

Under The Fig Tree



WEEK 1

Introduction

We begin at the beginning. It was the beginning of all beginnings in this universe and on this earth. Today we will read the first four chapters of the Book of Genesis. Take time to read each of the four chapters carefully. At the end of each of these chapters pause and prayerfully consider what you have read. See how the Holy Spirit draws your attention to something in the chapter that you have not noticed before. Remember that your diary records should be personal. Don't write down only what someone else has told you. Read my comments before you start because they will help to bring some focus and get you started, but what you read from the Bible and what you see for yourself is the purpose of the studies.

For each diary entry, remember to make notes that cover:

1. The Bible Verses you have read
2. Brief notes on what you read and how you thought about it
3. How you were inspired to pray

Start your diary in a way that you mean to continue throughout the year, making sure that every reading and every entry is done prayerfully and carefully. This is your personal record, made before God. If you do it well you will value it in the coming years, as a record of what you learned under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Day 1

Notes on Today's Readings

Chapter 1 of Genesis contains the only perfect record of the Creation of the Universe. It is a compact record that has challenged men and women for thousands of years. However many times we go over and over what is written, we will still find new perspectives to consider. Most of all we read about what God our Creator has done, and realize that He wants us to live in relationship to Him, knowing Him first as Creator. In seven days God created every material thing and established the universe, things both in the seen and in the unseen, in all its wonder and variety that continue today. It is hard to know what the first few days were exactly like because no-one was there to measure time or to record the events that only God can describe. On the fourth day the sun, moon and stars

were in their place to measure days as we now know it. Through later Bible records we can make assessments of how long ago this was and we find that it is a short span of six thousand years ago when all this happened. Through our reading today we develop our understanding of where we came from. Later we will consider God's purpose in our lives both on this earth and for all eternity. Read Chapter 1 and then look out into the world around you, and up into the sky. Ask God to speak to you about His Creation. Write what you are shown in your diary.

Chapter 2 continues the account of Creation. The first four or five verses complete what we read in Chapter 1. Then we go on to a different perspective of Creation. Chapter 1 begins with the immense universe and ends with the creation of the first human beings. God created the universe as a place for mankind to dwell. Chapter 2 begins with the Sabbath Day, which He intends for mankind to share with Him, both as a regular day of rest each week and an experience that extends to all eternity. Then the chapter takes a different perspective on God's Creation. God shows us that most important to Him was the creation of human beings. First came Adam, and then His wife was formed out of his body. They were to live in perfect relationship with Him and one another. Man and woman were of the same physical body, expressing the importance of their unity, which is now expressed in marriage of a man with a woman. This gives us a picture of the spiritual unity that God intended between Him and us. We also share in the stewardship of the rest of His Creation, including all the animals and things that grow on the earth.

Chapter 3. We do not know how long it was between the Creation of Adam and the Fall from fellowship with God, recorded for us in this chapter. Neither do we fully understand all that we read. None of us has had the same wonderful experience that Adam and Eve had at the start. We can read the account and be sad for what was lost, but also live in expectation for what is waiting for us in the future. Our reading today is the account of the separation of mankind from God, revealing the need of a Saviour. Our Saviour came four thousand years later in the form of the Son of God who came down to earth to pay the price for our sins. These sins began in the Garden of Eden and go on in our world today. There is symbolism in this Chapter, but it is also literally true. We have a revelation of Adam, Eve and our spiritual enemy Satan here. What we read in this Chapter is also true for us today as we contend with deception and our own tendency to sin. We are born after the Fall and so we inherit a world which, though still beautiful to our human eyes, is nevertheless in a state of decay. We find, in our own lives, the same tendency to sin that were present in our forefather and mother, Adam and Eve.

