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Prior to the second day, it seems that the earth was completely surrounded by a thick layer of water, perhaps in the form of a heavy vapor. On the second day God divided this layer, part covering the earth with water and part forming clouds, with the atmospheric layers (firmament or "dome") between. God called the firmament Heaven—that is, the expanse of space immediately above the earth (not the stellar heavens, nor the third heaven, where God dwells). Verse 20 makes it clear that the heaven here is the sphere where the birds fly. (Believers Bible Commentary)

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Notice: God is orderly and plans out everything on Earth for man which is His creation in His image. The land and vegetation, which is key given man was called to be a vegetarian until the flood. If He planned to

provide for Adam and Eve even before He created them, then why do we worry about so many trivial needs that He already knows about?

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### **Reflections on the sun**

In the sun, we have the most worthy emblem that the visible universe presents of Him, who, with the word of His power, kindled up its glories, and with the strength of His right hand established it in the heavens. And the analogies between the sun of nature and the Sun of Righteousness are both striking and instructive.

1. In the opening scene of the fourth day we have a fine image of the advent of the Redeemer of men. On that morning the sun burst forth in its unveiled glories, irradiating the new-made earth, and revealing upon its face scenes of loveliness and grandeur which could neither be seen nor known before. So arose the Sun of Righteousness upon the world of mankind, an object as wonderful and as new in His person, and

character, and office, as the great orb of day when it first came forth to run the circuit of the heavens—pouring a flood of light from above upon benighted humanity, and opening up to them views of truth, happiness, and immortality, such as the world had never known or heard before; and, like the solar light, while revealing all else, remaining Himself a glorious mystery.

2. As the natural sun is the centre of the system of creation, so the Sun of Righteousness is the vital centre of revealed truth and religion.

3. As the sun shines by his own light, so the Son of God poured the light of truth upon men from the fountain of His own mind. The instructions He imparted were neither derived from tradition nor borrowed from philosophy. He was a self-luminous and Divine Orb, rising upon the darkness of the world, shedding new light, and revealing new truths to bewildered humanity.

4. As in the pure sunbeam we have combined all the colors of the rainbow in their due proportions, so in Christ we find all virtues and graces harmoniously blended in one perfect character. In Him we behold every principle, every affection, every impulse, in perfect equipoise.

5. As the sunlight, on whatever foulness or corruption it may fall, remains uncontaminated, so the Son of Man, amid all the temptations, guilt, and depravity of earth, continued pure and unspotted.

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the Divine law of love, with equal hand, imposes its obligations upon kings, and peasants, and beggars; its authority is no less binding in courts and cabinets than in churches and families, its voice is to be heeded no less by the diplomatist sent to foreign realms, than by the preacher who remains among his flock at home. To all it speaks alike, in the name and in the words of its Divine original, “Love one another, as I have loved you.” (H. W. Morris, D. D.)

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**Gen 1:20-21** Then God said, "Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens." So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

According to its kind is a key phrase here. God is referring to the species. Darwin missed the boat. There is not scientific evidence of evolution across species. Note, bird referenced in the bible are normally not good, but here he calls them good. Later, Jesus discussed sparrows in:

**Matt 10:29-31** Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

**Gen 1:22-23** And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." So the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

THAT LIFE IS VARIED IN ITS MANIFESTATION AND CAPABILITY.

1. Life is varied in its manifestations. There were created on this day both fish and fowl. Thus life is not a monotony. It assumes different forms. It grows in different directions. It has several kingdoms. It has numerous conditions of growth.
2. Life is varied in its capability. The fish swim in the water. The fowls fly in the air; the abilities and endowments of each are distinct and varied. Each takes a part in the great ministry of the universe. The whole in harmony is the joy of man.
3. Life is abundant and rich in its source. The waters brought forth abundantly. There was no lack of life-giving energy on the part of God. The world is crowded with life. The universe will not soon become a grave, for even in death there is life, hidden but effective to a new harvest.
4. Life is good in its design.

**Gen 1:24-25** Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its kind"; and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

The complexity is increasing with the days of creation building to Him making man.

**Gen 1:26** Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

"Us" is a deep discussion on the on spiritual world (See the book [Unseen Realm](#))

- L- LAND – Civil/Common Law – Freedom and responsibility (no injury to person or property)
- A-Air – Trust Law – God is the rightful Executor/we are trustees/beneficiaries are descendants.
- W- Water – Merchant – Admiralty Law (law of seas/later to be corporate law)

Using the Trust Law (AIR) illustration, God is the executor (Sovereign/Owner). He owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Psalm 50:10). We are even warned that our bodies are not our own (1 Cor 6:19-20).

***Gen 1:27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.***

What does it mean to you to be an image bearer of God? Do you really believe you're made in the image of God? How would our society change if everyone believed this and acting on it?

***Gen 1:28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."***

*The Bible describes the origin of the sexes as a creative act of God. Evolution has never been able to explain how the sexes began. Humanity was commanded to be fruitful and multiply.*

*God gave man a mandate to subdue creation and have dominion over it—to use it but not abuse it. The modern crises in the earth's environment are due to man's greed, selfishness, and carelessness. - BBC*

*"And have dominion" is God's instruction to man. Adam was not just a gardener to cut the grass. Man was created to rule this earth. I think that Adam could control the weather just as we control the air-conditioning in our homes. He ruled this earth. This is what we see in the Lord Jesus. When He was here on this earth, He had control over nature. He could say to a storm, "Be still." He could feed a multitude with five loaves and two fishes. It is my opinion that Adam could have done all of that until his fall. At the Fall he lost the dominion that God had given him. – McGee*

What if we were no different than the people in Joshua's day. We crossed the Jordan river and were told to possess the promise land and we would be given victory for every where we set our foot (Joshua 1:4). In some respects, we are, right? We live in the only nation on earth founded in God's principles that has a constitution stating we are the sovereign not a king or president. Yet, we have not held to God's words and His laws and instead have chosen to do what is right in our own eyes kicking God out of our government, much like in Judges 21:25.

**Who is responsible for the plight of our country today?**

***Gen 1:29-30 And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food"; and it was so.***

It is clear from these verses that animals were originally herbivorous, and that man was vegetarian. This was changed after the Flood (see Gen\_9:1-7).

***Gen 1:31 Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.***

The “Very Good” here denotes the distinguish between man and the rest of creation. Also, notice God rests on the seventh day!

### *Declaration of Independence*

*When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to **which the laws of nature and of nature’s God entitle them**, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.*

***We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.** That, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.*

*Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and, accordingly, all experience has shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.*

*But, when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former systems of government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.....*

## CHAPTER 2

**THEME:** *The Sabbath Day; summary of the first five days of the restoration; man's creation; condition placed on man; woman's creation.*

A great principle of revelation occurs for the first time in this chapter, but it will be found again and again in the Word of God. It is one of the fingerprints of inspiration. It is the law of recurrence or the law of recapitulation. In other words, the Spirit of God, in giving the Word of God, has a practice of stating briefly a series of great facts and truths; then He will come back and take out of the series that which is all-important, and He will elucidate and enlarge upon that particular thing. He is going to do this now in chapter 2 with the six days of creation which were given in chapter 1. This same principle is seen in the Book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy is the interpretation of the Law after forty years of experience with it in the wilderness. Deuteronomy is not just a repetition of the Law, but rather an interpretation of it. Likewise, we are given not only one but *four* Gospels. Again and again, this procedure is followed throughout the Word of God.

**Gen 2:1-3** *So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.(NLT)*

When God finished His six days of work, He looked upon it and it was very good, and there was nothing else to do. Every time I leave my office for the day, I still have work all over my desk. I have never been able to sit down and say, "I'm through. I've finished it." But *God* did. At the end of six days, He rested the seventh day because His work was complete. This is one of the greatest spiritual truths there is. The Book of Hebrews tells us that as believers we enter into "rest"—that is, we enter into His *sabbath*; we enter into His perfect redemption.

Notice: God demonstrates the principle of the Sabbath before He commands it!

**Do we do they that? Do we walk the walk show love to those that don't deserve it before we expect them to treat us likewise?**

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**Gen 2:4** *These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, (KJV)*

Actually, the word "generations" means *families*. The Book of Genesis is not only the book of beginnings but also the book of the families. "These are the families of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens." McGee

The name **LORD God** (*Jehovah [Yahweh] Elohim*) appears for the first time in verse 4, but only after the creation of man ([Gen 1:27](#)). As Elohim, God is the Creator. As Jehovah, He is in covenant relation with man. Failing to see this, some Bible critics have concluded that these different names for God can only be explained by a change in authorship. – Believers' Bible Commentary

**Do you now clearly understand why the world attacks the family today? How important is it for us as Christians to defend the family? Who do you want to offend God or somebody else because you reject pronouns or other things? You will have to account for every idle word.**

Note: In chapter 2, God changes the Names. You will know a theme throughout that names mean something. Look up names and you will learn a lot. Yahweh is principally the word we can pronounce that draws attention to His role as a covenant redeemer, as opposed to a creator. Do you know you a promised a new name?

**Rev. 2:17 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.**

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**Gen 2:5-6 And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.**

This is the history (v. 4) refers to the beginnings described in chapter 1. Verse 5, which reads, "before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown," describes conditions on the earth in Gen\_1:10, when the dry land appeared but before vegetation appeared. The earth was watered by a mist rather than by rain. – Believers' Bible Commentary

**Gen 2:7 And 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.**

This is the method of the creation of man, and again we are limited in what God has told us. Physically, man was taken out of the ground. It is quite interesting that our bodies are made up of about fifteen or sixteen chemical elements. Those same chemical elements are in the ground. The physical part of man was taken out of the dust of the ground. If we were to be boiled down into the separate chemical elements of which we are made, we would be worth very little in terms of money. I used to say \$2.98, but inflation has increased that figure a little. That is the extent of our bodily worth because we were made out of the dust of the ground. – McGee

But man is more than dust. Physically, dust he is and to the dust he will return, but his spirit is going to God. Why? Because God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." God breathed into him "the breath of life." God gave man life which is physical or psychological, and then He gave him life which is spiritual. In other words, man now is brought into a marvelous relationship with his Creator. He has in his being a capacity for God. This is what separates man from all other creatures that are found in God's universe, as far as we know. Of course, there are the angels, but we know very little about them..... God breathed into his breathing places the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Man is fearfully and wonderfully made, and that is something which we need to keep in mind. - McGee

The dust (Biblical Illustrator) – six characteristics for us to consider why God made us out of dust.

1. The emblem of frailty (Psa\_109:14).
2. The emblem of nothingness (Gen\_18:27).
3. The emblem of defilement (Isa\_52:2).
4. The emblem of humiliation (Lam\_3:29; Job 42:6).
5. The emblem of mourning (Jos\_7:6).
6. The emblem of mortality (Ecc\_3:20; Ecc\_12:7). (H. Bonar.)

### **Are you a living soul or a person?**

As a man or woman and a living soul you have unalienable rights, but currently by our laws you are viewed as a person and a US Citizen.

### **Do you know the legal definition of a person?**

26 U.S. Code § 7343. Definition of term "person" The term "person" as used in this chapter includes an officer or employee of a corporation, or a member or employee of a partnership, who as such officer, employee, or member is under a duty to perform the act in respect of which the violation occurs.

# citizen of the United States


(15) "citizen of the United States" means— (A) an individual who is a citizen of the United States; (B) a partnership each of whose partners is an individual who is a citizen of the United States; or (C) a corporation or association organized under the laws of the United States or a State, the District of Columbia, or a territory or possession of the United States, of which the president and at least two-thirds of the board of directors and other managing officers are citizens of the United States, which is under the actual control of citizens of the United States, and in which at least 75 percent of the voting interest is owned or controlled by persons that are citizens of the United States.

## Source

49 USC § 40102(a)(15)

## Scoping language

In this part

Is this correct?   okay or not okay

Do you know you have the right to self-determine your status? What is a State National?

Title 8 section 1101 A21 and A23 - Definition of a State National

A21- The term "national" means a person owing permanent allegiance to a state.

A23 - The term "naturalization" means the conferring of nationality of a state upon a person after birth, by any means whatsoever.

*An American State National is either: (1) naturally born on the land and soil of an American State such as Wisconsin, or (2) after being naturalized as a United States Citizen, is a foreign-born man or woman who voluntarily accepts and publishes their adoption of a specific American State as their permanent home and domicile. A State National is not acting as a citizen of any government and owes no obligations to government beyond keeping the peace and reporting crimes.*

*As a completely unincorporated Person, a State National is sovereign and private and generally immune from prosecution until and unless they take some action that causes actual physical harm to someone else or someone else's property, whereupon they are subject to the Common Law of the County and State where they live or where the alleged crime is committed.*

*State Nationals are "We The People" of each State and populate the National Soil Jurisdiction.*

Language is used as a weapon against us. For example, look up the definition in the US code of a motor vehicle and an automobile. **Do you know the difference?**

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***Gen 2:8-14 And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.***

Notice its full trees and plants that are for food. Also, there are two unique trees mentioned. One will carry through to Revelation and Heaven; the other is the issue. **So, what is more dangerous the knowledge of good or the knowledge of evil? Why?**

God richly provides resources even gold. Think about us here in Texas, and we have more oil than we could use: Reuters 12/6/2018: "In its first assessment of the Delaware portion of the Permian shale field that spans west Texas and New Mexico, the USGS, which is part of the U.S. Department of the Interior, said it contains about 46.3 billion barrels of oil and 281 trillion cubic feet of natural gas."

***Gen 2:15-17 Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the LORD***

***God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."***

Even in Eden, man is working. We were called to work. Notice the commandment is given to Adam directly. Eve is not on the scene yet.

Remember that man is a trinity, and he would have to die in a threefold way. Adam did not die physically until over nine hundred years after this, but God said, "*In the day you eat, you shall die.*" Death means separation, and Adam was separated from God spiritually the very day he ate, you may be sure of that. – McGee

***Gen 2:18-20 And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.***

Notice the Dominion already. He is naming all the animals, which denotes control and demonstrates an incredible mind. Adam had to experience time without Eve to truly know what he was missing.

"An help for him" (the word meet should not be here)—that is, one agreeing and answering to him, a helper as his counterpart, the other half of him. A man is but half a man until he is married, and that is very important to see. I am not here to promote marriage, and yet I would say that it is God's intention for both man and woman. The woman is to answer to the man. - McGee

***Gen 2:21-23 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."***

In the process of naming the animals and birds, Adam would have noticed that there were males and females. Each one had a mate that was similar to itself, yet different. This prepared Adam for a helper who would be comparable to himself. His bride was formed from one of his ribs, taken from his side as he slept. So from Christ's side, His Bride was secured as He shed His life's blood in untold agony. Woman was taken not from Adam's head to dominate him, nor from his feet to be trodden down, but from under his arm to be protected, and from near his heart to be loved.

God gave headship to man before sin entered. Paul argues this fact from the order of creation (man was created first) and the purpose of creation (woman was made for the man) (1Co\_11:8-9). Also, although it was Eve who sinned first, it is by Adam, the head, that sin is said to have entered the world. He had the position of head and was thus responsible. – Believers Bible Commentary

***Gen 2:24-25 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.***

With the words of verse 24 God instituted monogamous marriage. Like all divine institutions, it was established for man's good and cannot be violated with impunity. The marriage bond illustrates the relationship that exists between Christ and the church (Eph\_5:22-32). – Believers Bible Commentary

Shame is likely a consequence of sin. Remember there is no condemnation in Christ. Romans 8:1

## Genesis - Chapter 3

**THEME:** *The serpent denies the Word of God; the man and woman disobey the Word of God; the design of God for the future; the doctrine of redemption introduced.*

*"Here we trace back to their source many of the rivers of divine truth. Here commences the great drama which is being enacted on the stage of human history and which well-nigh 6,000 years has not yet completed. Here we find the divine explanation of the present fallen and ruined condition of our race. Here we learn of the subtle devices of our enemy, the devil. Here we behold the utter powerlessness of man to walk in the path of righteousness when divine grace is withheld from him. Here we discover the spiritual effects of sin, man seeking to flee from God. Here we discern the attitude of God toward the guilty sinner. Here we mark the universal tendency of human nature to cover its own moral shame by a device of man's own handiwork. Here we are taught of the gracious provision which God has made to meet our great need. Here begins that marvelous stream of prophecy which runs all through the Holy Scriptures. Here we learn that man cannot approach God except through a mediator." – unknown author*

**Gen 3:1-3** *Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"*

The question arises: Why the temptation? If we go back to chapters 1 and 2, we find that man was created innocent, but man was not created righteous. What is righteousness? Righteousness is innocence that has been maintained in the presence of temptation. You see, temptation will either develop you or destroy you; it will do one of the two. Man was created a responsible being, and he was responsible to glorify, to obey, to serve, and to be subject to divine government.

There is maxim of law that says the one who creates has control over that which he creates. Man did not create himself—I do not think anyone claims that—but God created him. Therefore, God is sovereign over man. Our Declaration of Independence affirms this and goes on to say "We people" create government and are sovereign over it. Does an examination of your life reveal that God is sovereign?

Notice the steps that plunged the human race into sin. First Satan insinuated doubt about the Word of God: "**Has God indeed said?**" He misrepresented God as forbidding Adam and Eve to **eat of every tree**. Next, Eve said that they were **not to eat** or "**touch the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden.**" But God had said nothing about *touching* the tree. Then Satan flatly contradicted God about the inevitability of judgment on those who disobeyed, just as his followers still deny the facts of hell and eternal punishment. Satan misrepresented God as seeking to withhold from Adam and Eve something that would have been beneficial to them. – Believers Bible Commentary. **How well do you know God's word?** "The serpent very subtly contradicts God, and he substitutes his word for God's word." - McGee

The thing that Eve did was to add to the Word of God. The liberal and the atheist take *from* the Word of God, and God has warned against that. The cults (and some fundamentalists, by the way) *add* to the Word of God, and God warns against that. There are those who say that today we are saved by law. They argue, "Yes, it is by faith, but it is faith plus something else"—and they are apt to come up with anything. The Word of God says: "Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" ([Joh 6:29](#)). How important this is! - McGee

**Gen 3:4-6** *Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.*



Eve yielded to the threefold temptation: the lust of the flesh (good for food), the lust of the eyes (pleasant to the eyes), and the pride of life (a tree desirable to make one wise). In doing so, she acted independently of Adam, her head. She should have consulted him instead of usurping his authority. In the words "she took of its fruit and ate" lie the explanation of all the sickness, sorrow, suffering, fear, guilt, and death that have plagued the human race ever since that time. Someone has said, "The wreckage of earth and a million billion graves attest that God is true and Satan is the liar." Eve was deceived (1Ti\_2:14), but Adam acted willfully and in deliberate rebellion against God. – Believers Bible Commentary

Note: There is no biblical support that the fruit was an apple. Most commentaries support it being a fig tree.

John wrote: ***"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1Jn\_2:16). "The lust of the flesh"—that is, the tree was good to eat. "The lust of the eyes"—the tree was good to look at. "The pride of life"—the tree was to be desired to make one wise. These things are not of the Father, but of the world.***

***Gen 3:7-9 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" (See the appendix on the first question God asks)***

The first result of sin was a sense of shame and fear. The aprons of fig leaves speak of man's attempt to save himself by a bloodless religion of good works. (BBC).

This is the same condition of man today in religion. He goes through exercises and rituals, he joins churches, and he becomes very religious. Have you ever noticed that Christ cursed the fig tree? That is quite interesting. And He denounced religion right after that, by the way; He denounced it with all His being because religion merely covers over sin. - McGee

**The day we do church as a religion and not relationship, we lose all the power, fellowship, and presence of Christ.**

When called to account by God, sinners excuse themselves. Adam said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me . . ." as if blaming God (see Pro\_19:3). Eve said, "The serpent . . ." (v. 13).

In love and mercy God searched after His fallen creatures with the question "Where are you?" This question proved two things—that man was lost and that God had come to seek. It proved man's sin and God's grace. God takes the initiative in salvation, demonstrating the very thing Satan got Eve to doubt—His love.

