

# Surfing the Scriptures

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My Anne,

Whose eternal encouragement and confidence  
cheers me on toward the end.

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***Now let your servant depart in peace,  
according to your word  
You have presented your salvation to the people.  
Everyone can see your plan  
(Luke 2: 29—31)***

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I Think I'd Better Think It Out Again!

Overturning tables

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## *Surfing the Old Testament Scriptures*

Hebrew (Old Testament)		
	In the Beginning	(Genesis)
LAW (Torah Pentateuch)	And These are the Names	(Exodus)
	And He called	(Leviticus)
	In The Wilderness	(Numbers)
	These are the words	(Deuteronomy)
PROPHETS (Former)	Joshua	Judges
	Samuel	Kings
PROPHETS (Later)	Isaiah	Jeremiah
	Ezekiel	Hosea
	Joel	Amos
	Obadiah	Jonah
	Micah	Nahum
	Habakkuk	Zephaniah
	Haggai	Zechariah
	Malachi	
WRITINGS	Praises (Psalms) . . .	Job
	Proverbs	Ruth
	Song of Songs (Solomon)	The Preacher (Ecclesiastes)
	How (Lamentations)	Esther
	Daniel	Ezra
	Nehemiah	Words of the Days (Chronicles)

Greek / (English) OLD TESTAMENT		
HISTORY	Genesis	Exodus
	Leviticus	Numbers
	Deuteronomy	Joshua
	Judges	Ruth
	Samuel	Kings
	Chronicles	Ezra
	Nehemiah	Esther
POETRY	Job	Psalms
	Psalms	Ecclesiastes
	Song of Solomon	
PROPHECY MAJOR	Isaiah	Jeremiah
	Lamentations	Ezekiel
PROPHECY MINOR	Daniel	Hosea
	Joel	Amos
	Obadiah	Jonah
	Micah	Nahum
	Habakkuk	Zephaniah
	Haggai	Zechariah
		Malachi

Figure 1: Compare Order Hebrew and English Bibles

## INTRODUCTION

Our Bible is a remarkable book.

It is more than just a clever view of history it was written down by forty authors of all walks of life from king to labourers and all between It was written over a span of one-thousand-five-hundred-years in three languages, There is no way these writers could collaborate with one another and yet it has one unified theme and message all the way through. Peter said, *“For the word was not written by the will and schemes of man, but holy men of God wrote under the power of the Holy Spirit”*.<sup>1</sup> The Bible has many minor themes woven through it but it answers two overriding questions; What has gone wrong with the world and how can it be put right. The overall answer is, God is going to put it right, and he is going to do it by rescuing us from ourselves. The plot unfolds as to how he is going to do that in the story of redemption—the story of rescue. The Book of Genesis introduces us to the plot of this drama.

When early Hebrews wanted to read Genesis, they picked out a papyrus scroll from a pitched lined storage box. Unrolling it enough to read the first few lines, they would check if it was the required scroll. If, *“In the Beginning”* were the first words, they would have the book we now call Genesis. As the Hebrew language declined, Greek began to rise. The Greeks added headings to the books. To make

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Peter 1: 2.



## INTRODUCTION

checking for accuracy easier, chapters were added later, and then chapters were further divided into verses. The scroll “In the Beginning” became “Genesis ” or “Origins”.

If you take Genesis out, the rest of the bible doesn’t make sense because it introduces the plot. Imagine trying to follow the plot your favourite mystery drama after missing the first two-minutes. But many critics of scripture will try to say Genesis is an irrelevant book. Paul writes, “*Just as death came through the first man Adam, so the resurrection comes through a man Jesus Christ*”.<sup>2</sup> How would you know who Adam was or what he got up to without reading Genesis. But Genesis introduces us to very many more origins. Life, Our universe, The world, Marriage, Bigamy, Family life, Civilization. Government, Culture, Literature, Arts, Sciences, Sin, Death, Murder, Music, War, Sacrifices, Idol worship and much more. Most important for the major plot of scripture is the introduction of the plan to achieve Salvation.

We do have an age-old problem however, ancient Hebrew people thought very differently from twenty-first century English folk. It was not just language or grammar but the very thought patterns behind the language. Hebrew people were meticulous about accuracy. We saw that vividly when a young shepherd boy idly slinging stones, much as we can imagine David doing, suddenly heard a tinkle as one stone hit the clay jars containing what we now know to be the

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2 1 Corinthians 15: 21.

