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THE JOURNEY BEGINS!

Stephen Valgos



Student Text

An Introduction to the Old Testament, Third Edition Revised

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This book is dedicated to my wonderful wife, Jill, who so patiently waited for me to finally come to bed as I labored late into the night time and time again. And to my sons, Mark and Luke, that they may one day search the Scriptures for themselves and experience the excitement and joy of encountering God in its pages.

I want to offer my sincere appreciation to my beloved students at St. Stanislaus Parish School (Modesto, California), classes of 2003 and 2004, for your love, patience, enthusiasm, energy, and willingness to celebrate and share with me the joy of studying the Sacred Scriptures as this work was created. May God bless you and make his presence known to you through them always.

I want to thank my student aides, Anthony Palermo and Kristin Garke, for their help in editing and formatting earlier editions of this work. Finally, my thanks to the Central Catholic High School English Department teaching staff for their willingness to edit this work in addition to the piles of student essays through which they courageously wade each quarter.

All scripture is inspired by God
and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness,
so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work.
2 Timothy 3:16-17

In the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets His children with great love
and speaks with them; and the force and power in the word of God is so great
that it stands as the support and energy of the Church, the strength of faith for her sons,
the food of the soul, the pure and everlasting source of spiritual life.

Dei Verbum 21

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Dear Parents,

I owe a great deal of thanks to many parents who approached me with their concerns and who further helped me to think through the strengths and weaknesses of this Bible study program as it developed into its present form. I designed the program to supplement the regular school curriculum of Scripture study. While teaching religion curriculum, I recognized a true deficit in biblical literacy among Catholic school children and, in truth, among many Catholic adults as well.

The Church affirmed her teachings at Vatican II, in the *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum)*: “Like the Christian religion itself, all the preaching of the Church must be nourished and regulated by Sacred Scripture. For in the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets His children with great love and speaks with them; and the force and power in the word of God is so great that it stands as the support and energy of the Church, the strength of faith for her sons, the food of the soul, the pure and everlasting source of spiritual life” (21). I have therefore dedicated a great deal of time and energy into discerning how best to introduce students to the Hebrew people’s story and encounter with God, as conveyed in these selections from the Old Testament. There is no easy way around some of the powerful Old Testament events such as the destruction of people, cities, and the world as a result of wickedness; the abuse of power, especially in incidents of incest, rape, and slavery; or even the mass murder of peoples and cultures in the name of God. It is our task not to sidestep these issues, but instead to address together many of these topics in a reflective, meaningful, and prayerful way.

Because parents are the primary educators in faith, I encourage you to *work through these Bible studies with your children* so that you can discuss and grow in understanding of and love for God while reading his Word together, as well as sort out some of the complexities of the text prior to your child’s coming to class. Your child’s teacher will undoubtedly do his or her best to explain the deeper spiritual richness that the Scripture intends to convey in telling the story, but no one teacher can address all of the questions that your child might have. It is paramount, therefore, that we work together to teach salvation history to your children.

I thank you in advance for your commitment to your child's Catholic education and hope that you take every opportunity to work with your child's teacher while searching the Scriptures. If you have comments, questions, or concerns either now or in the future, please do not hesitate to call your child's teacher. You may also e-mail me personally at stephen@catholicevangelist.com. I will do my best to get back to you in a timely manner.

