

Synopsis of the Books of the Bible - Genesis

by John Nelson Darby

The book of Genesis establishes the relationship between God and man, from creation to the early history of the Israelites, and sets the stage for the rest of the biblical narrative.

Scripture: Genesis 1:1, Genesis 2:7, Genesis 3:15, Genesis 12:1-3, Genesis 15:6, Genesis 17:4-5, Genesis 18:14, Genesis 21:1-3, Genesis 22:18, Genesis 28:14

Topics: "Creation", "Covenant", "Faith"

Description

John Nelson Darby explores the foundational themes of Genesis, emphasizing its unique character as the beginning of the Bible and the introduction of key principles regarding God's relationship with humanity. He discusses creation, the fall of man, and the unfolding of God's promises, highlighting the significance of Abraham as the father of faith and the establishment of God's covenant. Darby illustrates how Genesis encapsulates the essence of human sin and divine grace, setting the stage for the rest of Scripture. He notes the importance of faith and obedience in the lives of the patriarchs, particularly in the context of God's promises and the coming of the Messiah. Ultimately, Genesis serves as a profound introduction to the overarching narrative of redemption throughout the Bible.

Transcript

Genesis has a character of its own; and, as the beginning of the Holy Book, presents to us all the great elementary principles which find their development in the history of the relationships of God with man, which is recorded in the following books. The germ of each of these principles will be found here, unless we except the law. There was however a law given to Adam in his innocence; and Hagar, we know, prefigures at least Sinai. There is scarce anything afterwards accomplished of which the expression is not found in this book in one form or another. There is found also in it, though the sad history of man's fall be there, a freshness in the relationship of men with God, which is scarce met with afterwards in men accustomed to abuse it and to live in a society full of itself. But whether it be the creation, man and his fall, sin, the power of Satan, the promises, the call of God, His judgment of the world, redemption, the covenants, the separation of the people of God, their condition of strangers on the earth, the resurrection, the establishment of Israel in the land of Canaan, the blessing of the nations, the seed of promise, the exaltation of a rejected Lord to the throne of the world, all are found here in fact or in figure--in figure, now that we have the key, even the church itself.

Let us examine then the contents of this book in order. First, we have the creation--creation in which man is found placed on earth as centre and head. We have first the work of God, and then the rest of God: at the close of His work, rest from labour, without presenting the idea that any one participated in it. God Himself rested from His work. Man comes in to take his place then in happiness at its head.

But here some brief general remarks deserve a place. This revelation from God is not a history by Him of all that He has done, but what has been given to man for his profit, the truth as to what he has to say to. Its object is to communicate to man all that regards his own relationship with God. In connection with the second Adam he will know as he is known; and already, by means of the work of Christ, he has that unction of the Holy One by which he knows all things. But historically the revelation is partial. It communicates what is for the conscience and spiritual affections of man. The created world therefore is taken up as it subsists before the eyes of man, and he in the midst of it, and in so bringing it forward Genesis gives God's work as the author of it. What is here said is true of the whole Bible. Here it is evident in this, that nothing is said of the creation, but what places man in the position which God had made for him in the creation itself, or presents to him this sphere of his existence as being the work of God. Thus no mention is made of any heavenly beings! Nothing is said of their creation. We find them as soon as they are in relationship with men; although afterwards, as a truth, it is fully recognised of course that they are so created.

Thus also, as regards this earth, except the fact of its creation, nothing is said of it beyond what relates to the present form of it. The fact is stated that God created all things, all man sees, all the material universe. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." What may have taken place between that time and the moment when the earth (for it only is then spoken of) was without form and void, is left in entire obscurity. Darkness was then upon the face of the deep, but the darkness is only spoken of as resting on the face of the deep.

From out of this state of chaos and darkness in which the earth then lay God brought it, first introducing light into it by His word, and then formed seas and dry land, and furnished it with plants and living creatures. In this earth, thus prepared and furnished, man, made after the image of God, is placed as lord of all that was in it. Its fruits are given him for food; and God rests from His work, and distinguishes with His blessing the day which saw His labours closed. Man enjoyed the fruit of God's work rather than entered into the rest; for in nothing had he taken part in the work.

The first four days, God brings light and order out of darkness and confusion: light, the first day; the expanse as a scene of heavenly power over the earth, the second day; then He divided what was formed and orderly, on the one hand, from the moving powerful but shapeless mass of waters, on the other, and then ornamented the ordered habitable scene with beauty and fruitfulness on the third. The symbols of directing power were set visibly in their places on the fourth.

The scene of man's display and dominion was formed, but man was not yet there. But before He formed man, God created living energies of every kind in the seas, and earth, and air, which, instinct with life, should propagate and multiply, the proof of God's life-giving power, that to matter He could communicate living energy; and thus, not only a scene was formed, where His purposes in man should be displayed, but that existence, which man should rule so as to display his energies and rights according to the will of God, and as holding his place as vicegerent over the earth, apart and distinct from all, the centre of all, the ruler of all, as interested in them as his; living in his own sphere of blessedness according to his nature, and as to others, ordering all in blessing and subjection. In the midst of all the prepared creation, in a word, man is

set.

But this was not all. He was not to spring out of matter by the mere will of God, as the beasts, by that power which calls things that are not as though they were, and they are. God formed man out of the dust, and when formed breathed from Himself into his nostrils the breath of life, and thus man became a living soul in immediate connection with God Himself. As the apostle states elsewhere, we also are His offspring. It is not said "Let the earth bring forth"; but "Let us make." And He made man in His likeness, created him indeed to multiply as the other living creatures, but gave him dominion over them, and made him the centre and head of God's creation on the earth. The seeds of the fruitful earth were given to him, the green herb and its increase to the beasts. Death and violence were not yet.³ {Ge 2}

We shall see, in chapter 2, another immensely important principle brought out as to man, when the question of his relationship to God is brought forward. Here his creation is a distinct one from all else; he is presented simply, apart from every other thought, as God's workmanship as a creature, the head and centre of the rest, the ruler over them all. But this we may remark: while he represents God and is like Him we have nothing of righteousness and holiness here. This came in by redemption and the partaking of the divine nature. There was of course the absence of evil, and so far the likeness of God; but ignorance of it, not what God is in respect of it. It is much more here the place man holds, than his nature, though the absence of evil, and the spring of condescending affections as the centre of being, must have been found there, had he not fallen. These last are more the likeness, his place more the image. He was the central authority of all things, and all things referred to him as their head. All authority and all affections were related to him as their centre and head, and no sin, sorrow, or evil, or insubordinate self-seeking was there. Unfallen moral order would have been his delight.

