

Genesis

Chapters 1, 2

God made the world.

God made the sun, the moon
and the stars.....the whole universe.

God said "Let there be light" and there was light.

God made the earth with all its plants and trees
and animals and fish and birds.

God made the first people.....the first man and first woman.

God made them in his own image and said to them
"Be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth."

God saw all that he had made,
and all of it was good, very good.

Dear God, thank you for making such a beautiful world!

Chapter 3

A creature hostile to God took the form of a snake
and tempted the first man and first woman.

The snake tempted them to disobey God.

The man and woman then disobeyed God.

When God asked them why they disobeyed him,
the man blamed the woman, and the woman blamed the snake.

God said to the snake: "You are the enemy of the human race.
Someday a member of the human race will defeat you."

God said to the man and woman:

"From dust you came and to dust you will return."

The first man's name was Adam (meaning "man").

The first woman's name was Eve (meaning "life").

Dear God, please help me understand how evil in the world
started when Adam and Eve disobeyed you

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Chapter 4

Two of Adam and Eve's sons were Cain and Abel.

Cain was a farmer. Abel was a shepherd.

Cain was jealous of his brother Abel.

God said to Cain: "Get control of yourself."

But Cain let his anger take over, and he killed Abel.

God asked Cain, "Where is Abel?"

Cain answered, "How should I know?"

I'm not his security guard."

God replied, "I can hear your brother's blood crying out to me from the ground.

That same ground will no longer give you any crops."

Dear God, please help me not to get angry with other people

Chapters 5, 6 (see www.noahsark.com.hk)

Among Adam and Eve's descendants were Seth, Enosh, Kenan and Enoch.

Enoch was a special friend of God.

Enoch walked with God.

Another good man who walked with God was Noah.

In Noah's time, most people had forgotten God.

Most people did bad things.

So God decided to cleanse the earth by a great flood.

To save Noah and his family from the flood, God got Noah to build a huge boat for his family and for two animals of every kind.

Even though most people forgot God, Noah believed in God and trusted God.

Dear God, please help me to remember you,
to walk with you

Chapters 7, 8

Noah's family and many animals went into the big boat, the "ark".

Then for about 40 days there was heavy rain which caused a great flood. The ark floated on the water.

The people and animals inside the ark were safe but people and animals outside the ark died.

When the rain and flood stopped Noah and his family and the animals went out of the ark.

God made a special agreement (covenant) with Noah to bless Noah and his family.

God told Noah that the rainbow would be a sign of their agreement.

Dear God, thank you for making the rainbow so beautiful

Chapters 9, 10, 11

Noah's descendants spread to many lands.

They started speaking new languages.

They discovered how to make bricks.

In one place, Babel, they tried to build a very high tower.

But God was not pleased with them.

God scattered the people of Babel to many places.

Dear God, the human family
uses so many different languages.

Please help us to live peacefully together on this earth

Chapters 12, 13

God said to a man in the land of Haran named Abraham, "Leave your own country and go to a new land I will give you. I will make you into a great nation."

So Abraham and his family left the land of Haran and moved to the land of Canaan.

God said to Abraham, "I will make your descendants as many as the number of dust particles on the groundan uncountable number."

Even though Abraham and his wife Sarah were old and had no children, Abraham believed God's promise to give them many descendants.

Dear God, please help me to trust you like Abraham

Chapters 14, 15

In the land of Canaan there were many kings. Sometimes they went to war against each other.

Melchizedek, king of Salem, was also a priest of God. Abraham gave Melchizedek 10% of all his possessions. Melchizedek gave Abraham bread and wine.

Melchizedek asked God to give Abraham a special blessing.

God said to Abraham, "This land of Canaan is yours; I give it to you and your descendants."

Dear God, please help all the kings
and leaders in the world to be friends

Chapter 16

Abraham and his wife Sarah had been married many years but they did not have any children.

So Sarah said to Abraham, "Take my slave Hagar and have children by her."

When Hagar bore a son, Sarah was jealous and treated Hagar badly.

Hagar ran away from home, but God said to her "Go back to your mistress and submit to her; I will bless all your descendants."

Dear God, please help childless couples to have a baby

Chapter 17

God appeared to Abraham and said to him "I will make an everlasting covenant with you and your descendants.

