



**St. Mary and St. Mina Coptic Orthodox Church,  
Syracuse, NY**  
**St. Stephen the Archdeacon Bible Study Group**



***Bible Study Aids for the Book of Genesis***  
***Part II***

**Introduction to the Second Part of the Book of Genesis:**

Chapters 12 – 50, or the second part of the Book of Genesis, provides an overview of the early history of Israel. In the five books of Moses, Israel is viewed as a microcosm of mankind, to which is tied the fortunes of all people. The focus of these chapters is on the forefathers (or as we often refer to them the Patriarchs) of Israel, namely Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as well as the stories of the twelve sons, who constitute the twelve tribes of Israel. A special focus is laid on Jacob's favorite son, Joseph (Chapters 37 – 50). In these chapters, we also learn about the Covenant which God establishes with Abraham, and which serves as the very foundation of God's plan to redeem mankind.

**Chapter 12 – God's calling and promise to Abram**

Now, the Bible narrative focuses on one family line, that of Abram. We see in this chapter, how God called Abram and asked him to go from his county, leave his father's house and head to the land which God would show him. God promises Abram three specific blessings, namely to (1) make him a great nation; (2) make his name great; and (3) to make him a blessing to all nations (universal blessing). These blessings are given first as Divine promises in this Chapter, and later in the narrative are transformed into covenants, associated with a sacrifice.

Specifically, in Chapter 15, following the sacrifice of animals, God transforms his first promise (i.e., the great nation) into a covenant. In Chapter 17, following the circumcision of Abram, the promise of making Abram's name great is emphasized, and finally in Chapter 22, following the sacrifice of Isaac, God confirms the universal blessing of all nations through Abraham's seed (i.e., our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ). Abram obeys God, and departs with his wife, Sarai, and Lot, his nephew.

***Questions for Reflection on Chapter 12:***

1. How old was Abram when God called him?
2. Why does Abram go down to Egypt?
3. What was Abram's mistake in Egypt and how did God save him?

## **Chapter 13 – Abram and Lot part ways**

In this chapter, we learn more about the personalities of Abram and Lot. Abram is really seeking after God, he is a man of peace, and he values his good relationship with his nephew more than any earthly gain. Lot, on the other hand, focuses more on the earthly, and he chooses what he perceived as fertile land despite knowing that sin abounded there. Consider the following questions:

### ***Questions for Reflection on Chapter 13:***

1. What was the cause of dispute between Abram's and Lot's servants?
2. How did the Bible characterize the people of Sodom?
3. What did Abram always do first whenever he went to dwell in a new place?

## **Chapter 14 – Lot's Capture and Rescue**

In this Chapter, we see more of the holy personality of Abram. Lot who has left him, by his own accord, is now captured in war, and Abram rushes to rescue him. In this Chapter, we also meet the mysterious personality of Melchizedek, who is a clear type of our Lord Jesus Christ, as St. Paul later explains in his epistle to the Hebrews in the New Testament (refer to Hebrews, Chapter 7, to see how our teacher St. Paul draws several analogies between Melchizedek and our Lord Jesus Christ). Melchizedek is described as priest of the Most High God, and his sacrifice is bread and wine. Melchizedek blesses Abram, and Abram gives him a tithe of everything. Consider the following questions:

### ***Questions for Reflection on Chapter 14:***

1. How many men went to fight with Abram?
2. List some of the similarities between Melchizedek and our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **Chapter 15 – God's Covenant with Abram**

In this Chapter, God transforms the first part of his promise to Abram, recorded in Chapter 12, into a covenant. God assures Abram that he will have a child, and that his seed will be as numerous as the stars of the heaven and the sands of the sea. God confirms his covenant with Abram with an animal sacrifice.

### ***Questions for Reflection on Chapter 15:***

1. According to Abram, who was going to be his heir and whom did Abram prefer to be the one to inherit him?
2. What did God tell Abram about the future of his descendants?