

# UNIT



## Surfing the Bible

## LESSON

1  
Genesis**Equipment Needed**

- 1) Chalkboard or whiteboard.
- 2) Maps showing Mesopotamia, Canaan, and Egypt.
- 3) Globe, if available.

**Teaching Supplies Needed**

- 1) Copies of Genesis Quiz (page 23).
- 2) Copies of student lessons 1 and 2 to distribute to the class.

1. Introduce yourself. Write your name on whiteboard.

2. Have class members briefly introduce themselves.

Ask them to state their name and one fact about themselves. The one “fact” can be anything—their favorite food, pet peeve, where they grew up, etc. The purpose is to slow the process so students can write the names and connect with fellow class members.

3. Introduce the course:

- Review objectives. Explain procedures and teaching/learning style (informal, interactive, non-threatening, seeking truth as a team of equals). Mention your role as a “gate keeper,” meaning you are responsible to make sure everyone has an equal opportunity to participate in class discussion. You will sometimes have to limit one or more student’s “speeches” so others will have an opportunity to participate.

Ask that no one feel offended by this. It’s your responsibility to be a gatekeeper, and it’s essential to good discussion.

- Review the “Table of Contents” page that lists the topics for each lesson.
- Describe homework expectations.

Write your name on board.

Ask students to turn to the Introduction portion of their handouts and follow along as you explain the objectives, expectations, and content outline.

**Note:** For your own background information on the patriarchs, we suggest reading the entry for each person in *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary* or similar reference.

**Lecture**

1. Define “Genesis” (Beginning). Refer to the list of things that began in Genesis (the opening paragraph on the first page of their student handouts). Have students underline each.

2. Show the location of Mesopotamia, Canaan, and Egypt. Relate Mesopotamia to modern Iraq, and share any information you have about the area. Current interest in Iraq will make this easier. Class members may already have information from the media or other sources to share.

Genesis - “Beginning”

Use overhead or free-standing maps to identify locations. Pass a globe around classroom if you have one, and show or mark the location of Mesopotamia, etc.

- On Board:  
 Adam—2  
 Noah—6  
 Abraham—12  
 Isaac—21  
 Jacob—25  
 Joseph—37  
  
 Abraham—2,000 B.C.

3. Introduce the names of the six patriarchs. Define “patriarch” (the head of a family or clan, the originator of a line of descent). Point out the advantages of memorizing these names (basic to all of Scripture, quick reference when seeking information about them, simple and easy familiarity with the content of Genesis.)
4. Tell the story of each patriarch, using the best story-telling technique possible. Make it lively, interesting, and colorful. Ask students to remember Abraham’s date—approximately 2,000 B.C. Be sure to include everything in the lecture that is tested in the “Genesis Quiz.” Refer to the Family Tree chart in the student manual, page 29, as you tell the stories.

**Note:** With regard to the date of creation and the length of creation days, explain that the Bible does not give a date. Limit discussion on this issue by pointing out that an adequate examination of this question would require more time than is available in a survey course of this kind. However, it should be noted that Christians, all of whom have respect for the authority of Scripture, disagree on this issue. Some hold to a young earth (6,000 to 10,000 years old and literal twenty-four-hour creation days). Others hold to an old earth (millions? billions? of years) and understand the “days” to be long periods of time. Still other theories are proposed, including the “gap theory,” which proposes a long period of time elapsed between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, after which the earth was “recreated” in six twenty-four-hour days.

Point to Mesopotamia (Iraq) on the map.

## I. Adam

- A. The Garden of Eden
  1. Possibly located in Mesopotamia
  2. Adam & Eve’s sin—Stage set for drama that unfolds throughout the Bible. This attitude of rebellion is called sin, affects the entire human race, and separates man from God.
  3. The rest of the Bible is the story of God bringing man back into fellowship with Himself.
- B. Acts of mercy
  1. Kept from tree of life (Gen. 3:22-24) Was this an act of mercy? What would life be like if we lived forever in bodies affected by sin? The Bible doesn’t say, but it’s a great discussion question.
  2. Clothed with skins (symbolic of sacrificial life given to cover sin)
  3. Gen. 3:15—Redeemer to come from the human race (offspring of the woman) and will “crush” Satan’s head.
- C. Adam’s children
  1. Cain and Abel
  2. Seth is father of the godly line
  3. The pattern in Genesis is to follow the main line of the family, break away for peripheral lineage, then return to the main line.
  4. Seth’s line
    - Longevity (Methuselah—969 years)
    - Enoch—Transported to heaven without dying.