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Dead Sea scrolls. One-thousand-years of time were spanned at that moment. Bible translators were told to hold their translating because we now had scrolls more than a millennium earlier to translate. Was it surprise or delight when they found no more minor differences than can be counted on one hand? Hebrew obsession with accuracy led to two system checks when copying writings. The first was that every Hebrew letter has a numerical value. So scribes would have a checksum figure at the end of every line. We use the same system today to prevent fraud every time you enter a bank card number. Another checking system was used to ensure accuracy in the main facts of a story. They called it Chiasma<sup>3</sup>. We know it under the name attributed to Bill Gates called “*Bullet-Points*”. Chiasma has an added advantage because each “bullet-point” had a corresponding check. The whole of the Old-Testament is written in Chiasma<sup>4</sup>. What is a Chiasma and how does it work? Here is an example from Genesis chapter-three.

A↓, God Favoured Adam and Eve (the subjects of the story)  
    B↓, God gives them a protected land to live in  
        C↓, God makes a Contract with them sanctions apply  
            D↓, God reserves certain properties as His by right  
                E Satan argues a different perspective (The turning point )  
            D↑, They usurp God’s reserved properties  
        C↑, They Invalidate the contract sanctions are implemented  
    B↑, They loose access to the protected Land  
A↑, They fall out of Favour (the checks and results )

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3 Sounded Kiasma

4 You can google the chiasma of nearly every Old Testament passage for the chiasma pattern.

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Chiasma is simply a story stripped down to its bare bones.

It takes an A,B,C,B,A. Structure where

A↓ corresponds to A↑ B↓ to B↑ and so on. So:

A↓, God Favoured Adam and Eve.

A↑, Adam & Eve fall out of Favour.

B↓ God gives Adam & Eve protected land to live in.

B↑ Adam & Eve lose access to protected land.

And so on. Hebrew people used this system long before the days when things were written down. Besides aiding the memory it ensured the accuracy of the story. By using chiasma, the story teller can be sure all the essential facts are relayed to the listener even if the ear rings Eve wore or the slogan on Adam's tea shirt are imagined.

God Favoured Adam and Eve over the Beasts of the field. The beasts may be dinosaurs or Homo-Neanderthal folk for all we know, that is unimportant to the story. God gave Adam and Eve a protected land to live as free people, they were responsible stewardship to use and organize everything in that land as they wished subject to a contract. In that contract God reserved certain rights and privileges. These, we are told, are the sole right of God to decide Good from Evil.

The turning point of the story comes in **D**, when Adam and Eve deliberately usurp God's reserved rights under the contract. That Invalidated the contract and invoked the Sanctions. Under the sanctions they were to lose access to

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the protected land and to lose direct communication with God himself. They were to fall out of Favour with God. These are the essential facts of the story and clearly indicate that from the outset of creation, God gave human-beings Freedom within the bounds of His right to decide right from wrong.

In relational terms, God required faith, trust and obedience from Adam and Eve, and indeed everyone else under this covenant. That is what God looks for when he judges. Deciding what is right or wrong are His part of the contract and will be the standard when He makes a judgement ruling. Faith and Obedience are the basis of this covenant and will remain the basis of all other covenants made in scripture. Any law or commandment, any sacrifices or ceremony, any attempt at good works will be based on and judged by these two requirements, Faith and obedience.

The writer to Hebrews later writes:

*Cain and Abel both offered sacrifices to God. But Abel offered a better sacrifice to God because he had faith. Noah had faith and respect for God, Abraham travelled on the promised of God because he had faith.* <sup>5</sup>

Why did God reserve the right to Judge good from evil? Judging good from evil is above the human pay grade for four reasons. First God wants the best for his creation not

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<sup>5</sup> Hebrews 11: 4.

## *INTRODUCTION*

for an individual. Remember God's Motivation is always Love—even in his Justice. Secondly, God alone has the expertises and knowledge. Remember God has already had dealings with Satan and knows his ways, we do not. Third, God wanted Adam and Eve to remain innocent. When they ate from the tree they lost their innocence—it matters not what fruit it was, it was the act of wilful disobedience that called for the sanctions. Forth, but far from finally, If every human-being decides right and wrong for herself/himself, there will be no absolute right and wrong. Just think of the chaos and anarchy that causes now, what would it be if all laws and standards were removed from the world. We only have to look at Sodom & Gomorrah, or Babel, or the time before the great flood. Read again the time of the Judges when only a few chose to heed the laws. These times did not bring freedom, every person was striving to dominate others.