The first three verses of chapter 2 belong to the first chapter. It is the rest of God, He ceasing from His own works, all very good. {Ge 2}

In chapter 2 we have man's relationship with God, and his own portion as such. Hence the Lord ⁴ God is introduced: not merely God as a creator, but God in relationship with those He has created. Hence we have the special manner of man's creation.

Only a word or two is called for as to the garden. It was a place of delights. Eden means pleasure. It has wholly disappeared, and it was meant that it should; only we find, by two at least of the rivers, that it was on this earth substantially as we have it. Jehovah Elohim had formed the man, Jehovah Elohim had planted the garden. The river of God to water the earth had its rise there. The fresh springs of God are found in the place of His delight. Man was set there to dress and keep it. Man and the earth are both now in ruin.

But we have in this chapter, more particularly, the special relationship of man with God, with his wife (type of Christ and His church), with the creation; and the two great principles, from which everything flows as regards man, established in the garden where man was placed in blessing; namely, responsibility in obedience, and a sovereign source of life--the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and the tree of life. In these two things, in conciliating these two, lies the lot of every man.⁵ It is impossible out of Christ. It is the question raised in the law, and answered in grace in Christ. The law put life as the result of the perfect obedience of him who knew good and evil, that is, made it depend on the result of our responsibility. Christ, having undergone the consequence of man's having failed, becomes (in the power of a life which had gained the victory over death which was the consequence of that disobedience) a source of life

eternal that evil could not reach, and that in a righteousness perfect according to a work which has taken away all guilt from him that has share in it, a righteousness moreover in which we stand before God according to His own mind and righteous will and nature, according to His own glory. His priesthood⁶ applies to the details of the development of this life in the midst of evil, and the place of divine perfectness in which we are set by His work, and reconciles our present infirmities with our divinely given place before God. In the garden the knowledge of good and evil did not yet exist: obedience only in refraining from an act, which was no sin if it had not been forbidden, constituted the test. It was not a prohibition of sin as at Sinai, and a claim of good when good and evil were known.

The condition of man, in contrast with every other creature here below, found its source in this, that, instead of springing from the earth or water by the sole word of God, as a living being, man was formed and fashioned from the dust, and God places him in immediate relationship, as a living being, with Himself; inasmuch as he becomes a living being through God Himself's breathing into his nostrils the breath of life.

All animated creatures are called living souls, and said to have the breath of life; but God did not breathe into the nostrils of any in order to their becoming living souls. Man was, by his existence, in immediate relationship with God, as deriving his life immediately from Himself; hence he is called in Acts 17 the offspring of God, and in Luke it is said "the [son] of Adam the [son] of God."

It is important to consider this chapter as laying down, in a special manner, all the principles of the relationship of man, whether with God, with his wife, or with the inferior creation. Here were all things in their own order as creatures of God in connection with the earth; but man's labour not the means of their growth and fruitfulness. Nor did rain from heaven minister fruitfulness from above. The mist that watered it rose from the earth, drawn up by power and blessing, but not coming down. Yet man was, as to his place, in a peculiar one in reference to God. Man did not dwell in heaven; God did not dwell on earth. But God had formed a place of peculiar blessing and delight for man's habitation, and there He visited him. Out of this garden, where he was placed by the hand of God as sovereign of the world, flowed rivers which watered and characterised the world without. Upon Adam reposed the duty of obedience. The image of God upon earth, in the absence of evil from his nature, and as the centre of a vast system around him and in connection with him, his own proper blessing was in his immediate connection and intercourse with God, according to the place he was set in.

As soon as God had redeemed a people, He dwelt among them. His abiding presence is the consequence of redemption and through it only (Ex. 29:46). Here He created, blessed, and visited. Adam, created the conscious centre of all around him, had his blessing and security in dependence on and intercourse with God. This, as we shall see, he forfeited, and became the craving centre of his own wishes and ambition, which he could never satisfy.

Earthly nature then in its perfection, with man, in relationship with God by creation and the breath of life that was in him, for its centre; enjoyment; a source of abiding life, and a means of putting responsibility to the test; the sources of universal refreshment to the world without; and, if continuing in his created condition, blessed intercourse with God on this ground --such was the position of the first and innocent Adam. That he might not be alone here, but have a companion, fellowship, and the enjoyment of affection, God formed--not another man, for then the one were not a centre--but out of the one man himself, his wife, that the union might be the most absolute and intimate possible, and Adam head and centre of all. He receives her, moreover, from the hand of God Himself. Such was nature around man: what God always

owns, and man never sins against with impunity, though sin has spoiled it all; the picture of what Christ, the church, and the universe shall be at the end in power in the obedient man. As yet all was innocence, unconscious of evil. {Ge 3}

In chapter 3 we find--what, alas! has always happened, and happened immediately when God has set up anything in the hands of responsible man--disobedience and failure. So it was in Adam, so in Noah, so in Israel with the golden calf, so in the priesthood with strange fire, so in Solomon son of David, and Nebuchadnezzar. So indeed in the church, 1 John 2:18-19, and Jude. It was always the first thing when what was set up was trusted to man. All is set up again in Christ, the Man of God's purpose. The subtlety of the hidden enemy of our souls is now at work. The first effect is the distrust of God which he inspires; then lusts and disobedience; utter dishonour done to God, whether as regards His truth or His love; the power of natural affections over man; the consciousness of being naked and powerless; effort to hide it from oneself;7 terror of God--seeking to hide from Him; self-justification, which seeks to cast upon another, and even upon God, that of which we have been guilty. After that, we have, not the blessing or restoration of man, or promises made to him, but the judgment pronounced upon the serpent, and, in that, the promise made to the second Adam, the victorious Man, but who in grace has His birthplace where the weakness and the fall were. It is the Seed of the woman who bruises the serpent's head.