Point to location of Mt. Ararat on the map.

## II. Noah

- A. Righteous— “...found favor in the eyes of the LORD” (Gen. 6:8)
- B. Major climatic and human longevity changes associated with the Flood.
- C. Location of Mt. Ararat

- D. “Second father of human race”
- E. Migration of Noah’s children and their families:
  1. Shem: Arabian Peninsula, Syria, Assyria, Persia, and the Orient
  2. Ham: Mesopotamia, Egypt, Africa
  3. Japheth: North and West
- F. Tower of Babel

Show migrations of Noah’s descendants on map.

### III. Abram/Abraham

A. Father of the nation through which the Messiah would come. Previously (Gen. 3:15), God said the Savior would come from the human race. Now the prophecy is narrowed to the nation descending from Abraham through Isaac (Gen. 12:1-3; 17:15-21; 21:12). Through this nation God will bring blessing to “all peoples on earth” (Gen. 12:3).

- B. Ur—Abraham’s hometown
  1. Began approx. 5,000 to 6,000 B.C.
  2. At its height about 3,100 B.C.
  3. Sumerians: Highly intelligent. Libraries, cultural centers, schools, irrigation, flood control systems, canals
  4. City water and sewer systems (canals that carried fresh water into the city and other canals carried sewage out.)
  5. A wealth of information about Ur is available on the Internet. Do a search of “Ur of the Chaldees.”

Point to the location of Ur on the map.

Refer to the Bible Lands map, page 30, and Family Tree chart, page 29 in the Student section.

- C. Went with father to Haran
  1. Same name as brother. Coincidental?
  2. “Haran” means “road.”
  3. Father, Terah, died at Haran.
- D. Received call
  1. Read Genesis 12:1-5
  2. Note promises
- E. Trace route
  1. About 600 miles around “Fertile Crescent”
  2. Jerusalem already there (Salem). Note visit by Melchizedek.



- F. Relationship to Lot
- G. Sodom and Gomorrah
- H. Chapter 15—Promise reconfirmed
  1. Still childless
  2. Promise: His descendants would be numberless, like the stars. (Today we know the stars can’t be counted. At that time the Babylonians thought there were about 3,000 stars).
  3. Fire and smoke between animals. This was an ancient rite to confirm a promise.
  4. Fulfillment delayed (15:13-16) — 400 yrs. Note God’s mercy and patience.
- I. Significance of Abraham in the Bible story:
  1. The geography of the Bible story moves to Canaan.
  2. Abraham’s descendants are identified as the nation through whom the Messiah will come.
  3. Abraham is the father of both Israel and Arab nations.
- J. Abraham lived about 2,000 B.C. Ask students to memorize that date.

Refer to Family Tree chart, Page 29 in the Student section.

Abraham—2,000 B.C.

## IV. Isaac

A. Note how the sacrifice of Isaac is a picture (type) of Christ’s sacrifice—(God sacrificing His only son). Some scholars think even the place of sacrifice may be the same or nearby.

B. Search for wife

1. Back to Haran
2. Rebekah, cousin Bethuel’s daughter
3. Note one generation behind Nahor’s family because of Abraham’s age when Isaac was born. (Refer to Family Tree chart, page 29 in the Student section.)

## V. Jacob

A. Name means “heal catcher” or “supplanter”

B. Deceived his father and brother

C. Mother, Rebekah, feared Esau would kill him, so told Jacob to return to Haran to marry.

D. Story of Laban, Rachel, and Leah

E. Return—Esau meets with 400 men.

F. Night of prayer—wrestled with angel—renamed “Israel” — “Wrestler with God.”

G. Significance of Jacob—every descendant of Jacob is now part of the chosen nation.

## VI. Joseph

A. Favorite of his father

B. Story of sale into slavery

C. His life divides into three major periods: “The pit, the prison, and the palace.”

D. New Pharaoh

E. Type of Christ. Despised by his brothers, sold to the Gentiles, went ahead to prepare salvation for those who caused his suffering.

## Summary

The book of Genesis takes the story from the grandeur of the Garden of Eden and sinless perfection to the misery of a “coffin in Egypt” (the concluding words of the book—50:26).