Chapter 4 describes the first sacrifices made to God and a beginning of an understanding of what pleased God through sacrifice. As we have said, we are reading the Book of our beginnings. Among these beginnings we have the Creation of all things in the heavens and on the earth, the inauguration of the Sabbath Day, our first understanding of God's desire for fellowship with His people, the first sin, the first promises of God, and the first curse. We also have the development of the first family on earth, and the increase of mankind into more and more families on the earth. Again, we do not have all the details, such as who married whom and how many children in total

were born. We have the details that we need to know. Another thing that we learn in Chapter 4 is how sin increased. Even Adam and Eve's first children did not learn from the mistakes of their parents, and we see how anger soon turned to murder when Cain killed his brother Abel. We also see how men might misunderstand the teaching of God. Lamech misunderstood the reason why Cain was protected by God, and went on to multiply the sin of murder. Yet, we also see that God is not only the God of beginnings but also the God of new beginnings. Sins and evil were to be accounted for but God allowed a new beginning for the human race through the birth of Seth. Though mankind fell from relationship with God, as is recorded in the Gospel of Luke, from the line of Seth would come our Saviour, Yeshua HaMashiach (Jesus the Messiah), who would save from their sins all those who put their trust Him. There is a lot for us to study in the Book of Genesis – the Book of beginnings. The themes that begin here are still relevant to us today.

Day 2

Comment on Today's Readings

Today read the next four chapters of the Book of Genesis. The Hebrew name for the Book of Genesis is *Bereshit*. This word is taken from the first words of the Book and means, *In the beginning*. All that God wants us to know begins in this book. If we consider the importance of the topics in this book it is amazing to think how little is written. Yet we will come back to study these same themes over and over again and always find something new. We find here the beginning of all Bible themes which trace their way throughout the Bible. Our daily readings are part of the process of learning to trace the themes for ourselves. This is why it important to be methodical, stopping after each main section to consider what we have read, praying for understanding, and noting down what we discover.

Chapter 5. Bible truth is built up layer by layer. Just as Chapter 2 of Genesis reviewed Creation from a different perspective from Chapter 1, Chapter 5 reviews the spread of Adam's family on the earth in a different way from Chapter 4. We can see how God keeps records of individuals and families. The details in his chapter enable us to study the names of the descendants of Adam and also the length of time involved.

God established a family line that would eventually lead to the Messiah, but first we needed to learn of our need for Him. God knew of our need in advance and, despite growing sin in the world He provided, like a scarlet thread that goes through all history, a plan that ensured the survival of mankind. This scarlet thread was held together through the people mentioned in this chapter. As we read the list we also learn some of the principles that God wants for His family. For example Enoch shows us the walk of faith. Noah shows us obedience and rest. At the end of Chapter 3 we read that men began to call out to God. Chapter 4 shows us that God already had an answer prepared whereby, through a process that we will discover through all the pages of the Bible, God would redeem a family from all the earth containing all people who truly call out to Him to be their Father. We learn something here about the nature and importance of prayer which is within God's purposes for us. God has a plan and He wants us to call out to Him to be included in that plan. In a few short chapters we have been reminded of the wonderful beginning of Creation, the terrible Fall and the beginnings of restoration - a few short chapters, as relevant today as they were those thousands of years ago. Read the Chapter for yourself and see what the Lord says to you.

Chapter 6 of Genesis could be a description of the world today. We do not know the exact details of the lifestyle of people in those days, what clothes they wore, what their houses were like, what they had invented and so on, but we know that all but one man and his family had drifted away from God. In their circumstances, just as in ours, sin and evil were in the whole earth. We know from what we read here that this is an extremely serious matter. We learn the principle that the wages of sin is death. In this case it was physical death, sent as a reminder to us that our sin too is worthy of the same death. We also know what God is looking for. He is looking for people like Noah who will trust Him and obey Him, who can be accounted as righteous and saved because of their faith. God did not destroy everything that He had created, but prepared a man whom He could use to make a fresh

start for mankind. In Noah we have a teaching that will prepare us for the greater Saviour, who will save us out of this world for all eternity, Yeshua the Messiah. The sins from which we are saved are of the same nature as the sins that were punished at the time of Noah, when God washed the entire earth with deep flood water.