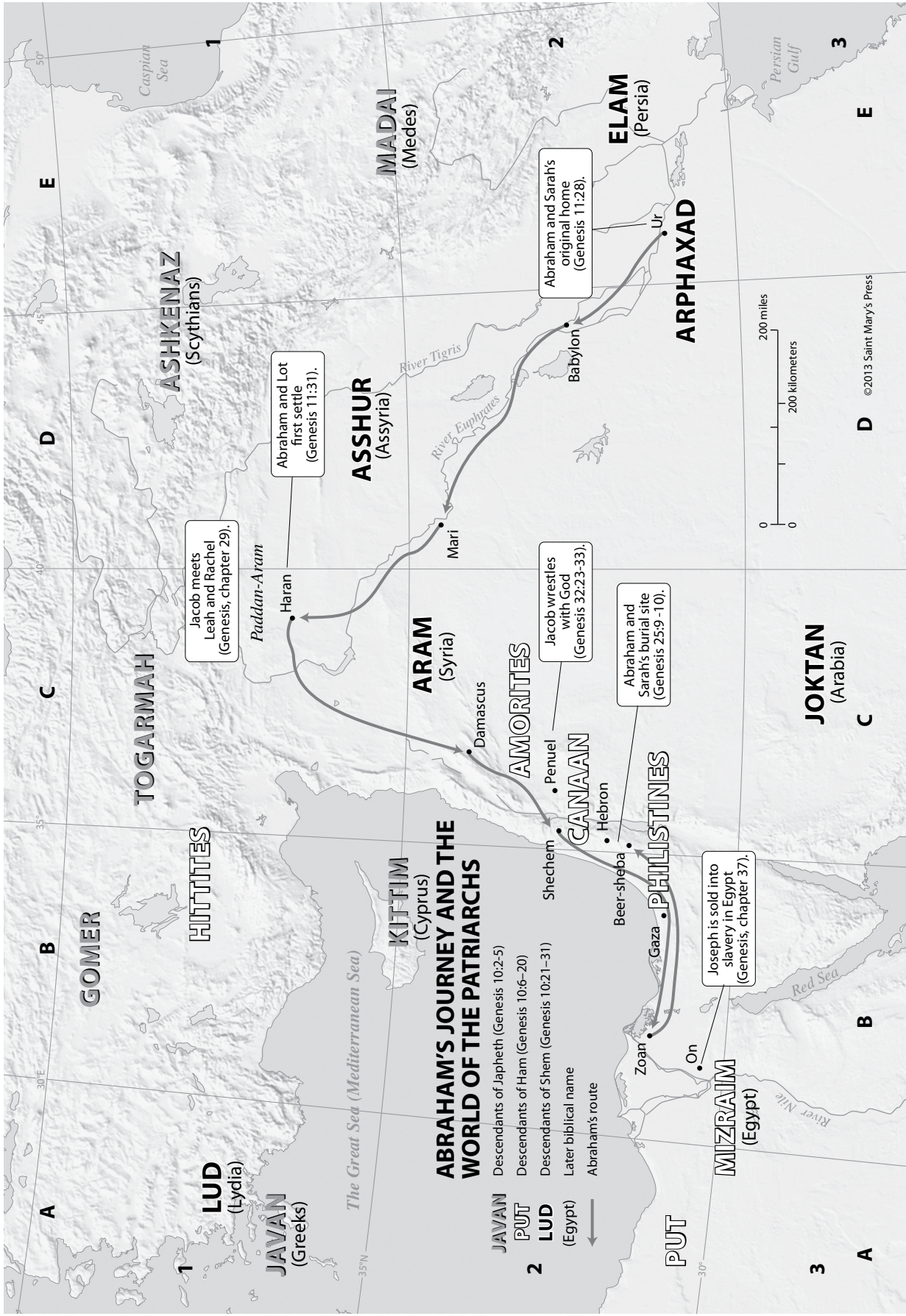
In God's grip,
Stephen P. Valgos, M.T.S.
Catholic Evangelist

Please sign here to show your willingness to grow and learn with your child this year.