***Gen 3:10-12 So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat? Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."***

Notice that there is no confession on Adam's part. The important thing is not so much that he blamed the woman or, as we would say in the common colloquialism of the day, "he passed the buck," but that there is no confession of sin on his part.

***Gen 3:13-15 And the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." So the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."***

Notice: Eve, not Adam, confesses. Her explanation was not challenged and accepted as truth not an excuse.

The LORD God cursed the serpent to degradation, disgrace, and defeat. The fact that the serpent is cursed more than all cattle or any other beast of the field suggests that reptiles are primarily in view here rather than Satan. But verse 15 switches to the Devil himself. This verse is known as the protevangelium, meaning "The First Gospel." It predicts the perpetual hostility between Satan and the woman (representing all mankind), and between Satan's seed (his agents) and her Seed (the Messiah).

he most prominent thought is not the ultimate victory that would come, but the long-continued struggle. This verse reveals the fact that now there is to be a long struggle between good and evil. John again mentions this conflict in **1Jn 3:10**: ***"In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."*** Thus, we have brought before us the fact that here is a conflict, here is a struggle, and here are two seeds in the world. There will be the final victory—but the long-continued struggle is important to note. Every man must face temptation and must win his battle.

***Gen 3:16-19 To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you." Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return."***

Sin has inevitable consequences. The woman was sentenced to suffering in childbirth. She would be subject to her husband. The man was sentenced to earn his livelihood from ground that was cursed with thorns and thistles. It would mean toil and sweat for him. Then at the end of life, he himself would return to dust. It should be noted here that work itself is not a curse; it is more often a blessing. It is the sorrow, toil, frustration, perspiration, and weariness connected with work that are the curse. - BBC

Adam died *spiritually* the moment he disobeyed; he was separated from God. Death is separation. When Paul wrote to the Ephesians that they were "dead in trespasses and sins," he did not mean that they were dead physically but that they were dead spiritually, separated from God. In that wonderful parable of the prodigal son, our Lord told about this boy who ran away from his father. When he returned, the father said to the elder son, "For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found ..." (Luk\_15:24). Dead? Yes, he was dead, not physically, but he was separated from the father. To be separated from the Father means simply that—it means death. – McGee

***Gen 3:20-21 And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. Also, for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.***

In order to have the skins of animals, the animals have to be slain. I believe that this is the origin of sacrifice and that God made it clear to man. God rejected their fig leaves but made them clothing of skins, and when Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden, they looked back upon a bloody sacrifice. When they looked back, they saw exactly what God had Moses put on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies: two cherubim looking down upon the blood that was there—and that was the way to God. – McGee

If God provided the sacrifice, He likely provided the altar and the way to the altar was not blocked by an angel. I think this is a key point to consider when get to the story of Cain and Able.

***Gen 3:22-24 Then, the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" — therefore the LORD God sent him***

***out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So, He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.***

All I can say to this is, thank God that He did not let man live eternally in sin and that God is not going to let us do that. That is really a blessing! This does not mean that God put up a roadblock. It means that the way of life was kept open for man to come to God. But now that way is not through the tree of life. Salvation must come through a sacrifice, and when man looked back, the blood of the sacrifice is what he saw.- McGee

Adam and Eve had to decide whether God or Satan was lying. They decided that God was. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Thus their names are missing from the Honor Roll of Faith in Hebrews 11. The ideal environment did not prevent sin. The problem is deeper than that. – BBC

**Who do you fear God or Satan or man or the world? Before you answer, consider your actions not just your words!**

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*The First Question God asks is Important. What are you answers? He is still asking.*

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“Where art thou?”

- 1.** Where are you?—are you in God’s family or out of it? When you are baptized, you are put into God’s family upon certain conditions—that you will do certain things; and it depends upon you how you live, because if you do not love God you cannot be God’s child.
  
- 2.** Supposing you are one of God’s children, “Where art thou?”—near to thy Father or far from Him?—because some children are nearer to their fathers than others. Mary and Martha were sisters, and they were both Christians, but one was much nearer to Christ than the other. Mary sat at Jesus’ feet, Martha was “troubled about many things.” If we delight to tell Jesus everything, than we shall be near God.
  
- 3.** Are you in the sunshine or the shade? If you follow Christ you will always be in the sunshine, because He is the Sun.
  
- 4.** Are you in the path of duty? Are you where you ought to be? The path of duty is a narrow path sometimes a steep path. God could say to many of us, as He said to Elijah, “What doest thou here?”—thou art out of the path of duty.
  
- 5.** How have you progressed? The surest way to know that we get on is to be very humble. When the wheat is ripe it hangs down; the full ears hang the lowest. (*J. Vaughan, M. A.*)

## Genesis 4-5 - Cain's offer not accepted! But comfort (Noah) is coming!

**THEME:** *The birth of Cain and Abel; God gives Cain a second chance; Cain murders Abel; the children of Cain and a godless civilization; the birth of Seth.*

In Genesis 3, we have the *root* of sin and in Genesis 4 the *fruit* of sin. How bad is sin? Well, in this chapter, we find that man was not just suffering from ptomaine poisoning because of having eaten the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Chapter 4 reveals how much had really happened to the man. By his disbelief and his disobedience, he had turned away from God and had sinned in such a way that he brought upon himself and his race His judgment, because you and I are given this same kind of nature. We have the same nature that our father had, and Adam has given all of us a pretty bad nature. All this is revealed in the story of the two sons of Adam and Eve. They had more children than this, but we are given the record of only these two at this time.

Cain and Abel

**Gen 4:1-5** *Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD." Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.*

The verb know here is in an intimate way, remember they become one flesh. We too are called to know ("Yada") God and become one.

"In process of time" actually means "at the end of days," which would mean on the Sabbath Day, on the day that God had rested.

"Cain brought"—the idea of "brought" means to an appointed place. They are bringing an offering to God to an appointed place to worship. All this would indicate that they are doing it by revelation. I know that they are, for when we turn to [Heb 11:4](#), we read: ***"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh."***

There is no indication that Cain brought anything but his best grain. There are no details here to explain exactly why it was unacceptable, but here are some theories:

- He had been using his grain to purchase a lamb from his brother's flock all the prior times, but here pride got to him, and he claimed his grain was "good enough".
- He was already angry at his brother, and therefore, he need to resolve that before he gives his sacrifice at the altar.
- Grain can be an acceptable form of sacrifice in Leviticus; therefore, the issue was all about his heart not the sacrifice in anyway. Hebrews speaks of the faith of Able, so maybe he had no faith and was just going through the motions.

McGee – indicates the offering was not accepted because:

1. Not offered in Faith
2. Denied man was separated from God
3. Based on works and not grace - Titus 3:5

**Apply:** Have you ever thought your way was good enough? Will all our offerings be accepted by God? Where is our heart in giving?

That which makes sacrifice acceptable is faith. A formal sacrifice is a vain thing. It is Cain's offering.

**Gen 4:6** So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted?"

**Gen 4:7 (Contemporary English Bible)** If you had done the right thing, you would be smiling. But you did the wrong thing, and now sin is waiting to attack you like a lion. Sin wants to destroy you, but don't let it!

McGee - It is obvious that Cain did not realize how vulnerable to sin he was. When God said to him that "sin lieth at the door," I believe He was saying that sin, like a wild beast, was crouching at the door waiting to pounce on him the moment he stepped out. For that reason Cain needed a sacrifice that would be acceptable to God for sin, a sacrifice that pointed to Christ. "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous" ([1Jn 3:12](#)).

**Have you ever underestimated the power of sin? Do you believe that there are demons crouching at the door waiting for you to sin?**

**Gen 4:8-10** Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground."

Cain's evil attitude of jealous rage was soon translated into evil action, the murder of his brother. - BBC

The writer to the Hebrews uses this in Heb\_12:24 : "And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." Abel's blood spoke of murder committed. The blood of Christ speaks of redemption; it speaks of salvation.-McGee

**Gen 4:11-12** So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth."

When the Lord's loving question was met by an unrepentant, insolent reply, He pronounced Cain's judgment—he would no longer be able to make a living from the soil, but would wander as a **fugitive** in the desert. - BBC

Yet in our day there is a curse upon the earth because of man's sin which causes it to lose its fertility. In some of the most lush sections of our earth multitudes of folk are starving. It takes great effort and ingenuity for man to make this earth produce in abundance. Certainly the blood of Abel cries out from the very earth itself—blood that was spilled in murder by a brother.

**Gen 4:13-16** And Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear! Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me." And the LORD said to him, "Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him. Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden.

Cain's whimpering complaint reveals remorse for the consequences of his sin rather than for its guilt. But even then the Lord allayed the fugitive's fears for his life by putting a protective mark on Cain and a curse on anyone who killed him. Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, the saddest of all departures. – BBC

**Gen 4:17 - 22** And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. And he built a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son—Enoch. To Enoch was born Irad; and Irad begot Mehujael, and Mehujael begot

***Methushael, and Methushael begot Lamech. Then Lamech took for himself two wives: the name of one was Adah, and the name of the second was Zillah. And Adah bore Jabal. He was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. His brother's name was Jubal. He was the father of all those who play the harp and flute. And as for Zillah, she also bore Tubal-Cain, an instructor of every craftsman in bronze and iron. And the sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah.***

Cain married his sister or other blood relative. As mentioned, Gen\_4:3 allows time for a population increase, and Gen\_5:4 specifically states that Adam had sons and daughters. Marriage of close relatives was not forbidden then (nor was it genetically risky).

Verses 17-24 list Cain's posterity, and a series of firsts: the first **city**, named **Enoch**; the first case of polygamy; the beginning of organized animal husbandry; the beginning of the art of music and of metalcrafts - BBC

Here is the beginning of polygamy—having more than one wife. Lamech now does that which is contrary to what God intends, contrary to what God has for man. You will never find anywhere in the Scriptures that God approves of polygamy. If you read the accounts accurately, you will find that He condemns it. He gives the record of it because He is giving a historical record, and that is the basis on which it is given to us here.

“Adah” means pleasure or adornment. She was the first one to make it to the beauty parlor, I guess. “Zillah” means to hide; McGee used the term coquette – which is a flirt.

***Gen 4:23-24 Then Lamech said to his wives: "Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; Wives of Lamech, listen to my speech! For I have killed a man for wounding me, Even a young man for hurting me. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold."***

Lamech says, “If Cain got by with it, I can get by with it. After all, Cain did not slay in self–defense, but I have.” I do not know whether he did or not, but he says that he slew in self–defense. And I do not know whether or not his two wives entered into this, or whether or not he was defending one of them. We are not told how it happened. Lamech feels that he will be avenged seventy and sevenfold, but our Lord told Simon Peter that he ought to forgive his enemy that many times. – McGee

***Gen 4:25-26 And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, "For God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed." And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and he named him Enosh. Then men began to call on the name of the LORD.***

Now in striking relief, the godly line of Seth is introduced. It was through this line that the Messiah would eventually be born. When Enosh (meaning "frail" or "mortal") was born, men began to use the name of the LORD (Jehovah) for God, or perhaps to call on the name of Jehovah in public worship. -BBC

**Does it sometimes take a crisis before people began to call upon the Lord? Doesn't this imply that weren't calling on the Lord for some time? What happened? Has that happened to you before in life?**

## **Chapter 5 – Generations of Adam**

***Gen 5:1-5 This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created. And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. After he begot Seth, the days of Adam were eight hundred years; and he had sons and daughters. So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died.***

**Adam was created in the likeness of God. Seth was born in the image of Adam.** In between, the Fall took place and the image of God in man became marred by sin. Verse 5 records the *physical* fulfillment of what God said would happen in [Gen 2:17](#); the *spiritual* fulfillment took place the day Adam sinned. - BBC

**Gen 5:6-11 Seth lived one hundred and five years, and begot Enosh. After he begot Enosh, Seth lived eight hundred and seven years, and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years; and he died. Enosh lived ninety years, and begot Cainan. After he begot Cainan, Enosh lived eight hundred and fifteen years, and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Enosh were nine hundred and five years; and he died.**

**Gen 5:12-17 Cainan lived seventy years, and begot Mahalalel. After he begot Mahalalel, Cainan lived eight hundred and forty years, and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years; and he died. Mahalalel lived sixty-five years, and begot Jared. After he begot Jared, Mahalalel lived eight hundred and thirty years, and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Mahalalel were eight hundred and ninety-five years; and he died.**

**Gen 5:18-24 Jared lived one hundred and sixty-two years, and begot Enoch. After he begot Enoch, Jared lived eight hundred years, and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years; and he died. Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah. After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.**

The Enoch and Lamech mentioned here should not be confused with those in chapter 4. The Enoch in verse 18 is the seventh from Adam (Jude 14), not the third. By faith Enoch walked with God for 300 years and pleased the Lord (Heb\_11:5). It seems that the birth of his son had a sanctifying, ennobling influence on his life (v. 22a). It is good to start well, but it is even better to continue steadfastly to the end. The word walk implies a steady, progressive relationship and not just a casual acquaintance. To walk with God is the business of a lifetime, and not just the performance of an hour. Enoch was transported to heaven prior to the flood just as the church will be raptured to heaven before the Tribulation begins (1Th\_4:13-18; Rev\_3:10).

**Gen 5:25-32 Methuselah lived one hundred and eighty-seven years, and begot Lamech. After he begot Lamech, Methuselah lived seven hundred and eighty-two years, and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years; and he died. Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and had a son. And he called his name Noah, saying, "This one will comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD has cursed." After he begot Noah, Lamech lived five hundred and ninety-five years, and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy-seven years; and he died. And Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah begot Shem, Ham, and Japheth.**

Methuselah lived longer than any other man (nine hundred and sixty-nine years). If, as Williams says, the name Methuselah means "it shall be sent," it may be a prophecy, because the flood came in the year of his death. Perhaps Lamech's prediction when he named Noah looked forward to the comfort that would come to the world through Noah's greater Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Noah's name means "rest." As the years passed, man's life expectancy decreased. Psa\_90:10 speaks of seventy years as normal. – BBC

These two men, Adam and Methuselah, pretty well bridged the gap between creation and the Flood. According to our genealogy, this man Methuselah could have told Noah everything from the creation of the world.

Why did Methuselah live longer than any other person? God kept him here just to let mankind know that He is patient and merciful. God will also wait for you, my friend—all of your life. Peter speaks of the long-suffering of our God: "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water" ([1Pe 3:20](#)). - McGee



## Genesis 6 – Let it Rain!

OVERVIEW: GRACE – G – Noah, R- Rain, A-Angels, C- Covenant, and E – Evil all the time.

**Gen 6:1-2** *Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.*

### E. Widespread Sin and the Universal Flood (Chaps. 6-8)

**6:1, 2** There are two principal interpretations of verse 2. One is that **the sons of God** were angels who left their proper sphere (Jude 6) and intermarried with women on earth, a form of sexual disorder that was most hateful to God. Those who hold this view point out that the expression "sons of God" in [Job 1:6](#) and [Job 2:1](#) means angels who had access to the presence of God. Also, "the sons of God" as a term for angels is a standard Semitic expression. The passage in Jude 6, 7 suggests that the angels who left their own abode were guilty of vile sexual behavior. Notice the words "as Sodom and Gomorrah" at the beginning of verse 7, immediately after the description of the fallen angels.

The main objection to this view is that angels don't reproduce sexually, as far as we know. [Mat 22:30](#) is used to prove that Jesus taught that the angels don't marry. What the verse actually says, however, is that the angels *in heaven* neither marry nor are given in marriage. Angels appeared in human form to Abraham ([Gen 18:1-5](#)), and it seems from the text that the two who went to Sodom had human parts and emotions.

The other view is that **the sons of God** were the godly descendants of Seth, and **the daughters of men** were the wicked posterity of Cain. The argument is as follows: The preceding context deals with the descendants of Cain (chap. 4) and the descendants of Seth (chap. 5). [Gen 6:1-4](#) describes the intermarriage of these two lines. The word *angels* is not found in the context. Verses 3 and 5 speak of the wickedness of *man*. If it was the *angels* who sinned, why was the race of *man* to be destroyed? Godly men are called "sons of God," though not in exactly the same Hebrew wording as in [Gen 6:2](#) (see [Deu 14:1](#); [Psa 82:6](#); [Hos 1:10](#); [Mat 5:9](#)).

There are several problems with this view. Why were all the Sethite *men* godly and all the *women* of Cain's lineage ungodly? Also, there is no indication that Seth's line *stayed* godly. If they did, why should they be destroyed? Also, why should such a union between godly men and ungodly women produce giants? - BBC

For a deep dive on this topic, read [The Unseen Realm](#) by Michael S. Heiser.

**Gen 6:3-5** *And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

The LORD warned that His Spirit would not strive with man forever, but that there would be a delay of one hundred and twenty years before the judgment of the flood would occur. God is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish, but there is a limit. Peter tells us that it was Christ who was preaching through Noah to the antediluvians by the Holy Spirit (1Pe\_3:18-20; 2Pe\_2:5). They rejected the message and are now imprisoned.

### What was the condition on the earth before the Flood? What caused God to bring the judgment of the Flood?

Dr. Vernon McGee, who espouses the Sethite interpretation, explains that verse 6:5 provides that answer without the need of the fallen angels.

Regarding the giants (Heb. nephilim, "fallen ones") Unger explains:

The Nephilim are considered by many as giant demigods, the unnatural offspring of "the daughters of men" (mortal women) in cohabitation with "the sons of God" (angels). This utterly unnatural union, violating God's created orders of being, was such a

shocking abnormality as to necessitate the worldwide judgment of the Flood.

***Gen 6:6-7 And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them."***

The Lord's sorrow does not indicate an arbitrary change of mind, though it seems that way to man. Rather, it indicates a different attitude on God's part in response to some change in man's behavior. Because He is holy, He must react against sin.

***Gen 6:8-10 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God. And Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.***

Why did God save Noah? Because he walked with God? Yes, but we are also told: "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Heb\_11:7). It took faith to prepare an ark on dry land when it had not even drizzled! In this same chapter in Hebrews, we are told that it was by faith that Enoch was translated.

Noah (v. 9) and Enoch (Gen\_5:22) are the only men in Scripture who are said to have walked with God. If Enoch is a symbol of the church raptured to heaven, Noah symbolizes the faithful Jewish remnant preserved through the Tribulation to live on the millennial earth. – BBC

***Gen 6:11-13 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth."***

The entire human family has turned from God "... There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom\_3:10). There are just a few, though, who do believe Him—Noah and his family. Here is one man who walked with God; he believed God. Here is a man who still trusted God—"by faith Noah." Here is a man who was willing to risk building a boat on dry land. If the rains did not come, he certainly would be the laughingstock of the community. I think he was just that for 120 years, but Noah believed God. -McGee

***Gen 6:14-16 Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above; and set the door of the ark in its side. You shall make it with lower, second, and third decks.***

In the preparation for the Flood, God is giving the people ample opportunity. Noah preached for 120 years with no converts. All those that go to Hell, choose it. God's word is clear that he does not want any to perish (2 Peter 3:9).

Gopher wood is an almost indestructible wood very much like our redwood here in California. The word for "rooms" has the idea of nest. The elephant would need a room, but the mole would not need quite that much space. He could be given just a little dirt in a corner, and that is all he would need. The ark was to be made waterproof with pitch.

**What can we learn and apply today from this bible story?**

1. If the storm is coming, it is the part of wisdom, not of cowardly fear, to prepare for it.

2. His faith was in season and out for 120 years. He started building the ark and it had never rained on the earth.
3. He was likely ridiculed by all relentlessly, yet we are not told it ever stopped or delayed the ark.
4. Obedience – He did all that was commanded.

***Gen 6:17-18 And behold, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die. But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you.***

God is bringing judgment upon the earth—upon animal and bird and man – not the fish of the sea. The Word is clear.