Chapter 7 contains the precise details of that great deluge that enveloped the earth. Study these details carefully so that you have no doubt about the way the entire earth was submerged under water. Mighty fountains came up from under the earth and mighty torrents fell from the skies. The earth was reshaped and all that had gone before was destroyed, man and beast. It was a mighty washing of something that had become unclean. That is like the washing by the power of God's Spirit that goes on inside of us as we are cleansed of our sin and renewed for eternal life. If you read this passage carefully you will see details of what happened and shadows of what was to come in later generations.

Chapter 8 continues the concise account with all the details that we should know. God was committed to restarting the human race through Noah's family, from whom we all descend, whether through Shem (the Semitic people of the Middle East, including the Arabs and Jews), through Ham (including those who settled into Africa) or Japheth (those in Europe and more northern areas). Also the families of animals had a new start and spread across the world once more. Some animal species, such as the great dinosaurs, may not have lived for long as the earth resettled. Others found suitable habitats and increased to the numbers and that we see today. All else is lost that was before the Flood. The mountains and hills were reshaped and, as time went on, the land mass split apart and moved into new positions, forming the continents as they are found today. All this was about five thousand years ago, and the effects still go on today. God also made a Covenant with Noah that is still valid for us today. Despite the growth of sin, never again will the earth be judged by a Flood that covers the entire earth. We must study this carefully and come to the realization of how immense the judgment for sin could be but for God's Covenant with Noah. We must be aware of the penalty that our sin deserves. The Covenant with Noah ensured that sin had to be dealt with in another way. This means that the suffering of Yeshua on the Cross paid the penalty for us at the level indicated by the Flood. Think about this and pray for understanding.

Day 3

Comment on Today's Readings

Today, read Genesis Chapters 9 to 12. In the brief space of four chapters we move on from the account of the resettling of the earth after the great Flood to the account of Abraham. The Bible does not contain every detail of these early days, but all that we need to know has been written down and passed on to us. God teaches us through the lives of His people and He ensures that the scarlet thread of His covenant commitment to us is secured through the lives of His people. He chose Noah, then He chose Abraham. Several thousand years later He also chose us.

Chapter 9 contains a clear statement of God's Covenant with Noah. Read it carefully and make sure that you have understood all that is written. It comes to us out of ancient history but it is as relevant today as when God first made the promise to Noah. Consider how important to God is the life of a human being, and how there is perfect justice in God's principles for the preserving of life. Noah was chosen by God because He trusted God and this was accounted to him for righteousness. This did not make Noah and his family unable to sin and we notice this in the record of the drunkenness that was followed by the sin of Ham. This resulted in blessings for the descendants of Shem and Japheth and a curse on the descendants of Ham who came from the line of Canaan. Here we have a prophetic insight into the later time when Israel inhabited the Land of Canaan, at the expense of the Canaanites who, by this time, would be following false gods. Sometimes Christians would like to imagine God as different from what He really is. He really did bring the Flood and He really did speak these blessings and curses, however much we might think differently. We must be careful to note what God shows about Himself as the Bible account unfolds. That is a central purpose to all we are reading. We must not imagine or make a god in our image, as it were, but find out what He has shown us about Himself.

Chapter 10. Chapter 10. Sometimes a chapter of the Bible seems to contain information that we do not need to read in detail. However, this is not a good attitude to take. This chapter contains a list of names. We might wonder what use to us is a list of names, but we should still read the record carefully and be ready to discover something important. From carefully reading these lists we see that God keeps records of families, nations and tribes and that they are important to Him. These are records, by name, of the nations as they began to grow in size. Some of the names are familiar to us and some might require extra study to locate them in the history and geography of the world. The records may be brief but we have some important information to consider, such the appearance of mighty men like Nimrod. Here too is mentioned the nations that developed from Canaan who, according to God's Word recorded in Chapter 9, would be removed from their land when Israel, in later years, comes out of Egypt to possess the Land promised to them. We also have reference to the time when the earth divided at the time of Peleg. One view of this is that the continents began to develop out of one land mass, as large areas moved apart. Bearing in mind the potential great upheaval which could cause the waters of the world to develop damaging surges likened to modern day tsunamis, another interpretation is that this division of the land masses largely took place at the Flood and the division in Peleg's day was the division of people groups across the world as a result of Babel. What massive thought and prayer provoking events can be contained in a single sentence of the Bible!

