
Introduction to the Epistles.....	101
The Pauline Epistles.....	102
The Prison Epistles.....	109
The Pastoral Epistles.....	113
The General Epistles.....	116
Revelation.....	123

INTRODUCTION

The Bible

The Bible is a collection of books divided into two major sections. The first section is called the Old Testament. It provides a historical account of the people of Israel from Creation to Israel's return from exile. The second section, which contains twenty-seven books, is called the New Testament, and spans the birth of Jesus to the establishment of the first-century church.

Before beginning our study of the Bible, it is important to understand two key concepts, covenant and inspiration. A covenant is an arrangement made between two people. Another word for covenant is "testament." The Bible, made up of the Old and New Testament, provides the basis for how man is to interact with God and what is required of him by God. The Bible was given by God to man for his spiritual guidance and benefit. In addition, the Bible has many contributing authors but is wholly the Word of God. The concept that what is written in the Bible was completely directed and guided by God is called the doctrine of inspiration. This is clearly seen in II Timothy 3:16-17: "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

A key term to know regarding the Bible is the word *canon*, which means "rule" or "measuring stick." It communicates the idea that the books contained in the Bible, the Biblical canon, have been tested and measured for historical accuracy and divine authority. Some traditions include a section of historical books called the deuterocanonical books. These writings are found in a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures called the Septuagint, but not in the Hebrew canon. This section includes both full books and additional sections within books found in the Hebrew canon.

GENESIS

The Book of Genesis

Genesis is all about beginnings: the beginning of the world, people, sin, civilization, the promise of salvation, and the Hebrew people. Genesis opens with the creation story in chapters 1 through 3, where God creates everything that exists out of nothing, in six days.¹ He takes the dark chaos and turns it into a beautiful garden, the garden of Eden, where humans can flourish. This is very good, indeed; God even says the phrase “it is good” seven times, about all that He creates. God then creates Adam and Eve in His image², and they live in this very good garden. God commands them to be fruitful and multiply, to fill the earth, and to subdue it. In addition, God commands them not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, or they shall certainly die. But what do Adam and Eve do? They disobey God by eating the fruit of the tree, and sin enters the world; this event is known as the Fall.³ God then declares to Adam and Eve, and to the snake, their consequences. God tells the snake that he is destined for defeat and promises that a descendant of Eve will crush the serpent’s head, and the serpent will strike the descendant’s heel.

Chapters 4 through 11 contain stories of the downward spiral of humanity, stemming from Adam and Eve and their two sons, Cain and Abel. Each son makes an offering to God, but only Abel’s proves acceptable; Cain becomes jealous of his brother and gives into temptation and sin by killing him. Humanity continues to descend into more sin and destruction—so much so that God decides to punish the earth. God is filled with sadness and grief with the state of the world, and, out of His passion to

1 God created the world in six days and on the seventh day He rested.

2 *Imago Dei* - the image of God.

3 Genesis 3

preserve the goodness of His creation, He washes it clean with a flood.⁴ The Lord chooses Noah and his family to preserve all of humanity, commanding him to build an ark that would save his family and the animals of the earth from the coming flood. The flood subsides and God makes a covenant with Noah, promising never to destroy the earth again with a flood. After this, the nations desire to make a name for themselves by building a tower into the heavens. They unite together to accomplish the construction of the Tower of Babel. But God, in His mercy, decides to scatter them throughout the world, giving them different languages.

After the scattering of Babel, Genesis gives the genealogy of one of Noah's sons, Shem, ending with Abram. Around 2000 B.C., God calls Abram and makes a covenant with him, promising to bless him, to give him numerous children, and to bless the nations of the world through him and his family. Abram is led on a journey by God to the land of Canaan; the Lord promises that this land will belong to him and his offspring. Abram steps out in faith and believes God's promises.⁵ Later in chapter 17, God says, "No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations."⁶ This section of Genesis is concluded with the destruction of the two wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.⁷

The remaining chapters of Genesis focus on the patriarch, Abraham, and his family. Throughout chapters 17-21, Abraham deeply desires an heir. Both he and his wife struggle as they remain childless, their trust in God's promises wavering. After many years, despite Abraham and Sarah being quite old, God miraculously gives them a son, Isaac, as He had promised. In chapter 22, when Isaac is a young boy, God tells Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. Abraham acts to obey God, but before he can sacrifice his son, God stops him and provides a ram instead. God blesses Abraham again for his faithfulness. Isaac eventually has twin sons, Jacob and Esau. The older brother, Esau, sells his birthright to his younger brother, Jacob. When Isaac is very old,

4 Genesis 6:5-8

5 Genesis 12:1-9

6 Genesis 17:5

7 Genesis 18:20-21, 19:23-29

Jacob, with the help of his mother, devises a plan to trick his father into giving him a blessing meant for his older brother; Esau is furious. Jacob flees to Haran and, along the way, he has a dream that God would protect him and bring him back to the Promised Land. Later, Jacob returns to Canaan, and one night on his trip, Jacob wrestles with God and is given a new name: Israel.⁸ When he encounters his brother, Esau, they embrace and are reconciled.

Jacob has twelve sons; but he loves his eleventh son, Joseph, more than all the others. He gives him a coat of many colors, and his other brothers are jealous of him for this. They plan to kill their brother, but instead one brother convinces them to sell him to slave traders passing by on their way to Egypt. Eventually, Joseph settles in Egypt. While a slave, Joseph is accused of a crime and thrown into jail, but God is with Joseph by empowering him to interpret dreams. Pharaoh calls upon Joseph to explain one of his dreams, which Joseph interprets to mean that there would be a famine in the land. Pharaoh is amazed and promotes Joseph to second in command, in charge of collecting food for the famine. As anticipated, the famine that Joseph spoke about fills the whole land, including the land of Canaan; because of this, Joseph's brothers travel down to Egypt in search of food. When they arrive, they do not recognize Joseph, but he recognizes them immediately. God uses Joseph to save them, along with the rest of the Israelites, from starving to death, and they are invited to live in Egypt.⁹ Genesis ends with two deaths: first Jacob dies and is buried in Canaan; Joseph then reminds his family that "God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."¹⁰ This is a reminder of the hope that God will preserve His people and fulfill His promise to Abraham. In the last verse of Genesis, Joseph dies and is buried in Egypt. Now the stage is set for God's people to dwell in Egypt for many years.

8 Genesis 32:24-31

9 Genesis 50:15-26

10 Genesis 50:24