## Practice

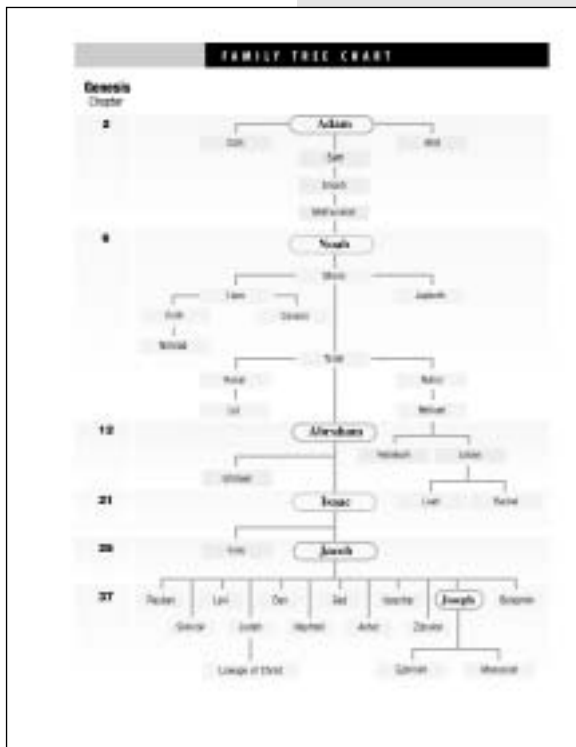
Make enough copies of the Bible Lands map on page 29 so you will have extra maps available for students to practice tracing the stories of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph on the map.

## Review

If time permits, administer the quiz over Genesis. Explain that this is not a “test.” It is just a fun way for each student to see how much he has learned in this lesson.

Point to Haran on map.

Refer to the Family Tree chart, page 29 in the Student section, as you tell the story of Jacob, Laban, Rachel, and Leah.



Demonstrate tracing the patriarchs on an overhead or classroom map.

No one will see the papers. Students do not hand them in to be graded. When all students have completed the quiz, discuss each question and give the correct answer.

The correct answers are:

- |      |      |       |
|------|------|-------|
| 1) a | 5) c | 9) c  |
| 2) b | 6) a | 10) c |
| 3) b | 7) b | 11) a |
| 4) c | 8) a | 12) c |

## Assignment

Tell students to look over Lesson 2 materials in preparation for next week, but to spend most of their time reviewing what they learned about the patriarchs in Lesson 1 and memorizing the names of the six patriarchs in order.

# Genesis Quiz

1. The patriarch who lived about 2,000 B.C. was
  - a. Abraham
  - b. Noah
  - c. Joseph
2. The patriarch who was renamed “Israel” was
  - a. Joseph
  - b. Jacob
  - c. Abraham
3. A good place to start looking for the story of Abraham would be
  - a. Genesis chapter 6
  - b. Genesis chapter 12
  - c. Genesis chapter 21
4. According to the Bible, the date of creation is
  - a. 10,000 B.C.
  - b. 4,004 B.C.
  - c. unknown
5. The events of the first eleven chapters of Genesis took place in the region of the modern country of
  - a. Israel
  - b. Iran
  - c. Iraq
6. Europeans are probably descendants of Noah’s son
  - a. Japheth
  - b. Ham
  - c. Shem
7. Abraham’s hometown was
  - a. Jerusalem
  - b. Ur
  - c. Babylon
8. The name, “Mesopotamia,” means
  - a. between the rivers.
  - b. beyond the mountains.
  - c. in the garden.
9. The “miracle child” born in his parent’s old age was
  - a. Jacob
  - b. Joseph
  - c. Isaac
10. In Old Testament chronology,
  - a. Joseph lived before Ishmael
  - b. Jacob lived before Isaac
  - c. Noah lived before Abraham
11. Try some more Old Testament chronology:
  - a. Sarah lived before Rachel
  - b. Japheth lived before Methuselah
  - c. Rebekah lived before Shem
12. The patriarch most closely related to Egyptian government was
  - a. Abraham
  - b. Jacob
  - c. Joseph

# Genesis

**T**he word, “Genesis,” means “beginning.” This first book of the Bible tells about the beginning of the universe, the beginning of life on earth, the human race, sin, God’s plan of redemption, and the beginning of the nation of Israel. It is foundational to the entire Bible. You might say the “plot” for the entire Bible story is described here, and the rest of the Bible is much more understandable to someone who has a knowledge of Genesis.