Chapter 11 is an account of the separation of men and women from God. This follows very soon after the time of Noah. Men and women are so separated from Him that God “goes down” to see what is going on. They are separate from Him again through sin, just as they were before the Flood, and now they are seeking to exalt themselves and discover all the secrets of the universe. It was through the grace of God that He made us into smaller nations at the time of the Tower of Babel, each with our own language, so that we would not become a one world system. Such a one world system would grow farther and farther from Him, as men grew strong in their own eyes and felt that they did not need fellowship with God. The promise that there would not be a judgment like at the time of Noah still stood, so this time we see the scarlet thread of God’s grace alongside the growing evil in the world. God once again found a man, Abram, through whom to take forward His covenant plan. God is always looking for such people as Abraham, who desire to hear Him, trust Him and obey Him. Mankind, in general, turned away from God, but God did not turn away from His plans for mankind.

Chapter 12. It is very important to read the account of Abraham carefully, and study every part of what God did in his life. This begins with his call to leave the great city of Ur, in Chapter 11. The account continues in Genesis Chapter 12, which begins with another covenant commitment made by God, in addition to the one He made with Noah. Abram is to become the father of a great people on this earth and God will honour Him. Abram’s life, his human struggles and his growth in faith that pleased God, is described in these chapters in detail. Make sure that you consider all of this carefully, because we are to be like Abram on our journey of faith. We will learn many lessons from the account of his life and the account of the life of his wife Sarai.

Day 4

Comment on Today's Readings

Today, read Chapters 13 to 16. A great deal of the world's history has already been studied in the space of a few chapters. Now there is a special focus on one man and his family. This is a pivotal point in the covenant purposes of God. While the world is going its sinful way, despite the lessons learned by Adam and Eve, and at the time of the great Flood, God's plan of salvation by faith is coming to the foreground of the Bible account and we must study very carefully what we read.

Chapter 13 contains an account of what occurs again later. Abram spent time in Egypt with his family because of a famine. Then God brought him out of Egypt to view the inheritance of the Land of Canaan that would be given to his descendants as a possession. His descendants would grow into a great nation and take possession of the Land of Canaan one day and Abraham was shown the Land ahead of time. Later the nation of Israel would also spend time in Egypt due to a famine and be brought out to inherit this Land. Later still Joseph and Mary would spend time in Egypt with their son Yeshua. This is the beginning of a story that commences with one person, Abram and his wife Sarai and includes a promise of deliverance from Egypt. This was a reality for Abram and his family. It is also teaching us about our own life of faith, pointing beyond the Promised Land on this earth to eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven. Make sure that you study all the details. They will be reference points for you as you grow in understanding on your own walk of faith. God teaches us through the lives of those who went before in both practical and symbolic ways. This teaching is through the contrasts we encounter, such as between Egypt and the Promised Land, and through the lives of sinful people and those who learn to live the life of faith.

Chapter 14 shows us that God's people will have problems on this earth, but God will help them. The pattern of Abram's life is the pattern for all God's people in this world. Later we will read that Yeshua confirmed this, when He said that in this world we will have troubles. He said clearly that these troubles would continue right up to His return. This is also confirmed in the biblical Prophets. Perseverance through trials trains us for patience and tests our faith. Abram knew what to do when trouble came. God delivered him and used him to rescue Lot and bring back all the people. Thankfulness to God was expressed through the tithes given to Melchizedek. Abram was blessed by God through this priestly king who is a forerunner of Yeshua. Notice Abram's priority was concern for the people, more than physical property, and he depended on God for his provision in all things spiritual and physical.

