OLD TESTAMENT · THE LAW · BOOK 1 OF 66

Genesis

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth (1:1)

50	Moses	c. 1446–1406 B.C.	1–11 · 12–50
Chapters, 1,533 Verses	Author	Written in the Wilderness	Four Events, Four People

STRUCTURE

The Book in Two Parts

Genesis falls into two parts. **Chapters 1–11** tell four great events that touch the whole human race; **chapters 12–50** narrow to one family, through whom God prepares for the coming of the Redeemer.



Each bar shows that part's share of the 1,533 verses.

I 1–11 · 299 verses

Entrance of Sin on Earth

Creation, the fall, the flood, and the nations and Babel.

II 12–50 · 1,234 verses

Preparation for the Redeemer

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph.

GO DEEPER

Topic Studies from Genesis

Four of the great subjects of Genesis have their own study pages on this site, with pictures, key verses and questions to think about.

GENESIS 1–2

Creation

The seven days of creation, day by day, and what they teach about God and about us.

Read the study →

GENESIS 3

Man's Fall in Eden

The temptation, the first sin, its results, and God's first promise of a Redeemer.

Read the study →

GENESIS 6–9

The Flood

Noah, the ark, the flood that covered the earth, and God's covenant of the rainbow.

GENESIS 12–22

The Abrahamic Covenant

God's promises to Abraham of a land, a people and a blessing for all nations.

CHAPTERS 1–11

Four Great Events

The first eleven chapters cover the whole human race, from the first man to the scattering of the nations.

1 1–2

Creation

God makes all things in six days, and it is "very good" (1:31). Study →

2 3–5

The Fall

Adam and Eve disobey, and sin and death enter the world (3:6, 19). Study →

3 6–9

The Flood

God judges the earth with water and saves Noah in the ark (7:23). Study →

4 10–11

Babel

The LORD confounds the language of all the earth and scatters the nations (11:9).

> *"And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good."*
>
> Genesis 1:31 (KJV)

GENESIS AT A GLANCE · PART 2 OF 7

The Days of Creation and Four Great People

GENESIS 1:1–2:3

The Days of Creation

On the first three days God forms the world; on the next three He fills it. On the seventh day He rests.

GOD FORMS

Day 1: Light, and the light divided from the darkness

1:3–5

GOD FILLS

Day 4: Sun, moon and stars, lights in the firmament

1:14–19

GOD FORMS

Day 2: The firmament divides the waters above from the waters below

1:6–8

GOD FILLS

Day 5: Creatures of the waters and fowl of the air

1:20–23

GOD FORMS

Day 3: Dry land, seas, grass, herbs and fruit trees

1:9–13

GOD FILLS

Day 6: Beasts of the earth, and man in God's image

1:24–31

DAY 7 · GENESIS 2:2–3

God Rested

"And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it."

For a day-by-day study with pictures, see Creation: The Seven Days.

CHAPTERS 12–50

Four Great People

From chapter 12 the story narrows to one family, through whom God will bless the world.

1 · 12–25 · FAITH

Abraham

Called out of Ur and Haran, he believes God's promise and is counted righteous.

"And he believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness."

15:6

2 · 21–35 · THE PROMISED SON

Isaac

The son of promise, laid on the altar and spared; God renews the covenant with him.

"God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering"

22:8

3 · 25–50 · CHANGED BY GOD

Jacob (Israel)

A schemer whom God meets at Bethel and Peniel and renames Israel; father of the twelve tribes.

"for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."

32:30

4 · 37–50 · FAITHFUL IN TRIAL

Joseph

Sold as a slave, raised to rule Egypt, and used by God to save his family and many people.

"God did send me before you to preserve life."

45:5

The Journeys of the Patriarchs

GENESIS 11–50 · MAP

The Journeys of the Patriarchs

God called Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees to a land He would show him. The map follows Abram by Haran into Canaan and down to Egypt, Jacob's flight to Haran and back, and Jacob's family going down to Goshen. The numbers match the cards below.

