

**A SHILLING BOOK OF OLD
TESTAMENT HISTORY FOR
NATIONAL AND ELEMENTARY
SCHOOLS: WITH A MAP OF THE
HOLY LAND**

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A Shilling Book of Old Testament History for National and Elementary Schools: With a Map of the Holy Land by G. F. Maclear

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BOOK I.

From the Creation to the Dispersion of Mankind.

CHAPTER I.

1. **The Creation.** *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.* With these simple words begins the History contained in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, teaching us that the world did not exist from all eternity, or, as some have thought, owe its origin to Chance, but was called into existence by the will of an All-Mighty Creator. The Creation of the world took place in six days, or periods of time. On the *first* day light was created, and divided from the darkness; on the *second* the firmament, or atmosphere encircling the globe; on the *third*, the water and the land were separated, and the surface of the earth was covered with vegetation, with the *herb yielding seed, and the tree yielding fruit after its kind.* On the *fourth*, the sun, moon, and stars were bidden to give light upon the earth, and to be for signs and seasons, and for days and years. On the *fifth*, the waters brought forth the various tribes of fish after their kind, and the winged fowl flew in the air. On the *sixth* day land animals, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth appeared, and each and all were pronounced by God to be very good.

2. **The Creation of Man.** But the work of Creation was not yet complete. A being higher than any yet created was to appear. Accordingly, God said, *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over every living thing, and over all the earth; over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.* So the Lord God formed Man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and Man became a living soul. Then having seen that all things He had made were very good, God ended His work, and rested on the *Seventh Day*, hallowing it as a Day of Rest for man.

3. **Adam and Eve.** For the abode of the first man, ADAM, the Almighty planted a garden in the region of the East, where now is the high table-land of the modern Armenia. It was watered by four streams, of which two were the Tigris and Euphrates. The situation of the others, Pison and Gihon, is not known. But here, in a spot supplied with everything that was pleasant to the eyes and good for food, the first man's work commenced, and he was charged to dress and keep the garden, which the Lord had made. Nor amidst everything to

please his senses and supply material for his thoughts was he left alone. A being, *bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh*, was created a *helpmeet for him*. The Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and taking one of his ribs He made thereof a woman, and brought her unto him, and Eve, *the mother of all flesh*, was united to him in holy bonds, which He, who thus instituted them in Paradise, afterwards adorned and beautified with His own presence and first miracle at Cana of Galilee (Jn. ii. 1; Eph. v. 23—33).

4. **The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.** Of the life of the first human pair in Paradise we are told very little. Besides the charge to dress and keep the fair enclosure in which they had been placed, they received but one command. Of the fruit of every tree in the garden they might freely eat, save the fruit of one in the midst of the Garden, and called the *tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*. Of the fruit of this tree the Almighty said to them, *Ye shall not eat, for in the day ye eat thereof ye shall surely die*. How long our first parents were faithful and obedient to this command we are not told. But whether the period was long or short, certain it is that it came to an end.

5. **The Temptation.** The Creation of man had been watched by a Being of infinite subtilty and malignity, the Enemy of God and of all goodness. In Genesis he is called the Serpent, in other places he is styled Satan, *i. e.* the *Enemy*, and the Devil, *i. e.* the *Slanderer*. He now approached the woman and enquired, *Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?* To this Eve replied that they might eat of the fruit of every tree save one, that of the *tree of knowledge of good and evil*, for on the day they ate of that they would surely die. Thereupon the Tempter declared that death would not follow the eating of this fruit, nay, that the Almighty knew that in the day they ate thereof, her eyes and those of her husband would be opened, and they would *become as gods*, knowing good and evil.

6. **The Fall.** Thus he threw a dark shadow over the goodness and love of God, and affirmed that, in mere envy, He had denounced a penalty He could not inflict. In an evil hour Eve listened to his voice, and seeing that *the Tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a Tree to be desired to make one wise*, she took of the fruit, and did eat, and gave unto her husband with her and he did eat. Then the wicked counsels of the Tempter were accomplished. Through want of faith in God's word, through a vain desire to become gods unto themselves, our first parents were beguiled into sin, and when their

eyes were opened, instead of greater happiness, they felt a hitherto unknown sense of shame and degradation and unmeasurableness for God's presence.