Chapter 15 is quite short but, again, it contains teaching that is very important. Read it slowly and take in every point. This is the confirmation of the covenant with Abraham that was established for all times and is conditional only on faith. This Covenant contained a promise for the Land of Canaan where God would take His people. Later in the Bible it is revealed that God's Covenant with Abram also has spiritual power that points to the eternal Kingdom of Heaven. Later, Gentiles were grafted

into God's Covenant purposes through the same faith that Abram had learned. Gentiles would be grafted in alongside the physical descendants from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who learned to live by this same faith. In this chapter we learn about the foundations of our faith as well as Abram's. We are also reminded of the contrasts between God's people whom He will bless and those who will remain under the curse. Recall how Noah's descendants from the line of Canaan would not be inheritors of God's blessings. We are reminded of this at the end of this chapter. See how the Holy Spirit helps you to understand this awesome time of God confirming His Covenant with Abram. It was a time when *horror and great darkness fell upon him*. There was also to be a day, in the future, when horror and darkness descended all around the Cross of Yeshua when He fulfilled the Covenant in an even deeper way. Horror and darkness will also come towards the end of time on this earth when sin reaches its climax once more prior to the Lord's return. All this began in the day that God met with Abram.

Chapter 16 contains the account of birth of Ishmael. This shows us how, despite the great deeds of God and the great promises of God, Abram and Sarai still made a mistake. Ishmael was brought into the world. He did not ask to be born and his birth would bring problems into the future when nations would descend from him who would bring strife and struggle on this earth. We will see that God does not forget Ishmael and his descendants despite all of this. The time will come when people from every tribe are called to respond to Him through faith. Nevertheless, at this time, we see that even Abram and Sarai made a mistake in interpreting God's promises. In the Bible we will discover mistake after mistake as we learn about the lives of people like us. We all make mistakes and we all sin before we come to salvation through faith. It is not God who sins or who leads us into sin, but He does allow us to see ourselves for what we are. We first must suffer some of the consequences of sin and then turn to Him through hard wrought faith that grows in us if we are willing to let Him help us. This is the faith that pleased God in Abram. God looked for the willingness in Abram to admit mistakes and learn from the mistakes. He wants people who are willing to be taught. Abram's mistakes have consequences in this world of suffering, but God's Covenant remains secure through all our learning processes.

Day 5

Comment on Today's Readings

We are well into the first week of our studies. It may be a good time to assess how well you have settled down into a routine that is both disciplined and free. If you are rushing through your readings you will miss the benefit of inspiration that comes from prayer as you study. Are you reading each chapter slowly, noting down ideas as you go, stopping to pray and ask for inspiration? Always expect to learn something that is new to you or be reminded of something that you forgot. You should feel uplifted by the Holy Spirit during each reading. We are tackling about four chapters each day in order to complete the Bible readings in one year. This is best done by having two, three or even four separate times when you stop to read your Bible in the day. As soon as you feel yourself rushing because you are short of time you may be wise to pause and come back later in the day when you have the time to study properly. If you cannot go at the pace of four chapters each day then you might consider doing less each day. This will mean that overall you will take more than a year to complete the entire Bible, but it is more important to study carefully than to get through the work in a short time. Remember, above all, God is with you and sees what you are doing, hearing every beat of your heart. Your purpose is to *Study to be approved by God*. There is no greater purpose for your studies.

