

## The CV Bible Batch 1

### **1 God made a world**

In the very beginning, there was nothing but darkness and chaos. Then God said, 'Let there be light!' And there was light – and God saw that it was good.

God went on to make the world we know with rugged mountains and deep valleys, cool streams, flowing rivers and salty seas. God filled the world with leafy trees and flowering plants. God made the hot sun to shine by day and scattered stars around the silvery moon that shone at night.

God made every kind of creature that swims and flies and burrows and gallops. . . striped, spotted, plain and patterned; soft and furry, hard and spiky.

God looked at all that he had made and saw that it was good.

God's world was full of sound and colour and variety. But God had not finished yet. God wanted to make people who were more like him – able to be creative, to think and feel and love. God made them male and female, man and woman, to be his friends. God gave them his world to look after, from the fish and the birds to creatures that lived on the earth, from the creepy crawlies to the great lumbering beasts.

### **2 Noah's ark**

God looked with great sadness at the way the people he had made told lies and cheated and stole, fought and killed each other. God had made people to be his friends but no one remembered who he was; no one, that is, except Noah.

When God spoke to Noah, Noah listened. God told Noah that soon there would be a great flood that would cover the land. Everything would be destroyed.

'You must build an ark,' God told Noah. 'I will give you instructions for exactly how big it must be and how it should be built. You must collect two each of every animal that I have made so they will be kept safe until after the flood.'

### **3 Rain and rain and rain**

Noah's neighbours laughed when they saw him felling cypress trees and cutting them into logs. They made fun of him when they saw the shape of a boat being formed. Surely Noah was a crazy old man! But Noah and his family sawed and hammered, just as God had

told them to, until one day, the ark was ready.

It was huge – longer than a football field and higher than a three-storey building. Noah and his family watched as, two by two, animals of every kind came into the ark: lions, tigers and bears, elephants and giraffe, flamingos, rabbits and foxes, all climbed onto the ark that Noah had built.

And when the last one was on board, the rain began to fall. Hour after hour, day after day, for forty days and forty nights, they heard the rain drumming on the roof. Streams became rivers and rivers became seas. The ark rose steadily on the floodwaters till there was nothing to be seen but water, water everywhere around them.

Then one day, they all looked at each other and listened. Silence. The rain had stopped. Noah watched as a strong wind blew the clouds away. The ark came to rest on Mount Ararat and slowly, very slowly, the waters began to go down.

#### **4 The beautiful rainbow**

Noah and his family watched and waited a long time before the waters went down and the earth was dry again.

Finally God told Noah it was safe to open the door of the ark. Noah set all the animals free. Noah brought his family out of the ark and all the animals streamed out too, one kind after another, two by two. The earth was clean and new.

Noah made an altar to God and thanked him for keeping his family and all the animals safe from the flood. It was time to start again. And God put a beautiful rainbow in the sky.

‘Whenever you see a rainbow, remember my promise that the earth will never again be destroyed by flood.’

#### **5 God’s friend, Abraham**

Abraham was living in the land of Haran when God spoke to him.

‘It’s time to move on,’ God said. ‘Pack up all your things and take your family and servants with you. I will tell you where to go.’

Abraham and his wife Sarah were already old. They didn’t know where they were going, and they didn’t know how long it would take them, but they trusted God.

Abraham gathered up the tents where he lived, and all the things he owned and went with his wife, Sarah, his nephew, Lot, his servants,

sheep, goats and cattle... far away from his home and across the hot, dusty desert. They made camp many times on their long journey until they arrived in the land of Canaan. Then Abraham saw that the place that God had given them as their new home was and beautiful.

Everywhere trees and plants were growing. There would be plenty of food for Abraham's sheep and goats. It was a good place to be.

'Now I will bless you, Abraham,' God said. 'This land will belong to your children and your children's children.'

Abraham loved God and he trusted him; but he couldn't help wondering how that could happen when he and Sarah didn't have even one tiny baby of their own.

## **6 A baby called Isaac**

Abraham was resting in the shade in the heat of the day when he thought he saw three strangers walking towards him.

Abraham got to his feet and went to greet them. He offered them somewhere to rest and started to prepare food for them to eat. As they spoke Abraham began to realize that God had sent them to him with a very special message.