Remark too how complete was the fall and separation from God. God had fully blessed; Satan suggests that God keeps back the best gift out of envy, lest man should be like Him. Man trusts Satan for kindness rather than God, whom he judges according to Satan's lie. He believes Satan instead of God, when he tells him he should not die, as God said he should, and casts off the God who had blessed him, to gratify his lusts. Not trusting God, he uses his own will to seek happiness by, as a surer way, as men do now. {Php 2}

We see in Philippians 2 how completely the Lord Jesus glorified God in all these points, acting in a way exactly opposite to Adam. We may remark too that Adam did it to exalt himself, to be as God, as a robbery; while Christ, when He was in the divine glory, emptied Himself to be like man, and was obedient, not disobedient, unto death. Remark, too, how the hiding of sin from self is gone when God comes in. Adam, who had covered his nakedness, speaks of it when God is there as much as if he had done nothing to cover it. And so it is with all our efforts to make out what shall hide our sin, or make out righteousness. Moreover man flies from God before ever God drives him in righteousness from His presence and blessing. The knowledge of good and evil in a state of disobedience makes us afraid of God, and must have a divine work and righteousness to cover it. Remark farther, what is of great importance, Adam had no promise: there is none to the first Adam; no restoration of the first man, no way back to the tree of life; all is in the Second, the woman's Seed. In judging Satan He and His victory are promised.

What follows is the present result as to the government of God; the temporal sentence pronounced on Adam and his wife, until death, under the power of which he was fallen, seized him. There was a sign however of deeper mercies. Life is recognised as still there though death had come in: Eve is the mother of all living; a faith, it would seem, real, though obscure, at any rate, ours. But there is yet more. Before they are driven out, and shut out from all return back to the tree of life according to nature, God clothes them with a garment which covers their nakedness, a garment which had its origin in death (the death of another), which had come in, but which hid the effects of the sin that had introduced it. Man was no longer naked. So, though out from God's presence in nature, we have not yet indeed the serpent's head bruised, though this is sure to be accomplished; the prince of this world is judged (though he be it still), and we know it by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, when Christ, whom the world led by Satan slew, was

seated at God's right hand; but if that be not yet accomplished, we are before God clothed with the clothing which He has put upon us, that best robe. It is not now a promise or a figure, but an accomplished work--a work of God, God has made our coat; the world may mock at such a thought, we know what it means. But he is justly driven out of the garden, an outcast from paradise and God, and hindered from partaking of the tree of life, that he may not perpetuate here below a life of disaster and of misery. The way of the tree of life was henceforth inaccessible to man,⁸ according to nature, as the creature of God. There is no return to the paradise of man in innocence. Adam, already in sin and far from God, is the parent of a race in the same condition as himself.⁹

But grace could work. The grace of a God above the evil of man, and Abel approaches Him by faith.

Hereon follows the separation of the families of God and of the enemy, of the world and of faith. Abel comes as guilty, and, unable as he is to draw near to God, setting the death of another between himself and God, recognises the judgment of sin--has faith in expiation. Cain, labouring honestly outwardly where God had set him to do so, externally a worshipper of the true God, has not the conscience of sin; he brings as an offering the fruits which are signs of the curse, proof of the complete blinding of the heart, and hardening of the conscience of a sinful race driven out from God. He supposes that all is well; why should not God receive him? There is no sense of sin and ruin. Thus is brought in sin, not only against God which Adam had fully wrought, but against one's neighbour, as it has been displayed in the case of Jesus; and Cain himself is a striking type of the state of the Jews.

In these two chapters we have sin in all its forms, as a picture set before us, in Adam's and Cain's conduct--sin in its proper original character against God, and then more particularly against Christ (in figure) in the conduct of Cain, with its present consequences set forth as regards the earth. We may remark, in both Adam's and Cain's case, how the government of God on the earth is set in prominence as to the effects of sin. Separation from God of a being capable of, and naturally formed for, intercourse with Him, is there, but left rather for the moral weighing of the soul. The publicly revealed judgment is that of consequences on earth. It is clearly said no doubt, "He drove out the man" with whom He was to have held intercourse (chap. 3); and "from thy face," says Cain, "am I driven out" (chap. 4). But what is developed is the earthly condition. Adam is shut out from a peaceful and unlaborious paradise, to labour and till the ground. Cain is cursed from the earth in this very position, and a fugitive and a vagabond; but he will be as happy there as he can, and frustrate God's judgment as far as he can, and settle himself in comfort in the earth as his, where God had made him a vagabond;¹⁰ and that is the world. Here it is first pictured in its true character.

Remark also the two solemn questions of God: "Where art thou?"--man's own state apart from God--intercourse with Him lost; and, "What hast thou done?"--sin committed in that state; of which the consummation and full witness is in the rejection and death of the Lord.

In the history of Lamech we have on man's part, self-will in lust (he had two wives), and vengeance in self-defence; but, I apprehend, an intimation in God's judgment, that as Cain was the preserved though punished Jew, his posterity at the end, before the heir was raised up and men called on Jehovah in the earth, would be sevenfold watched over of God. Lamech acknowledges he had slain to his hurt, but shall be avenged.

In the second chapter then we have man in the order of created blessing, the state in which he is; in the third, man's fall from God, by which his intercourse with God on this ground is foreclosed; in the fourth, his

wickedness in connection with grace in the evil state resulting from his fall; what the world thereupon became; man being driven out from the presence of Him who accepted by sacrifice in grace, and ordering its comforts and pleasures without God, yet borne with; and a remnant preserved, and the heir of God's counsels, Seth, set up, and men calling on the name of God in relationship with them, that is, on Jehovah.

Driven from the presence of God, Cain seeks, in the importance of his family, in the arts and the enjoyments of life, temporal consolation, and tries to render the world, where God had sent him forth as a vagabond, a settled abode and as agreeable as possible, far from God. Sin has here the character of forgetfulness of all that had passed in the history of man; of hatred against grace and against him who was the object and vessel of it; of pride and indifference; and then despair, which seeks comfort in worldliness. We have also the man of grace (Abel, type of Christ and of them that are His) rejected, and left without heritage here below; man, his enemy, judged and abandoned to himself; and another (Seth) the object of the counsels of God, who becomes heir of the world on the part of God. We must remember however that they are only figures of these things, and that in the antitype the Man who is heir of all is the same as He who has been put to death. {Ge 5}

In chapter 5 we have the family of God upon the earth, subject to death, but depositary of the counsels and of the testimony of God. Here we may remark Enoch, who has his portion in heaven, and who bears witness to the world of the coming of Jesus in judgment, but is himself taken up there before it; and Noah, on the other hand, warned for himself, preaching righteousness and judgment, and passing through the judgments to begin a new world--figures of the church and the Jews in connection with Christ's coming.