7. *The first Promise of a Saviour.* But though they thus yielded to the arts of a malignant Tempter, they were not wholly given up to his power. God now interfered between them and their Enemy. For them, indeed, it remained to taste of the bitter fruits of their disobedience and mistrust. Eve was told that sorrow and pain must henceforth be the condition of her life; *in sorrow should she bring forth children, her desire should be to her husband, and he should rule over her.* Adam was told that with himself nature too must undergo a change; *thorns and thistles must grow upon the face of the earth, toil must be the price of his existence, and his end the silence of the grave, for dust he was, and unto dust he must return.* But the triumph of the Tempter was not to be complete. *Utterly cursed was he above all cattle, and over every beast of the field, and the very creature whom he had sought to conquer, should in the end prove his conqueror. I will put enmity, said the Almighty to him, between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* In these words we trace the *first Promise* of a future Deliverer of the human race. With this Sacred History finds its starting-point, and the Old Testament becomes a true introduction to the New, because it reveals the several steps whereby the Divine Wisdom provided for the fulfilment of this promise, for the coming of One, *in whom the Father counselled before the worlds to redeem mankind, and to gather together in one all things, both which are in heaven and which are on earth* (Eph. i. 10; Phil. ii. 9, 10).

CHAPTER II.

1. *Adam leaves Eden.* Though thus assured of the coming of a Saviour, the first man, as a fallen being, could not remain in the region, which had been the scene of his trial and his failure. Lest he should take of the fruit of another tree that grew in the midst of the Garden, *the Tree of Life*, and eat, and live for ever, he was sent forth from Eden, at the east of which were stationed cherubim, or angels, while a *flaming sword, which turned every way*, guarded the approach to the Tree of Life.

2. *Cain and Abel.* Thus driven forth from Eden, Adam and Eve in due time became the parents of two sons, *CAIN* (*gotten or acquired*), and *ABEL* (*breath, transitoriness*). From early

years the two brothers were very different in their characters, and at length a fatal quarrel broke out between them. One day they both brought offerings to the Lord; Cain, of the fruit of the ground, Abel, of the best that he had, even the firstlings of his flock. The offering of Abel was accepted, that of Cain rejected. This roused Cain's jealousy, and he became his brother's murderer. For this he was condemned by the Almighty to be driven forth for ever from the region of Eden, and removed into the land of Nod (*Exile*), where he became the ancestor of numerous descendants.

3. *Cain's Posterity.* The heads of these are mentioned to the sixth generation under the names of ENOCH, IRAD, METHUJAH, METHUSAL, and LAMECH. In the land of Nod Cain built the earliest city of which we have any record, and called it *Enoch*, after the name of his eldest son. The fourth after him, Lamech was the first to take more than one wife, and of his three sons JABAL first taught the art of tent-making, JUBAL the use of musical instruments, and TUBAL-CAIN the art of working in metals.

4. *Seth's Descendants.* Meanwhile with another son Seth (*substituted*), who had been given to Adam in place of Abel, a line began very different from that of Cain. The heads of this family are told us to the tenth generation under the names of SETH, ENOS, CAINAN, MAHALALEL, JARED, ENOCH, METHUSELAN, LAMECH, NOAH. One of the most eminent of the descendants of Seth was ENOCH, the son of Jared, the *seventh from Adam* (Jude 14). All his life long he walked by faith and in communion with the Most High, and at length one day he vanished from amongst his fellow-men. *He was not, for the God, whom he served, took him to Himself, and translated him to the unseen world, without undergoing death.*

5. *The Wickedness of Men.* In this early period of the world human life was prolonged to a great length. Adam attained to the age of 930 years, Methuselah to that of 969, the others nearly as long. But though men lived to such a great age they did not walk in the paths of righteousness. Their wickedness became worse and worse, till at length *the earth was filled with violence, and all men corrupted their way upon it.* Even many in the righteous line of Seth fell away, and the sin of man was great, and *every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil, and that continually.*