Verse 18 gives the first mention of covenant in the Bible. Scofield lists eight covenants: Edenic (Gen\_2:16); Adamic (Gen\_3:15); Noahic (Gen\_9:16); Abrahamic (Gen\_12:2); Mosaic (Exo\_19:5); Palestinian (Deu\_30:3); Davidic (2Sa\_7:16); and the New Covenant (Heb\_8:8).- BBC

***Gen 6:19-21 And of every living thing of all flesh you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. Of the birds after their kind, of animals after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive. And you shall take for yourself of all food that is eaten, and you shall gather it to yourself; and it shall be food for you and for them." Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.***

Noah was the world's first prepper. Noah is now to do something very practical. It took a lot of hay in the ark to feed these animals. Some people are going to say, "But some of those animals ate meat. They would eat each other!" I do not think so. Up to the time of the Flood, apparently both men and animals were not flesh-eating. They just did not eat flesh; there were no carnivorous animals. We are told of a day in the Millennium when the lion and the lamb will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like an ox (see Isa\_11:6-7). That could certainly come to pass, for that probably was the original state of the animal. - McGee

A pair of every living creature was to be brought into the ark, as well as food. Critics claim that the ark was not big enough to hold all the species of animals and enough food for one year and seventeen days. But it is likely that the ark contained only the basic kinds of animal and bird life, and that many variations have resulted since then. The ark was more than large enough for this. - BBC

# CHAPTER 7

## NOAH, HIS FAMILY, AND THE ANIMALS ENTER THE ARK

***Gen 7:1 Then the LORD said to Noah, "Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation.***

Why was Noah righteous? It was by faith, just as later on Abraham was counted righteous because of his faith: "And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness" (Gen\_15:6). Noah believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. "By faith Noah ... prepared an ark ..." the writer to the Hebrews said (Heb\_11:7). That is the reason God saved him.

Have you ever noticed how gracious God is to this man in all of this time of judgment? Here in verse 1 He says "Come thou..." This is the same invitation that the Lord Jesus gives today to all mankind: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will you rest" (Mat\_11:28). Then in verse Mat\_11:16 of this chapter, we read, "And the LORD shut him in." Isn't that lovely? And finally, chapter 8 opens, "And God remembered Noah." How wonderful! God could very easily have forgotten all about Noah. Years later He could have said, "Oh my, I forgot all about that fellow down there. I put him in an ark and forgot about him!" That would have been too bad, wouldn't it? But God did not forget. God remembered Noah. God never forgets. He remembers you. The only thing that He does not remember is your sin if you have come to Him for salvation. Your sins He remembers no more. What a beautiful thing this is!

Now Noah and his family enter into the ark. Did you know that this story of Noah, just like the story of creation, has wandered over the face of the earth? I wish that I could give you the Babylonian account. All you have to do is to compare them to see the differences. The other accounts are utterly preposterous and ridiculous. The very fact that most nations and peoples have an account of both creation and the Flood should tell you something, my friend. It ought to tell you that there is a basis of truth for them. All of these peoples would not come up with such a record if they had been making up stories. And if you want to know which one is accurate, just make a comparison. The Babylonian account, for example, is a perfectly ridiculous story of a sort of war going on among the gods, one against the other, and that is what brought the Flood. In contrast, the Bible tells us that the Flood was a judgment of God upon man for his sin—that makes sense, by the way.

***Gen 7:2-4 You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that are unclean, a male and his female; also seven each of birds of the air, male and female, to keep the species alive on the face of all the earth. For after seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made.***

No reason is given why Noah was commanded to take seven pairs of clean animals into the ark, but only one pair of unclean. Perhaps it was for food and in anticipation of the clean animals' being needed for sacrifice (see Gen\_8:20). The ark was filled with its inhabitants for seven days before the rain began and the underground reserves of water gushed out. The torrent continued for forty days and forty nights; forty is the number of probation or testing in the Bible. – BBC

***Gen 7:5 And Noah did according to all that the LORD commanded him.***

## CHAPTER 7

Wow! That's a big statement. All is all! Imagine what we could accomplish if we did all that the Lord commanded.

***Gen 7:6-9 Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters were on the earth. So Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, went into the ark because of the waters of the flood. Of clean animals, of animals that are unclean, of birds, and of everything that creeps on the earth, two by two they went into the ark to Noah, male and female, as God had commanded Noah.***

Nowhere does Scripture say that Noah went out and drove the animals in. It was not necessary—they came to him. – McGee. This points to the dominion the Lord gave Adam over the animals, and it underscored that where God calls you, He equips you.

***Gen 7:10 And it came to pass after seven days that the waters of the flood were on the earth.***

For seven days the world could have knocked at the door of the ark, and frankly, they could have come in—God would have saved them. All they had to do was to believe God. – McGee

**We are all many times under the faulty assumption that there will always be tomorrow. But although God is long suffering, His patience eventually runs out and His justice/judgement has to come.**

***Gen 7:11-15 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights. On the very same day Noah and Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark— they and every beast after its kind, all cattle after their kind, every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, every bird of every sort. And they went into the ark to Noah, two by two, of all flesh in which is the breath of life.***

Noah's wife is never mentioned by name nor are the daughter-in-laws that were aboard. Only Noah's righteousness is mentioned in the bible, so did Noah's righteousness save his family?

***Gen 7:16-18 So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the LORD shut him in. Now the flood was on the earth forty days. The waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters.***

Notice: The Lord shut the door or sealed Noah in the Ark. This is a clear parallel to the holy spirit sealing us to go through life, and also in Revelation the 144,000 are sealed to go through the tribulation. Likewise, Enoch was raptured out prior to the Flood.

***Gen 7:19-24 And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered. The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died. So He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained***

## CHAPTER 7

*alive. And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days.*

On the other hand, there have recently come from the press several books by men whom I consider to be pseudointellectuals and pseudotheologians. They take the position that the Flood was local; that is, that it was confined to the Tigris–Euphrates Valley. In other words, it was sort of a big swimming pool and that is about all. The Genesis Flood absolutely demolishes that thought altogether, and I am sure that you realize that the Scriptures make it very clear that the Flood covered the whole earth.

But if you say that the Flood was not universal, then you have someone besides Noah starting the human family over again—and that is just not the way the Word of God tells it. You are on the horns of a dilemma, as I see it: you either have to accept the Word of God, or you have to reject what it says. To my judgment, to attempt to make a case for a local flood is actually, in the long run, to reject the Word of God. The Bible makes it very clear that it was a universal flood. “And every living substance was destroyed ... and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark.” – McGee

The ark is a picture of Christ. The waters depict God's judgment. The Lord Jesus went under the waters of divine wrath at Calvary. Those who are in Christ are saved. Those who are outside are doomed (see 1Pe\_3:21). - BBC

## Genesis 8 - God remembered Noah

### The Flood Subsides

	<b>Chronology (Believers Bible Commentary)</b>	<b>Reference</b>
1	7 days — from the time Noah entered the ark until the flood began	Gen_7:10
2	40 days and nights — duration of the rain	Gen_7:12
3	150 days — from the time the rain began until the waters decreased (8:3) and the ark rested on Mount Ararat	Gen_7:11 and 8:4
4	224 days — from the beginning of the flood until the mountaintops reappeared	Gen_7:11 and 8:5
5	40 days — from the time the mountaintops were seen until Noah sent out a raven	8:7
6	7 days — from the sending of the raven to the first sending forth of a dove	8:6-10
7	7 more days — until the dove was sent forth a second time	8:10
8	7 more days — until the final sending forth of the dove.	
9	314 days — from the beginning of the flood until Noah removed the covering from the ark	7:11, 8:13
10	371 days — from the beginning of the flood until the earth was dried (compare Gen_7:11 and Gen_8:14). At this time, Noah was commanded to go out of the ark (v. 16)	7:11,8:14,8:16

***Gen 8:1-4 Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided. The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were also stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. And the waters receded continually from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters decreased. Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat.***

We are given the record not only of the building up of the Flood but also of the prevailing and now the assuaging of the Flood. We are told that “God remembered Noah”—how lovely—and that “God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged.” It did not happen just overnight. The buildup of the waters took over 150 days, and then there were 261 days in the assuaging. That looks to me like it is something more than just a local flood.

***Gen 8:5-8 And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen. So it came to pass, at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made. Then he sent out a raven, which kept going to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth. He also sent out from himself a dove, to see if the waters had receded from the face of the ground.***

We could say that this is the beginning of the end of the Flood. Frankly, Noah becomes a bird-watcher. He sends out these two birds, the raven and the dove. – McGee

Note: One bird is unclean, and one is clean.

***Gen 8:9-12 But the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, and she returned into the ark to him, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her, and drew her into the ark to himself. And he waited yet another seven days, and again he sent the dove out from the ark. Then the dove came to him in the evening, and behold, a freshly plucked olive leaf was in her mouth; and Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth. So he waited yet another seven days and sent out the dove, which did not return again to him anymore.***

## Genesis 8 - God remembered Noah

*I want you to see a great spiritual truth that we have here in the eighth chapter in this account of the raven and the dove. After Noah had spent over a year in the ark, he sent forth a raven, and the raven never came back. But the dove kept coming back and even brought in its beak a little bit of greenery, an olive leaf. I do not know why the dove and olive leaf have always been symbolic of peace, but they are. I cannot quite see that that is exactly the message of the dove's second return. But when the dove did not return at all, that was the sign that the judgment was over and that peace had returned to the earth. But, of course, man going out of the ark is the same type of man that all the sons of Adam were who had provoked the Flood as a judgment from God in the first place. You are going to see that there is not too much improvement in man after the Flood; in fact, there is none whatsoever.*

*There is a great spiritual lesson here which I would not have you miss for anything in the world. Noah is engaged here in "bird-watching." He sends out the raven, and the raven does not come back. Why didn't that raven come back? You must recognize what that raven eats—it feeds on carrion. There was a whole lot of flesh of dead animals floating around after the Flood, and that was the kind of thing this old crow ate. He did not return to the ark because he was really going to a feast, and he was having a very wonderful time. The raven was classified as an unclean bird, by the way.*

*The dove is a clean bird and is so listed later on in Scripture. Remember that Noah took into the ark both the clean and the unclean animals. The dove brought back information: it was a regular homing pigeon. With the dove's second trip, Noah was now a confirmed bird-watcher—and the dove brought back evidence that the dry land was appearing. The third time, the dove did not return, and Noah knew that the waters of judgment were gone.*

*I have said before that all great truths of the Bible are germane in Genesis. The Bible teaches that the believer has two natures, an old and a new nature: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2Co\_5:17).*

*The clean and the unclean are together. You and I as believers have these two natures. Our Lord said: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (Joh\_3:6). And Paul writes: "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not" (Rom\_7:18).*

*Paul spoke of a struggle between the two natures. And there is a struggle today between the old nature and the new nature of a believer.*

*The raven went out into a judged world, but he found a feast in the dead carcass because that is the thing he lived on. The bloated carcass of an elephant would have made him a banquet; I tell you, it would have been for him a bacchanalian orgy. Back and forth, he restlessly went up and down. May I say to you, that is the picture of the old nature; the old nature is like that raven. The old nature loves the things of the world and feasts on them. That is the reason so many people watch television on Sunday night and do not go to church. Don't tell me that you have some good excuse for that. You do have an old nature, but that is no excuse because you ought not to be living in the old nature.*

*The dove went out into a judged world, but she found no rest, no satisfaction, and she returned to the ark. The dove represents the believer in the world. The old raven went out into the world and loved it. When he found that old carcass, he probably thought the Millennium had arrived! You see, it is a matter of viewpoint. A professor said to me, "This matter of what's right and wrong is relative." He's right; it is.*



## Genesis 8 - God remembered Noah

*It is what God says is right, and it is what the professor says is wrong—and he does not find very much that is wrong, by the way. What God says is wrong is wrong. The believer is told, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world ...” (1Jn\_2:15). You and I are living in a judged world today. We are in the world, but not of it. We are to use it, but not abuse it. We are not to fall in love with it, but we are to attempt to win the lost in this world and get out the Word of God. Our Lord told us, “... Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mar\_16:15). Let's take care of our job down here and get out the Word of God—that is the important thing. The dove recognized what kind of a world she was in, and she found no rest. She found rest only in the ark, and that ark sets forth Christ, if you please.*

*Let me ask you this very personal question: What kind of bird are you? Are you a raven or a dove? If you are a child of God, you have both natures—but which one are you living in today? Do you love the things of God, or don't you? - McGee*

***Gen 8:13 And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and indeed the surface of the ground was dry.***

This brings us to 261 days, so that the total time of the Flood was 371 days, extending over a year. That also conforms to the statement of Scripture that the Flood was universal; it was not just the filling of a swimming pool—it certainly was more than that!

There have been other discoveries that have revealed something concerning the Flood, and I would like to pass on to you the words of Dr. J. E. Shelley who takes the position that the Flood was universal, that it covered the entire earth: “The most striking example of this is found in the case of the mammoths. These elephants are found buried in the frozen silt of the Tundra, Siberia, all over the length of the Continent of Asia, and in the North of Alaska and Canada. They are found in herds on the higher ground not bogged in marshes, hundreds of thousands in number.” He goes on to say that these elephants have been examined and found to have drowned. If they had just gotten bogged down, they would have died of starvation. - McGee

*“The farther north one goes, the more there are, till the soil of the islands of the White Sea inside the Arctic circle consists largely of their bones mingled with those of sabre-tooth tiger, giant elk, cave bear, musk ox, and with trunks of trees and trees rooted in the soil. There are now no trees in those regions, the nearest being hundreds almost thousands of miles away. The mammoth could not eat the stunted vegetation which now grows in this region for but three months in the year, a hundred square miles of which would not keep one of them alive for a month. The food in their stomachs is pine, hawthorn branches, etc. These mammoths were buried alive in the silt when that silt was soft. They and the silt were then suddenly frozen and have never been unfrozen. For they show no signs of decomposition. Mammoth ivory has been sold on the London docks for more than a thousand years. The Natural History Museum purchased a mammoth's head and tusks from the ivory store of the London Docks. This head was absolutely fresh and was covered with its original fur.”*

***Gen 8:14-19 And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dried. Then God spoke to Noah, saying, "Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you: birds and cattle***

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*and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. Every animal, every creeping thing, every bird, and whatever creeps on the earth, according to their families, went out of the ark.*

Notice: Noah's obedience even post flood. He does not leave the boat till God tells him to. If you doubt the universality of the Flood, here is more than enough evidence to convince you (every living...). - McGee

### **God's Covenant with Noah**

***Gen 8:20-22 Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma. Then the LORD said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done. "While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, Cold and heat, Winter and summer, And day and night Shall not cease."***

Noah responded to God's saving grace by building an altar. Those of us who have been saved from the wrath to come should likewise bring to God our heartfelt worship. It is as acceptable and pleasing today as it was in Noah's day. The LORD made a covenant that He would never again curse the ground or destroy every living thing, as He had done; also, He would provide regular seasons as long as the earth endured.

In Gen\_6:5 and here in verse 21, God speaks of the intense evil of man's heart. In the first instance, there was no sacrifice, and judgment ensued. Here there is a sacrifice; and God acts in mercy. –

**Believers Bible Commentary**

## Genesis – 9 – Don't be drunk and naked in a tent!

THEME: New instructions and arrangements; the sin of Noah and his sons.

Now we come to a new beginning. It is difficult for us to realize what a revolutionary beginning it is. The dispensation of human conscience is over, and God is putting man under government—he is to govern himself. We will see something of this in the covenant which God made with Noah. And let's keep in mind that, when God made the covenant with Noah, He made it with you and me, for He made it with all mankind. - McGee

***Gen 9:1 So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.***

The word replenish is meaningful here because we know that there was a civilization before the Flood, and now there is to be a civilization after the Flood. (When Adam was told to replenish the earth, we assume that there had been living creatures—I don't know what to call them—before Adam. They apparently were living creatures of God's creation; anything I could say beyond that would be pure speculation.)

Notice that the first thing God tells Noah to do is to “be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.” There is to be the propagation of the race. Remember that God gave this command under special circumstances. Today we are in a time of population explosion, and there is overpopulation that is quite dangerous. However, Noah stood in a unique position. He and his family were the only folk around. Can you imagine driving down the freeway, going to work in the morning, and there are cars in front of you, cars to the right of you, cars to the left of you, cars behind you, cars honking—you're in a traffic snarl. Then about a year later you go out on the freeway and there is not another car there. Yours is the only one. You might as well take down all the traffic lights. You won't need them because you are the only one driving through. This would be quite an unusual experience for us, would it not? Well, this was the experience of Noah in his day. - McGee

***Gen 9:2 And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand.***

Another part of the covenant is man's protection and rulership over the animal world. I take it that before this time the relationship was different. Apparently, man had not been a meat eater before. All the animals were tame, and one is not inclined to eat an animal that is a pet. Remember that the animals came to Noah when the Flood was impending; they seemed to have no fear of him at all.

Now the animals will fear and dread man. However, man is responsible for the animal world. Man's treatment of the animal world is a brutal story. Man has attempted to exterminate many of the animals. Man would have slaughtered all the whales around the Hawaiian Islands for the money they could get if the government had not intervened. At one time the buffalo were in great herds in the West, but they were killed by man. Today we must have places of refuge to protect animals and bird life. It is well that we do that. The animals of Africa are being exterminated. Man is a mighty brutal creature. We need a government to protect the animals from man.

***Gen 9:3*** Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs.

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Now God gives to man a new provision for food. Before the Flood God gave to man the green earth, the plant life, to eat. Now He tells Noah that he is able to eat animal life. There are diet faddists, and often this type of thing becomes a part of a person's religion. I once met a lady who was a vegetarian as a part of her religion, and she was quite excited when I told her that these antediluvians were all vegetarians. She thought this reinforced her argument that we should all be vegetarians, and she had her assistant take it down in her notes. However, I think she must have erased it later because I told her this: "I wouldn't make too much of it if I were you because you must remember that it was a bunch of vegetarians who were destroyed in the Flood. If diet had in any way improved them at that time, they would not have been destroyed." We see here that God now permits man to eat flesh.

However, God prohibits the eating of blood. – McGee

***Gen 9:4 But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.***

The blood should be drained out. The blood speaks of life; draining it indicates that the animal should be killed in a merciful way rather than prolonging its suffering and that it must be really dead. Although I enjoy the sport of hunting, I don't like to shoot quail, for instance, because sometimes I just wound the little fellow and it crawls away so that I can't find it. I don't like to do that. God says that when you are going to eat animals, you are to make sure that you don't eat them with their blood. It should be drained out, ensuring that the animal is killed in a merciful manner.

***Gen 9:5 Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man.***

And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.

This is an interesting statement, but not so meaningful to those of us who do not live on a frontier. However, there are certain animals even we encounter—such as skunks and opossums which may be rabid or disease-carrying rodents—that pose a real danger to man.

Now the fifth and the last statement in the new covenant is the most amazing—

***Gen 9:6 "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man.***

Here God lays down the principle for government and protection of man. He gives the government the right of capital punishment. We have seen that in this new covenant which God has given, man is to propagate the race, he is to have the protectorate and the rulership over animals, he is given a new provision for food and a prohibition against the eating of blood. Now we see that he is given the principle of government, which is the basis of capital punishment.

May I say to you that it is amazing how the attitude of the present generation has gotten away from the Bible. You see, we do not have a Bible-oriented population anymore. It is almost totally ignorant of the Word of God. As a result, we find the judges, the lawyers, and the politicians all wanting to get rid of capital punishment. They have succeeded in many cases, and I think that finally it will be eliminated totally from American culture. At the same time we have an increase in crime and the most horrible crimes taking place. I have dealt with this subject more in detail in a booklet which I entitled, *Is Capital Punishment Christian?* I believe that capital punishment is scriptural and that it is the basis of

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government. The government has the right to take a life when that individual has taken someone else's life. Why? Well, I think it is quite obvious that God has ruled it so in order to protect human life.

Our lives are no longer safe on the streets and often not in our homes, either. Although I know that many officials would deny this, one reason is our attitude toward capital punishment. When a criminal knows that if he takes a life, his life is going to be sacrificed, then may I say to you, he'll think twice before he takes a life. Also, there is an idea today about getting a gun-control law. May I say that the problem is not with the gun in the hand, it is with the heart inside the man.