As a sign of this covenant, all your males must be circumcised. Baby boys must be circumcised when they are eight days old.

Also, Sarah your wife, even though she is old, will bear you a son. You will name him Isaac."

Dear God, please bless all the babies in the world

Chapter 18

One day at Mamre, God and two angels appeared to Abraham. At first, God and the angels looked like men.

Following the ancient custom of hospitality Abraham prepared a feast for them.

God told Abraham that the town of Sodom was going to be destroyed because of the evil done there.

Abraham pleaded with God not to destroy Sodom.

God agreed to postpone Sodom's destruction for a while.

Dear God, please help people avoid sodomy

Chapter 19

The men of Sodom practised sodomy.

They wanted to abuse the two angels who looked like men when the angels visited the home of Abraham's nephew, Lot.

So the angels struck the threatening men with blindness.

Then the angels told Lot and his family to leave Sodom immediately because it would soon be destroyed.

As soon as Lot and his family had left Sodom the town was destroyed by a volcanic storm.

Dear God, please help people avoid sodomy

Chapters 20, 21

Abraham and his wife Sarah were old people but God blessed them with a son. They named their son Isaac.

Sarah again made life difficult for Hagar and Hagar's son.

Hagar and her son had to leave Abraham's home but God protected them and found them a new home.

Dear God, please don't let me
make life difficult for anyone else

Chapter 22

Abraham loved God very dearly.

Once when God put him to the test

Abraham was even willing to sacrifice his only son Isaac if that was what God wanted.

When God saw Abraham's love and obedience God renewed his promise to make Abraham and Isaac's descendants as many as the stars of heaven.

Dear God, please help us love and obey you

Chapters 23, 24

Not long after his wife Sarah died Abraham told his number one servant to go back to Haran and find a wife for his son Isaac.

The servant went to Haran, to the town of Nahor.

When women were getting water from the well in Nahor the servant prayed to God for help to find a wife for Isaac.

He said to God, "If I ask a woman for a drink and she answers 'Please take some of my water, and I'll give some to your camels, too', may she be the one you have chosen for Isaac."

He had barely finished his prayer when Rebecca, daughter of Bethuel came to the well.

She was very beautiful and not married.

The servant asked her for water and she said "Drink, sir...and I'll get water for your camels, too."

Bethuel, a relative of Abraham, gladly agreed for Rebecca to go with the servant to be Isaac's wife.

Rebecca herself was happy with the plan.

Isaac married Rebecca and loved her dearly.

Dear God, please help people to find "Mr/Mrs Right"

Chapter 25

After Abraham died, God blessed Abraham's son Isaac.

For a long time Isaac's wife Rebecca could not have children.

Then after Isaac prayed for her, she had twin boys
- Esau and Jacob.

Esau became a hunter. Jacob helped at home.

Isaac favored Esau. Rebecca preferred Jacob.

There was a strong rivalry between the two boys.

Once when Esau came home seriously ill,
he agreed to give Jacob his rights as first born
son in exchange for some soup Jacob had made.

Dear God, please help childless couples to have a baby

Chapters 26, 27

God blessed and protected Isaac all his life.

When Isaac grew old and was nearly blind, he followed the
usual custom of giving his final blessing to his sons.

He wanted to bless Esau first, since Esau was his older son.

But Rebecca and Jacob tricked Isaac.

Jacob dressed in Esau's clothes and put hairy animal skins
on his arms.

Before Esau came home, Jacob asked for Isaac's blessing.

Isaac said "Your voice is that of Jacob, but your arms and
scent are those of Esau. Are you really Esau?"

Jacob said "I am."

Isaac then gave him his solemn blessing.

When Esau found out what had happened, he was very angry and planned to kill Jacob.

So Rebecca got Jacob to go to Haran until Esau's anger cooled down.

Dear God, please bless everyone in my family

Chapter 28

When Rebecca sent Jacob to Haran, she and Isaac told Jacob to find a wife in Haran.

While Jacob was on his way to Haran, God appeared to him in a dream and said to him "I will keep you safe wherever you go, and I'll bring you back safely to your own land."