Finally we find power and force here below, the result, of the sons of God not keeping their first estate, of apostasy; and God executes judgment instead of any longer pleading with men by the testimony of His Spirit in grace, which has its allotted term. The obedience of faith is the security of the warned remnant; but the principle of degeneracy worked on in spite of the testimony, and worked on the accomplishment of the testimony it despised. Man grew worse and worse, and God's creation was utterly defiled and filled with violence, the two universal characters of active will out of God. As regards man, it was now brought out, when he was left to himself (for before the flood, save gracious testimony, he was so left), that every thought of his heart was only evil continually. God creates and destroys; He calls and repents not. Creation was utterly corrupted, and God destroys it wherever the breath of life is. The testimony of these things is gone out everywhere among the heathen. We have here the exact though brief account of them, so far as needed to shew what man was and is, and God's ways with him.

In the midst of the ruin and judgment God points out the way of salvation through the judgment. The remnant taught of God profit by it. The flood is brought upon the world of the ungodly. Up to this, though the seed of the woman had been promised, sacrifice brought in, and testimony given, there were no special dealings of God with man. It was man walking before God in wickedness, no calling out, no law, no judgment. The world, man, was judged (save Noah and his family) and its deeds were hidden under an overwhelming flood. The judgment of God is accomplished; but He remembers His mercy. {Ge 9}

In chapter 9 begins the history of the new earth. God blesses the earth more than before; and the answer to the sweet savour of the sacrifice assures the world that a universal deluge will never recur. God makes a covenant¹¹ with the creation to this effect. Government is established in the hand of man, and death begins to furnish him with nourishment. It does not appear to me that, before this, there had been either government or idolatry. There had been sin against God, violence without restraint against one another, and corruption; the two perpetual characters of sin, amongst men, and even in Satan as far as may be.¹²

God cared for His creation in mercy; but with Noah new principles were brought out. The sacrifice of Christ (in figure) becomes a ground of dealing with the earth, not alone of accepting man, as in Abel; and on this a covenant is founded. That is, God binds Himself in grace, so that faith has a sure ground to go upon, that on which it can count.

Another very important principle introduced was the second referred to--government in the hand of man. Covenant was sure, for God is faithful when He binds Himself. Government was entrusted to the hands of men. Alas! this new trial soon has the same result as before. The government confided to Noah loses immediately its honour. The earth, under mercy, relieved (as Lamech had announced) by agricultural care, becomes in its fruits a snare to Noah, who becomes intoxicated, and his own son dishonours him; on whose race consequently the curse falls. This is given in view of the people opposed to Israel, the centre of God's earthly government, and of the relationship of God with that family.

In these chapters then we have the old earth closed and the new begun on new principles. This lasts till the judgment by fire. Man's failure in the old world is set forth, and God's judgment thereon, in Adam and Cain. Now the special judgment and the special blessing in connection with Israel begins to shew itself, for we are yet on the earth here. The historical course of Noah's family is brought out in connection with these two points, the blessing and the curse in Shem and Ham. This is God's survey of the new world, in its three heads Shem, Ham, and Japheth, in a brief declaration of what characterised their position in the earth. Its whole history is stated in a few words. How mighty in everything is the word! He who knows all can state all briefly and surely. We begin afresh with chapter 10 with the generation or history of Noah's sons.

We have thus the establishment of the new earth and its whole general prophetic history, as this earth, in the first account of Noah, and God's communications with him; Shem being owned as the root of God's family in it, allied to the name of Jehovah, with special judgment on Canaan, whose place, we know, Israel took. {Ge 10}

Chapters 10, n give us the history of the world as peopled and established after the deluge, and the ways of men in this new world; the great platform of all the development of the human race as peopling this world after the flood, and the principles and judgments on which it is founded. Chapter 10 gives the facts, chapter 11 how it came about in judgment, for chapters 10 and n are not to be taken as chronologically consequent; for the division into nations and tongues was consequent on the attempt at unity in human pride in Babel; and then, lastly, we have the family Jehovah owned, to trace the descent in it to the vessel of promise: together with God's orderings of the world. The posterity of Noah is given by families and nations (a new thing in the earth), out of which, from the race of Ham, arises the first power which rules by its own force and founds an empire; for that which is according to flesh comes first. We have then, that the moral history of the world may be known as well as the external form it assumed, the universal association of men to exalt themselves against God, and make to themselves a name independently of Him,¹³ an effort stamped on God's part with the name of Babel (confusion), and which ends in judgment and in the dispersion of the race, thenceforth jealous of and hostile to one another.¹⁴ Lastly we have the genealogy of the race by which God was pleased to name Himself; for God is Jehovah,¹⁵ the God of Shem.

The importance of these chapters will be felt. The preceding chapters gave us, after the creation, the great original principles of man's ruin, closing with judgment, in which the old world found its close. Here we have the history of our present world, and, as seen in Genesis (which uncovers the roots of all that was to be for the revelation of God's thoughts and the display of His government), in its great principles and

original sources, which imprint their character on the results, till another judgment from God Himself obliterates all but its responsibility, and gives room for another and a better world.

The result of this history is that the world is set out by families. The fashion of this world has obliterated the memory and the perception of this, but not the power. It is rooted in the judgment of God, and, when the acquired force of this world becomes weak, will be evermore apparent, as it now really works. The fountain heads were three, first named in the order, Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: the first being the family in which the covenant was to be established on earth, and with which God was to be in relationship; then he who was in hostility with God's family; and last, though eldest and proudest, the Gentile Japheth.

In the detail Japheth is given first. The isles of the Gentiles in general, that is, the countries with which we are familiar, and much of northern Asia, were peopled by his descendants. But the great moral questions, and power of good and evil in the world, arose elsewhere, and the evil now (for it was man's day) before the good.

The East, as we call it, Palestine, down the Euphrates, Egypt, &c., was in the hands of Ham. There power first establishes itself by the will of one in Nimrod. A mighty hunter--force and craft--works to bring untamed man, as well as beast, under his yoke. And cities arise; but Babel was the beginning of his kingdom; others he went out and built, or conquered. Then come the well-known Egyptians, Mizraim. Another branch of this family is marked as forming the races in possession of the inheritance destined of God for His people.

Shem comes last, the father of Hebrews, the brother of him who has long despised him, as possessed of an elder brother's title. Such is the general result in the peopling of the world under God's ordering.