GENESIS 11–50

The Journeys of the Patriarchs

From Ur of the Chaldees to the land of Goshen

Abraham to Joseph, c. 2091–1805 B.C. · Routes approximate



Abram: Ur to Haran to Canaan
And down to Egypt in the famine (11:31–12:20)

Jacob flees to Haran and returns
Twenty years with Laban (28–33)

Jacob's family goes down to Egypt
Seventy souls to Goshen (46)

The Fertile Crescent
The usual road between Ur and Canaan

"Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee."

GENESIS 12:1 (KJV)

Travelers went the long way round by Haran and the Euphrates, not straight across the desert. Positions approximate.

1 11:28–31; 15:7

Ur of the Chaldees

Abraham. Abram's home city, which he left with Terah, Sarai and Lot.

2 11:31–12:5; 28:10; 29:4

Haran

Abraham. Terah dies; the LORD calls Abram on to Canaan. Later Jacob flees here to Laban.

3 12:6–7; 33:18

Shechem

Abraham. Abram's first altar in the land: "Unto thy seed will I give this land."

4 12:10–20

Egypt

Abraham. Abram goes down in a famine, and Pharaoh sends him away.

5 45:10; 46–47; 50

Goshen

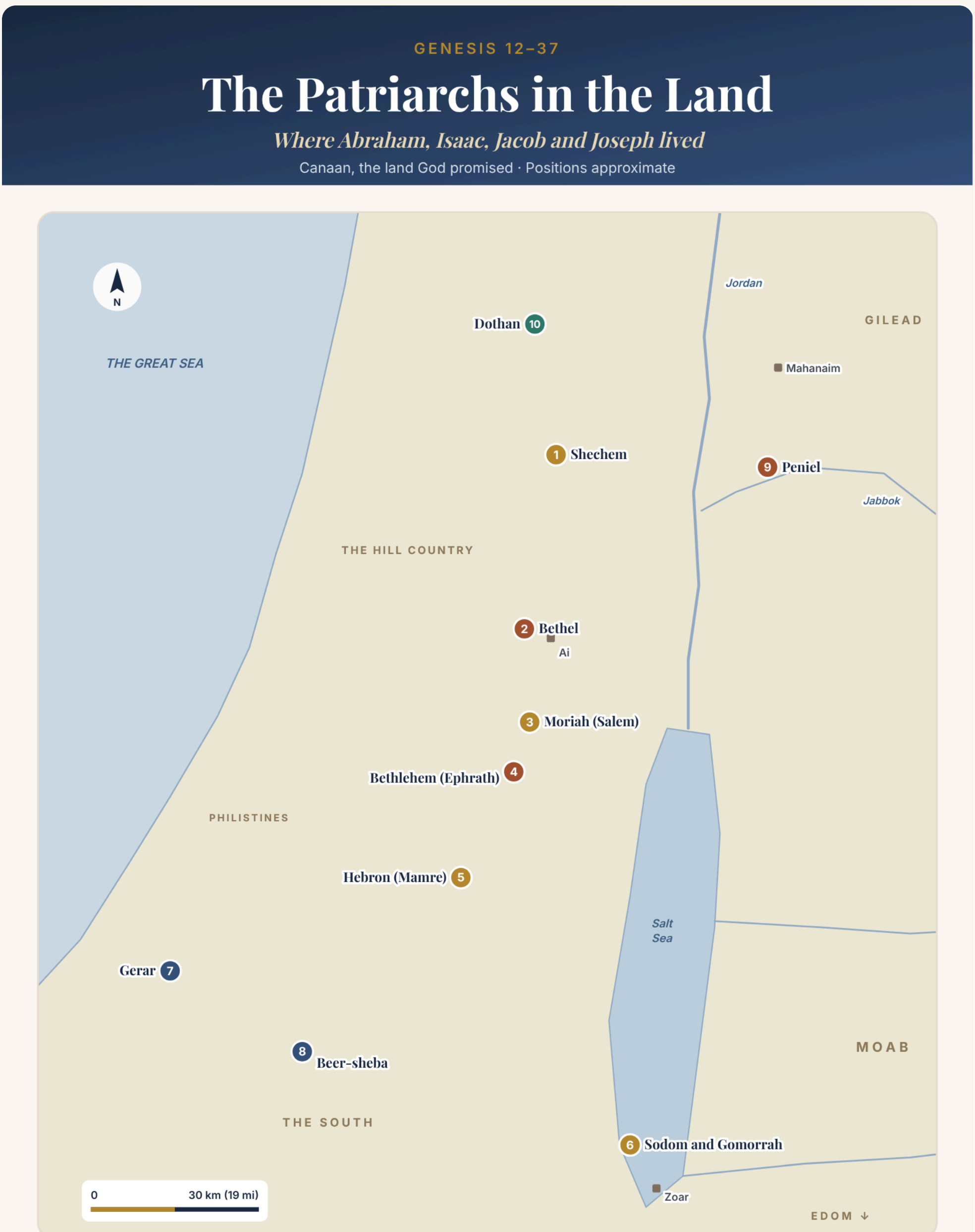
Jacob and Joseph. Joseph brings Jacob's family, seventy souls, to dwell in Goshen.