Chapter 17 of Genesis reveals more details about God's Covenant with Abram. This gives us the impression that God's Covenant is constantly being affirmed. He has made it, He is making it and He will make it. Now, in our day, much further on in history, we know that God had much more in mind than was shown in detail to Abram. The Covenant was to have spiritual as well as physical interpretation. It was eventually to include Gentiles who come to Yeshua by faith as well as Abram's physical descendants who come to Him through faith. These things were in God's mind as He spoke to Abram, but to be fulfilled two thousand years later through Yeshua HaMashiach (Jesus the Messiah) with implications for the end times when the Kingdom will come in fully. Read this chapter carefully. It contains information of eternal value that you will not find anywhere else. There is confirmation of the Promised Land for Abram's physical descendants and the command that Abram's physical descendants must be circumcised. Later we understand that these physical things point to the eternal Kingdom and circumcision of the heart. They are nevertheless of great importance to Abram's physical descendants while this earth remains. The most important principles that we learn are that Abraham must walk before God by faith (verse 1) and that God will be the God of Abraham's descendants (verse 8). These two statements show us that much is left in faith that is yet to be revealed and Abram must let God work out gradually all the covenant promises, held fully in His heart but not yet fully revealed. This is the time when Abram (exalted father) receives his new name, Abraham (father of many nations), and Sarai (whose name is thought to be linked to the idea of being contentious) is given the new name Sarah (Princess). There are echoes here of Revelation 2:17, where those who live by faith are given a new name by God. Don't move on from this chapter until you have grasped the important things that God will confirm for you today.

Chapter 18 is yet another important study. Abraham seemed very alert to the fact that these were three angels visiting him. He recognizes that the Lord is speaking to him through these angels. It makes me wonder if we are as alert to the way God speaks to us as Abraham was. When, for example, we come to Chapter 13 of the Epistle to the Hebrews we will find that we are exhorted to entertain strangers and that we may find ourselves entertaining angels. Perhaps the writer to the Hebrews was remembering this time when Abraham entertained these strangers who came to visit him. They brought a very important message concerning the timing of the birth of Isaac, who had been promised to Abraham despite his great age and that of Sarah. No wonder Sarah laughed in astonishment! In this chapter we also come to this very important incident concerning the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah. It was only a short time since Abraham had been promised that he would be the father of many nations and now the cities nearby are to be destroyed. This is all very perplexing. On the one hand a great promise for the nations and on the other hand comes a judgment on the nearby cities. This together with the promise for Isaac, that in human thinking is impossible at their stage of life - Abraham must wonder if he really understands God's ways. The answer is that he doesn't understand them fully. Time after time in both the Bible and in our personal lives we see this truth confirmed, that God's ways are not our ways. Despite any perplexity, Abraham took the promises of God seriously and this turned him into a man of faith and prayer, leading to his standing in the gap, even for Sodom, as an intercessor. The pleading with God for Sodom contains a message for all of us concerning our attitude to the people on earth today. Judgment is in the Lord's hands and we, like Abraham, must be concerned to the maximum for all who can be saved by grace. The level of concern for fallen humanity was most fully expressed through the intercessions of Yeshua on the Cross. There will be judgment across the nations as the return of Yeshua draws near whilst the fulfillment of the Covenant with Abraham, through Yeshua, will still ensure the salvation of many people, such as when Lot and his family were saved.

Chapter 19 reveals the depth of depravity that men and women can fall into, which brings the judgment of God to them in full measure. We can compare the judgment of Sodom with the great Flood in the uncompromising way that God performs His Word. We can also compare it with the end time prophecies of Revelation and what Yeshua foretold for the coming days when He spoke of His return. He even warned the City of Capernaum that Sodom would have repented if they had seen the miracles that they had seen (Matthew 11:23). This teaching is important for us all. The suffering for our sins by Yeshua on the Cross turned back God's wrath from us if we will repent and be people who walk before God in faith and who learn obedience like our father Abraham. The penalty for the unrepentant is not by Flood but by fire, as also taught by Peter (2 Peter 2:4 – 3:18).

Chapter 20 reveals yet another mistake in Abraham's path of learning. Despite all that he has been promised and all that he has seen, even in the great deeds of God, he continues to show his humanness to us. Once before, in Egypt, he tried to hide the fact that Sarah was his wife. Now again he was afraid that Abimelech would cause trouble on account of Sarah, so he sought to conceal the fact again. God protected Abraham nevertheless and troubled Abimelech, until the issue was resolved and Abraham was blessed by gifts from Abimelech. We see that the promise that God gave to Abraham is secure and those who bless him will be blessed. This is despite the need for Abraham

to continue to grow in faith day by day. Abraham continued to learn through his trials and we must do so too, taking encouragement through these accounts in the Bible that have been preserved for us over all these thousands of years. What has God covenanted with you through Yeshua? How are you growing in faith on your own path of discipleship?