The way was this. Man sought to make a centre for himself. Adam, living in the earth, would have been so, and its link with God; as Christ will be hereafter, and ever was in the purpose of God, for Adam was the image of Him that was to come. But will has none but itself. Noah, whose influence would have been just, has no place in the whole history (after his worship), save that he lost the place of authority by falling into sin, in the loss of self-restraint.¹⁶ Will characterised all now; but in a multitude of wills, all impotent as centres, what can be done? A common centre and interest is sought independent and exclusive of God. They were to fill the earth; but scattered in peaceful quietness, to be of no importance, they would not. They must get a name for themselves to be a centre. And God scatters into nations by judgment what would not fill the earth by families in peace. Tongues and nations must be added to families, to designate men on the earth. The judged place becomes the seat of the energetic will of one--of the apostate power. The beginning of Nimrod's kingdom was Babel. Tongues were a restraint, and an iron band round men.

In Shem God's history begins. He is Jehovah, the God of Shem. We have dates and epochs, for after all God governs, and the world must follow: man belongs to God. Other people's ages were shortened surely besides those here named: here we know when. And when the earth was divided, for God after all disposed of it, men's years lost one-half of what they were, as they had already done immediately after the flood. But of known history God's people have ever been the centre. This comes down to Abraham. And here again a new element of evil had become universal, at least practically so--idolatry (Josh, 24:2), though it had not been the subject hitherto. It is man in the world; and in Shem, the secret providential ordering of things by God. Still it ended in the power of evil, even in the family of Shem.

We have seen the wickedness and violence of man, his rebellion against God, and Satan's craft to bring him into this state: but here an immense step is made, an astonishing condition of evil appears on the

scene. Satan thrusts himself, to man's mind, into the place of power, and seizes the idea of God in man's mind, placing himself between God and him, so that men worship demons as God. When it began, scripture does not say; but the passage cited shews that it had contaminated even Shem's family, in the part of it too which scripture itself counts up as God's genealogy in the earth at the time we have arrived at. Individuals might be pious; but in every sense the link of the world with God was gone. They had given themselves up, even in the family which as a race was in relationship with God, to the worship and power of Satan. What a tale all tells of man! What a tale of the patience of God!

Here therefore we change entirely the whole system and order of thought; and a principle, in exercise without doubt from the beginning as to individual salvation, but not manifested in the order of things, declares itself, and comes into evidence in the history of the earth. Abraham is called, chosen, and made personally the depository of the promises. But remark that here, in order that this great principle may be preserved in its own purity as an act of God, the occasion given in the fact we have referred to is not mentioned. We find it in Joshua 24. God comes down, after judgment, in sovereign grace to have a family of His own by the calling of grace--an immense principle.

But it is well to dwell a moment on what was really a most important epoch in the history of God's ways with the world, where the proper history of faith begins, though of course there were believers individually before. But as Adam was the head of the ruined race, so Abraham was the father of the faithful, the head of the race of God on the earth, both after the flesh and after the Spirit. Christ the fulness of all blessing we know, in whom we have far higher blessings than those revealed in Abraham. Still in God's ways upon the earth Abraham was the head of the accepted race. Idolatry, as we have seen, had at this time gained a footing in the family of Shem himself. "Your fathers," says Joshua (24:2)," dwelt in old time beyond the flood, Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor; and they served other gods." Now these gods were demons (1 Cor. 10:20; it is a citation of Deut. 32:17). That is (now that God had interfered in judgment and in power), these demons had possessed themselves of this position in the spirit of man, and taken the place in his mind of the sources of the authority displayed and of blessing still bestowed. They presented themselves to him as authors of those judgments, of all which drew forth the worship, the gratitude, and the terror of the natural heart of corrupted man, expressed in his worship according to the principles on which he was, on which he alone could be, in relationship with those superior beings, to whom he attributed the power to answer his desires or to avert the things which he feared. It was not merely man corrupted and in rebellion against God, it was his religion itself which corrupted him; and he made of his corruption a religion. The demons had taken the place of God in his mind, and having the ascendancy over his conscience, if man did not forget it, hardened or misled it. He was religiously bad; and there is no degradation like that. What a state! What folly! How long, O Lord?

But if the human race plunge thus into darkness, taking demons for their god, and, incapable of self-sustainment, substitute for their own rebellion against God servitude to what is more elevated in rebellion, placing themselves in miserable dependence upon it, God raises and lifts us up above all this evil, and by His calling introduces us into His own thoughts--thoughts far more precious than the restoration of what was fallen. He separates a people to hopes which suit the majesty and the love of Him who calls them, and places them in a position of proximity to Himself, which the blessing of the world under His government would never have given them. He is their God. He communicates with them in a way which is in accordance with this intimacy; and we hear speak, for the first time, of faith (chap. 15:6), based on these communications and these direct testimonies of God, though it may have operated from the beginning. {Ge 12}

From chapter 12 then there is developed altogether a new order of events, which refer to the call of God, to His covenants, to His promises, to the manifestation of His people as a distinct people on the earth, to the counsels of God. Before the deluge, it was man such as he was--fallen before God; and though there was a testimony from the beginning, still no dispensational intervention of God in His own ways, but man, with that testimony as to divine institutions,¹⁷ left to himself, resulting in such violence and corruption as brought on the deluge in judgment on the world. Afterwards, God having interposed in judgment and begun the world that now is, there was the government of that world and its failure and the consequences of this failure; but, the nations being established and having submitted themselves to the power of demons, the call of God, the deposit of promise in him who was chosen of God, His elect ones (seed of the depository of the promises), and subsequently His people, rise up to our view.

Hence we find them at once called upon to separate themselves entirely from all that connected them with their position in nature on the earth, and to belong to God on the ground of promise and confidence in His word. "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee." This was a solemn event. It was in principle the judgment of the world, though in the way of grace to those called out of it.

That we may fully understand this, we must remember that the world had been constituted by the judgment of God passed upon the enterprise of building the tower. Countries and nations had been formed, as it is to this day. That was the world. Satan had full hold of it, and the very world which God had providentially formed Abram had to leave. God would have a family, a people for Himself, not of it, though out of it. Another fact adds to Abram's importance. There had been saints individually, known and unknown, but no head of a race since Adam. Adam fallen was the head of a fallen race. Abram was called to be the root of the tree of promise, of God's people natural or spiritual. He was the father of the circumcision, and of all them that believe.

In the outset however, Abram still held to his family; or at least, if it held to him, he did not break with it; and though he quitted his country on the call of God, he stops as far from the land of promise as before. For, thus called, man must belong wholly to God on a new principle. In fine, he sets out as God had said to him.