The Patriarchs in the Land

GENESIS 12–37 · MAP

The Patriarchs in the Land

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived as strangers in the land God promised them, moving between Shechem, Bethel, Hebron and Beer-sheba. The numbers match the cards below.



- **Abraham** — Chapters 12–25
- **Isaac** — Chapters 20–28
- **Jacob** — Chapters 28–35
- **Joseph** — Chapter 37

"For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever."

GENESIS 13:15 (KJV)

Sodom and Gomorrah are shown at the south end of the Salt Sea; their exact place is not known. Positions approximate.

BibleStudyForAll.com · Map positions approximate · Scripture from the King James Version

1 12:6–7; 33:18–20; 37:12–14

Shechem

Abraham. Abram builds his first altar; Jacob buys a field and builds an altar.

2 12:8; 28:10–22; 35:1–15

Bethel

Jacob. Abram's altar between Bethel and Ai; Jacob's ladder; God renames him Israel.

3 14:18–20; 22:1–14

Moriah (Salem)

Abraham. Melchizedek king of Salem blesses Abram; Abraham offers Isaac on mount Moriah.

4 35:16–20

Bethlehem (Ephrath)

Jacob. Rachel dies giving birth to Benjamin and is buried by the way.

5 13:18; 18; 23; 35:27; 50:13

Hebron (Mamre)

Abraham. Abraham dwells by the oaks of Mamre; the cave of Machpelah, the family grave.

6 13:10–13; 18:16–19:29

Sodom and Gomorrah

Abraham. The cities of the plain destroyed with fire and brimstone; Lot escapes to Zoar.

7 20; 26:1–22

Gerar

Isaac. Abraham and later Isaac sojourn with Abimelech; Isaac digs again the wells.

8 21:31–33; 26:23–33; 28:10; 46:1

Beer-sheba

Isaac. Abraham's well and covenant; Isaac's home; Jacob sets out from here twice.

9 32:22–32

Peniel

Jacob. By the ford Jabbok Jacob wrestles until daybreak: "I have seen God face to face."

10 37:17–28

Dothan

Joseph. Joseph's brothers cast him into a pit and sell him to the Ishmeelites.

GENESIS AT A GLANCE · PART 5 OF 7

The Twelve Sons of Jacob and the Ten “Generations”

GENESIS 29–35; 49

The Twelve Sons of Jacob

Jacob’s twelve sons became the twelve tribes of Israel. Here they are in the order of their birth, with each one’s mother (35:23–26).

LEAH
Reuben
The firstborn (29:32)

LEAH
Simeon
“the LORD hath heard” (29:33)

LEAH
Levi
Father of the priestly tribe (29:34)

LEAH
Judah
“Now will I praise the LORD” (29:35)

BILHAH
Dan
Rachel’s maid’s son (30:6)

BILHAH
Naphtali
Rachel’s maid’s son (30:8)

ZILPAH
Gad
Leah’s maid’s son (30:11)

ZILPAH
Asher
Leah’s maid’s son (30:13)

LEAH
Issachar
Leah’s fifth son (30:18)

LEAH
Zebulun
Leah’s sixth son (30:20)

RACHEL
Joseph
Father of Ephraim and Manasseh (30:24; 48:5)

RACHEL
Benjamin
Born as Rachel died (35:18)

> *“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.”*
>
> Genesis 49:10 (KJV)

THE BOOK’S FRAMEWORK

The Ten “Generations”

Genesis is divided by ten headings, each beginning “These are the generations of …”

1 2:4
The Heavens and the Earth

2 5:1
Adam

3 6:9
Noah

4 10:1
The Sons of Noah

5 11:10
Shem

6 11:27
Terah (Abraham’s story)

7 25:12
Ishmael

8 25:19
Isaac (Jacob’s story)

9 36:1
Esau

10 37:2
Jacob (Joseph’s story)

Each heading opens what came from that person. The family lines not chosen (Cain, Ishmael, Esau) are told briefly; the chosen line is told in full.