Dear God, please keep us safe wherever we go

Chapter 29

Jacob went to the home of his uncle Laban, in Haran.

Laban had two daughters, Leah and Rachel.

Jacob fell in love with Rachel.

Jacob made an agreement with Laban:

Jacob would work for Laban for seven years in return for marriage to Rachel.

For Jacob, the seven years went like a flash because he loved Rachel so dearly.

But Laban forced Jacob to marry both Leah and Rachel and made him work for another seven years as well.

Dear God, please help us to enjoy our work

Chapter 30

Leah gave birth to four sons

- Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah.

Rachel had no children and was jealous of her sister Leah.

Rachel gave her servant girl Bilhah to Jacob and Bilhah gave birth to two sons - Dan and Naphtali.

Leah then gave her servant girl Zilpah to Jacob and Zilpah gave birth to two sons - Gad and Asher.

Leah herself had two more sons - Issachar and Zebulun and a daughter - Dinah.

Finally Rachel had a baby, a son whom she named Joseph.

For many long years Jacob worked for Laban but Laban would not let Jacob return to his own land.

Dear God, please bless everyone in my family

Chapter 31

Jacob said to Rachel and Leah: "You know how hard I have worked for your father, yet he has treated me unfairly

- ten times he changed my wages.

Now God has told me to go back to my own land.

So, get ready, we are going."

Jacob took his wives, children and livestock and left

- without telling Laban.

Only after three days did Laban find out that Jacob had outsmarted him.

Laban chased Jacob, but God told Laban not to hurt Jacob.

So Laban made a treaty with Jacob

and let him go on his way.

Dear God, please help us to treat everyone fairly

Chapter 32

As Jacob returned to his own land of Canaan,
he feared that his brother Esau would try to kill him.

So Jacob, always clever and wily,
sent messengers ahead of him to make friends with Esau.

The messengers reported
that Esau was on his way to meet Jacob
and had 400 men with him.

This news increased Jacob's fears
so he divided his family and flocks into two groups,
thinking that if Esau attacked one group
then the other group could escape.

Jacob also prayed hard to God for protection.

Jacob sent gifts of animals to Esau,
hoping that Esau would be friendly to him.

On the night before Jacob and Esau met,
God appeared to Jacob and gave him a new name: Israel.

Dear God, please help me to be kind and clever

Chapters 33, 34

When Esau and Jacob met,
Esau was friendly and kind to Jacob.

Esau accepted all the gifts of animals that Jacob gave him.
But Jacob continued to be wary of Esau.

Jacob moved to Shechem.

One of the men of Shechem raped
and then wanted to marry Jacob's daughter, Dinah.

Jacob and his sons craftily said
they would agree to the marriage
if all of the men of Shechem were circumcised.

The men agreed.

But on the third day
while the Shechem men were still in a lot of pain
Jacob's sons Simeon and Levi took matters
into their own hands.

They killed all the Shechem men,
because their sister Dinah had been raped.
Jacob did not approve of the killings.

Dear God, please help women who have been raped

Chapters 35, 36

God said to Jacob "Go to Bethel and live there."

So Jacob moved to the area of Bethel.

Not long after this, Rachel conceived another baby.

But Rachel died in childbirth.

Jacob named the baby boy Benjamin.

In all, Jacob had 12 sons:

Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun
- their mother being Leah;

Joseph and Benjamin - their mother being Rachel;

Dan and Naphtali - their mother being Bilhah;

Gad and Asher - their mother being Zilpah.

Jacob and his family stayed in the land of Canaan,
the land of his father Isaac.

Esau and his family moved to the land of Edom.

Dear God, please bless and protect my brothers and sisters

Chapter 37

Jacob loved Joseph more than his other sons because Joseph was the son of his old age.

Jacob had a special coat of many colors made for Joseph. Joseph's older brothers were jealous of Joseph and hated him.

Joseph had a dream: he became a famous person. This made his brothers hate him all the more.

One day, when the brothers were looking after their sheep in a distant place, Jacob sent Joseph to see how they were.

When the brothers saw Joseph coming some of them wanted to kill him.

Eventually they sold Joseph to some slave traders for 20 silver pieces.

The slave traders took Joseph to Egypt and re-sold him there.