"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" is a law that we had better get back on our statute books and get rid of this sob-sister stuff. Human government is the area into which all mankind has moved (Gentiles included). "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man" is the basis for human government. It has not been changed as far as the governments of the world are concerned. - McGee

***Gen 9:7-10 And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; Bring forth abundantly in the earth And multiply in it." Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: "And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth.***

This is a repetition of God's instructions in verse Gen\_9:1. "With your seed after you" includes all the human race.

All of God's creatures are included in this covenant. Isaiah predicts that someday the lion and the lamb will lie down together and that they will not hurt or destroy each other. In Paul's Epistle to the Romans he mentions that the whole creation is groaning and travailing in pain in this present age. May I say to you that God has made this covenant with Noah and with all of His creatures until the time His Kingdom comes on earth. It is for all of Noah's descendants and "every living creature that is with you."

***Gen 9:11-13 Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." And God said: "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth.***

This is God's promise. His purpose is that He will not again destroy the earth with a flood. The next time His judgment of the earth will be by fire. We find that stated in 2 Peter 3.

In the next few verses we see the picture of the covenant, and in my opinion, really a spiritual meaning of the covenant. It is sort of a sacrament, if you please. The thing which makes it that is a visible sign to which are annexed promises. – McGee

The rainbow is more or less of a sacrament, that is, a token of a covenant.

***Gen 9:14-17 It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living***

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*creature of all flesh that is on the earth." And God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth."*

Notice that God says, "I will look upon it" and "I will remember." God didn't say that *you* would see it; He said that *He* would see it. He said He would look upon it and it would be an "everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth." That ought to be the encouragement whenever you look at a rainbow.

This is God's covenant, not merely with Noah but with all flesh that is upon the earth.

Let me say again that the rainbow could be called a sacrament because a sacrament is a visible sign to which are annexed certain promises. The Passover feast, the brazen serpent, Gideon's fleece, and in our day, baptism and the Lord's Supper are such signs.

Dr. John Peter Lange once made the statement, "God's eye of grace and our eye of faith meet in the sacraments." That is what happens when man looks at the rainbow. Faith lays hold of the promise attached to the sign. You see, the merit is in what the sign speaks of. There is no faith in a promise and there is no assurance in a sign—the word and the sign go together, you see. God makes a promise and attaches a sign to it. Now the rainbow is God's answer to Noah's altar. It is as if God says, "I'll remember, and I'll look upon it." A friend of mine told me about a time he was traveling by plane across the country and going over a storm. The plane was up where the sun was shining, and all of a sudden he saw a rainbow that went all the way around, a complete circle. I guess that is the way God always sees it.

***Gen 9:18-21 Now the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And Ham was the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated. And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent.***

Here is the record of Noah's sin. The hard fact of the matter is that Noah got drunk, and this is sin. There is no satisfactory excuse, although many expositors have attempted to find excuses for him. One excuse is that he was ignorant of the effect of wine since no one had been drunk before. You will notice that before the Flood, drunkenness is not mentioned as one of the sins. Then there are those who hold the canopy theory about the Flood. (There are many things I have not had time to mention.) The canopy theory is that before the Flood there was an ice covering which the sunlight filtered through so that grapes did not ferment before the time of the Flood and that this was something new to Noah. Well, all I can say is that this is a new beginning in a new world, but it is old sin that is still there. This incident reveals this, and it was given to answer a big question, as we shall see. – McGee

In spite of God's grace to Noah, he sinned by becoming **drunk** and then lying naked **in his tent**. When **Ham** saw him and reported the matter to **his brothers**, they **covered** their father's shame without looking on his naked body. - BBC

***Gen 9:22-25 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness. So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. Then he said: "Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brethren."***

## Genesis – 9 – Don't be drunk and naked in a tent!

When he **awoke, Noah** pronounced a curse on **Canaan**. The question arises, "Why did the curse fall on **Canaan** instead of **Ham**?" One possible explanation is that the evil tendency which was manifested in **Ham** was even more pronounced in **Canaan**. The curse was thus a prophecy of his immoral conduct and its fitting punishment. Another explanation is that Canaan himself committed some vulgar act against his grandfather, and that Noah later became aware of it. Noah **knew what his younger son had done to him**. It may be that verse 24 refers to Canaan as Noah's *youngest grandson*, rather than to Ham as his *younger son*. In the Bible, "son" often means "grandson" or other descendant. In this event, **Canaan** was not **curse**d for his father's sin, but for his own. Yet another possibility is that God's grace allowed Noah to curse only a small segment of Ham's descendants and not a possible third of the human race.

## CHAPTER 10

**THEME:** Sons of Japheth; sons of Ham; sons of Shem.

This is a chapter of genealogies, of families, which are the origin of the nations of the world. This chapter is far more important than the space I'm giving to it would indicate. If you are interested in ethnology and anthropology and the story of mankind on the earth, you may want a far deeper study than you will find here. H. S. Miller, who has his master's degree in ethnology, has charted the origin of the nations, using Genesis 10 as a basis for the threefold division of the human family, which is revealed in these three sons of Noah: Ham, Shem, and Japheth. Ethnology makes it evident, by the way, that neither the sons of Japheth nor the sons of Ham ever comprised what some folk call the lost ten tribes of Israel.

Here in chapter 10 we have the genealogies of all three sons of Noah.

Let me give you a quotation from Saphir's book, *The Divine Unity of Scripture*:

The tenth chapter of Genesis is a very remarkable chapter. Before God leaves, as it were, the nations to themselves and begins to deal with Israel, His chosen people from Abraham downward, He takes a loving farewell of all the nations of the earth, as much as to say, "I am going to leave you for a while, but I love you. I have created you: I have ordered all your future; and their different genealogies are traced."

In chapter 10 seventy nations are listed. Fourteen of them are from Japheth. Thirty of them come from Ham. Don't forget that. It will give you a different conception of the black man at his beginning. And twenty-six nations come from Shem, making a total of seventy nations listed in this genealogy.

It seems to me that God is showing us what He has done with the nations of the world. Why has the white man in our day been so prominent? Well, I'll tell you why. Because at the beginning it was the black man, the colored races, that were prominent. Then the sons of Shem made a tremendous impact upon this world during the time of David and Solomon. And you will notice that from Shem there came others, such as the Syrians, the Lydians, and the Armenians, also the Arabians from Joktan. These great nations appeared next. Apparently we are currently in the period in which the white man has come to the front. It seems to me that all three are demonstrating that, regardless of whether they are a son of Ham or a son of Shem or a son of Japheth, they are incapable of ruling this world. I believe that God is demonstrating this to us, and to see this is a tremendous thing. - McGee

***Gen 10:1 Now this is the genealogy of the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And sons were born to them after the flood.***

First we see the genealogy of Japheth (vv. [Gen 10:2-5](#)), then the genealogy of Ham (vv. [Gen 10:6-20](#))—this was the outstanding people at the very beginning—and finally the genealogy of Shem (vv. [Gen 10:21-32](#)). Notice that throughout the Bible God follows this same pattern of giving the rejected line first and saying a word about it, then He drops that subject entirely and does not bring it up again. Finally, He gives the accepted line, the line which is leading to the Lord Jesus Christ. – McGee

***Gen 10:2 The sons of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.***

**Japheth:** The Japhetic peoples—the Medes, Greeks, Cypriots, etc. Probably the Caucasian people of Europe and of northern Asia. Many scholars would also include the Orientals here. -BBC

According to H. S. Miller's chart, the Scythians, the Slavs, Russians, Bulgarians, Bohemians, Poles, Slovaks, Croatians came from Magog. The Indians and the Iranic races—Medes, Persians, Afghans, Kurds—all came from Madai. From Javan we have the Greeks, Romans, and the Romance nationalities such as French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, etc. Coming from Tiras are the Thracians, the Teutons, the Germans, and then from that we have the east Germanic and the



European races, the north Germanic or the Scandinavians and the west Germanic, from which come the High German and the Low German, and then the Angles and the Saxons and the Jutes, the Anglo–Saxon race, the English people.

Well, I simply can't go into the whole chart, but it is an interesting study. You can see that the majority of us in America descended from these lines.

**Gen 10:3-5** *The sons of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. From these the coastland peoples of the Gentiles were separated into their lands, everyone according to his language, according to their families, into their nations.*

Verse 5 describes the division of the Japhetic tribes into their different areas.

**Gen 10:6** *The sons of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.*

**Ham:** The Hamitic peoples—Ethiopians, Egyptians, Canaanites, Philistines, possibly the African and Oriental peoples, though many scholars view the Orientals as Japhetic. - BBC

As you can see, Ham had other sons, but the curse was only upon Canaan. Why it was not upon the others, I am not prepared to say. From Canaan came the Phoenicians, the Hittites, the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, etc.

From Ham's son Cush came the Africans—the Ethiopians, the Egyptians, the Libyans, etc. All of these races are Hamitic, you see. Now we have some detail regarding a son of Cush—McGee

**Gen 10:7-9** *The sons of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabtechah; and the sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan. Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD."*

Nimrod (vv. 8-10) means rebel. He appears as the first "mighty one on the earth" after the flood (v. 8) and as the first to establish a kingdom (v. 10). He built Babel (Babylon) in rebellion against God, and also Nineveh in Assyria (see v. 11), another inveterate enemy of God's people. - BBC

*"He began to be a mighty one in the earth." He wanted to become the ruler of a great world empire, and he attempted to do it.*

*"He was a mighty hunter before the LORD." This doesn't mean that he was a wild game hunter. Sometimes a little boy is given an air gun, and when he goes out and shoots a sparrow, his folks say, "My, look at that! He's a little Nimrod. He hit a sparrow!" But Nimrod wasn't shooting sparrows or hunting wild game in Africa. He was a hunter of men's souls—that is the thought in this passage.*

**Gen 10:10** *And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.*

He was the founder of those great cities in the land of Shinar.

Nimrod has quite a story which you can get from secular history. Alexander Hislop, in his book, *The Two Babylons*, gives the background which I am not going to repeat here, but it is a fascinating story of how Nimrod was responsible for the Tower of Babel. It was he who attempted to bring together the human race after the Flood in an effort to get them united into a nation of which he could become the great world ruler. He was the rebel, the founder of Babel, the hunter of the souls of men. He was the lawless one, and he is a shadow or a type of the last world ruler, the Antichrist who is yet to appear.

The first great civilization, therefore, came out from the sons of Ham. We need to recognize that. It is so easy today to fall into the old patterns that we were taught in school a few years ago. Now the black man is wanting more study of his race. I don't blame him. He hasn't been given an opportunity in the past several hundred years. The story of the beginning of the black man is that he headed up the first two great civilizations that appeared on this earth. They were from the sons of Ham. Nimrod was a son of Ham.

I'm not going to attempt to develop that line any further. You see, we are following the pattern set by the Holy Spirit in which He gives the rejected line first and then drops it. We are going to turn now to the line that will lead to Abraham and then to the nation Israel and finally to the coming of Christ into this world. It is this line which we will follow through the Old Testament. God is bidding good-bye to the rest of humanity for the time being, but He will be coming back to them later on.

Let me give you a quotation from Saphir's book, *The Divine Unity of Scripture*:

The tenth chapter of Genesis is a very remarkable chapter. Before God leaves, as it were, the nations to themselves and begins to deal with Israel, His chosen people from Abraham downward, He takes a loving farewell of all the nations of the earth, as much as to say, "I am going to leave you for a while, but I love you. I have created you: I have ordered all your future; and their different genealogies are traced."

In chapter 10 seventy nations are listed. Fourteen of them are from Japheth. Thirty of them come from Ham. Don't forget that. It will give you a different conception of the black man at his beginning. And twenty-six nations come from Shem, making a total of seventy nations listed in this genealogy.

It seems to me that God is showing us what He has done with the nations of the world. Why has the white man in our day been so prominent? Well, I'll tell you why. Because at the beginning it was the black man, the colored races, that were prominent. Then the sons of Shem made a tremendous impact upon this world during the time of David and Solomon. And you will notice that from Shem there came others, such as the Syrians, the Lydians, and the Armenians, also the Arabians from Joktan. These great nations appeared next. Apparently we are currently in the period in which the white man has come to the front. It seems to me that all three are demonstrating that, regardless of whether they are a son of Ham or a son of Shem or a son of Japheth, they are incapable of ruling this world. I believe that God is demonstrating this to us, and to see this is a tremendous thing. - McGee

***Gen 10:11-20 From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah (that is the principal city). Mizraim begot Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, Pathrusim, and Casluhim (from whom came the Philistines and Caphtorim). Canaan begot Sidon his firstborn, and Heth; the Jebusite, the Amorite, and the Girgashite; the Hivite, the Arkite, and the Sinite; the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite. Afterward the families of the Canaanites were dispersed. And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; then as you go toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. These were the sons of Ham, according to their families, according to their languages, in their lands and in their nations.***

***Gen 10:21 - 25 And children were born also to Shem, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder. The sons of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram. The sons of Aram were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash. Arphaxad begot Salah, and Salah begot Eber. To Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name was Joktan.***

As already mentioned, verse 21 lists Shem as the older brother of Japheth. It is impossible to identify with certainty the places where the various people settled, but the following will prove helpful in later studies.

Tarshish (v. 4)—Spain  
Kittim (v. 4)—Cyprus  
Cush (v. 6)—Ethiopia  
Mizraim (v. 6)—Egypt  
Put or Phut (v. 6)—Libya  
Canaan (v. 6)—Palestine  
Asshur (v. 11, KJV)—Assyria  
Elam (v. 22)—Persia  
Aram (v. 22)—Syria and Mesopotamia

Verse 25 tells us that the division of the earth (at Babel) took place in the days of **Peleg**.

**Gen 10:26-31** *Joktan begot Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, Obal, Abimael, Sheba, Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these were the sons of Joktan. And their dwelling place was from Mesha as you go toward Sephar, the mountain of the east. These were the sons of Shem, according to their families, according to their languages, in their lands, according to their nations.*

**Gen 10:32** *These were the families of the sons of Noah, according to their generations, in their nations; and from these the nations were divided on the earth after the flood.*

Verse 32 serves as an introduction to the Tower of Babel in chapter 11, when the families of the sons of Noah were divided into different nations with different languages. \_BBC

## CHAPTER 11

THEME: The building of the Tower of Babel; from Shem to Abraham.

THE BUILDING OF THE TOWER OF BABEL

***And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech [Gen\_11:1].***

I do not know what language the people spoke at that time. A friend of mine who was a fellow Texan, a preacher in Texas, facetiously said to me, “You and I are probably the only two who really know what they spoke before the Tower of Babel because it was Texan.” Well, I’ll be honest with you, I’ve come to the conclusion that it could have been something else. What the language was, we simply do not know. I believe whatever that language was will be the language that will be spoken in heaven, and it will be a much better language than we have today, with more specific nouns and verbs, adverbs, and adjectives.

***And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there [Gen\_11:2].***

“As they journeyed from the east”—notice it was from the east. Mankind was apparently moving toward the west. “They found a plain in the land of Shinar,” which is in the Tigris–Euphrates Valley.

***And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar [Gen\_11:3].***

Down in that area there is no stone, and so they made bricks. That in itself reveals something about the substantial character of their buildings. Even today brick is a popular type of building material. Yet the brick was used there because of its practicality; it was a necessity.

***And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth [Gen\_11:4].***

Notice that they said, “Let us build us a city ... and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad.” They had a bad case of perpendicular I–itis—let us make us a name! In my opinion, the sole purpose of this tower was for a rallying place for man.

The Tower of Babel was a ziggurat. There are many ruins of ziggurats in the Tigris–Euphrates Valley. I have a picture of the ruins of one in Ur of the Chaldees where Abraham lived. It was made of brick, solidly constructed, and around it was a runway which went to the top. Apparently, on top of it was an altar on which, in certain instances, human sacrifices were offered. Later on children were offered, put in a red–hot idol. All of this was connected with the ziggurat in later history.

But at the time of its construction, the Tower of Babel represented the rebellion of mankind against Almighty God. Apparently it was Nimrod who led in this movement. He was the builder of the city of Babel and evidently of the Tower of Babel also. It was to be a place for him to rear a world empire that was in opposition to God.

In order to realize his ambition and to make his dreams come true, two features and factors were essential: First, he needed a center of unity, a sort of headquarters, as it were. He needed a capital, a place to assemble, a place to look to. This was why he built the city of Babel. It fulfilled one of his requirements to carry out his dream of world empire. Secondly, he needed a rallying point, not just geographical but psychological, that which gives motive—a spark, an inspiration, a song, a battle cry, sort of like a “rally-around-the-flag-boys.” There had to be some impelling and compelling motivation. There had to be a monument, Lenin's tomb is where Communism meets, and in Nimrod's day it was the Tower of Babel. “Let us make us” is defiance and rebellion against God. “Let us make us a name” reveals an overweening ambition.

Now let's see what the Tower of Babel was not. It was not built as a place of refuge in time of high water. He wasn't building above the flood stage, as some expositors suggest. In fact, I consider that a very puerile interpretation. After all, Lenin's tomb is not a place of refuge when the Volga River overflows! No, this tower revealed the arrogant, defiant, rebellious attitude of man against God. God had said to man that he should scatter over the earth and replenish the earth. But man in essence answered, “Nothing doing. We're not going to scatter; we are going to get together. We are through with You.” The Tower of Babel was against God.

Also, the Tower of Babel was a religious symbol. It was a ziggurat. All through that valley, as I have indicated, there are ruins of ziggurats. They were places where people worshiped the creature rather than the Creator. Some ziggurats were round, others were square, but all of them had runways leading to the top, and on the top the people carried on the worship of the sun, moon, and stars. After all, when they could see the sun, moon, and stars, they knew they were not going to have a flood, and they felt that God had been pretty mean to have sent the Flood.

Now notice God's reaction to the Tower of Babel—

And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

***And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do [Gen\_11:5-6].***

This is a tremendous statement! Since all the people spoke one language, they didn't have the great language barrier. They could get together and pool their knowledge and resources—“and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.” We find here that man has a fallen nature in spite of the Flood and that he is totally depraved. God cannot ignore this rebellion, for it is a rebellion against Him. God is going to put up a protective wall. He is going to throw up a barrier. This was necessary because man is such a very capable creature. He can go to the moon and he can fly in a jet plane. I still am amazed that I can sit in a jet plane, flying five miles high in the air and be served a delicious dinner. I just can't get over it, I'll be honest with you. It seems unbelievable. Man has done that, friend. Man is a very competent creature.

You can see what mankind would do with one language if they all came together against God.

So notice what God did—

Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.

***Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth [Gen\_11:7-9].***

Now man is scattered over the face of the earth. They were together in their rebellion, but now they can't understand one another. You know, a language barrier is a wall that is higher than the Wall of China. It is higher than the Berlin Wall and more effective. It is that which separates people, and it is stronger than any national border and any ocean.

There are a great many who say that languages developed gradually. But God said He confounded their language so that right then, while they were building, they suddenly couldn't understand each other. The building project came to a sudden halt, and folk moved away from Babel—they went in every direction.

This is a tremendous thing that took place. Here is a “speaking in tongues” when they couldn't understand each other. It is a miracle, a miracle of speaking and a miracle of hearing. They spoke different languages, and those who heard could not understand them.

Let me ask you a question: Was this a blessing in disguise, or was it a curse upon mankind? Well, for God's purposes it was a blessing. For man's development away from God, it was definitely a judgment. Down through the centuries mankind has been kept separate, and it has been a great hindrance to him. One thing that is happening today through the medium of radio and television and jet travel is that these walls are being broken down. They are tumbling down like the walls of Jericho. This is one reason that I believe God is coming down in judgment again.

Now let's put over against this tongues movement those events of the Day of Pentecost. That was another great tongues movement, and that time we find that the gospel was preached in all the languages that were understood by the people there. This was not speaking in an unknown tongue—that never was involved in the tongues movement to begin with. On the Day of Pentecost, God is giving His answer to the Tower of Babel. God is saying to mankind, “I have a gospel and a message for you, and I'm coming to you with the gospel in your own language.”