'Get ready for a wonderful surprise,' they said. 'By this time next year, Sarah will be nursing your baby son.'

Sarah was listening from inside her tent. She laughed sadly to herself. Surely she was far too old to have a baby now?

But as time passed, Abraham knew that God had kept his promise about a baby for Sarah. Abraham was going to be a father at last. It was a miracle.

Abraham was as impatient as Sarah to hold his little baby son in his arms.

'God has made me so happy!' said Sarah when her son was born. They named their baby Isaac, which means laughter.

## **7 Isaac's new wife**

Isaac was a man by the time his mother died. Abraham wanted to find for him a wife from his own family rather than from the people who lived nearby. So Abraham sent his servant on a long journey to find a good, kind woman who would be happy to be Isaac's wife.

When the servant arrived at the place where Abraham's family still lived, he was tired and very thirsty. He sat down and prayed for God's help.

'Please help me to find a girl for Isaac – someone kind enough to offer me water to drink on this hot day – and then water my ten camels too.'

Abraham's servant saw many girls coming to draw water from the well. One was very beautiful.

'May I have a drink?' the servant asked her.

'Of course!' she answered. She drew the water from the well and offered it to him. Then the girl added, 'Let me bring some water for your camels too. They must be so thirsty!'

He discovered that the girl was called Rebekah and that she was the granddaughter of Abraham's brother. God had brought him to the right place. The servant silently thanked God. He knew that he had found the right wife for Isaac.

## **8 Twin baby boys**

Isaac and Rebekah were married and were together for some years before Rebekah told him he would be a father – and then it was with twins.

Esau was born first, strong and healthy with lots of red hair. He grew up to be a skilful hunter and loved the outdoor life. Isaac was proud of his eldest son. He liked spending time with Esau best of all.

Jacob was born second, dark in colouring with smooth skin. Jacob was a quiet boy, Rebekah's favourite. Esau would often come back from a day's hunting to smell something good simmering in a pot that Jacob had cooked.

## **9 Jacob tricks his brother**

Esau returned to his father's tents one day hot and tired and hungry. He followed the spicy smell to Jacob and the lentil stew he was cooking.

'Mmmm, that smells delicious,' Esau said. 'I'm so hungry, I could die!'

Jacob was quiet but he was clever. He kept stirring the stew. 'You can have some now,' he replied, 'as long as you will trade it for father's blessing.' They both knew that only the older son was allowed that

special blessing given before their father died. Jacob had never felt that was fair.

'You can have anything you like if I can eat that stew!' replied Esau. So Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for his dish of food.

## **10 A very cunning plan**

When Isaac was an old man, his back became stooped. His eyes became dim. He soon found that he couldn't see very well at all. He called Esau to his tent one day.

'My son, I know it will not be long before I die. I want to give you my blessing. But first – go and hunt for me with your bow and arrow. Bring home something tasty and cook me my favourite meal.'

Isaac didn't know anything about Esau's trade with his younger brother years before. But Rebekah was listening. She had a plan. Jacob was Rebekah's favourite son; she wanted Jacob to have his father's blessing instead of Esau.

So while Esau was out hunting, Rebekah started to cook a tasty meal for Isaac. She called Jacob and told him to dress in some of Esau's clothes so that he would smell like his brother. Then Rebekah covered Jacob's neck and arms in goatskin so he would feel hairy like his brother.

Now everything was ready: Jacob could go to see his father and make him believe that he was blessing Esau. . .

## **11 Isaac's blessing**

Jacob looked up when he heard someone come into his tent.

'Is that you already, Esau?' he asked his younger son. 'God must have blessed you to have such a good day's hunting.'

Then Isaac touched his son and felt his hairy skin; he smelled the clothes that he wore. Isaac was satisfied. He ate the meal that Rebekah had made for him and blessed Jacob.

'May God bless you now and always. You will become a rich man and will rule over your brother.' Jacob had what he had always wanted – but he had done it by cheating and stealing.

Not long afterwards, Esau returned from his hunting trip. He prepared the food to take to his father and carried it into his tent.

'I have brought you your favourite meal, Father,' he said. 'I have come for your blessing.' Then Isaac felt the pain of knowing that he

had been tricked and Esau realized that he was too late for his father's blessing. They were both very angry.

'I'm going to kill my brother for this!' Esau said. He went looking for Jacob.