God’s Promises and a Timeline of the Patriarchs

THE COVENANT PROMISES

God’s Promises in Genesis

The story of Genesis, and of the whole Bible, rests on promises God made and kept.

> *“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel.”*
>
> Genesis 3:15 (KJV)

9:8–17 · NOAH

Never Again a Flood

God’s covenant with Noah and every living creature, sealed by the bow in the cloud.

12:1–3 · ABRAHAM

A Land, a Nation, a Blessing

“in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (12:3).

15; 17 · THE COVENANT

Sealed and Signed

The covenant between the pieces, and circumcision as its token.

22:15–18 · BY OATH

Through Abraham’s Seed

“in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (22:18).

26:3–4 · ISAAC

Renewed to Isaac

“I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father” (26:3).

28:13–15 · JACOB

Renewed to Jacob

“in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (28:14).

See The Abrahamic Covenant for a full study of God’s covenant with Abraham.

DATES B.C. (APPROXIMATE)

Timeline of the Patriarchs

Dates follow the early exodus (c. 1446 B.C., 1 Kings 6:1) and the ages Genesis gives. Chapters 1–11 are not dated here.

c. 2166 B.C.

Abram Born

In Ur of the Chaldees (11:26–28)

c. 2091 B.C.

The Call

Abram leaves Haran at 75 (12:4)

c. 2066 B.C.

Isaac Born

Abraham is 100 (21:5)

c. 2006 B.C.

Jacob and Esau Born

Isaac is 60 (25:26)

c. 1916 B.C.

Joseph Born

In Padanaram (30:22–25)

c. 1899 B.C.

Joseph Sold

At seventeen (37:2, 28)

c. 1876 B.C.

Into Egypt

Jacob is 130 (47:9)

c. 1806 B.C.

Joseph Dies

At 110 years old (50:26)

Christ in Genesis, Key Themes and Key Verse

LOOKING FORWARD

Pictures of Christ in Genesis

Jesus said that Moses “wrote of Me” (John 5:46). Genesis points ahead to Him again and again.

3:15
The Seed of the Woman
The first promise: one born of a woman will crush the serpent’s head (Galatians 4:4).

6–8
The Ark
One way of safety from judgment, with one door (1 Peter 3:20–21).

14:18
Melchizedek
King of Salem and “priest of the most high God,” a picture of Christ our High Priest (Hebrews 7).

22:8
The Lamb Provided
Abraham offers his only son, and God provides a substitute (John 1:29).

28:12
Jacob’s Ladder
Angels ascending and descending, fulfilled in the Son of man (John 1:51).

37–50
Joseph
Beloved, rejected by his brothers, then exalted to save many (Acts 7:9–14).

BIG IDEAS

Key Themes

God the Creator
All things were made by God’s word, and made good.
1:1, 31

Man in God’s Image
Man and woman were made to know God and rule His world.
1:26–28; 2:7

Sin and Judgment
Sin brings death, and God judges it, as in the flood.
3:19; 6:5–7

Grace and Promise
God promises a Redeemer and saves those who trust Him.
3:15; 6:8

Covenant
God binds Himself by covenant to Noah and to Abraham’s seed.
9:13; 12:1–3; 17:7

Faith
Abraham believed God, and it was counted for righteousness.
15:6; 22:8

God’s Providence
God rules over all, even evil deeds, for good.
45:5–8; 50:20

The Chosen Line
From Seth to Abraham to Judah, God keeps the line of the promised seed.
4:25; 12:3; 49:10

A Land Promised
Canaan given to Abraham’s seed for an everlasting possession.
13:15; 17:8; 50:24

KEY VERSE

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

Genesis 1:1 (KJV)