Well, as we know, Adam and Eve fell by breaking the first contract with God. But God was not caught out because He immediately stated his second covenant. This time it was unconditional and not dependent upon the actions of his creation. God said to Adam and Eve, “You did not overcome Satan, but I will produce a seed from you that will overcome Satan. Satan may bruise the heel but this seed will bruise Satan's head”. The writer to Hebrews wrote:

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*This promise he swore by Himself because there is no-one Higher and He cannot break a promise<sup>6</sup>*

God is incapable of breaking a promise. That is why the promise became effective immediately. That is why Abraham could benefit from it through faith. That is why Job who lived two-thousand-years before Jesus could say:

*I know my redeemer lives and at a later date will stand upon the earth.*

Well of course we have the benefit of hindsight, but for them it raised many questions. Who will this redeemer be? How long must we wait before we see him? How will God keep his promise? What genetic line will he take? Who will live in faith and faithfulness in the meantime? Who will not? Exactly how does this promise work out in practice? At this point we are simply told. “*One of your descendants will overcome Satan*”. It is the beginning of a promise. If God can prove to keep this promise then he can be shown to be trustworthy. If not, then mankind might have to determine his own fate.

Of course we are left with the old-perineal, “*What is truth*”? Here God has the advantage over man again. Before God makes a promise, He looks down the avenue of time to its last chapter. If what He wants to say is not there He does not say it. It is not truth. If it is, then He can make a promise and it is stands true. That is how God cannot

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<sup>6</sup> Hebrews 6: 13

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break a promise. That is why His promises becomes active at the moment they are spoken, even if the event appears much latter in history. When God “*said...*” in Genesis chapter-one, it was done! You can argue how long it took but it was there long before the last chapter of time to prove it. History down to its dying days declares creation to be true. When you and I make a promise it can only be at best an intention and a hope, simply because we cannot see the end from the beginning.

We must also examine at this stage the purpose of the Scriptures. The Hebrew people were interested in God as a personality. How can a person related to an unseen God? By what means can we converse or argue our case? These things were written down so generations to come could live alongside God. The Hebrew people were chosen to discover and relate with God and then teach the world how to do the same. Their language and culture developed out of these values and to enhance that possibility. When these papyri were translated into Greek much of the purpose was lost because Greeks were a materialistic and philosophical people. One very real loss we suffer today comes from the influence Greek culture had on the world. The Book of Genesis, for example, was turned from “*In the beginning God*”, to “*Beginnings*”! No longer was the book viewed to discover the nature of this God but now it was viewed to argue about the beginnings. We no longer looked for **why** God did what He did and what drove him to do it, now we

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begin to ask **how** did these things come to pass. Philosophers and scientists were now free to argue, ‘*we do not agree this is how it happened*’ therefore God must be a liar and a fraud. Thus, today, God is dismissed because Greek thinking has taught us to ask how things are done and not why God wanted to do things.

All this has led to a loss of respect for scripture. In olden-times, preachers who chose their own theme were called false prophets. Today we call it New-Age or Liberal preaching because anyone can do it. One modern day politician from the right, (who shall remain nameless), once sought to silence a theological student from the left by retorting “*If the good Samaritan had not had capital he could not have paid the innkeeper, true or false*”? To which the unsuspecting student, (had he only known his scriptures better), might have replied “*But did not the two highest earners of the day, the priest and the lawyer, pass by on the other side*”? Checkmate? I make no political point only illustrate how this use of scripture is prominent in society today. How it is banded about by so many who have barely read it. This only masks the real purpose of scripture which is to see the heart of God and understand His purposes.