Rebekah saw that the two brothers could not live together happily now. 'You must leave, Jacob,' she said to her youngest son. 'Go and stay with your Uncle Laban for a while. You will be safe there.'

## **12 God's promise to Jacob**

Jacob left his family and travelled till sunset when he lay down to sleep. Then Jacob dreamed...

In his dream Jacob saw a stairway which stretched from earth to heaven, and on it were angels climbing up and down. At the top was God himself!

'I am the Lord,' God said, 'the God of your father and your grandfather. I will give this place to your children and your grandchildren's children. There will be so many of them that they will spread all over this land. I am with you now and will watch over you and take care of you wherever you go; I will always be with you and bring you back here to your home.'

## **13 Jacob falls in love**

Jacob knew that God had blessed him more than he could imagine. He wanted to show God that he was grateful in the way he lived.

He went on his journey till he stopped at a well on the way to Haran where his uncle lived. There he met a beautiful shepherdess called Rachel; he knew straight away that he wanted to marry her. Then Jacob found out that the beautiful girl was his cousin. Rachel took Jacob to meet her father.

Soon Jacob was being welcomed into his uncle Laban's family and started to work for him, taking care of his sheep and goats.

After some time, Laban asked Jacob: 'You have worked hard for me. How can I reward you for all you have done?'

Jacob knew immediately what his answer would be. 'I will work for you for seven years if you will let me marry Rachel.'

## **14 Jacob's strange wedding**

Laban had two daughters. Leah, who was older, was not yet married but Laban agreed to the marriage of his younger daughter. He knew that Jacob was strong and he could see that God had blessed him.

Jacob was happy to work hard for his uncle. Every day brought him nearer to the time when he could marry Rachel.

Seven years later, Jacob was married. But when he lifted the veil to kiss his new wife, he found that his uncle Laban had tricked him!

‘It’s our custom that the older sister is married first,’ Laban explained. Jacob had married not Rachel – but Leah! Jacob had been tricked. His uncle was not an honest man.

### **15 Jacob’s big family**

Jacob was very sad that Rachel was not his wife and he was angry that he had been tricked. But Laban told Jacob that as long as he worked for him for another seven years, he could marry Rachel as well as Leah. So, since many people had more than one wife at that time, Jacob married Rachel too.

Rachel was very happy to be Jacob’s wife at last, but Leah was not quite so happy. She knew that Jacob did not love her as much as he loved Rachel. So God blessed Leah with many children to love. It was a long time before Rachel had a child and that made her sad. Jacob had ten sons and a daughter before Rachel gave birth to little Joseph.

### **16 Spotted and speckled sheep**

When Jacob had been living with his uncle for a long time, he decided he wanted to go home.

Laban was a selfish man; he knew that God had blessed him while Jacob had been there and he didn’t want that to change.

‘Wait till you have built up a herd of speckled or spotted animals,’ Laban suggested. Then Laban hid the animals so Jacob could not breed from them! Laban was still a man who could not be trusted.

But Jacob found a way to breed the sheep and goats secretly so that soon, everywhere he looked, the animals were black and white and every variation of spotted and speckled! When his herd was big and strong, Jacob gathered his wives and children and all his animals – and crept away, without telling his uncle.

### **17 Time to forgive**

The day had come when Jacob was to meet his brother again. Many years had passed. Jacob was nervous – and became very worried when he saw that Esau had come out to meet him with 400 men! Jacob told his family to wait in safety while he went on alone to meet Esau and his army.

Jacob could hardly believe his eyes when he saw that Esau was smiling and coming forward to hug him. Esau had forgiven Jacob long ago. Now they were not just brothers but friends. God really had blessed Jacob.

### **18 A birth and a death**

God blessed Jacob again after his meeting with Esau.

‘Your name is Jacob, but you will now be known as Israel. I am your God: this land will be your land, just as I gave it to Abraham and to Isaac.’

Jacob marked the place where God had blessed him and called it Bethel.

Before they reached Bethlehem, Rachel went into labour with her second son. But Rachel had a difficult time; just after baby Benjamin was born, Rachel died. She was buried on the way to Bethlehem and Jacob marked the place where he left his much-loved wife.

Then Jacob went home to see his father Isaac, who was now a very old man. When Isaac died, he was buried by his two sons.