This is the thing that God has done, and today the Bible has gone out in more languages than any other book. It is still being translated into tongues and dialects and is being brought to literally hundreds of tribes throughout the world. The gospel is for all mankind, and the reason and the purpose for the talking in tongues was to let the human race know that God had answered the Tower of Babel. He had a redemption for man now. The mission has been accomplished. It is no longer necessary for man to try to work out his salvation. He can listen to God's message and turn to Him. The gospel is for you, whoever you are and whatever tongue you speak. It's for you. It's for all the nations of the world. We are told in the final book of the Bible that there will be gathered into His presence “... a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues ...” (Rev\_7:9).

## **FROM SHEM TO ABRAHAM**

Now we will take up the line of Shem since it is the line which will be followed throughout the Old Testament.

***These are the generations of Shem: Shem was an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood [Gen\_11:10].***

Shem's genealogy is given in the following verses, then we read:

And Nahor lived nine and twenty years, and begat Terah:

***And Nahor lived after he begat Terah an hundred and nineteen years, and begat sons and daughters [Gen\_11:24-25].***

You see that we are following the line of Terah. Why Terah? Notice the next verse:

***And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran [Gen\_11:26].***

Now we are going to follow the line of Abram, whom we know as Abraham.

We're following the line of Shem, and we are actually going right through the Bible following this line. The Word of God will follow this line directly to the Cross of Christ. God has recorded all of this as preliminary. God now has demonstrated to man that he is in sin. In the incident of Cain and Abel, we find that Cain would not acknowledge that he was a sinner. In him we see a demonstration of the pride of life. At the Flood we see the sin of the flesh because the people then were

given over to the sins of the flesh. They were indulging in violence and their every thought and imagination was evil. They were blind to their need of God. They were deaf to His claim, dead to God, dead in trespasses and sins. God gave them an invitation through Noah. They spurned the invitation and remained in the sins of the flesh. Then, here at the Tower of Babel, we see the sin of the will, rebellion against God. That was the Tower of Babel.

Do you have your own little Tower of Babel which you have built? Are you in rebellion against God? Well, it is natural for human nature to be in rebellion against God.

Little Willie was being very cantankerous one evening. He was really cutting up, and his mother was having a great deal of trouble with him. Finally, she had to get him and put him in a corner—sat him down with his face to the wall and told him to sit there. She left him and went back to the living room with the rest of the family. After awhile she heard a noise in there, and she called to him, “Willie, are you standing up?” He said, “No, Mom, I’m sitting down, but I am standing up on the inside of me!”

Well, believe me, there are a lot of men and women in our day who are standing up on the inside of them, standing against God. They have built their own little Tower of Babel.

Now as we follow the line which is going to lead to Christ, here are the generations or the families of Terah—

Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot.

And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees.

And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah.

But Sarai was barren; she had no child.

***And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there [Gen\_11:27-31].***

The name Haran means delay.

***And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran [Gen\_11:32].***

This bit of history is given to let us know that we are going to follow Abraham, and his story will begin in the next chapter.

It is at this point that the Book of Genesis—and, for that matter, the Bible as a whole—takes a turn. There is a great Grand Canyon which goes right down through the Book of Genesis. The first eleven chapters are on one side, and the last thirty-nine chapters are on the other side. In the first eleven chapters we cover over 2,000 years, as long a period as the rest of the Bible put together. Contrast that 2,000 years with the 350 years from Genesis 12 through 50. In these first eleven chapters of Genesis we have seen the Creation, the fall of man, the Flood, and the Tower of Babel. These are four great events which covered that long span of years.

## Genesis 12– From marrying your sister to the promised land!

CHAPTER 12 - God's call and promise to Abraham; Abraham's response; Abraham's lapse of faith.

The chapter before us brings us to the other side of the Grand Canyon which runs through Genesis. The atmosphere is altogether different here, and we are going to slow down to a walk. The emphasis turns from events, stupendous events, to personalities—not all of them were great but all of them were important personalities. In Genesis there are four, and others will follow in subsequent books of the Bible.

In the first eleven chapters we have seen four great events: the Creation, the fall of man, the Flood, and the Tower of Babel. In all of these tremendous events God has been dealing with the human race as a whole. Other than Adam and Abraham, God did not appear to anyone else. God was dealing with the entire race of mankind. There is a radical change at chapter 12. Now there will be brought before us four individuals. God will no longer be dealing with events, but with a man, and from that man He will make a nation. In the first section we will see Abraham the man of faith (Gen. 12–23). Then there will be Isaac the beloved son (Gen. 24–26). Next there will be Jacob the chosen and chastened son (Gen. 27–36), and then there will be Joseph's suffering and glory (Gen. 37–50). These four patriarchs are extremely important to the understanding of the Word of God. We will be taking up their stories in the rest of the Book of Genesis.

After the Tower of Babel, God turns from the race of mankind to one individual. From that individual He is going to bring a nation, and to that nation He will give His revelation, and out of that nation He will bring the Redeemer. Apparently, this is the only way that God could do it. Or let me put it like this: If there were other ways, this was the best way. We can trust God to do the thing which is the best.

God said that Abraham was a man of faith. In the Bible record the greatest thing that is said about Abraham is that he believed God: "... Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom\_4:3). As we go through these chapters in Genesis, we will find that God appeared to this man seven times, each time to develop faith in his life. This does not mean that he was perfect. The fact of the matter is that he failed many times. God gave him four tests, and he fell flat on his face on all four of them. But, like Simon Peter, he got up, brushed himself off and started again. May I say to you, if God has touched your heart and life, you also may fall, but you are surely going to get up and start over again. We will see this happen in Abraham's life as we go through the chapter before us.

***Gen 12:1-3 Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."***

**12:1-3** The call of **the LORD** had come to **Abram** when he was still in Ur (compare v. 1 with [Act 7:1-2](#)). Abram was called to leave his **country**, his **family**, and his **father's house**, and to embark on a life of pilgrimage ([Heb 11:9](#)). God made a marvelous covenant with him which included the following significant promises: **a land**—that is, the **land** of Canaan; **a great nation**— namely, the Jewish people; material and spiritual prosperity for Abram and his seed; a **great name** for Abram and his posterity; they would be a channel of **blessing** to others; friends of Israel would be **blessed** and anti-Semites would be cursed; **all the families of the earth** would be **blessed in** Abram, pointing forward to the Lord Jesus Christ, who would be a descendant of Abram. This covenant was renewed and enlarged in [Gen 13:14-17](#); [Gen 15:4-6](#); [Gen 17:10-14](#); and [Gen 22:15-18](#).

***Gen 12:4 So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.***

"So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him." Now he will follow God's leading to the land of Canaan. "And Lot went with him"—oh, oh! It is still incomplete obedience; he is taking his nephew Lot with him.

***Gen 12:5 Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan.***

Abram took Sarai, his wife, and that was all right, of course.

“And Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran.” The time Abram had spent in Haran was a period of just marking time and of delaying the blessing of God. God never appeared to him again until he had moved into the land of Palestine, until he had separated at least from his closer relatives and brought only Lot with him.

***Gen 12:6 Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land.***

Here is the record of the fact that the Canaanites were the descendants of Ham's son Canaan. I want to add something very important right at this point. A great many people think that Abram left a terrible place in Ur of the Chaldees and came to a land of corn and wine, a land of milk and honey, where everything was lovely. They think that Abram really bettered his lot by coming to this land. Don't you believe it. That is not what the Bible says. And through archaeology we know that Ur of the Chaldees had a very high civilization during this time. In fact, Abram and Sarai might well have had a bathtub in their home! Ur was a great and prosperous city. Abram left all of that and came into the land of Canaan, “and the Canaanite was then in the land.” The Canaanite was not civilized; he was a barbarian and a heathen, if there ever was one. Abram's purpose in coming to Canaan was certainly not to better his lot. He came in obedience to God's command. Now he has obeyed, and notice what happens—

***Gen 12:7 Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.***

Abram builds an altar unto the Lord when He appears to him this second time. While he was in Haran, the place of delay, God had not appeared to him.

You see, one of the reasons that you and I are not always blessed in the reading of the Bible is because the Bible condemns—we are not living up to the light which God has already given to us. If we would obey God, then more blessing would come. We see in Abram's experience that God did not appear again to him until after he had moved out and had begun to obey God on the light that he had. Now God appears to him again. Then Abram builds an altar, and we will see that he is a real altar-builder.

***Gen 12:8-9 And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. So Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South.***

Abram next relocated between Bethel (house of God) and Ai. True to form, he not only pitched a tent for himself but also built an altar to the LORD. This says a great deal about the priorities of this man of God. Verse 9 finds Abram moving toward the South (the Negev).

***Gen 12:10 Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine was severe in the land.***

I think that if you had met Abram going down to Egypt and had said, “Wait a minute, Abram, you're going the wrong direction—you should be staying in the land,” that Abram could have given you a very good reason. He might have said, “Look, my sheep are getting pretty thin and there's not any pasture for them. Since there's plenty of grazing land for them down in Egypt, we're going down there.” And that's where they went.

However, immediately there is a problem, and it concerns Sarai because she is a beautiful woman.

***Gen 12:11-13 And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance. Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you."***



As you probably know, over along the northwest shore of the Dead Sea, ancient scrolls were found in the caves there, and they are known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. At first the unbelieving scholars thought that they had found something that would disprove the Bible. But have you noticed how silent the higher critics have become? They just don't seem to have found anything that contradicts the Bible.

Among the scrolls was a set which couldn't be unrolled because they were so fragile—they had been wrapped so long that they would just shatter and come to pieces. One name could be seen, the name Lamech, so they were called part of the book of Lamech and said to be one of the apocryphal books of the Bible. Boy, how incorrect that was! The nation Israel bought them, and in the museum the experts began to moisten and soften them until they were unrolled. The scholars found that they contained Genesis 12, 13, 14, and 15, not in the Bible text but rather an interpretation of it. In the part that deals with chapter 12, it tells about the beauty of Sarai, actually describing her features and telling how beautiful she was. It confirms what we read of her in the Word of God.

The same scroll gives a description of Abram's exploration after God told him to "walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it" (Gen\_13:17). The scroll gives a first person account by Abram of his journey. It confirms what the Bible has said about the land's beauty and fertility. The eyewitness (whether or not it was really Abram, we do not know) certainly confirmed the Bible record. A great many people who visit that land today can't understand how it could be called a land of milk and honey. Well, in the Book of Deuteronomy we learn what caused the desolation that is seen there today. But it was a glorious land in Abram's day.

However, there were periods of famine, and Abram left the land and went down to Egypt during such a time.

As Abram neared Egypt, he recognized that he would get into difficulty because of the beauty of his wife. So he said to Sarai,

***Gen 12:14-17 So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman, that she was very beautiful. The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken to Pharaoh's house. He treated Abram well for her sake. He had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels. But the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.***

***Gen 12:18-20 And Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? Why did you say, 'She is my sister'? I might have taken her as my wife. Now therefore, here is your wife; take her and go your way." So Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they sent him away, with his wife and all that he had.***

God, you see, was overruling in the lives of Abram and Sarai, but God did not appear to him while he was in the land of Egypt. – McGee

Faith, however, has its lapses. During a time of serious famine, Abram left the place of God's choosing and fled to Egypt, a symbol of the world. This move bred trouble. Abram became obsessed with the fear that the Pharaoh might kill him in order to seize his beautiful wife Sarai for his harem. So Abram prevailed on Sarai to lie by saying that she was his sister. Actually she was his half-sister (Gen\_20:12), but it was still a lie, with deception as its motive. The ruse worked for Abram (he was rewarded handsomely) but it worked against Sarai (she had to join the Pharaoh's harem). And it worked against the Pharaoh (he and his household contracted plagues). The latter acted more righteously than Abram when he learned of the deception. After rebuking Abram, he sent him back to Canaan.

This incident reminds us that we should not wage a spiritual warfare with carnal weapons, that the end does not justify the means, and that we can't sin and get away with it.

God did not forsake Abram, but He did allow the sin to work itself out. Abram was publicly humbled by the Pharaoh and deported in disgrace.

The word "Pharaoh" was not a proper name but a title, such as king, emperor, president, etc. – Believers Bible Commentary

# Where you pitch your tent matters?

## Did you know Abram went out camping also?

God spoke to him, and Told him to go to Canaan (the Promised Land) and he packed up and left. He was comfortable 75 yrs probably had a nice 401k and was set-up. He had a beautiful wife more on that later. Leaving was more than many of us ever actually do. He had to say goodbye to all he knew and loved and his father's house and go off as a nomad chasing God with no guarantees just a hope and a promise from God.

## Have you ever said you were going on a trip and some family just tag along or invite themselves?

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That's what happen here. Lot is the third wheel. He is the brother-in-law and nephew that invites himself and they can't say no. Image romantic dinner for two with Abram and his beautiful wife and a third chair for Lot. You gotta hand it to Lot he sees a meal ticket through this deal and goes for it in spite of being the third wheel.

Now, Abram not yet Abraham starts off strong like many of us as new Christians; however, he definitely fails pretty quickly out of the gate.

Let's see. Read Genesis 12:7-10 ***Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. 8 And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord. 9 So Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South.***

***10 Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine was severe in the land.***

**Can you relate? Have you ever been there? You start off on fire for God but when the first hardship comes, you take off to Egypt!**

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Remember: When you read Egypt in the Bible, it is a metaphor for the World.

Examples today:

1. You are all about the the bible until you find out it is not popular at school, so you go quiet, or you turn on God all together.
2. Maybe you are in the workplace but you get informed by your boss that God Bless on your email or voice mail is offensive, so you delete it and go quiet.

# Where you pitch your tent matters?

When we bow to world and fail to glorify Christ, we are essentially going to Egypt. We are no different. What happens when you go to Egypt?

1. Sin Multiples
2. Conflicts arise

Read Genesis 12:10-12

**10** Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine *was* severe in the land. **11** And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, “Indeed I know that you *are* a woman of beautiful countenance. **12** Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, ‘This *is* his wife’; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. **13** Please say you *are* my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you.”

It was innocent enough just a white lie, right? Half truth. However, one lie out of fear leads to another. Let’s read when Abram comes into the land of King Abimelech.

**Gen 20:9-13**

God talks to Abimelech in a dream and says he is a dead man for taking another man’s wife. Then, Abimelech wakes the next morning to confront Abram....Let’s read.

**9** And Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, “What have you done to us? How have I offended you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done.” **10** Then Abimelech said to Abraham, “What did you have in view, that you have done this thing?”

**11** And Abraham said, “Because I thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will kill me on account of my wife. **12** But indeed she is truly my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. **13** And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father’s house, that I said to her, ‘This is your kindness that you should do for me: in every place, wherever we go, say of me, “He is my brother.”’ ”

How can you restore the blessings and fellowship with the Lord?

1. Leave Egypt / Return to the Promised Land (Gen 13:1-2)

# Where you pitch your tent matters?

*Then Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, to the South. Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold.*

## 2. Call on the name of the Lord (13:3-4)

*3 And he went on his journey from the South as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, 4 to the place of the altar which he had made there at first. And there Abram called on the name of the Lord.*

## 3. Resolve the conflict that arises from your sin. (Gen 13:5-7)

*5 Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. 6 Now the land was not able to support them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together. 7 And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land.*

## 4. Trust in the Lord don't have to control the situation. (Gen 10:8-9)

*8 So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren. 9 Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left."*

## 5. Choose wisely. God has a different perspective than we do!

What was Lot's choice?

*Gen 13:10-13 10 And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. 11 Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. 12 Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom. 13 But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord.*

Do you think it was appropriate for Lot (the third wheel) to take the premium land and leave Abram the rock hills to run the sheep? Did Lot pray before he made this decision?

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Did you notice Lot started off in the plains but soon pitched his tent toward Sodom (Gen 13:12)?

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# Where you pitch your tent matters?

Have you ever been tent camping and pitched your tent in a low spot then were flooded out?

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He had no intent to be wicked but that he would get close. Soon we read, he sits at the city gate in Sodom and then, he nearly loses everything and is barely spared.

You know Lot and his wife were in the tent and they could see the fires and lights at night of Sodom and they were drawn to it like a fly to the bug zapper.

Have you ever been there? Enticed by the what the world has to offer so you decide to head that way.

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What about Abram? After he separated from Lot, the Lord came to him and confirmed the covenant and the blessing promised. How about you? Where are you in the process?

1. Leave Egypt / Return to the Promised Land (Gen 13:1-2)
2. Call on the name of the Lord (Gen 13:3-4)
3. Resolve the conflict that arises from your sin. (Gen 13:5-7)
4. Trust in the Lord - don't have to control the situation. (Gen 13:8-9)
5. Choose wisely. God has a different perspective than we do! (Gen 13:10-13)
6. Sometimes you have to separate yourself, so God can use you fully! (Gen 13:14-18)

Things to ponder:

Did God design the land not big enough for both Lot and Abram? Gen 13:6

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Was it God's will for them to go to Egypt and accumulate vast possessions or was that their free will?

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Did the riches and possessions help Lot and Abram to stay together in deep fellowship with the Lord?

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Do you think more money and possessions are always a blessing or do you think we too accumulate so much our heart turns and we tend to pitch our tent toward Sodom?

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# Where you pitch your tent matters?

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## Genesis 13 -14 – Lot chooses Sodom and Melchizedek King of Righteousness

CHAPTER 13 - THEME: Abraham separates from Lot; Lot goes to Sodom; God appears to Abraham and reaffirms His promise.

In chapter 13, we see the return of Abram from the land of Egypt. Abram and Lot leave Egypt and return to the Land of Promise. Lot separates from Abram and goes to Sodom, and then God appears to Abram for the third time. As long as Abram is in the land of Egypt and as long as he is still holding on to Lot, God does not appear to him. The minute that he comes back to the land and there is the separation from Lot, God appears to him.

***Gen 13:1-4 Then Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, to the South. Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. And he went on his journey from the South as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, to the place of the altar which he had made there at first. And there Abram called on the name of the LORD.***

Abram went far north of Jerusalem. He had come to the south, around Hebron, and now he goes north of Jerusalem to Bethel.

Although he may stumble and fall, this man comes back to God. There is always a way back to the altar for Abram, the prodigal son, and any man or woman who wants to come back to God. The arms of the Father are open to receive them.  
– MCGee

Underlying Abram's return to **Bethel . . . from Egypt** was a return to fellowship with God. "Back to Bethel" is the rallying cry for all who have wandered from the Lord. – Believers Bible Commentary

**Question: Have you returned to the Lord or are you still in Egypt?**

***Gen 13:5-7 Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. Now the land was not able to support them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together. And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land.***

The Word of God is a marvelous Word if you just let it speak to you. Will you notice this: Abram got two things in the land of Egypt which caused him untold grief. One was riches, and the second was a little Egyptian maid by the name of Hagar. We will see more about her later. But now he has riches, and it causes him and Lot to have to separate—there is strife between them.

Did you notice this statement: "And the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land?" Abram's herdsmen and Lot's herdsmen are fighting, and then Abram and Lot disagree. The very interesting thing is that then the Canaanite probably whispered over to the Perizzite, "Look at them! Fightin' again! When they came into this land and built an altar to the living and true God, how we looked up to Abram! When he first came here, we thought he was such a wonderful man. We knew he was honest, we knew he was truthful, but look at him now. Look at the strife they're having!" I do not think the Perizzite and the Canaanite were very well impressed by Abram and Lot at this time. – McGee

***Gen 13:8-9 So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren. Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left."***

It is Abram who makes the division. It took a big man to tell Lot this. In other words, Abram is saying that Lot could choose what he wanted and Abram would take what was left. – McGee



## Genesis 13 -14 – Lot chooses Sodom and Melchizedek King of Righteousness

**Question: Would you offer your tag along nephew the choicest land and depending on God regardless no your own eyes?**

***Gen 13:10-12 And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom.***

This is interesting. Probably during all the time Lot spent in that land with Abram, at night he would push back the flap of his tent and look out and say to Mrs. Lot, "Isn't that a beautiful spot down there?" In the morning he would get up and say, "My, it looks so attractive down there!" The grass is always greener in the other pasture. When the day came that Lot could make a decision and go, you know the direction he went. No man falls suddenly. It always takes place over a period of time. You lift the flap of your tent, and you pitch your tent toward Sodom—and that's the beginning. Lot lifted up his eyes, he saw the plain, and he headed in that direction. That is the biggest mistake he ever made in his life.- McGee

**Question: Have you ever been deceived by your eyes and pitched your tent toward Sodom?**

***Gen 13:13-15 But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD. And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever.***

"And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him"—here is the third appearance of God to this man.

"Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward." This is the land God is going to give him. As God continued to appear to Abram and later on to the other patriarchs, God put sideboards around that land. In other words, He put a border to it and told them exactly what the land was. He was very specific about it. – McGee

**Question: When Abram operates in obedience, separates from conflicts, and acts in faith, God appears. If we do this also, do you think we will hear more clearly from God and see His had in our lives?**

***Gen 13:16-18 And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered. Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you." Then Abram moved his tent, and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built an altar there to the LORD.***

Abram was quite an altar builder. You could always tell where Abram had been because he left a testimony. One of the meanings of Mamre is "richness," and Hebron means "communion." That is a marvelous place to dwell. In our day we can be fairly certain that we have located the tree where Abram was, and the well that is there—I have been there. It is quite an interesting spot between Hebron and Mamre, and that is where Abram dwelt. It is a good place to be: in the place of richness and of communion with God. This seems to have been Abram's home, and this is where he is buried.

## Genesis 13 -14 – Lot chooses Sodom and Melchizedek King of Righteousness

### CHAPTER 14 – Melchizedek King of Salem

THEME: Kings of the east capture Sodom and Gomorrah; Abraham delivers Lot; Abraham refuses booty.

In chapter 14 we find the first recorded war, one in which Abram delivers Lot; and we find the appearance of the first priest, at which time Abram is blessed by Melchizedek. These are the two great truths that are here. In one sense, this is a most remarkable chapter. It does not seem to fit in with the story at all. It seems that it could be left out, that there is a continuity without it. But it is one of the most important chapters in the Book of Genesis.

**Gen 14:1-7** *And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations, that they made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). All these joined together in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled. In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him came and attacked the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh Kiriathaim, and the Horites in their mountain of Seir, as far as El Paran, which is by the wilderness. Then they turned back and came to En Mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and attacked all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who dwelt in Hazezon Tamar.*

**Gen 14:8-12** *And the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out and joined together in battle in the Valley of Siddim against Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of nations, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar—four kings against five. Now the Valley of Siddim was full of asphalt pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled; some fell there, and the remainder fled to the mountains. Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. They also took Lot, Abram's brother's son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.*

14:1-12 Thirteen years before the main events of this chapter, Chedorlaomer, king of Elam (Persia), had conquered various kings in the plains adjacent to the Dead (Salt) Sea. In the thirteenth year, the five captive kings rebelled against Chedorlaomer. So he allied himself with three other kings from the region of Babylon, marched south along the eastern side of the Dead Sea, then north on the western side to Sodom, Gomorrah, and the other cities of the plain. The battle took place in the Valley of Siddim, which was full of asphalt pits. The invaders defeated the rebels and marched north with their booty and captives—including Lot, Abram's backslidden nephew. – Believers Bible Commentary

**Gen 14:13-16** *Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, for he dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner; and they were allies with Abram. Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people.*

When Abram received the news, he assembled a fighting force of three hundred and eighteen trained men and pursued the victors to Dan, in the north. He finally defeated them near Damascus, in Syria, and rescued Lot and all the spoils. Backsliders bring not only misery on themselves but trouble on others. Here Abram delivered Lot by the sword. Later he delivers him through intercessory prayer (chaps. 18, 19).

**Gen 14:17-18** *And the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley), after his*

## Genesis 13 -14 – Lot chooses Sodom and Melchizedek King of Righteousness

*return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him. Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High.*

As Abram was returning home, the king of Sodom went out to meet him, just as Satan often tempts the believer after a great spiritual victory. But Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of God Most High, was on hand with bread and wine to strengthen Abram. We cannot read this first mention of bread and wine without thinking of these symbols of our Savior's passion. When we consider the price He paid to save us from sin, we are strengthened to resist every sinful temptation.

***Gen 14:19-20 And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all.***

I have several questions here, and I am sure that you do. To begin with, where in the world did this man Melchizedek come from? He just walks out on the page of Scripture with bread and wine, he blesses Abram, and then he walks off the page of Scripture—that's it. I wonder where he came from. I wonder where he is going, and I wonder what his business is.

I find out that he is king of Salem, but he is also priest of the most high God. But now I have another question: How did he find out about "the most high God"? He found out somewhere. El Elohim is the most high God, the Creator of heaven and earth; in other words, the living God, the God of Genesis 1, the God of Noah, and the God of Enoch. This is the One—He is not a local deity. H. C. Leupold in his book on Genesis says that this is "strictly a monotheistic conception." Dr. Samuel M. Zwemer, in his *Origin of Religion*, says that this reveals that there was monotheism before polytheism. In other words, all men had a knowledge of the living and true God. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Rom\_1:21). Paul goes on to say that men continued to go down to the point where they began to worship the creature more than the Creator.

Yet back in Abram's day here is a man who is high priest for the world of that day. He has a knowledge of the living and true God. He is a priest of the living and true God. He comes out, bringing bread and wine to Abram—those are the elements of the Lord's Supper! I wonder what he had in mind? How much did Melchizedek know?

Melchizedek is mentioned three times in Scripture. In addition to this passage in Genesis, he is also mentioned in Psa\_110:4, which is prophetic of Christ: "... Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." Finally, he is mentioned several times in Hebrews. After reading Hebrews, I know why nothing is said about his origin in Genesis. Nothing is said about his parents, and that is strange because the Book of Genesis is the book of families. It tells about the beginnings of these families. Every time we see mentioned a man who is important in the genealogical line (as this man Melchizedek is), his parents are mentioned. "He is the son of So—and—So," or "these are the generations of So—and—So." But we do not have the generations of Melchizedek. The writer to the Hebrews makes it very clear that the reason there is no record of Melchizedek's father or mother or beginning or ending of days is because the priesthood of Christ, in its inception, is after the order of Melchizedek. In service—in what our Lord did in the sacrifice of Himself and in His entering the Holy of Holies, which is heaven today—Christ's priesthood follows the order of Aaron. But in His person, our Lord had no beginning or ending of days, and His priesthood follows the order of Melchizedek. As King, Christ is son of Abraham, He is son of David—the Gospel of Matthew tells us that. But in the Gospel of John we read: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (Joh\_1:1, Joh\_1:14). He had no beginning or ending of days as far as creation is concerned—He is the eternal God. He came out of heaven's glory, the Word was made flesh, and we beheld His glory. We have in Melchizedek a marvelous picture of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Brought forth bread and wine." I know now why Melchizedek does this. It is because the Scriptures say, "For as often as

## Genesis 13 -14 – Lot chooses Sodom and Melchizedek King of Righteousness

ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1Co\_11:26). Melchizedek is anticipating the death of Christ here!

On that basis he blessed Abram: "Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth"—El Elohim, the Creator. This man was the high priest of the world in that day. The Lord Jesus is the great High Priest for the world today. The Lord Jesus is after the order of Melchizedek—not Aaron—as set forth here. Aaron was just for Israel and just for a tabernacle. In His person, Christ is after the order of Melchizedek.

***Gen 14:21-24 Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself." But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich'— except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion."***

The king of Sodom said, in effect, "Give me the persons; you take the material things." So Satan still tempts us to be occupied with toys of dust while people around us are perishing. Abram replied that he wouldn't take anything from a thread to a sandal strap.

REFLECTION EXERCISE – Refer to complete lesson on Be Careful where you pitch your tent Gen 12-14.

What about Abram? After he separated from Lot, the Lord came to him and confirmed the covenant and the blessing promised. How about you? Where are you in the process?

1. Leave Egypt / Return to the Promised Land (Gen 13:1-2)
2. Call on the name of the Lord (Gen 13:3-4)
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## Genesis 13 -14 – Lot chooses Sodom and Melchizedek King of Righteousness

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In chapter 13, we see the return of Abram from the land of Egypt. Abram and Lot leave Egypt and return to the Land of Promise. Lot separates from Abram and goes to Sodom, and then God appears to Abram for the third time. As long as Abram is in the land of Egypt and as long as he is still holding on to Lot, God does not appear to him. The minute that he comes back to the land and there is the separation from Lot, God appears to him.

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Abram went far north of Jerusalem. He had come to the south, around Hebron, and now he goes north of Jerusalem to Bethel.

Although he may stumble and fall, this man comes back to God. There is always a way back to the altar for Abram, the prodigal son, and any man or woman who wants to come back to God. The arms of the Father are open to receive them.  
– MCGee

Underlying Abram's return to **Bethel . . . from Egypt** was a return to fellowship with God. "Back to Bethel" is the rallying cry for all who have wandered from the Lord. – Believers Bible Commentary

**Question: Have you returned to the Lord or are you still in Egypt?**

***Gen 13:5-7 Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. Now the land was not able to support them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together. And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land.***

The Word of God is a marvelous Word if you just let it speak to you. Will you notice this: Abram got two things in the land of Egypt which caused him untold grief. One was riches, and the second was a little Egyptian maid by the name of Hagar. We will see more about her later. But now he has riches, and it causes him and Lot to have to separate—there is strife between them.

Did you notice this statement: "And the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land?" Abram's herdsmen and Lot's herdsmen are fighting, and then Abram and Lot disagree. The very interesting thing is that then the Canaanite probably whispered over to the Perizzite, "Look at them! Fightin' again! When they came into this land and built an altar to the living and true God, how we looked up to Abram! When he first came here, we thought he was such a wonderful man. We knew he was honest, we knew he was truthful, but look at him now. Look at the strife they're having!" I do not think the Perizzite and the Canaanite were very well impressed by Abram and Lot at this time. – McGee

***Gen 13:8-9 So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren. Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left."***

It is Abram who makes the division. It took a big man to tell Lot this. In other words, Abram is saying that Lot could choose what he wanted and Abram would take what was left. – McGee

## Genesis 13 -14 – Lot chooses Sodom and Melchizedek King of Righteousness

**Question: Would you offer your tag along nephew the choicest land and depending on God regardless no your own eyes?**

***Gen 13:10-12 And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom.***

This is interesting. Probably during all the time Lot spent in that land with Abram, at night he would push back the flap of his tent and look out and say to Mrs. Lot, "Isn't that a beautiful spot down there?" In the morning he would get up and say, "My, it looks so attractive down there!" The grass is always greener in the other pasture. When the day came that Lot could make a decision and go, you know the direction he went. No man falls suddenly. It always takes place over a period of time. You lift the flap of your tent, and you pitch your tent toward Sodom—and that's the beginning. Lot lifted up his eyes, he saw the plain, and he headed in that direction. That is the biggest mistake he ever made in his life.- McGee

**Question: Have you ever been deceived by your eyes and pitched your tent toward Sodom?**

***Gen 13:13-15 But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD. And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever.***

"And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him"—here is the third appearance of God to this man.

"Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward." This is the land God is going to give him. As God continued to appear to Abram and later on to the other patriarchs, God put sideboards around that land. In other words, He put a border to it and told them exactly what the land was. He was very specific about it. – McGee

**Question: When Abram operates in obedience, separates from conflicts, and acts in faith, God appears. If we do this also, do you think we will hear more clearly from God and see His had in our lives?**

***Gen 13:16-18 And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered. Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you." Then Abram moved his tent, and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built an altar there to the LORD.***

Abram was quite an altar builder. You could always tell where Abram had been because he left a testimony. One of the meanings of Mamre is "richness," and Hebron means "communion." That is a marvelous place to dwell. In our day we can be fairly certain that we have located the tree where Abram was, and the well that is there—I have been there. It is quite an interesting spot between Hebron and Mamre, and that is where Abram dwelt. It is a good place to be: in the place of richness and of communion with God. This seems to have been Abram's home, and this is where he is buried.

## Genesis 13 -14 – Lot chooses Sodom and Melchizedek King of Righteousness

### CHAPTER 14 – Melchizedek King of Salem

THEME: Kings of the east capture Sodom and Gomorrah; Abraham delivers Lot; Abraham refuses booty.

In chapter 14 we find the first recorded war, one in which Abram delivers Lot; and we find the appearance of the first priest, at which time Abram is blessed by Melchizedek. These are the two great truths that are here. In one sense, this is a most remarkable chapter. It does not seem to fit in with the story at all. It seems that it could be left out, that there is a continuity without it. But it is one of the most important chapters in the Book of Genesis.

**Gen 14:1-7** *And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations, that they made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). All these joined together in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled. In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him came and attacked the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh Kiriathaim, and the Horites in their mountain of Seir, as far as El Paran, which is by the wilderness. Then they turned back and came to En Mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and attacked all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who dwelt in Hazezon Tamar.*

**Gen 14:8-12** *And the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out and joined together in battle in the Valley of Siddim against Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of nations, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar—four kings against five. Now the Valley of Siddim was full of asphalt pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled; some fell there, and the remainder fled to the mountains. Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. They also took Lot, Abram's brother's son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.*

14:1-12 Thirteen years before the main events of this chapter, Chedorlaomer, king of Elam (Persia), had conquered various kings in the plains adjacent to the Dead (Salt) Sea. In the thirteenth year, the five captive kings rebelled against Chedorlaomer. So he allied himself with three other kings from the region of Babylon, marched south along the eastern side of the Dead Sea, then north on the western side to Sodom, Gomorrah, and the other cities of the plain. The battle took place in the Valley of Siddim, which was full of asphalt pits. The invaders defeated the rebels and marched north with their booty and captives—including Lot, Abram's backslidden nephew. – Believers Bible Commentary

**Gen 14:13-16** *Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, for he dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner; and they were allies with Abram. Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people.*

When Abram received the news, he assembled a fighting force of three hundred and eighteen trained men and pursued the victors to Dan, in the north. He finally defeated them near Damascus, in Syria, and rescued Lot and all the spoils. Backsliders bring not only misery on themselves but trouble on others. Here Abram delivered Lot by the sword. Later he delivers him through intercessory prayer (chaps. 18, 19).

**Gen 14:17-18** *And the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley), after his*

## Genesis 13 -14 – Lot chooses Sodom and Melchizedek King of Righteousness

*return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him. Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High.*

As Abram was returning home, the king of Sodom went out to meet him, just as Satan often tempts the believer after a great spiritual victory. But Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of God Most High, was on hand with bread and wine to strengthen Abram. We cannot read this first mention of bread and wine without thinking of these symbols of our Savior's passion. When we consider the price He paid to save us from sin, we are strengthened to resist every sinful temptation.

***Gen 14:19-20 And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all.***

I have several questions here, and I am sure that you do. To begin with, where in the world did this man Melchizedek come from? He just walks out on the page of Scripture with bread and wine, he blesses Abram, and then he walks off the page of Scripture—that's it. I wonder where he came from. I wonder where he is going, and I wonder what his business is.

I find out that he is king of Salem, but he is also priest of the most high God. But now I have another question: How did he find out about "the most high God"? He found out somewhere. El Elohim is the most high God, the Creator of heaven and earth; in other words, the living God, the God of Genesis 1, the God of Noah, and the God of Enoch. This is the One—He is not a local deity. H. C. Leupold in his book on Genesis says that this is "strictly a monotheistic conception." Dr. Samuel M. Zwemer, in his *Origin of Religion*, says that this reveals that there was monotheism before polytheism. In other words, all men had a knowledge of the living and true God. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Rom\_1:21). Paul goes on to say that men continued to go down to the point where they began to worship the creature more than the Creator.

Yet back in Abram's day here is a man who is high priest for the world of that day. He has a knowledge of the living and true God. He is a priest of the living and true God. He comes out, bringing bread and wine to Abram—those are the elements of the Lord's Supper! I wonder what he had in mind? How much did Melchizedek know?

Melchizedek is mentioned three times in Scripture. In addition to this passage in Genesis, he is also mentioned in Psa\_110:4, which is prophetic of Christ: "... Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." Finally, he is mentioned several times in Hebrews. After reading Hebrews, I know why nothing is said about his origin in Genesis. Nothing is said about his parents, and that is strange because the Book of Genesis is the book of families. It tells about the beginnings of these families. Every time we see mentioned a man who is important in the genealogical line (as this man Melchizedek is), his parents are mentioned. "He is the son of So—and—So," or "these are the generations of So—and—So." But we do not have the generations of Melchizedek. The writer to the Hebrews makes it very clear that the reason there is no record of Melchizedek's father or mother or beginning or ending of days is because the priesthood of Christ, in its inception, is after the order of Melchizedek. In service—in what our Lord did in the sacrifice of Himself and in His entering the Holy of Holies, which is heaven today—Christ's priesthood follows the order of Aaron. But in His person, our Lord had no beginning or ending of days, and His priesthood follows the order of Melchizedek. As King, Christ is son of Abraham, He is son of David—the Gospel of Matthew tells us that. But in the Gospel of John we read: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (Joh\_1:1, Joh\_1:14). He had no beginning or ending of days as far as creation is concerned—He is the eternal God. He came out of heaven's glory, the Word was made flesh, and we beheld His glory. We have in Melchizedek a marvelous picture of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Brought forth bread and wine." I know now why Melchizedek does this. It is because the Scriptures say, "For as often as



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ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1Co\_11:26). Melchizedek is anticipating the death of Christ here!

On that basis he blessed Abram: "Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth"—El Elohim, the Creator. This man was the high priest of the world in that day. The Lord Jesus is the great High Priest for the world today. The Lord Jesus is after the order of Melchizedek—not Aaron—as set forth here. Aaron was just for Israel and just for a tabernacle. In His person, Christ is after the order of Melchizedek.

***Gen 14:21-24 Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself." But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich'— except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion."***

The king of Sodom said, in effect, "Give me the persons; you take the material things." So Satan still tempts us to be occupied with toys of dust while people around us are perishing. Abram replied that he wouldn't take anything from a thread to a sandal strap.

REFLECTION EXERCISE – Refer to complete lesson on Be Careful where you pitch your tent Gen 12-14.

What about Abram? After he separated from Lot, the Lord came to him and confirmed the covenant and the blessing promised. How about you? Where are you in the process?

1. Leave Egypt / Return to the Promised Land (Gen 13:1-2)
2. Call on the name of the Lord (Gen 13:3-4)
3. Resolve the conflict that arises from your sin. (Gen 13:5-7)
4. Trust in the Lord - don't have to control the situation. (Gen 13:8-9)
5. Choose wisely. God has a different perspective than we do! (Gen 13:10-13)
6. Sometimes you have to separate yourself, so God can use you fully! (Gen 13:14-18)

## Genesis 15 - God's Covenant with Abram

**THEME: God's revelation of Himself as shield and reward; Abraham's faith; God's covenant with Abraham.**

***Gen 15:1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."***

This now is the fourth time that God has appeared to Abram. God is developing this man and bringing him farther along. God does well to appear to him now because Abram has taken a tremendous step of faith in going out and rescuing Lot and in turning down the booty which the king of Sodom offered him.

"Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield." My friend, this is lovely; this is wonderful. The record does not tell us this, but let me suggest to you that perhaps during the battle, Abram got in real danger and wondered whether he would come out of it alive. God simply reminds him, "I'm your shield, Abram. I'm your shield."

"And thy exceeding great reward." In other words, God says, "You did well to turn down the booty. I am your reward; I intend to reward you." Oh, what God can do with a man today when he is willing just to believe God and look to Him!

If you think Abram is one of these pious boys who gets his halo shined every morning, you are wrong. Abram is very practical, and he is going to get right down to the nitty-gritty now. I think that God likes us to do that. I wish that we could get rid of this false piety and the hypocritical attitude that so many fundamentalists assume today. – McGee

**Is the Lord your shield and great reward? Do you really act and behave as if that is true in your life?**

***Gen 15:2-3 But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!"***

What Abram is saying to God is this: "I don't want more riches; I don't need that. The thing that's on my heart is that I'm childless and I want a son. You have promised to make me a father of nations and that my offspring will be as numberless as the sand on the seashore. But I don't even have one child!" According to the law of the day, the Code of Hammurabi, Eliezer, his steward, his head servant, who had an offspring, would in time inherit if Abram did not have a child. – McGee

**Are you ever impatient with God answering His promises? Do you ever just try to solve it yourself instead of waiting?**

***Gen 15:4 And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir."***

God is very practical when a man will be practical with Him. He says, "I am going to give you a son, Abraham. I am going to give you a son." Now God took Abram by the hand and brought him forth into the night. - McGee

***Gen 15:5 Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."***

This is remarkable. First God said to him that his offspring would be as numberless as the sand on the seashore, and now He says they will be as numberless as the stars in heaven. Abram could not number the stars. He could see approximately four thousand, but there were probably over fifty thousand in that area where he was looking. Abram couldn't number his offspring, and you couldn't do it today.