## The Place

The Bible story begins in Mesopotamia. “Mesopotamia” means “between the rivers,” and refers to the region between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers (modern Iraq). Refer to the Bible Lands map on page 30 to identify these locations. The Garden of Eden was located somewhere in this region and the families of Adam and Noah lived here.

Also on this map identify the location of modern Israel, sometimes referred to as Canaan or Palestine. During Abraham’s lifetime, Bible geography moves from Mesopotamia to Canaan.

A third region of importance in the Bible story is Egypt. Egypt has much literal and symbolic significance in Scripture.

## The People

We ask you to memorize only a few things in this course. Please memorize the following names in order. When you have done so, you will have not only an outline of the book of Genesis, but you will also be able to comprehend a huge section of Bible history in chronological order. The names are:

Adam	Isaac
Noah	Jacob
Abraham	Joseph

You may want to write these names on a 3 x 5 card and carry it with you for a few days. Keep saying these names as you go about your activities. Remembering them in order will help you in all your subsequent Bible study.

If you have the six names memorized and want an additional challenge, we suggest you go one step further and memorize a number after each name. The numbers are the chapters in the book of Genesis that record the story about each of these personalities. When you study your Bible or participate in a group discussion and want to refer to something in the life of one of these men or their families, you can turn directly to the appropriate passage. You will know, for example, that Noah and his family are described in Genesis 6 to 11. The names and beginning chapters are:

Adam: 2	Isaac: 21
Noah: 6	Jacob: 25
Abraham: 12	Joseph: 37

UNIT 1

These six men are called “Patriarchs,” meaning “fathers, rulers, or founders of families or tribes.” By tracing the lives of these six patriarchs we will observe the beginning of the nation of Israel and God’s plan of redemption that continues through the rest of the Bible. The book of Genesis describes the human problem (sin), and the rest of the Bible tells how God is solving the problem. The story ends in Revelation, where the work of Christ completely resolves the problem.

## The Story

Genesis begins with the creation event. Critics of the creation record in chapters 1 and 2 claim the accounts are “unscientific.” However, this description of the beginning of the universe has repeatedly been shown to be incredibly accurate. After studying the Genesis account of creation for eighteen months, Dr. Hugh Ross, a renowned astrophysicist, concluded he was “unsuccessful in finding a single provable error or contradiction. . . . All of the scientific and historical evidences I had collected deeply rooted my confidence in the veracity of the Bible and convinced me that the Creator had indeed communicated through this holy book.”<sup>1</sup>

We will study these issues of the truth of the biblical account in Session 21. Today’s lesson focuses on tracing the origin of human history through the families of the six patriarchs: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

## Adam

The Bible story begins in the land of Mesopotamia, the area between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, roughly the location of modern Iraq. Somewhere in this region God planted the Garden of Eden and placed the first human family there.

The sin of Adam and Eve marked the beginning of what is sometimes called “the human problem.” As a result of that original sin, the entire human race is adversely affected. Both human nature and the environment suffer because man is in rebellion against God and separated from Him. God exiled Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden and did not permit them to partake of the Tree of Life. The results of sin soon became apparent in Adam’s family. Adam’s son, Cain, killed his brother, Abel, out of jealousy. The rest of the Bible relates how God made it possible for sinful man to be brought back to a holy God. The book of Revelation is the story of God restoring to the faithful all that was lost in Genesis.

Genesis traces the “family tree” of each patriarch, following the “main line” of each and gives us a brief account of the most prominent people in it. From Adam to Noah, people apparently had a very long life span, the longest of whom (Methuselah) lived 969 years! Several theories try to explain the sudden change in life span after the flood. Some suggest that drastic changes in climate and other earth conditions shortened human longevity.

## Noah

The events in Noah’s family also take place in Mesopotamia. Whether the Flood was universal or covered only the area of human habitation is hotly debated among Bible scholars and will probably not be resolved in our lifetime. The point at issue, however, is that all human life perished except Noah and his family, so Noah literally became “the second father of the human race.”

The families of Noah’s sons spread out from Mesopotamia in three different directions. Japheth’s family went west and north to become the ancestors of European people. Shem’s family went east and south into the Arabian Peninsula and what became known as Syria, Assyria, and Persia. Ham went into Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Africa.