The brothers told Jacob that a wild animal had killed Joseph.

Jacob was heart broken and mourned Joseph all the time.

Dear God, please help me not to be jealous of other people

Chapter 38

Jacob's son Judah had three sons - Er, Onan and Shelah.

Er married Tamar, but not long after the wedding, Er died.

So, according to custom, Judah asked Onan to marry Tamar and have a child for his brother.

But Onan spilt his seed each time he slept with Tamar, so Tamar did not conceive.

Judah then said to Tamar

"Wait till Shelah grows up, and you can marry him."

But when Shelah was older, he still hadn't been given to Tamar.

So Tamar tricked her father-in-law Judah.

She dressed as a prostitute and conceived a baby by Judah.
Judah did not know that the woman was Tamar;
her face was covered

Three months later Judah was told that his daughter-in-law
was pregnant after acting as a prostitute.

Judah followed the harsh local custom and said
"Take her outside and burn her."

But Tamar produced Judah's seal, stick and cord
which he had given to her as a pledge when he had sex with her.
So Judah admitted his guilt and freed Tamar
who gave birth to twin boys.

Dear God, please help married people to be happy

Chapter 39

The slave traders took Joseph to Egypt
and sold him to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's top officials.

God was with Joseph. God blessed everything Joseph did.

Because Joseph did everything so well

Potiphar put Joseph in charge of his household
and all his possessions.

Because of Joseph, God blessed Potiphar and all his interests.

Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph who was very handsome.

But day after day Joseph refused to sleep with her.

Then one day when Joseph again refused her
she tore his clothes and started screaming.

She claimed Joseph had tried to seduce her.

Potiphar believed his wife and he put Joseph in jail.

Dear God, please don't let me cause other people to do wrong

Chapter 40

Even in jail, God protected Joseph.

When two of Pharaoh's officials,
his cup-bearer and his baker also were put in jail,
Joseph was able to interpret dreams they had.

The cup-bearer dreamt he picked grapes
and made wine for Pharaoh's cup.

Joseph told him the meaning of his dream:
in three days he'd be free
and back at work as Pharaoh's cup-bearer.

The baker dreamt that birds ate bread
from a tray on top of his head.

Joseph told him:
"In three days you'll be hanged,
and birds will eat your flesh."

And so it happened as Joseph had said: on the third day
the cup-bearer went back to work in Pharaoh's palace
while the baker was hanged.

Joseph asked the cup-bearer to help him get out of jail,
but when the cup-bearer was free, he forgot about Joseph.

Dear God, please bless everyone who has ever helped me

Chapter 41

Two years later Pharaoh had a dream:
he was standing by the river Nile
and saw 7 healthy cows feeding on the riverside.

Then he saw 7 sickly cows which ate the 7 healthy cows.

Pharaoh woke,
then had a second dream when he went back to sleep:
7 rich ears of corn on one stalk,
followed by 7 withered ears which ate the 7 rich ears.

None of Pharaoh's wise men could interpret the dreams.

Then the cup-bearer told Pharaoh
how Joseph could understand dreams.

Pharaoh sent for Joseph
and Joseph told Pharaoh the meaning of his dreams:
the 7 healthy cows and 7 rich ears
meant 7 good years for Egypt;
the 7 sickly cows and 7 withered ears meant 7 years of famine.

Joseph also told Pharaoh what to do:
use a tax to collect one fifth of all grain in the 7 good years;
then during the 7 years of famine
use the collected grain to feed Egypt.

Pharaoh and his ministers
were so impressed by Joseph's wisdom
that Pharaoh made Joseph governor of the whole of Egypt,
second only to Pharaoh himself.

Pharaoh gave Joseph Asenath, a priest's daughter, as his wife.

Joseph was now 30 years old,
having spent more than 10 years in Egypt.

For the next 7 years Joseph traveled all over Egypt, supervising the collection of grain.

Before the famine began,

Joseph and Asenath had two sons: Manasseh and Ephraim.

When the famine began, Pharaoh told the Egyptians

"Go to Joseph and do what he tells you."

People from all over Egypt and from other countries went to Joseph to buy grain during the famine.

Dear God, thank you for turning things around
in Joseph's life

Chapter 42

In Joseph's home country of Canaan, the famine was very severe.

