

**THE BEACON SERIES A GRADED
COURSE OF STUDY FOR THE
SUNDAY SCHOOL. HEBREW
BEGINNINGS OLD TESTAMENT
NARRATIVES, PART I**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649544875

The Beacon Series a Graded Course of Study for the Sunday School. Hebrew Beginnings Old Testament Narratives, Part I by Edna H. Stebbins

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

EDNA H. STEBBINS

**THE BEACON SERIES A GRADED
COURSE OF STUDY FOR THE
SUNDAY SCHOOL. HEBREW
BEGINNINGS OLD TESTAMENT
NARRATIVES, PART I**

The Beacon Series

A GRADED COURSE OF STUDY FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

HEBREW BEGINNINGS

OLD TESTAMENT NARRATIVES. PART I

BY
EDNA H. STEBBINS

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
25 BEACON ST.

BX
9821
.573
cop. 2

COPYRIGHT BY
UNITARIAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL SOCIETY
1909

CONTENTS.

I.	The Creation of the World	1
II.	The First Man and Woman	5
III.	Cain and Abel	9
IV.	Noah and the Flood	12
V.	The Tower of Babel	15
VI.	Abraham and Lot	17
VII.	The Destruction of Sodom	20
VIII.	Abraham's Children	23
IX.	Isaac and Rebekah	26
X.	Esau and Jacob	29
XI.	Jacob in Laban's Household	32
XII.	Jacob's Return to Canaan	35
XIII.	Joseph and His Brothers	38
XIV.	Joseph, Governor of Egypt	41
XV.	Joseph forgives His Brothers	43
XVI.	The Birth and Call of Moses	46
XVII.	Moses and Pharaoh	49
XVIII.	The Deliverance from Egypt	52
XIX.	The Life in the Wilderness	55
XX.	The Law on Mount Sinai	59
XXI.	The Golden Calf	62
XXII.	The Promised Land	65
XXIII.	Balaam's Prophecy	68
XXIV.	Joshua enters Canaan	71
XXV.	The Time of the Judges	74
XXVI.	Gideon's Victory	78
XXVII.	Samson and the Philistines	83
XXVIII.	The Story of Ruth	87
XXIX.	Samuel and Eli	90
XXX.	Saul, the First King	94
XXXI.	Saul's Great Victories	97
XXXII.	The Young David	100
XXXIII.	Jonathan's Friendship for David	103
XXXIV.	Saul's Pursuit of David	106
XXXV.	David's Life as a Fugitive	109
XXXVI.	Saul's Defeat and Death	112

I. The Creation of the World.

You will notice that our Bible is divided into two parts, called the Old Testament and the New Testament. The New Testament tells us about the life of Jesus and how his disciples spread his teachings. The Old Testament relates the history of the Jewish people, and what they thought about God before the time of Jesus. It begins with legends and traditions of the earliest heroes of the Hebrew race.

All nations whose history runs back for many centuries have such legends of their early days and delight to tell them. For instance, the Greeks had legends of Hector, of Achilles, of Hercules; the Romans, legends of Romulus and Remus, and of Horatius, "who kept the bridge"; and England has its legends of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table.

We cannot be sure that legends tell us truly and exactly what happened, because the facts were not written down at the time they occurred, and, in being told by fathers to their children for many generations, the stories would gradually be much changed; but they are of great value and interest to us because they do tell us how people lived in those early days, and what they thought about God and their duty to Him and to one another.

The Value of Bible Study.

The traditions of the Hebrew people mean more to us than those of any other race, because it is from this people that we have inherited our best thoughts of God. The story of the Hebrew religion is the story of our own religion. We shall find, as we study it, that in the earliest times people had strange ideas of the character of God, and they thought He did things and told them to do things which we now know He would not do. Then we shall see how, through the teachings of their prophets, the people of the Bible came to have higher and nobler and truer ideas, till at last Jesus, the greatest of all Hebrews and the most exalted teacher of any race or time, gave to us the high, noble, pure thought of God and life and

duty that all Christian nations hold to-day. As a child, Jesus studied and loved these stories of his nation's early heroes, and from them gained much of his wonderful moral strength.

So our religion has grown as a plant grows. Some one has said that the Hebrew religion was the strong, vigorous plant, and Christianity the beautiful flower.

Another reason why we should be familiar with the Bible men and women is that all literature is full of references to them, and we must know about these people ourselves in order to understand these allusions. A knowledge of the Bible is as necessary to a good education as a knowledge of American history or English literature. The men and women of the Bible are, for the most part, of fine, noble character, much like men and women to-day.

How the Bible Grew.

For long years before the stories of them were written they were told by fathers to their children down through many generations. Then they were put into writing. Many persons had a part in the writing before they reached their present form. Let us trace briefly the stages through which they passed.

First. Some time after the reign of King Solomon, many years after the events occurred, some man or group of men wrote out all these stories, which had only been told by word of mouth before. Scholars call this collection of stories the J collection, because the writer called God by the Hebrew word *Yahweh* or *Jahveh*. In our Bible it is translated *Jehovah* in the Revised Version and usually *Lord* in the King James Version.

Second. Another writer, living in another part of the kingdom, a few years later also put into writing the stories as *his* people used to tell them. His collection is called the E collection, because he called God by the Hebrew word *Elohim*, which in our Bible is translated *God*.

Third. Some years later these two collections were put together, the stories being fitted together as if written by one person. This explains why you will sometimes find both names used in the same story.

Fourth. In later years other writers wrote up the history of the nation, using some of the material of this early book, and made collections of their laws and poetry and genealogies. The chief of these writers is called P, because there is good reason for supposing he was a priest.

Fifth. Only a short time before the birth of Jesus all the different collections were rewritten and fitted in together, to form the account as we now have it in our Old Testament. This explains why we sometimes find two or three different accounts of the same event, and why these accounts do not always agree. The compilers (those who joined the different writings together) put in both the J and E stories, and sometimes the P story also.

Until quite recent years, people believed one person, Moses, wrote all the first five books of the Bible, and they found it impossible to explain the differences just mentioned. But with this later knowledge which men have gained through years of study it is very simple and clear.

The Story of Creation.

Turn to the first book in the Bible. What is it called? The word *Genesis* means *origin* or *beginning*, and it tells us of the ideas these early people had of the beginning of many things,—of man, of languages, and naturally, first of all, of the world itself.

The story of creation as told in the first chapter of Genesis is one of the most beautiful passages in the Old Testament. The writer tells us that God made the earth and planets, and all things that inhabit the earth, in six days, and rested on the seventh day. Read the account of the first day in Genesis 1: 1-3, the second day in verses 6-8. In the writer's day it was believed that the earth was flat like a disk, with the ocean washing it on all sides, and that the sky was a great dome stretched overhead, with the sun, moon, and stars moving about on its inner surface. Above the dome was more water which God let down in the form of rain through windows in the dome.

What was made the third day? Genesis 1: 9-13. The