This man Abram actually has two seeds. He has a physical seed, the nation Israel, and he has a spiritual seed, the church. How does the church become Abraham's spiritual seed? By faith. Paul told the Galatians that they were the sons of Abraham by faith in Jesus Christ—not in a natural line, but a spiritual seed (see Gal\_3:29).

I had the privilege of speaking to a group of very fine young Jewish men many years ago in Nashville, Tennessee. I had known some of them before I was saved and had been a very close friend of theirs. I spoke on the glories of the Mosaic Law and told them that the fulfillment of it was in Christ. I began by telling them I was glad to speak to them because I knew that they were sons of Abraham. But when I told them I was a son of Abraham also, they looked in amazement one to another. And then I told them how I was a son of Abraham. Included in God's promise were these two seeds of Abraham, and this is a very wonderful truth. – McGee

**Do see the difference and how amazing the blessings can be for waiting on God? Do you see you are also a child of Abraham?**

***Gen 15:6 And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.***

Humanly speaking this was impossible, since Sarai had passed the time when she could bear a child. But Abram believed God's promise, and God declared him to be righteous. The truth of justification by faith enunciated here is repeated in Rom\_4:3, Gal\_3:6, and Jas\_2:23. In Gen\_13:16 God had promised descendants as numerous as the dust, and here in 15:5 as numerous as the stars. The dust pictures Abram's natural posterity—those who are Jews by birth. The stars depict his spiritual seed—those who are justified by faith (see Gal\_3:7). – Believers Bible Commentary

**How's your faith? Would we pass this Abraham test?**

***Gen 15:7-8 Then He said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it." And he said, "Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?"***

Again, Abram is a very practical man. He believes in dealing with reality, and I think we need to do that. We need reality today in our Christian lives. If reality is not in your life, there is nothing there. A great many people just play church today. Abram is very practical. He wants to know something, and he would like to have something in writing.

Do you know what God is probably going to tell him? God is going to say, "Abram, I'm glad you asked Me, because I am going to meet you down at the courthouse; I will go before a notary public, and I will make real this contract which I am making with you. You are going to have a son. Meet Me down there, and I will sign on the dotted line." Now, before you write me a letter and protest, let me say that you are right, that the Bible says nothing about God meeting Abram at the courthouse, and it says nothing about going to a notary public, but in the terms of the law of our day, that is exactly what God said to Abram.

**Have you ever asked God for a confirmation or a sign?**

***Gen 15:9-10 So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two.***

God told Abram to prepare a sacrifice. He was to get a heifer, a she goat, and a ram and divide or split them down the middle and put one half on one side and one half on the other. The turtledove and the pigeon he did not divide, but put one over here and one over there.

When men made a contract in that day, this is the way they made it. Suppose one man agreed to buy sheep from another one. They would prepare a sacrifice in this manner. The party of the first part joined hands with the party of the second part, they stated their contract, and then they walked through the sacrifice. In that day this corresponded to going down to the courthouse and signing before a notary public in our day. So we see that God is using with Abram the legal procedure of his day.

In Jer\_34:18 we have a reference to this custom that was prevalent in that land, not just among these people, but among all peoples in the day: "And I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the

parts thereof." The method in that day was to take the sacrifice and divide it, and the men would then make the contract.

Notice Abram got everything ready according to God's instructions.- McGee

**A true contract or covenant has consideration, real value. God expects Abram to come to the plate with the offerings before He executes the contract. How about you are you giving the Lord real consideration of your time, talents, or money?**

***Gen 15:11-12 And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him.***

David Baron explains:

According to the ancient Eastern manner of making a covenant, both the contracting parties passed through the divided pieces of the slain animals, thus symbolically attesting that they pledged their very lives to the fulfillment of the engagement they made (see Jer\_34:18-19). Now in Genesis 15, God alone, whose presence was symbolized by the smoking furnace and lamp of fire, passed through the midst of the pieces of the slain animals, while Abram was simply a spectator of this wonderful exhibition of God's free grace.

This signified that it was an unconditional covenant, dependent for fulfillment on God alone.

According to another view of this passage, the sacrificial pieces represent the nation of Israel. The vultures speak of the Gentile nations. The land that is not theirs, of course, is Egypt. Israel would be delivered from Egyptian bondage and return to Canaan in the fourth generation. The smoking oven and the burning torch describe the national destiny of Israel—suffering and witness-bearing.

Israel's deliverance would not come until the iniquity of the Amorites was complete. These pagan inhabitants of Canaan must eventually be exterminated. But God often allows evil to run its course, sometimes to the seeming detriment of His people, before He judges it. He is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish—even the depraved Amorites (2Pe\_3:9). He also allows evil to come to fruition so that the awful consequences of wickedness can be clear to all. Thus His wrath is demonstrated to be completely righteous. – Believers Bible Commentary

**Are you always on the lookout for the enemy who wants to steal and prevent our agreements with God from Thriving as the Lord designed?**

***Gen 15:13-14 Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions.***

Verses 13 and 14 pose a chronological problem. They predict that Abram's people would be in harsh servitude in a foreign land for 400 years, and that they would leave at the end of that time, carrying great wealth with them. In Act\_7:6 this figure of 400 years is repeated.

In Exo\_12:40-41 we read that the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, were sojourners for 430 years, to the very day.

Then in Gal\_3:17 Paul says that the period from the confirming of the Abrahamic Covenant until the giving of the Law was 430 years.

How can these figures be reconciled?

The 400 years mentioned in Gen\_15:13-14 and in Act\_7:6 refer to the time of Israel's harsh affliction in Egypt. Jacob and his family were not in bondage when they first came to Egypt. On the contrary, they were treated quite royally.

The 430 years in Exo\_12:40-41 refer to the total time the people of Israel spent in Egypt—to the very day. This is an exact figure.

The 430 years in Gal\_3:17 cover approximately the same period as Exo\_12:40-41. They are reckoned from the time that God confirmed the Abrahamic Covenant to Jacob, just as Jacob was preparing to enter Egypt (Gen\_46:14), and they extend to the giving of the Law, about three months after the Exodus. – Believers Bible Commentary

***Gen 15:15-17 Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces.***

Both of these speak of Christ. The furnace, of course, speaks of judgment. The lamp speaks of Him as the light of the world. – McGee (Compare to Alternative interpretation presented in BBC notes v.11-12.

The four generations of Gen\_15:16 can be seen in Exo\_6:16-20 : Levi, Kohath, Amram, Moses.-BBC

***Gen 15:18-21 On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates— the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."***

Israel has not yet occupied the land promised in verses 18-21. Solomon had dominion over it (1Ki\_4:21, 1Ki\_4:24), as over vassal states, but his people did not occupy it. The covenant will be fulfilled when Christ returns to reign. Nothing can stop its fulfillment. What God has promised is as sure as if it had already occurred!

The river of Egypt (v. 18) is generally believed to be a small stream south of Gaza now known as Wadi el Arish, and not the Nile. – BBC

## Genesis 16 –Lack of faith and patience results in the birth of Islam

**THEME:** Sarai's suggestion; Hagar flees; the tests of Abraham.

As we come to this chapter, I must confess that I almost wish it were not in the Bible. After Abram rose to the heights in chapter 15, you would say that he certainly is treading on high places—but he is not perfect. In chapter 16 we see the lapse of this man's faith relative to Sarai and Hagar, the Egyptian maid. We have here the unbelief of both Sarai and Abram, and the birth of Ishmael. This is certainly a letdown after the wonder of the previous chapter. – McGee

### Sarai and Hagar

**Gen 16:1** *Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. And she had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar.*

Abram got two things down in the land of Egypt which really caused him trouble: one was wealth, and the other was this little Egyptian maid.

**Gen 16:2** *So Sarai said to Abram, "See now, the LORD has restrained me from bearing children. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her." And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai.*

The thing that Sarai suggested was the common practice of that day. When a wife could not bear a child, there was the concubine. Now don't say that God approved it. God did not approve of this at all. This was Sarai's idea, and Abram listened to her. It looks like he is surrendering his position as head of the home here, and he followed her suggestion.- McGee

**Gen 16:3** *Then Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan.*

This little Egyptian maid becomes a concubine, and this is not according to God's will. God is not going to accept the offspring at all—He didn't; He wouldn't. Why? Because it was wrong. Don't say that God approved this. All you can say is that this is in the record because it is an historical fact. - McGee

**Gen 16:4** *So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes.*

Hagar said, "I've mothered a child of Abram, and Sarai couldn't do it." She looked down on Sarai, you see. – McGee

**Notice:** How conflict always seems to arise when you stray off course from God's will. Have you seen that in your life?

**Gen 16:5** *Then Sarai said to Abram, "My wrong be upon you! I gave my maid into your embrace; and when she saw that she had conceived, I became despised in her eyes. The LORD judge between you and me."*

Don't pass this verse by. Don't assume that God approved of this. God says that it is wrong, and now Sarai sees that she has done wrong. "My wrong be upon thee"—she is wrong, my friend. God will not accept this, and it is going to be a real heartbreak to old Abram. But, you see, Abram and Sarai are not really trusting God as they should. After all, Abram at this time is nearly ninety years old and Sarai eighty. I think they have come to the conclusion that they are not going to have a child. Sarai could

## Genesis 16 –Lack of faith and patience results in the birth of Islam

probably rationalize and say, "I think maybe this is the way God wants us to do it, for this is the custom of the day." It was the custom of that day, but it was contrary to God's way of doing things. We get the wrong impression if we think that just because something is recorded in the Bible God approves of it. The Bible is inspired in that it is an accurate record, but there are many things God does not approve of that are recorded in His Word.

The moral implications that you and I read into this are not quite here in the historical record. Abram and Sarai were brought up in Ur of the Chaldees where this was a common practice, and the moral angle is not the thing that for them was so wrong. The terrible thing was that they just did not believe God. The wrong that they committed by Abram taking Sarai's maid Hagar was a sin, and God treated it as such. But today we reverse the emphasis and say that taking a concubine is a sin, but we do not pay too much attention to the unbelief. Yet the unbelief was the major sin here; that is, it was lots blacker than the other. - McGee

**What is worse? Our sin or our lack of faith, and how are they connected?**

### HAGAR FLEES

***Gen 16:6-7 So Abram said to Sarai, "Indeed your maid is in your hand; do to her as you please." And when Sarai dealt harshly with her, she fled from her presence. Now the Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur.***

Hagar took off—she ran away—and this would probably have meant death to her and certainly to the child she was carrying. I am inclined to believe that the Angel of the Lord is none other than the preincarnate Christ. This is characteristic of Him: He is always out looking for the lost. Hagar had traveled quite a distance from home. - McGee

***Gen 16:8-10 And He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai." The Angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand." Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, "I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude."***

In the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians, Paul uses this as an allegory. He speaks there of Hagar and her offspring as being Mount Sinai where the Mosaic law was given, and he speaks of the legality and the bondage of that law. Then he speaks of Sarai as being the one who is free. The point is that the one who belonged to Abram was Sarai—she was his wife. Many people today want to take on something different; they want to get under the law. But, my friend, as believers we have been joined to Christ. The church has been espoused to Christ, Paul says, as a chaste virgin and will someday be the bride of Christ. Therefore may I say to you, you do not want to take on the law. The law is another one that you and I just don't need; it is like Hagar, and that is the point that Paul is making in Galatians. - McGee

This is going to be a great sorrow, not only to Sarai (it already has been to her), but it is going to be an even greater sorrow to Abram later on. Hagar now comes back to give birth to a boy, that boy who happens to be Abram's son.

***Gen 16:11-12 And the Angel of the LORD said to her: "Behold, you are with child, And you shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, Because the LORD has heard your affliction. He shall be a wild***

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***man; His hand shall be against every man, And every man's hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."***

Have you looked at this verse in light of about four thousand years of history in the Middle East? What is going on out there today? The descendants of Ishmael are wild men—that has been the story of those Bedouin tribes of the desert down through the centuries, and it is a fulfillment of the prophecy that God gave. They will tell you that they are sons of Abraham, but they are also sons of Ishmael. They are related to Abraham through Ishmael. - McGee

***Gen 16:13-14 Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are- the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, "Have I also here seen Him who sees me?" Therefore the well was called Beer Lahai Roi; observe, it is between Kadesh and Bered.***

Hagar's exclamation in verse 13 might be paraphrased, "You are a God who may be seen," for she said, "Have I also here seen Him who sees me?" She named the well "Beer Lahai Roi" (literally, well of the One who lives and sees me). – BBC

How gracious God is to Hagar! It is not her sin, so God very graciously deals with her. Let me repeat that I believe the Angel of the Lord here is none other than the preincarnate Christ gone out to seek the lost again. He's that kind of Shepherd, and He brings to her this good word.

"And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me." This is something new to her that she did not realize before. The Egyptians did have a very primitive idea and conception of God. "For she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?" She is overwhelmed by the fact that she is seen of God. That doesn't seem to be very impressive to us today because we have a higher view of God than that. But wait just a minute! We probably come just as far short of really knowing about God as Hagar did. It is difficult for a little, finite man to conceive of the infinite God, and all of us come short of understanding and of knowing Him. I think that a theme which will engage us throughout the endless ages of eternity is just coming to know God. That is worthy of any man's study. To come to know God is something that will dignify a man's position throughout eternity. – McGee

**Do you know that you have a God that even see you, no matter your level, status, or circumstances?**

***Gen 16:15-16 So Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.***

Remember that Ishmael was Abram's son. Abram was now eighty-six years old.

### THE TESTS OF ABRAHAM

Before we go farther, I would like to make a recapitulation of the seven appearances of God to Abram, five of which we have already seen. There were certain failures in the life of Abram, but also there were successes. Actually, there were seven tests which God gave to him:

(1) God called Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees, his home, and Abram responded partially. His faith was weak and imperfect, but at least he moved out. Abram finally arrived safely in the land of Canaan, and God blessed him.

(2) Then there was a famine in the land of Canaan, and Abram fled from the land of Canaan to Egypt. There he acquired riches and Hagar—and both were stumbling blocks.



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(3) Abram was given riches which are a real test. They have been a stumbling block to many a man, by the way. Frankly, I have always wished that the Lord would have let me have that kind of test rather than some of the others I've had! But nevertheless, I'm of the opinion that He could not have trusted me with riches. Abram did not forget God, and he was certainly generous and magnanimous toward his nephew Lot. Riches resulted in his separation from Lot, and God appeared to him again.

(4) Abram was given power through his defeat of the kings of the east. That was a real test, for he happened to be the conqueror. This man Melchizedek met him, which I think strengthened Abram for the test, and so he refused the spoils of war. Afterwards, God appeared to Abram and encouraged him.

(5) God delayed giving Abram a son by his wife Sarai. Abram became impatient, and through the prompting of Sarai, he took matters into his own hands and moved outside the will of God. As a result, there was the birth of Ishmael. The Arabs of the desert today still plague the nation Israel, and they will keep right on doing that, I think, until the Millennium.

Abraham's two final tests occur (6) at the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in chapter 18 and (7) at the offering of his son Isaac in chapter 22.

**Read back through the lists of tests above. Put yourself in Abram shoes. How would you have done?**

## CHAPTER 17 - God gives Abraham a new name; God's covenant; Ishmael's inheritance

A great many people feel that the seventeenth chapter is the most outstanding chapter of the Book of Genesis. Here God makes a covenant with Abram and confirms His promise to him about a son. He lets Abram know that Ishmael is not the one He promised to him. In one sense this chapter is the key to the Book of Genesis, and it may be a key to the entire Bible. God's covenant with Abram concerns two important items: a seed and a land. He reveals Himself to Abram by a new name—El Shaddai, the Almighty God—and He also gives Abram a new name. Up to this point his name was Abram; now it is changed to Abraham. Abram means “high father,” and Abraham means “father of a multitude.” That Ishmael was not the son God promised to Abraham is the thing this chapter makes very clear. - McGee

### Abraham and the Covenant of Circumcision

***Gen 17:1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.***

Think of that! Abram was eighty-six years old when Ishmael was born, and it was not until fourteen years later that Isaac was born.

“The LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.” God says, “I am El Shaddai, the Almighty God”—this is a new name.

***Gen 17:2 And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly."***

Thirteen times in this chapter we find the word covenant. For it to appear thirteen times in twenty-seven verses obviously means that God is talking about the covenant. This is God's fifth appearance to Abram. He comes now not only to make the covenant, but also to reaffirm the promise of a son that He has made, which absolutely rules out this boy Ishmael, of course.

Paul, writing in the fourth chapter of Romans, says this: “And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb” (Rom\_4:19).

Sarah's womb actually was a tomb—it was the place of death. And out of death came life: Isaac was born. Paul concludes that fourth chapter by saying this about the Lord Jesus: “Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Rom\_4:25). Life out of death—that is the promise God is now making to this man. Abram is 99 years old, and that means that Sarai is 89 years old. When Isaac was born, Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah 90. – McGee

***Gen 17:3-4 Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations.***

God says to Abram that he will be a father of many nations. I suppose it could be said that this man has probably had more children than any other man that has ever lived on the earth, as far as we know. Just think of it: for four thousands years, there have been two great lines—the line of Ishmael and the line of Isaac—and there have been millions in each line. What a family! What a homecoming! Added to that, there is a spiritual seed, for we Christians are called the children of Abraham by faith in Christ. In Rom\_4:16, speaking of Abraham, Paul says, “... who is the father of us all”—that is, of believers, of the nation Israel, and also of the Arabs, by the way. Just think of the millions of people! God says here, “I am going to make you a father of many nations,” and He has made that promise good. – McGee

***Gen 17:5 No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations.***

Abram means “high father” or “father of the height” or “exalted father.” Abraham means “father of a multitude.”

## CHAPTER 17 - God gives Abraham a new name; God's covenant; Ishmael's inheritance

I am going to inject a little story here to illustrate to you something of the faith of this man Abram. Suppose that one morning Abram and Sarai get up, and as they are working around the tent there suddenly appears a group of traders at their little oasis created by the spring at Hebron. Abram goes out to meet them, and they want to know if they can water their camels.

There were many hospitable people in that day, and that is quite interesting. We speak of the caveman way back yonder and how terrible he was. May I say to you, in that day a stranger could not go through the country without somebody opening his home and entertaining him. But if you came into Los Angeles as a stranger, I don't know anybody who would take you in, although there are a lot of Christians in this area. Our culture is altogether different today, and we certainly lack the hospitality they had in that day.

Abram goes out to meet them, and the conversation probably sounded like this: "Sure, help yourselves, and I'll feed your stock. Would you like to stay for awhile?" They say, "No, we're on a business trip and are in a hurry to get down to Egypt."

One of the men then says, "My name is Allah," and the other says, "My name is Ali Baba. What's your name?" When Abram replies, "My name is High Father," the men exclaim, "My! Boy or girl?" Abram says, "I don't have any children." The men just laugh and say, "You mean to tell us that you don't have any children and your name is Abram? How in the world can you be a father and not have children?" And they ride off across the desert, laughing.

Six months later, they come by again. When he goes out to greet them again, they all begin to laugh, "Hello there, High Father!" But he says, "My name is not High Father anymore. It is now Father of a Multitude." The traders say, "My, must have been twins!" And then they really laugh when Abraham says, "No, I still don't have any children." They say, "How ridiculous can that be?"

Here was a man who was a father before he had any children. Abraham was Abraham, father of a multitude, by faith at that time. But four thousand years later, where you and I sit, we can say that God sure made this good. The name stuck, if you please, and he is still Abraham, the father of a multitude.