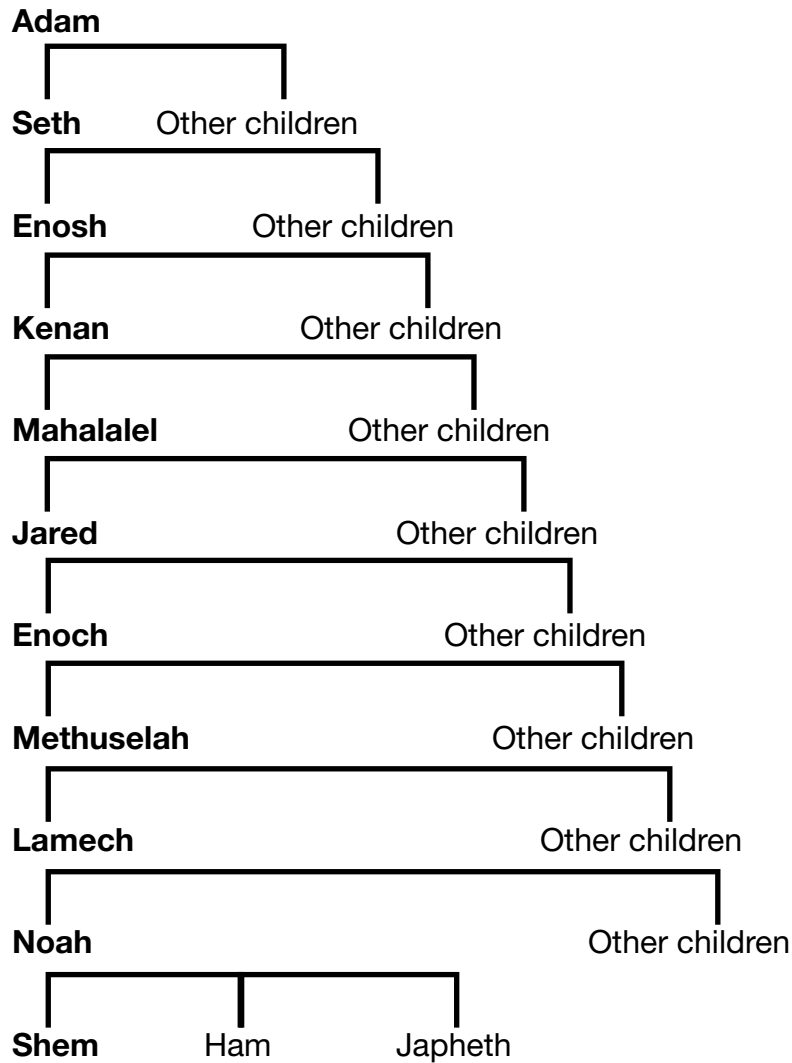
Name _____ Signature _____

Reflect before Reading the Old Testament

In the space provided, write what you know about the Old Testament: its main figures, events, books, or accounts. Who are the main figures in this story of God's covenant with humanity? Why do you think Christians concern themselves with reading the Hebrew Scriptures, also called the Jewish Scriptures? What do you hope to learn this year by reading these accounts of the Hebrew people and their experiences with the God of Israel?