We have then here Abram called by the manifestation of the glory of God (compare Acts 7) for the journey of faith. The promises are given to him, whether of a numerous posterity, or of the blessing of all the families on the earth in him.¹⁸ He sets out, he arrives. There are not many experiences, though there will be deeper knowledge of God, in a path which is purely of faith: power is there, and man walks with God. In the history of Jacob we have many. Arrived in Canaan, Abraham enters into possession of nothing, for his life must still be of faith. And here we see, by comparing this passage with Hebrews 11, the effect of being left as pilgrims and strangers on the earth, not yet in possession of what is promised. Abraham goes in the obedience of faith to the promised land, and there has not so much as to set foot upon; but in virtue of this--as God, though He could prove, could not leave faith without an answer; nor, indeed, where tried, without leading it on to the knowledge of further blessing, for He never does--he has before him the city which hath foundations, and the yet better country. The energy of faith through grace put him in a position which, as it was not possession, necessarily set him in connection with higher and better things; for he was under the personal calling of God for blessing: so, practically, we are come into the body and heavenly things below. But there is the path of faith--not possession--and the heavenly scene opens before us. Abraham in Ur could not see the heavenly portion; a stranger in the land of promise, it was his natural object under grace. Such is our own case. Only Abraham rises above his calling; we enter by the

Spirit into what we are called to.

But then there is a second revelation of the Lord to him in the land, in the place into which he had been called. The first was to call him out of the place he was in, and make him walk in the path of promise. Now the Lord reveals Himself to him for communion, where he is; speaks with him; unfolds to him how the promise will be accomplished, and Abraham thereon worships Him. He has in the land his tent and his altar. This is the second part of the life of faith. The revelation of God, when far from Him, sets us out on the journey of faith, inspires the walk toward heaven. When in the heavenly position, God reveals Himself for communion and worship and a full revelation of His ways. The Canaanite is in the land; the heir of promise has no possession of the thing promised. We have to do with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places, but the Lord reveals Himself, shews the heir and inheritance when the Canaanite will be gone; and so Abram worships by faith, as before he walked by faith. This is the full double function of faith.

The rest of the chapter is the history of his personal want of it. Pressed by circumstances, he does not consult God, finds himself in the presence of the world, where he has sought help and refuge, and denies his true relationship with his wife (just as has been done in respect of the church), is cherished by the world, which God at last judges, sending Abram again out from it. During this period, and until he was returned to the place from which he started, he had no altar. When he left Egypt and returned to his strangership in Canaan, he had what he had before. But he must return first to the same place and find his altar again. What a warning for Christians as to the relationship of the church with Christ!¹⁹ And, however the world may be a help for the church, this relationship cannot be maintained when we seek that help.

I would again recall here a remark made elsewhere, that in types the woman presents the position in which those prefigured are placed; the man, the conduct, faithful or unfaithful, of those that are there. {Ge 13}

After this (chap. 13) we have, in the conduct of Abram and Lot, the disinterestedness and self-renunciation of true faith on the one hand, and, on the other, him, who, though a believer, had, as regards the walk of faith, only followed that of another, and was now put to the test by circumstances which arise: and this, remark, is when they have together left their unbelieving connection with the world as an outward refuge. Lot had done so with Abram, but his inward heart and will clung to the ease of it. Abram had returned in spirit genuinely, perhaps with a deeper experience, to his pilgrim portion in Canaan. Yet the advantages he possessed in it led to the difficulty, for treasure here is not heaven, even if the possessor of it be heavenly-minded: an important lesson. Still Abram behaves beautifully. Lot chooses the world, fair in appearance, not as Egypt, the world as such, but as self-ease, and what did not seem, was not outwardly, separated from, Canaan; but which was soon after the scene and object of what did not appear--the sure judgments of God. The renunciation of a present portion down here, and of self in it, by Abram, is the occasion for him of a much clearer knowledge of the extent, and a still firmer assurance of the certainty, of the promise. It is when he gives up all to Lot as he might choose it, that the Lord says to Abram to look north, south, east, west, from where he was, adding he would give it to him and to his seed for ever. In a word, we have the believer acting in the spirit of the heavenly calling--the faithful believer, and the worldly-minded believer.

Abram maintains now his own proper portion; he dwells in Canaan, goes here and there as a pilgrim with his tent, and builds his altar. All this was the path of the heavenly man; his characteristic portion here, a pilgrim and a worshipper. Lot had lifted up his eyes, moved by his own will and lust, and sees the plain of Jordan well watered: why should he not enjoy it? God makes Abram lift up his, and shews him all the

extent of the promise, and with the promise tells him to walk through it all, to realise, in his experience and knowledge, all the extent of the promise made. The scene soon changes. What is linked with the world must suffer its vicissitudes. Nor can the godly man, though ensnared oft, be content with its evil. Lot (2 Pet. 2:7-8) suffers from the iniquity by which he is surrounded, and undergoes the ravages of the power of the world, of which Abram is victor, and of which he will receive nothing to enrich himself. Such are the just discipline and faithful ways of God. Nor was it yet all.

These last circumstances are the occasion of the manifestation of the kingly Priest, King of righteousness, and King of peace; that is, Christ, millennial King of the world, blessing victorious Abram, and, on Abram's behalf, the Most High God, who had delivered his enemies into his hand.

In this picture, then, we have the final triumph of the Lord and the family of faith over the power of the world, realised in spirit by the church (and finally in glory) for a heavenly hope and association with Christ; and literally by the Jews on the earth, for whom Christ will be Melchisedec-priest in full accomplished position; Priest on His throne, Mediator in this character, blessing them, and blessing God for them; God Himself then taking, fully and indeed, the character of possessor of heaven and earth. The Most High God is His proper millennial name; Almighty with the patriarchs, Jehovah with Israel, and Most High for the millennium. The discussion of where the Most High is found, in connection with the promises to Abraham and the Messiah, is beautifully brought out in Psalm 91, and Jehovah the God of the Jews is recognised as He who is. It is a kind of dialogue. These are connected with the earth. Our place, and the divine name we are in relationship with God by, are outside all these and properly heavenly. It is the Son who has revealed the Father, and now the Holy Ghost, who gives us the consciousness of sonship, and shews a man, the heavenly Christ, at the Father's right hand in glory, when He had by Himself accomplished the purification of our sins.