The human family attempted to stay together with a common language and unified human religion with a grand tower “to reach to the heavens,” but God dispersed the human family from the Tower of Babel. He confused the people’s speech so they would spread out over the earth and not develop a unified false religion.

## Abraham

The story of Abraham is critical to understanding the flow of Bible history and the development of the nation of Israel. Abraham is the first patriarch we can date with any degree of certainty. We ask you to remember only two dates in this entire course. This is the first. Abraham lived about 2,000 B.C.

Abraham's story begins in the splendid ancient city of Ur. From here God called him to "go to the land I will show you" (Gen. 12:1). Trace on the Bible Lands map (page 30), Abraham's journey from Ur, north along the Euphrates Valley to Haran, around the loop of the "Fertile Crescent," and down the Mediterranean shore to Canaan. In Abraham's lifetime the focus of Bible geography shifted from Mesopotamia to Canaan, with occasional excursions into Egypt.

Names of people in Genesis begin to compound at this point, and to "keep it all straight," you may want to refer frequently to the Family Tree chart on page 29.

The significance of Abraham in the Bible story cannot be overemphasized. Some of the important things about Abraham include:

- The shift in geography mentioned above.
- Abraham is the first individual God picked out of the stream of humanity and announced He would do something special with his descendants.
- Abraham is highly regarded by each nation descended from him, both Israeli and Arab.

## Isaac

Isaac was Abraham and Sarah's "miracle child." He was born when they were very old. The touching story of Abraham's willingness to offer Isaac as a sacrifice is not only significant in showing Abraham's faith, but also a beautiful "type" (a person, thing or event that represents or symbolizes some other person, thing, or event) of the crucifixion of Christ, God's only Son given to us. Many Bible scholars think Abraham offered Isaac on or near the mountain where Jesus died.

Isaac returned to Haran to find a wife, in obedience to his father's instructions, and married Rebekah, the granddaughter of his uncle Nahor (see Family Tree chart, page 29).

## Jacob

"Jacob" means "heel catcher," or "supplanter," a name Jacob aptly deserved. Born clutching the heel of his older twin brother Esau, Jacob persisted by intrigue and deceit until he finally supplanted his brother and inherited the birthright. He learned some difficult lessons, however, and later in life God changed his name to "Israel," meaning "wrestler with God." Other Hebrew scholars translate "Israel" variously as "having power with God," "God's wrestler," or even "ruling with God."

Jacob is the only descendant of Abraham whom God specifically chose to be the father of a special nation, Israel. In Scripture, the nation of Israel is most often called "the children of Israel," and occasionally "the children of Jacob." Frequently the simple terms "Israel" or "Jacob" are used to refer to the nation.

Jacob married Leah and Rachel, daughters of Laban (see Family Tree chart, page 29). The twelve sons of these marriages became the heads of the tribes of Israel.

## Joseph

In contrast to his father, Joseph exhibited incredibly noble character. His high moral standards, gentleness, patience, faithfulness, and perseverance have been recognized as exemplary and unsurpassed in human conduct.

Joseph is truly a "type" of Christ. He was his father's favorite son, was rejected by his brothers, sold for twenty shekels of silver, and unjustly accused and persecuted. Nevertheless, he became the savior of his family and ultimately of his nation.

When his brothers sold him into slavery, Joseph was taken to Egypt. Consequently, the geography of the Bible story moved to Egypt. When, finally, Joseph revealed his identity to his brothers, he invited them

and his father to come to Egypt and take up residence in Goshen, the choice pastureland of Egypt. All was well until after Joseph's death, when a new ruler ascended the throne of Egypt and forced the sons of Israel into slavery.