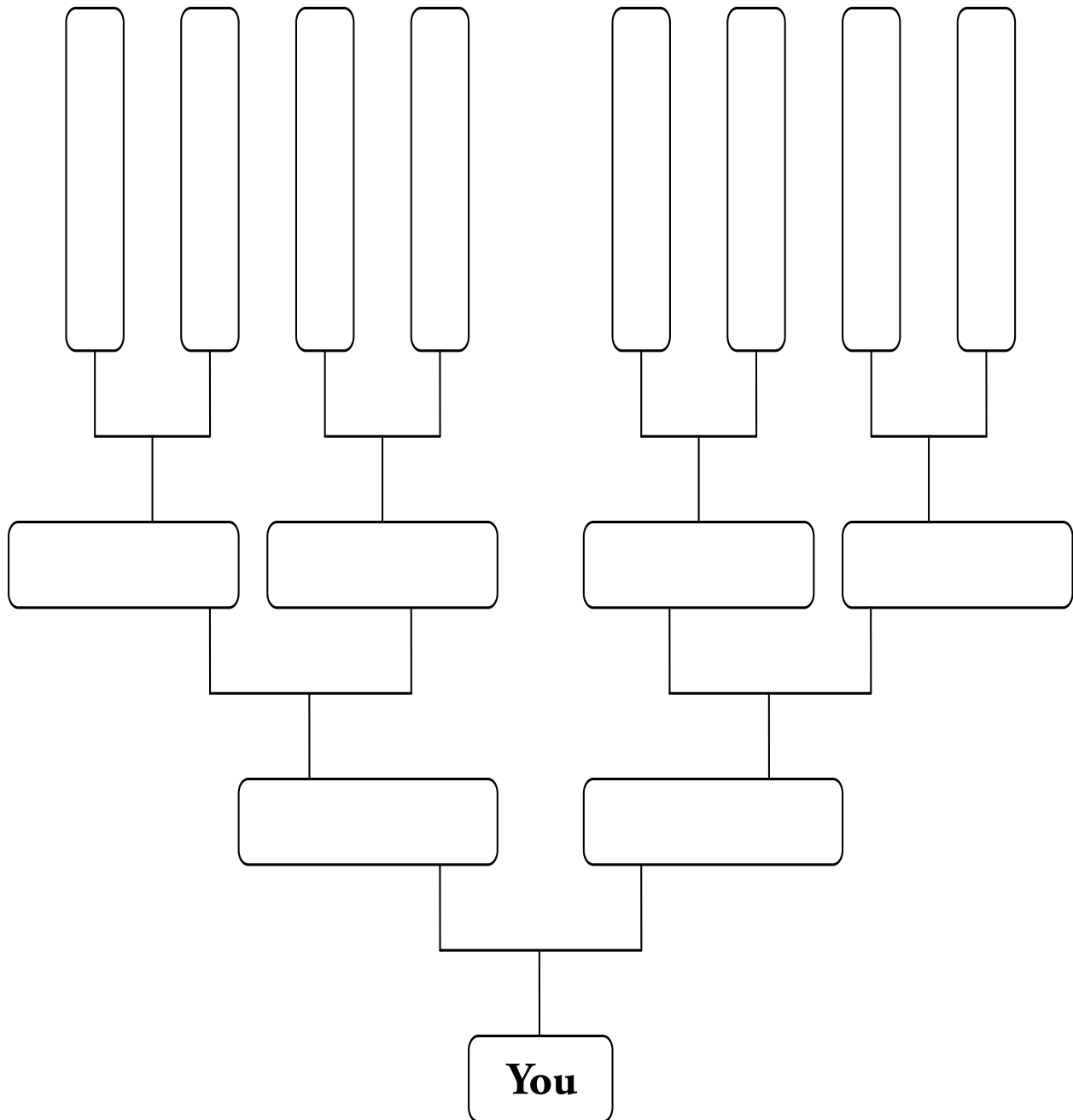


Genesis Chapter 5: Genealogy from Adam to Noah



Your Family Tree

What is your genealogy? From whom do you descend? Create a family tree in the space below, or go online and download your own. Go back as far as you want, adding older generations as needed. Include both sides of your family, as many people as possible. Talk to your mother, father, and especially grandparents to fill in the blanks.



Old Testament Religious History in Brief

Before 1850 BC: The Primeval History

- Adam and Eve
- Cain and Abel
- Noah and the flood
- Tower of Babel

1850 BC: The Call of Abraham; the Patriarchs and Matriarchs

- Abraham and Sarah
- Isaac and Rebecca
- Jacob and his wives/concubines: Leah, Rachel, Zilpah, and Bilhah

1750 BC: Hebrews Settle in Egypt

1290 BC: Exodus from Egypt; the Wandering in the Wilderness

1200 BC: The Hebrews Enter Canaan; Period of the Judges*

- “Major” judges: Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson
- “Minor” judges: Shamgar, Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon

1020 BC: Israel’s Monarchy Begins

- Saul (1020-1000 BC)
- David (1000-961 BC)
- Solomon (961-922 BC)

922 BC: The Kingdom Divides: Israel (North) and Judah (South)

- Kings of the divided kingdoms
 - Israel: Jeroboam I, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri Tibni, Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah, Jehoram, Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II, Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hoshea
 - Judah: Rehoboam, Abijam, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, Ahaziah, Athaliah, Joash, Amaziah, Azariah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah
- Prophets: Elijah, Elisha, Amos, Hosea, and First Isaiah

721 BC: The Assyrians Conquer Israel

- Prophets: Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and Ezekiel

*Modern scholars categorize the judges as “major” and “minor” based only on the length and substance of their accounts in Sacred Scripture. The Hebrew Scriptures do not classify the judges in this way.

587 BC: The Babylonians Conquer Judah: Babylonian Exile

538 BC: Persians Conquer the Babylonians; Exiles Begin to Return to Jerusalem

- Prophets: Second Isaiah, Zechariah, Haggai, and Malachi

458 BC: Additional Exiles Return to Jerusalem

- Prophets: Nehemiah and Ezra

332 BC: Greeks Conquer the Persians

142 BC: Maccabees Defeat the Greeks; Hasmonean Dynasty Begins

63 BC: Romans Conquer Israel

Student Learning Objective:
To identify God as the source of all creation, and humanity as central to God's creative activity on our behalf.

The Book of Genesis **Chapters 1 to 5**

1. What does God create on each of the first six days of creation, according to Genesis chapter 1?
2. God blesses man and woman and then gives them a command. What is his command to them?
3. What is the greatest difference between the first and second creation accounts?
4. What order does God give to man after settling him in the garden of Eden?
5. What does the serpent tell Eve will happen if she eats from the tree of knowledge?

6. What do Adam and Eve do after eating the fruit, when they hear God coming?

7. After punishing the serpent, the man, and the woman, how does God show his mercy?

8. How does God punish Cain for killing his brother, Abel?

9. What is Cain's response to God's punishment? How does God show his mercy and love to Cain?

10. What happens to Enoch after living for 365 years?

Reflection Question

In the first two chapters of Genesis, we read two very different accounts of God's creation of the world. How are they different? How are they the same? What do you think is the main point of these two stories? In other words, what is the author of Genesis trying to tell us about the world and all that is in it? Please explain.

My verse to share is _____:_____ because . . .