Day 6

Chapter 21 is a record of how the promise was kept by God, that Abraham and Sarah would have a son named Isaac, through whom the Covenant would be fulfilled. God is both a God of His Word and a God of compassion. He told Abraham that it would be through his son Isaac that the Covenant would be fulfilled even before Isaac was born. Abraham was given Isaac's name well before his birth. If God was not true to His Word, however much it is hard for us to understand the circumstances, then we could not be sure of anything. So it is important that Isaac was born and that God's hand of blessing would rest on Him rather than on Ishmael, regarding the Covenant. The first paragraph of this chapter contains all the joy of the birth of Isaac after the long wait of Abraham and Sarah. We hear of laughter several times prior to the birth, even the sort of laughter that carries doubt, so it should be no surprise that the name Isaac means laughter. The sad side of the story is that Ishmael and Hagar were sent away, but God was compassionate to them too, but in a different way. Even to our day we know that God will have compassion on all the descendants of Ishmael who will come to Him through faith in Yeshua. In this chapter we also read about the way Abraham settled at Beersheba. The Hebrew name of this city signifies that an oath was sworn concerning the well that was dug. Ruins of the city of Beersheba have been dug up by archaeologists of our day and we can visit the area to the south of the Land of Israel, where we will also find a large well that has survived through all these centuries. Abraham, Isaac, Sarah, Abimelech, Ishmael, Hagar, and all the rest were real people, living in a real country and we can find evidence of this to this day. The life of faith was taught to us through the lives of real people, no less human than we are.

Chapter 22. Today we will read just two chapters of Genesis. The second of these, Chapter 22, can be read over and over again and still reveal new perspectives for us. It is a climax of Abraham's life of faith. He could not have taken his son Isaac onto the mountain to offer him to God until the right and appointed time when his faith would match his actions. This chapter is full of symbolism that points to the sacrifice of Yeshua. Abraham and Isaac went up to the same mountain range, Moriah, where the Solomon's Temple would later be built and where Yeshua would be sacrificed. Read the account and notice how similar it is to the account in the Gospels where Yeshua goes to the Cross. The difference is that Isaac is spared and there is a symbolic substitution of the ram. Yeshua became that sacrifice and His life was not spared. All the Tribes of Israel descended from Isaac. They would never have existed if the substitute had not been made for Isaac. Ultimately, Yeshua was that substitute. In addition, we would not have any possibility of rebirth into the Kingdom of Heaven unless Yeshua had become our substitute on the Cross. Read this chapter and see what you can discover as Abraham, like God the Father Himself, took his one and only son of promise up to the altar at Mount Moriah.

Day 7

The seventh day of each week will be devoted to further reflection on the things that you have studied on the other six days. Perhaps you will be able to do this on the Sabbath Day. Use the time to catch up if you are behind or, better still, to follow up some of the themes that you have studied through the week. In just one week we have looked at the beginning of God's teaching on many important Bible themes which will develop throughout Scripture. We have considered such themes as the Creation, the problem of sin and temptation, judgment, rising tides of evil and the rise of false gods, God's Covenant plan and how His plan is worked out through faith that grows through trials in the lives of His people. In the Book of Genesis we look back to the beginning of Creation and also forward to the future when God's Kingdom will be established among His people. In the comments that I have written for each day's studies I have included some key points, but I have deliberately not tried to comment on all that you will discover for yourself. The purpose of these studies is for you to study the passages for yourself and see what you discover. Spend today seeing how some of these ideas can be followed up here and there through the Bible. You will probably find yourself going to the New Testament accounts of how the Covenant promises of God are fulfilled for us through Yeshua. You should also realize how important it is to be firmly established on the foundations of Old Testament truth, so that everything fits well together in the purposes that God has for you.