But the contrast of the heavenly-minded who do not settle on the earth, and of those who do, with the world's power over the latter, and the entire victory of the former over the power of the world, and then Christ's reign, King and Priest, and God's taking all into His hand by Him, are clearly and wonderfully brought out.²⁰

When God had thus revealed Himself, according to His establishment of blessing in power on the earth, through the priestly king Melchisedec, naturally the actual blessing of the chosen people finds its place; and we come down to the actual earthly scene, and in chapter 15 have the detailed instruction of the Lord to Abram, regarding the earthly seed and the land given to him, the whole confirmed by a covenant where God, as light to guide and furnace to try, deigns to bind Himself to the accomplishment of the whole. Death makes it sure. Jehovah confirms thus the covenant in going, in grace, through that which bound Him; Abram, heir of the promises, undergoes the terror and shadow of it. It is not here precisely expiation, but what belonged to the confirmation of the promises, by the only thing which could establish them in favour of man a sinner. It is evident that this unfolding of God's ways, and the establishment of the covenant embraces (though the covenant be made in favour of the earthly people) new and important principles. God Himself was Abram's defence and portion. That is the highest portion of all, so far as anything given to man can go.²¹

But Abram feels yet his connection with the earth as an abiding place in connection with the flesh, and it was indeed God's purpose so to bless him. That is in its nature Jewish, and we have consequently the Jewish portion unfolded. The whole scene descends thus here to earthly hopes, and promises, and covenant, and the land. Abram's mind goes down; for it is going down--when God says (on his having

refused everything from the world, in view of the world to come as a future hope), 'I am thy reward,' as He had been his shield--to say, What wilt thou give me? But the divine word uses it, to unfold on God's part His purposes in this respect, which, as regards the government of this world, are of real importance. I have no heir, says Abram; nothing to continue, by a family tie, the possession of my inheritance on earth, according to promise; for on earth, where men die, there must be succession. And so it was to be. But still, as to the earth, it was to be by dependence on Jehovah, by promise, and by faith. Although connected here with the earth, it was not according to nature: on this footing all was foreclosed against Abram--he had no seed. Hence, the seed of faith and promise comes forth--not indeed the one seed--but the Jews as children of promise. The principle is set forth and faith counted for righteousness while Abram believed God. Thus, for this world, Israel was the seed of promise, the heir. Then comes covenant as to the land, according to promise made in the call of Abram. The Lord binds Himself to Abram according to death, .as we have seen (for indeed it is assured in the death of Christ, without which they could have nothing). This is, as to present fulfilment, connected with the suffering of the people in Egypt, and their subsequent deliverance, when the oppressors of the people and the usurpers of the inheritance would both be judged.

The character of the act by which the covenant was made, we have already noticed. The reader may compare Jeremiah 34:18-19, as to the force of this act. It is not here, moreover, a promise by which Abram is called out by faith, but the assuring the inheritance to his seed by covenant, and here without condition. It is the promise to Israel, the seed of promise, the heir in connection with the earth and flesh. Remark, moreover, that the prolonged sorrow and oppression of God's people-- the delay of the promised heir--is in connection with the patience of God towards those that are to be judged. (Compare 2 Peter 3:9.) We may remark that the oppressors of Israel are judged for the sake of Israel, the usurpers of his inheritance for him.

Here the laying out of God's plans and purposes closes, even as to the earthly people, and man's ways, and God's ways for their fulfilment, begin to be unfolded with chapter 1622, with the paths of those, or hindrances from those, with whom His people may be connected in any way. These are developed up to chapter 23 when Abraham ceases to be the representative of the stem of promise. Sarah dies, the vessel of the seed of promise, and the risen heir comes into notice as the one whom God sets forth. They that are born after the flesh precede those who are born according to promise.

We cannot but remark, what gives so striking a character to the book of Genesis, and such freshness to all that is in it (particularly to what we have gone through hitherto), how all the great principles of man's estate and of God's ways are brought out in it. It is a heading and summary of all man's state and God's ways with him in it--not of redemption, though sacrifice and covering of sin be found, nor of its glorious results. Redemption is in Exodus. Man's state and God's ways and fundamental promises are here. {Ge 16}

Chapter 16.--Abram seeking, at Sarah's instigation, to anticipate the will of God and the accomplishment of the promise in its time, we have the covenant of the law in Hagar, the source of distress and disquietude. God, however, takes care of the seed according to the flesh. The application of this as a figure is clear from Galatians 4. The pride of man under the law is marked in Hagar's spirit, yet her son cannot be heir. The haste of man, who will not wait God's time, will not wait on Him as to means of accomplishment (so was it with Jacob for the blessing) is full of moral warning to us; it is ever the source of disquietude and sorrow. Hagar, too, was an Egyptian --a remembrance, also, of the want of faith in Abram. The law and flesh, and indeed sin, ever go together (see John 8:34-36); and in connection with the unbelief of nature, that is, Egypt.

As regards the order of these chapters, I may add, 12, 13, 14 go together, and are dependent on the double manifestation of God to Abram; first, to call him, and then in Canaan. We have power, failure, return, and enduring heavenly faith contrasted with worldliness, and thereto the display of earthly power attached, to that faith, closing with victory; God possessor of heaven and earth, and Melchisedec.

Though chapter 15 stands alone as a whole, chapter 16 is so far connected with it, that it is the fleshly attempt on Sarah's part to have the seed which was assured by the word of the Lord to Abram in the beginning of chapter 15. Here all is failure; but the purposes of God will be accomplished according to promise, and not of the flesh and man's will. {Ge 17}