## INTRODUCTION

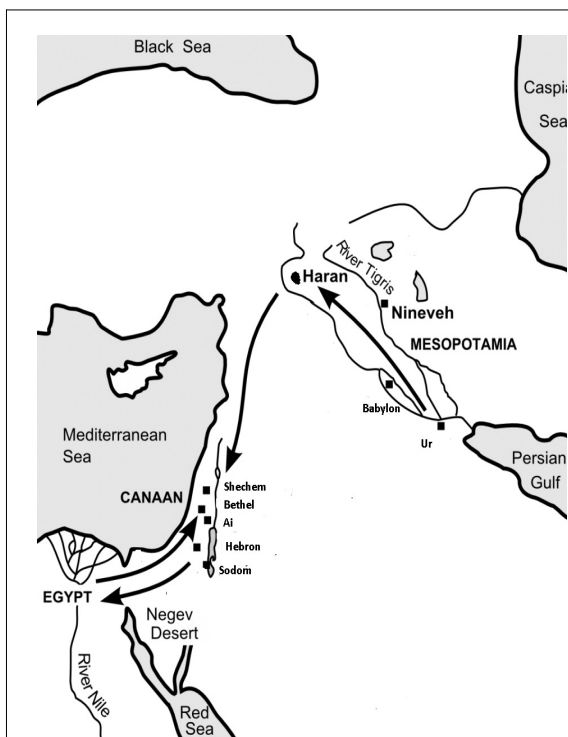
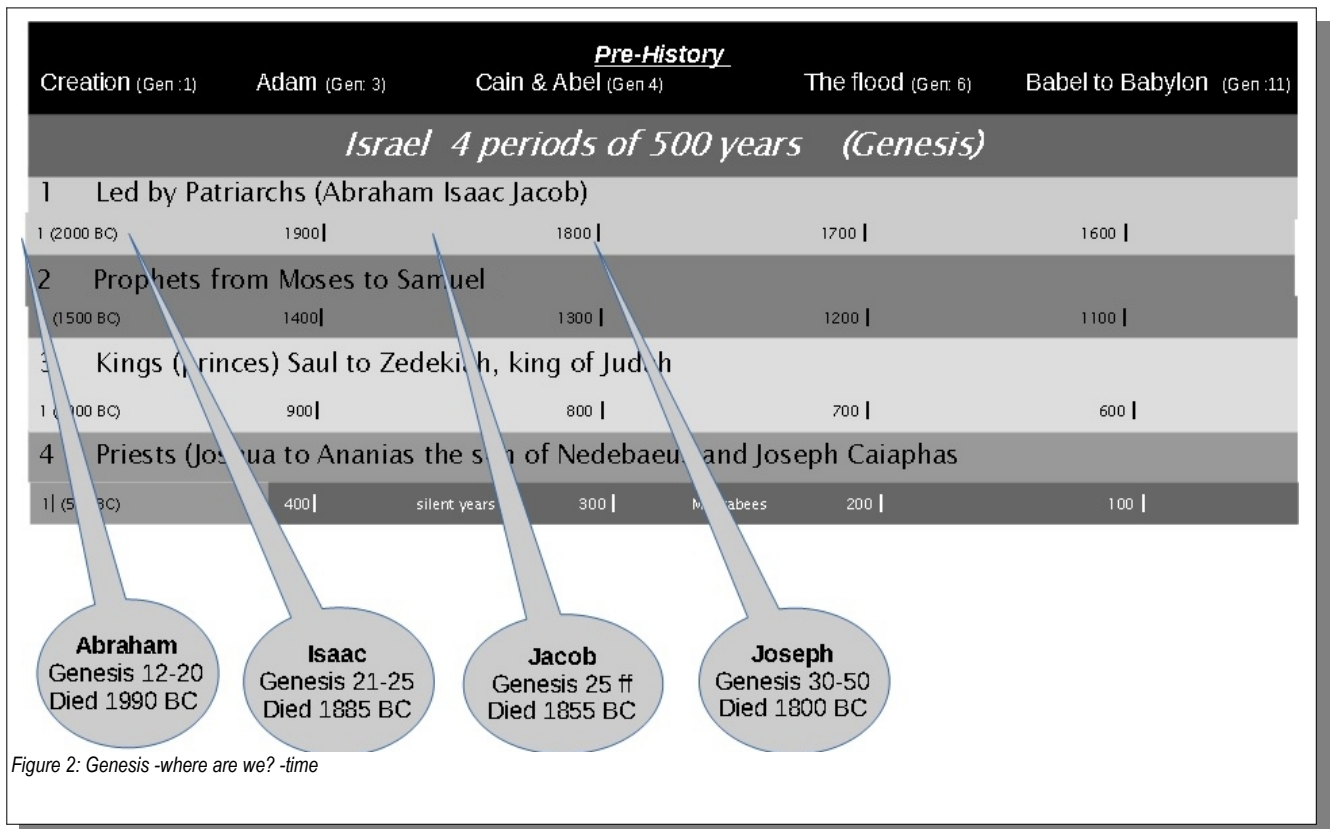


Figure 3: Genesis where are we ? -Place

### OUTLINE GENESIS

- A. Promises stated (Genesis 12:1-9)
- B. In Egypt with Sarah (Seed) (12:10-20)
- C. Lot and the land (to Sodom) (Ch. 13)
- D. Abraham and the nations (14)
- E. The covenant - initiation (15)
- F. Hagar & Ishmael (16)
- E.' The covenant confirmation (17)
- D.' Abraham and the nations (18)
- C.' Lot and Sodom and Gomorrah (19)
- B.' In Gerar with Sarah (Seed) (20)
- A.' Promise of son fulfilled (21)

Figure 4: Outline Joel

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