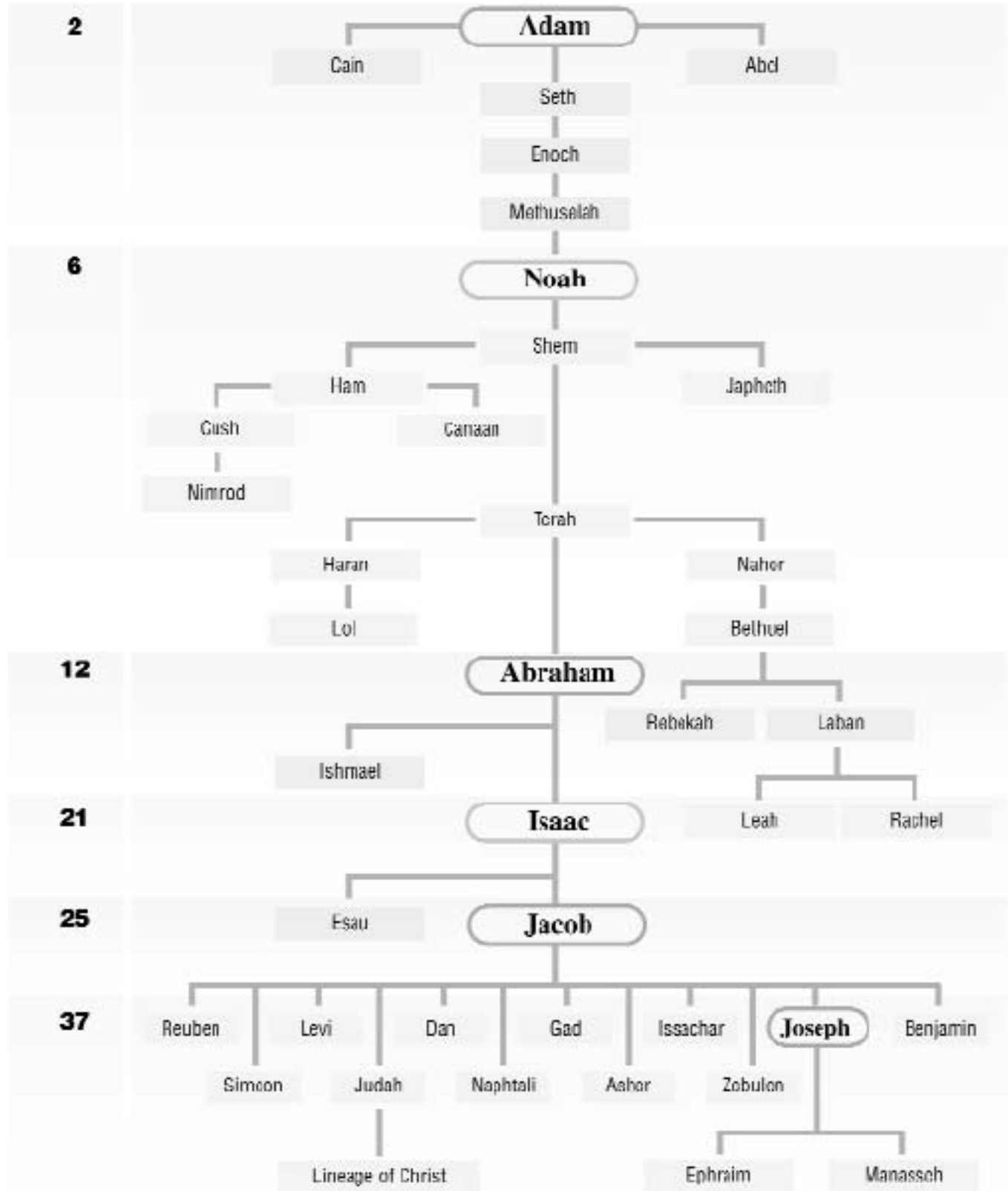
When Joseph's father, Jacob, finally learned that Joseph was alive, he must have still considered him dead in regard to the family inheritance. Bypassing Joseph, he placed his blessing on Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Consequently, there is no tribe of Joseph, but there are tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. You would think, then, that there should be thirteen tribes. However, the tribe of Levi did not receive a land inheritance because its sons were to serve as priests throughout all twelve tribes. Therefore, the land was divided among twelve tribes.

In reviewing this lesson, we suggest you repeat the names of the six patriarchs and trace their adventures on the map: Adam and Noah in Mesopotamia, Abraham traveling from Ur around the "Fertile Crescent" to Haran and Canaan, Isaac and Jacob in Canaan, and finally Joseph in Egypt.

Along with the beautiful story of man's creation in the image of God, Genesis tells the sad story of man's fall into sin and the consequences. Note that the story starts with the blessing and joy of the Garden of Eden, and ends "in a coffin in Egypt" (Gen. 50:26).

# FAMILY TREE CHART

## Genesis Chapter



# The Bible Lands



Caspian Sea

Persian Gulf

Tigris R.

Euphrates R.

Ur

Haran

Black Sea

Red Sea

Mediterranean Sea

EGYPT

NILE RIVER