Joseph's father Jacob said to his sons

"I hear there is grain for sale in Egypt.

Go to Egypt and buy grain for our families so that we will not die."

All Joseph's brothers, except Benjamin, went to Egypt and arrived at the place where Joseph was selling grain.

The brothers had not seen Joseph for about 20 years and they didn't recognize him. But Joseph recognized them.

Joseph put them to the test: he said they were spies, and he told them to bring Benjamin to Egypt to prove they were not spies.

He kept Simeon in prison until they returned with Benjamin.

Dear God, please help any places in the world
which are suffering from famine

Chapter 43

The famine continued and so Jacob sent his sons back to Egypt to buy more grain.

This time Benjamin went with them, even though Jacob worried greatly about his safety.

When the brothers arrived in Egypt Joseph invited them to his home for a meal. Simeon was allowed to join them.

The brothers still didn't recognize Joseph. Joseph was moved when he saw Benjamin, his full blood brother.

Joseph left the company and cried for quite some time.

When Joseph rejoined the group he gave the brothers a hearty meal which they all enjoyed. Joseph arranged that Benjamin's portion was extra large.

Dear God, please bless all missing persons

Chapter 44

Joseph had his brothers' sacks filled with free grain, then he gave them back their money.

But he again put them to the test: he got his servants to put his special chalice in Benjamin's sack.

Not long after the brothers left, Joseph's servants caught up with them and asked them why had they stolen Joseph's chalice.

They replied that they would never dream of doing such a thing and that if the chalice was found in anyone's sack that man would die.

Each man's sack was opened, beginning with the oldest, and finally the chalice was discovered in Benjamin's sack.

On returning to Joseph's home the brothers pleaded with Joseph not to punish Benjamin.

Judah even offered to be Joseph's slave for life in return for Benjamin's freedom.

Dear God, please help us in time of trial

Chapter 45

When Joseph realized his older brothers were sorry for having sold him as a slave he was overcome and started crying loudly.

He told his brothers "I am your brother Joseph whom you sold into Egypt.

God sent me here to provide food for you."

He hugged all his brothers and talked with them.

Joseph told his brothers to bring their father and their families to Egypt since the famine would last for five more years.

Pharaoh was pleased that Joseph's brothers had come and warmly invited them to live in Egypt.

The brothers returned to Canaan.

They told their father that Joseph was alive.

Their father Jacob was overcome with joy.

Dear God, please help separated family members
to be re-united

Chapter 46

Jacob and his whole family, about 70 people, took all their possessions and moved to Egypt.

God said to Jacob

"I myself will go down to Egypt with you."

Joseph was ready for their arrival in Egypt.

As soon as his father appeared, Joseph ran to greet him.

Joseph threw his arms around his father

and cried for a long time on his father's shoulder.

Jacob said to Joseph

"Now that I have seen you again, I can die in peace."

Dear God, please help separated family members
to be re-united

Chapters 47, 48, 49

Pharaoh met Jacob and Joseph's brothers and welcomed them to be shepherds in the land of Goshen.

Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

Pharaoh humbly received Jacob's blessing.

Joseph provided food for his family during the famine.

As the famine got worse

the Egyptians sold their livestock and their farms to Joseph in return for grain.

Joseph made the Egyptians promise

that when the famine was over

they would give one fifth of their produce to Pharaoh.

Jacob lived in Egypt for seventeen more years before he died in Joseph's arms.

Before his death, Jacob blessed all his sons.

Jacob adopted and also blessed Joseph's two sons Ephraim and Manasseh.

Dear God, please bless Egypt and Israel,
and help them be friends

Chapter 50

After mourning their father for 70 days Joseph and his brothers went to Canaan and buried Jacob there.

Many of Pharaoh's officials went with Joseph to Canaan.

When the group returned to Egypt, Joseph's brothers again asked him to forgive them for selling him as a slave.

Joseph replied "God has turned this evil into good, and through me has helped many people.

So do not be afraid.

I will provide for you and your families."

Joseph lived to see his children's children.

Before he died, he asked that his bones one day be taken back to Canaan.

Dear God, thank you for the beautiful story of Joseph