6. *The Flood denounced.* In this awful crisis one man alone found favour with God, NOAH (*rest or comfort*), the son of Lamech. When he was 500 years old, he became the father of three sons, SHAM, HAM and JAPHETH. Like Enoch he was a

righteous and perfect man in his generation, and to him, when the cup of the world's iniquity was full, the Almighty revealed His intention to bring an awful judgment upon the world. Behold I, even I, said God, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and everything that is in the earth shall die. From this terrible judgment Noah and his family alone were to be preserved, and he was told to construct an Ark, into which, when completed, he was to repair with his wife, his three sons and their wives, and also two of every species of beasts and birds accounted "unclean" or unfit for sacrifice, and seven of every species accounted "clean." The ark was to be made of gopher-wood, probably cypress, and was to be overlaid within and without with pitch or bitumen. In length it was to be 300 cubits, in breadth 50, in depth 30. But though the Flood was thus announced by the mouth of God Himself as certain to come to pass, the doom itself was deferred for upwards of 120 years.

7. *The Judgment inflicted.* During this period, according to all that God commanded Noah, so did he. Though the things, of which he was warned, were yet not seen (Heb. xi. 7), nay, must have seemed to many very unlikely, he yet persevered in warning his fellowmen of what was to come. But his warnings fell on unheeding ears. The men of his generation set at nought all his counsel, and mocked at his reproofs. *They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage* (Mit. xxiv. 38; Lk. xvii. 26, 27) as before. At length the day of Doom came. On the 17th day of the second month of the six hundredth year of Noah's life he and his family entered the Ark, and the Lord shut them in. Then, after a solemn pause, the flood began. *The fountains of the great deep were broken up, the windows of heaven were opened,* and the ruin descended till the waters covered the highest hills, and all flesh wherein was the breath of life died, of fowl, of cattle, of wild beast, and of every creeping thing, which creepeth upon the earth, and every man, save Noah only and they that were with him in the Ark. For 150 days the waters prevailed, till at length on the 17th day of the 7th month the Ark rested on one of the peaks of Ararat. From this time the waters gradually decreased, till the first day of the 10th month, when the tops of the mountains having begun to appear, Noah sent forth a raven, which did not come back to the Ark. A week afterwards he sent forth a dove, to see if the waters were abated from the lower and more level country. But the dove, finding no rest for the sole of her foot, returned. Again he waited seven

days, and once more sent her forth. This time she came back with a *fresh olive-leaf pluckt off in her mouth*, a sign that the waters had still further subsided. After another seven days Noah sent her forth for the third time, when she did not return, having found on the earth a *rest for the sole of her foot*. Then he knew that the awful Judgment was indeed over, and at the Divine command left the Ark, and set foot on the dry land.

CHAPTER III.

1. **The Covenant of the Rainbow.** The first act of Noah on leaving the Ark was to build an altar and offer burnt-offerings unto the Lord of every clean beast and of every clean fowl. His sacrifice was accepted, and he and his sons were solemnly assured that all flesh should never again be cut off by the waters of a flood, but that *while the earth remained, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night should not cease*. Of this Promise on the part of the Most High the Rainbow was the seal and pledge, assuring man that he need not dread another terrible and universal Judgment like that with which the earth had been so lately visited. Again too, men were bidden to be *fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth*, and while allowed to eat of animal food were solemnly warned of the sacredness of human life, whose *shed man's blood, by man should his blood be shed*.

2. **Noah's Prophecy.** The region, where the Ark had rested, being situated between the Black and Caspian Seas on the North, and the Persian Gulf and Mediterranean Sea on the South, formed a convenient centre, whence the sons of Noah might overspread the whole earth. But before they set out for this purpose, an unseemly incident occurred, which pointed to their future destinies. Noah began to till the ground, and planted a vineyard, and not knowing its properties as it has been thought, drank of the wine to excess, and lay exposed in his tent. While he was in this condition, Ham, his youngest son, mocked him, but Shem and Japheth, with more filial feeling, averting their eyes covered their father with a garment. Awaking from his slumber, Noah became aware of what his youngest son had done, and justly angry, uttered prophetic words of blessing and cursing. CANAAN, the fourth son of Ham, and probably a partaker in his father's sin, he declared should ever be a slave to his brethren, while SHEM should be the chosen one of Jehovah, and JAPHETH, when multiplied and enlarged, should dwell in his tents, and partake of his blessing.