In chapter 17 we have a fresh revelation of the Lord to Abram, and, I think, are upon higher and holier ground. It is not here calling, or worship, or the world and victory over it in Lot (12-1423), or a revelation by the word of how God would accomplish His earthly promises, and what His people should go through (15)--not what God was for Abram, but what He was Himself. It is not, I am thy shield and thine exceeding great reward; but I am God Almighty. This is not all He was, but it is what He was--His own name; and Abram is called upon to walk correspondingly to this name. Hence, also, he does not worship or request anything from God, however high the privilege, but Elohim talks with him. The various parts of His purposes are unfolded, and what Abram is to be before Him in whom he believed. It is the starting-point of God's history of His connection with, and ways in, the world, Jew and Gentile starting from His original sovereign title. That which brings in the Gentiles as well as Israel is before us. It is not the individual seed of promise, as in chapter 22, to which the promise of chapter 12 was confirmed, but the title of God with the first vessels of promise as root of a people set apart to God. In general God's covenant was with him. It is not a legal binding, but a free engagement of God in grace, according to His own mind, that Abraham should be the father of many nations. It is in three parts. God would be a God to Abraham, and to his seed after him; the land wherein he was a stranger is to be to him and to his seed after him; and nations and kings should come out of him. All these promises are without condition; but principles are set forth binding on Abraham, and expressive of the character of those who enjoy the privileges of God--circumcision and free sovereign promise. Circumcision in contrast with law (see John 7:22), but expressive of the death of the flesh (compare Rom. 4:10-13)²⁴, and next, the promise of the seed is given; but this when Abraham, as to the body, was now dead; and as the character of circumcision was peremptory--for flesh cannot have to say to God in light-- so was it as to the promise; it was to the son of promise. Though God might outwardly bless the seed according to flesh, the covenant was exclusively with the heir of promise. Death of flesh (for we are away from God), and simple sovereign grace, are peremptory. The barren woman must be the mother of thousands. Abraham rejoices in the promise, and acts obediently in the order of God.

There is another element here, a common one to this purport in scripture; God's giving a name to Abram and to Sarai also. It signifies the title of direct authority, and entering into relationship on this ground, So Adam, so Pharaoh, so Nebuchadnezzar. Here God having revealed His own name gives one to Abram in connection with Himself. Thenceforth He is the God of Abraham, revealing Abraham's place, and the sign of the covenant in separation to Himself too; Abraham is the father of many nations; Ishmael even is preserved and blessed; but the promised seed stands alone, also has his name (laughter), the child of mere promise of her whom God named too, intimating, though not revealing, resurrection (compare Rom. 4:19-22). For this world, Israel as to promise holds the place of Sarah thus named, but when dead according to the flesh. {Ge 18}

Chapter 18 is again a new unfolding of God's ways, here especially in connection with the seed, already in a general way, as part of God's purpose that it should be Abraham's seed according to grace and promise when flesh had no hope, and not according to the flesh, but now specifically revealed as a present thing to Abraham. This seed of promise is here the main object in view, and the present immediate object of hope. This is so on to the end of chapter 21. But I apprehend, he²⁵ is here seen as heir of the world and judge; while Abraham's personal relationship with God is in grace, by promise, where he is not seen; and, so far, has the ground of faith, and, in figure, a christian position. Hence, God Himself being known (not merely His gifts), Abraham rises higher than in chapter 15, and, instead of asking gifts for himself, intercedes for others. All is the effect of the gift of the heir being known. After chapter 22. the proper figures of the church as yet unrevealed come in, because the seed is raised: we get, however, great individual principles here.

Abraham is accustomed to the divine presence, and it is quickly felt by him; and although he says nothing referring to the divine glory till the Lord is pleased to discover Himself[^] yet from the first he acts with an instinctive deference which was as fully accepted by Him who came. In verse 3 Abraham addresses himself to One, yet speaks in his hospitality to all, and to this they all answer, and inquire withal for Sarai; but in verse 10 it is again individual, the effectual promise of the Lord. In the rebuke of Sarah's unbelief Jehovah reveals Himself. He judges flesh and its unbelief, as He promises. Abraham accompanies the three on their way; two go on, and Abraham is left alone with Jehovah. In this respect it is a lovely scene of holy consciousness and yet deferential waiting on the good pleasure of God. The immediate promise of the arrival of the seed is given. Abraham enjoys the most intimate communion with Jehovah, who reveals His counsels to him as to His friend. Intercession is the fruit of this revelation (compare Isa. 6). Judgment falls on the world; and whilst Abraham, on the top of the mountain, communes with God of the judgment which was to fall upon the world below, where he was not, Lot, who had taken his place in it, is saved so as by fire. Righteousness which walks with the world puts itself in the position of judge, and is at the same time useless and intolerable. Abraham escapes all judgment, and sees it from on high. Lot is saved from the judgment which falls upon the world in which he found himself. The place where Abraham enjoyed God is for him a place of sterility and fear: he is forced to take refuge there in the end, because he is afraid to be anywhere else.

In general, Abraham has the character here of communion with God, which faith, without sight, gives--not by an indwelling Holy Ghost, no doubt, according to the privilege of the saints now (that was reserved for the time of fuller blessing, when the church's Head should be glorified), but in the general character of the blessing. The promised seed is announced as to come, but not yet brought into the world, that is, in the way of manifested glory. Meanwhile, Abraham knows and believes it. God then treats him, as we have seen, as a friend, and tells him, not what concerns himself, but the world, (with a friend I speak of what I have on my heart, not merely of my business with him); and then, as he has received these communications from God, so he intercedes with God--a stranger in the place of promise, on high in communion with Him. And this is still more the place of the saints now through the Holy Ghost: the full communication of the mind and ways of God in the word, and the Lord's coming to take them up, so that this is the scene they live in by faith, and founded on that comes intercession. Abraham had the promise of the heir for himself already; here he is the vessel of divine knowledge of what concerns the world too. This puts him in the place of full grace, and so of intercession. His faith associates him with the mind and character of God. It brings out, withal, the patience and perfectness of judgment with God.

Lot, in the following chapter, because of his connection with the heavenly man, depository of God's counsels and wisdom, and intercessor, himself down in the plain of this world, which he had chosen, as

the Jews have, is delivered by providential power; but he passes through the tribulation, and suffers the loss of all that for which he had refused the heavenly condition, and sought the earth, as ignorant of the judgment as he was of the heavenly treasure. Such is the position of the people of faith when sunk into the world of judgment. Soon abandoned to the uncertainty of unbelief in the presence of visible judgment, he seeks his refuge in that place of Abraham's blessing to which he had previously been afraid to flee, and which he had earlier abandoned for the ease of the well-watered plain; but he is in miserable darkness, the parent of a perpetual thorn to the people of God. But this last part is only historically given, that Israel might know the origin of Moab and Ammon; and furnishes a general principle for all times.

Thus faith had its place, and the world had been judged. So will it be in the days of the Son of man; but here the heir is not yet actually brought in, but expected, and the path of faith, or the opposite, till He comes depicted. {Ge 20-21}

In chapters 20, 21 we have the question of the heir and of the path of faith in another point of view. Abraham denies his relationship with his wife, and is reproved by the world itself, which knows be

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