***Gen 17:6-7 I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you.***

What kind of covenant did God make with Abraham? An everlasting covenant. If it is everlasting, is it good today? It certainly is. God promised you and me everlasting life if we will trust Christ—that is a covenant God has made. My friend, if God is not going to make good this covenant that He made with Abraham, you had better look into yours again. But I have news for you: He is going to make your covenant good, and He is also going to make Abraham's good. — McGee

***Gen 17:8 Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."***

God tells Abraham what He will do. God says, "I will." "I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee.... And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed.... And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee ... all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession."

God has made a covenant with these people that is an everlasting covenant. Since it is, it is not one that will be easily broken, and it is not one that is going to run out. God did not give them a ninety-nine-year lease on the land. God gave them an everlasting possession.

The Hebrew people have been in that land on three occasions, and it is theirs, but the important thing is that they occupy it only under certain conditions. First of all, God sent them down into the land of Egypt, and they were dispersed there. They went down a family of about seventy and came out a nation of at least one and one-half million. They were put out of their land again at the Babylonian captivity because they went into idolatry and were not witnessing for God.

## CHAPTER 17 - God gives Abraham a new name; God's covenant; Ishmael's inheritance

We find that they again went out of the land in A.D. 70 after they had rejected their Messiah. Actually, they have never been back. God predicted that three times they would be put out of the land and three times they would be returned. They have been returned twice. (I do not consider the present return to the land a fulfillment.) When they return the next time, I take it that it means they will never go out of the land again. The Millennium will take place when God gathers and brings them back into the land. – McGee

***Gen 17:9-11 And God said to Abraham: "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you.***

Circumcision is the badge of the covenant. The Israelites did not circumcise themselves in order to become members of the covenant. They did this because they had the covenant from God. Circumcision occupied the same place that good works occupy for the believer today. You do not perform good works in order to be saved; you perform good works because you have been saved. That makes all the difference in the world.

When I went away from home as a boy, although I did get into a lot of trouble, the one thing that kept me from becoming an absolute renegade was the thought of my dad. I said to myself, "Because I'm a son of my father, I won't do this or enter into that." I refrained from things because of my dad. Now, I did not become his son because I did not do certain things. I already was his son. But because I was his son, I didn't do them. The badge of the covenant was circumcision. The thing that put them under the covenant wasn't circumcision, but circumcision was the badge of it, the evidence of it. – McGee

***Gen 17:12 He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant.***

Have you noticed how meticulous the record concerning the birth of Christ is? All the law was fulfilled in connection with the birth of this little baby. It is recorded that He was the son of Abraham, the son of David; He was in the line, and on the eighth day He was circumcised. He was "born under the law," Paul says in Gal\_4:4. - McGee

***Gen 17:13 He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.***

Again, circumcision is the badge of the covenant. They did not have to do this in order to get the covenant; God had already made the covenant with them. I trust that you see this because it is so important. The same thing is true today. A great many people think that, if they join the church or are baptized, they will be saved. No, my friend, you don't do those things to get saved. If you are saved, I think you will do both of them—you'll join a church, and you'll be baptized—but you don't do that to get saved. We need to keep the cart where it belongs, following the horse, and not get the cart before the horse. For in fact, in the thinking of many relative to salvation, the horse is in the cart today.- McGee

***Gen 17:14 And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant."***

The fact that there were those who disobeyed (practically the entire nation disobeyed when they came out of the land of Egypt) did not militate against the covenant. That disobedience simply meant that the individual would be put out. However, as far as the nation is concerned, no individual or group could destroy this covenant which God had made with

## CHAPTER 17 - God gives Abraham a new name; God's covenant; Ishmael's inheritance

Abraham and his seed after him. It is an everlasting covenant. The man who had broken the covenant was put out, but the covenant stood. That is how marvelous it is. – McGee

### *Isaac's Birth Promised*

***Gen 17:15-16 Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be from her."***

Her name was Sarai before; now it is changed to Sarah. If old Abraham is going to be a father of nations, then Sarah is going to be a mother of nations. – McGee

***Gen 17:17 Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Shall a child be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"***

Old Abraham just laughed. This is not the laughter of unbelief. I think it is the laughter of just sheer joy that this could happen. I am sure that you have had this experience. Every now and then in our lives, God does something for us that is so wonderful that we just feel like laughing. You don't know anything else to do but to laugh about it. This was something unheard of. There was "the deadness of Sarah's womb," and Abraham was "dead"—have you ever noticed how Paul described this? "(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body was now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness" (Rom\_4:17-22). Abraham believed in God, and he is absolutely overwhelmed by the wonder and the goodness of God.

But then, all of a sudden, a thought comes to Abraham like an arrow to his heart. He thinks of a little boy who is his, a boy by the name of Ishmael.-McGee

***Gen 17:18 And Abraham said to God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!"***

***Gen 17:19 Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him."***

Abraham is saying, "Oh, Lord, this little fellow who has been growing up in my home ... !" Abraham is attached to Ishmael. He was fourteen years old when Abraham sent him out a little later on. I do not think that Abraham ever saw him again. My friend, I don't care what you might think of Ishmael; he was Abraham's son, and Abraham loved his son. It was a heartbreak for him to have to give him up.

I am of the opinion that Abraham thought many, many times, "I made a great big mistake in taking Hagar." You see, that was a sin that not only plagued him, but there has also been trouble in that land from the beginning because Abraham sinned. Don't tell me that sin is a little thing or that sin is something you get by with. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal\_6:7). A man does not reap something similar; he reaps just that which he sowed. And this man Abraham is certainly reaping: "O that Ishmael might live before thee!"

In other words, God says, "No, I won't accept him. That was wrong." Don't say that God approved polygamy just because it is recorded in the Bible. I cannot see that He is approving it at all. - McGee

## CHAPTER 17 - God gives Abraham a new name; God's covenant; Ishmael's inheritance

***Gen 17:20-21 And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year."***

God holds to the promise that He has made. God is not to be deterred or deferred from this at all. He is going to do the exact thing that He said He would do. He speaks as if Isaac were already born and in their midst. He speaks of things that are not as if they are—and it is going to be next year.

***Gen 17:22 Then He finished talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.***

In other words, Abraham, you might just as well keep quiet. God has already decided this. My friend, there are things which you and I might as well stop petitioning the Lord for. There are times when you've said enough and you don't need to say any more. Sometimes folk just pester the Lord in a prayer when they already have the answer—which, of course, is No! God says to Abraham, "Let this alone, now. This is enough; you need not mention this anymore. I have not accepted it, and I do not intend to." God is going to hear and answer other prayers of Abraham. We will find that God listens to Abraham. However, in the case of His covenant, He is making it with Isaac not with Ishmael. That is settled, and Abraham might just as well stop trying to change God's mind. A great many people today pray about things that God maybe does not intend to hear or answer at all. I try to be very careful about asking people to pray about certain things. I want at least to feel like there is a reasonable chance of God's hearing it and answering.

***Gen 17:23-27 So Abraham took Ishmael his son, all who were born in his house and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very same day, as God had said to him. Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. That very same day Abraham was circumcised, and his son Ishmael; and all the men of his house, born in the house or bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.***

Circumcision is the badge of the covenant which God has made with Abraham. Someone will ask, "Why was Ishmael included?" Hasn't God promised that Ishmael is going to be a great nation also? He is included in it in that sense, but he is not the one whom God had promised to Abraham at the beginning. He is not to be the father of the nation that God will use and the nation through which the Messiah will come.

## CHAPTER 18 – Sarah laughs and Abraham negotiates with God for Sodom and Gomorrah

THEME: God reaffirms His promise; God announces the coming destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Until you get to the New Testament, you may wonder why the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of Genesis are included in the Bible. They seem rather detached from the story of Abraham. They deal with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Chapter 18 is a rather lengthy chapter in which God tells Abraham about the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah and Abraham intercedes on behalf of the cities of the plain. This is an illustration, I think, of the blessed Christian life, of life in fellowship with God. But in chapter 19, down in Sodom and Gomorrah with Lot, we will see what I would call the blasted life—all because of a decision that was made.

Unfortunately, we have both kinds among Christians today—those living a blessed life and those living a blasted life. There are those who have really made shipwreck of their lives; they have gotten entirely out of the will of God. I would not suggest even for a moment that they have lost their salvation, but they sure have lost everything else. As Paul says, they are saved, “... yet so as by fire” (1Co\_3:15).

***Gen 18:1 -4 Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, and said, "My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.***

Abraham is living down there in Mamre, and he's an old man, by the way. Notice the hospitality that Abraham extends. The little story that I told in the previous chapter has a basis of fact, at least, although I don't think it ever took place. The point is that this man Abraham is a very gracious, hospitable man. It seems very strange to us to tell a visiting stranger to wash his feet and come in. We wouldn't quite say that today, but this is probably the oldest custom that is known. Remember that in the Upper Room our Lord washed the disciples' feet—and there is a tremendous spiritual message there. Here Abraham says, “Wash your feet.” It was a token of real hospitality when someone came into a home to have him take off his shoes and wash his feet. In that day they did not take off their hat, but they did take off their shoes. Today we have reversed it. When you come to visit somebody, you leaves your shoes on and take off your hat. I'm not sure which is right. I like the idea, myself, of taking off my shoes. I like to go barefooted in the summertime. I think this was a great custom. It sure would make you feel at home to take off your shoes, wash your feet, and rest yourself under the shade of a tree. Abraham is really entertaining these men royally. - McGee

How do we treat guest today? The bible is clear about the importance of hospitality.

***Gen 18:5-8 And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant." They said, "Do as you have said." So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead it and make cakes." And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave it to a young man, and he hastened to prepare it. So he took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree as they ate.***

## CHAPTER 18 – Sarah laughs and Abraham negotiates with God for Sodom and Gomorrah

Isn't this a marvelous way of entertaining? Abraham has prepared a sumptuous meal. He took a little calf, a servant killed and prepared it, and the chef probably barbecued it. They had veal steaks or veal roast, I imagine, and all the trimmings that went with it. "And he took butter, and milk"—my, it was a real feast! Abraham entertains these three guests.

Then we find that these guests are royal guests. In the New Testament it is suggested to us that "... some have entertained angels unawares" (Heb\_13:2). That was Abraham—he didn't know whom he was really entertaining. McGee

***Gen 18:9-10 Then they said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" So he said, "Here, in the tent." And He said, "I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son." (Sarah was listening in the tent door which was behind him.)***

It was not proper in that day—and even in the East today—for the wife to come out and be the one to entertain, especially since there were three male guests there. But now they ask and make inquiry about Sarah. I think Sarah had her ear to the keyhole and had been listening in. Both Abraham and Sarah now discover that they are entertaining angels unaware. - McGee

***Gen 18:11-12 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; and Sarah had passed the age of childbearing. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?"***

That is, Sarah asks, "Is it possible that I will have a son?"—and she laughs. Now what kind of laughter is this? I think this is the laughter which says that it is just too good to be true—that's all. Again, I'm sure that most of us have had experiences like this. God has been so good to us on a certain occasion that we just laughed. Something happened that was just too good to be true, and that was the way Sarah laughed. She is saying, "This is something just too good to be true. It just can't happen to me!" – McGee

***Gen 18:13-15 And the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I surely bear a child, since I am old?' Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son." But Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. And He said, "No, but you did laugh!"***

When Sarah overheard the Lord say that she would have a child within a year, her laughter betrayed her unbelief. She was rebuked with the searching question, "Is anything too hard for the LORD?" But the promise was repeated in spite of her doubting (vv. 9-15). Heb\_11:11 indicates that Sarah was basically a woman of faith in spite of this momentary lapse. – Believers' Bible Commentary

***Gen 18:16 Then the men rose from there and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on the way.***

Abraham didn't have a front gate, so he walked out with them a little farther than the front gate to bid them goodbye. And as they walked out from where Abraham lived, they could look down to Sodom and Gomorrah. When I was in that land, it was amazing to me how far you could see on a clear day. I could see from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. And from the ruins of old Samaria, I could see Jerusalem, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Sea of Galilee. I could see Mt. Hermon from most anyplace—it's



## CHAPTER 18 – Sarah laughs and Abraham negotiates with God for Sodom and Gomorrah

tremendous. Abraham walked out a ways with these guests, and down below there, they saw Sodom and Gomorrah. They were the great resorts of that day, and they must have been very delightful and beautiful places to be. – McGee

***Gen 18:17-19 And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him."***

Up to this point, the Lord has not revealed to Abraham what He is going to do with Sodom and Gomorrah: He is going to destroy them. "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?"

Notice now the reason that God is not going to hide it from Abraham. Abraham is going to have a tremendous influence. He is going to influence multitudes of people, including the succeeding generations. That is true right now today. As I write and as you read this book, Abraham is influencing us—we cannot avoid it. God says, "I'd better not hide it from Abraham because he will get a wrong impression of Me." Notice by the way, that this man Abraham had discipline in his household. – McGee

***Gen 18:20-21 And the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know."***

In other words, God is saying to Abraham, "I know the situation there, but I'm going down to investigate." God never does anything hurriedly or hastily. It is a good thing that God told Abraham He was going to destroy these cities, because otherwise Abraham would have gotten a wrong impression of God. He would have thought that God was rather dictatorial and vindictive and that He was One who apparently showed no mercy for or consideration of those who were His. Abraham would really have had a distorted and warped view of God, and so God lets him know what He is going to do. Abraham now has time to turn this over in his mind. It is also a good thing that God told him because he did have a wrong idea of God and of Sodom and Gomorrah—he was wrong about many things. This is one of the reasons that God is telling us as much as He is. There are a lot of things that He does not tell us, but He has told us enough so that though a man be a fool and a wayfaring man, he needn't err therein. - McGee

### ***Abraham Intercedes for Sodom***

***Gen 18:22-23 Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD. And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?"***

What is the first thing that enters Abraham's mind? The first thing that enters his mind, of course, is Lot. He had rescued Lot once, and now Lot is again in danger down there. I think that Abraham had wondered many times about Lot and his relationship to God, but at least he believes that Lot is a saved man. He is asking God, "What about the righteous?" I believe that Abraham would have told you that he thought there were many people in the city of Sodom who were saved. He could not understand why God would destroy the righteous with the wicked. What a picture we have here! – McGee

## CHAPTER 18 – Sarah laughs and Abraham negotiates with God for Sodom and Gomorrah

***Gen 18:24-25 Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it? Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"***

Abraham begins with fifty. He says to the Lord, "Lord, suppose there are fifty righteous down there in Sodom. Would You destroy the city if there were fifty righteous?" That is still a question that many people ask: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" And there is an answer to it. The rest of the Bible testifies to the fact that the Judge of all the earth always does right. Whatever God does is right, and if you don't think He is right, the trouble is not with God, but the trouble is with you and your thinking. You are thinking wrong; you do not have all the facts; you do not know all of the details. If you did, you would know that the Judge of all the earth does right. We are wrong; He is right. – McGee

***Gen 18:26-28 So the LORD said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes." Then Abraham answered and said, "Indeed now, I who am but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose there were five less than the fifty righteous; would You destroy all of the city for lack of five?" So He said, "If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy it."***

In other words, Abraham says, "If there are forty-five righteous left, would You destroy the city for forty-five?" And God tells him, "If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it." - McGee

***Gen 18:29-32 And he spoke to Him yet again and said, "Suppose there should be forty found there?" So He said, "I will not do it for the sake of forty." Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Suppose thirty should be found there?" So He said, "I will not do it if I find thirty there." And he said, "Indeed now, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose twenty should be found there?" So He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of twenty." Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of ten."***

This makes the man a little bit bolder, and he says to the Lord, "Suppose there are forty?" The very interesting thing is that God says, "I will not destroy it for forty." And Abraham keeps on bringing the number down. He says, "How about thirty?" God says, "If there are thirty there, I still won't do it." Abraham says, "Suppose there are twenty there?" God says, "I'll not destroy it." Abraham is overwhelmed now, and he takes another plunge: "Suppose there are ten righteous there. Would You destroy it if there are ten?" And God says, "If there are ten righteous in the city, I will not destroy it." - McGee

***Gen 18:33 So the LORD went His way as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.***

Now the question arises: Why didn't Abraham come on down below ten? I'll tell you why: At this point he is afraid that Lot is lost, and this disturbs him a great deal; so he is not going to come down any further. But he could have come down to one. He could have said, "Lord, if there is one in that city who

## CHAPTER 18 – Sarah laughs and Abraham negotiates with God for Sodom and Gomorrah

is righteous, would You destroy the city?” Do you know what God would have said? He would have said, “If there is one who is righteous in that city, I am going to get him out of that city, because I would not destroy a righteous man with the city.” How do I know that is the way it would have been? Because that is the way it worked out. There was one righteous man there—Abraham didn't believe it, but God knew him—and that one was Lot. God said to Lot, “Get out of the city. I cannot destroy it until you are out.”

Do you know that the Great Tribulation period cannot come as long as the church is in the world? It just cannot come, my friend, because Christ bore our judgment, and the great tribulation is part of the judgment that is coming. This is the reason that the church cannot go through it. This is a glorious picture of that truth. We are going to see that Sodom and Gomorrah are a picture of the world—and what a picture! What a condition the world is in today—it is very much like Sodom and Gomorrah. That does not mean that the Lord is going to come tomorrow. I do not know—and no one else knows—when He will come. But He could come tomorrow, and it certainly would be in keeping with the carrying out of the picture which is before us here in Genesis. - McGee

## **Genesis 19 – First Abraham now God rescues Lot, and Sodom’s sin leads to destruction.**

THEME: The angels visit Lot; destruction of the Cities of the Plain.

The preceding chapter was a picture of blessed Christian fellowship with God. But now the picture changes: We leave Hebron on the plains of Mamre where Abraham dwells and we go to the city of Sodom where Lot dwells. In this chapter Lot leaves Sodom with his wife and two daughters, and Sodom and Gomorrah are destroyed. Lot's wife turns to a pillar of salt, and then we have Lot's awful sin with his two daughters.

In chapter 19 we have a picture of that which is “the blasted life.” Don't forget that this man Lot happens to be a righteous man. It is hard to believe that; if I had only this record in Genesis, I wouldn't believe it. But Simon Peter, in his epistle, says of Lot, “... that righteous man ... vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds” (2Pe\_2:8). Lot lived in Sodom, but he never was happy there. It was a tragic day for him when he moved to Sodom, because he lost his family—he lost all of them if you look at the total picture. It is tragic.

There is many a man today who may be a saved man, but due to his life style or where he lives, he loses his family, his influence, and his testimony. I have been a pastor for quite a few years, and I know Christians like Lot. Not too long ago, the son of a leader in a church which I served said to me that all he was doing was waiting for his dad to die in order to repudiate the Christian life. He thought the whole thing was phony; all he could see was hypocrisy. Of course, all he was doing was telling about his home. What a phony his dad must be! That man has lost his son, and he has lost his influence in other places, I can assure you. But I would not question his salvation. I think the man trusts Christ, but you would never know it by his life. Poor Lot! How tragic this is! This is one of two very sordid chapters in the Book of Genesis.

***Gen 19:1-2 Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. And he said, "Here now, my lords, please turn in to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way." And they said, "No, but we will spend the night in the open square."***

These two angels visit Lot in Sodom to announce judgment. Notice that Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. I cannot let that go by without calling attention to the fact that the ones who sat in the gate of a city were the judges. This man Lot not only moved to Sodom, but he also got into politics down there. Here he is, a petty judge sitting in the gate.

These two men must have had dirty feet. Of course, if you had walked from the plains of Mamre down into Sodom wearing nothing but sandals, your feet would need washing, also. Again, I call your attention to this custom of that day which was practiced by those who extended hospitality to strangers.

Lot was a hospitable man. When these strangers came, he invited them to his home, and they came in. At first, however, they were reluctant. “And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.” In other words, they said, “We'll just stay outside. We don't want to inconvenience you.” And they said this for a purpose, of course.  
– McGee

***Gen 19:3 But he insisted strongly; so they turned in to him and entered his house. Then he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.***

Now these men have another feast. They had a feast with Abraham; they now have a feast with Lot.

They had brought out something when they said, “We'll stay on the street and just sleep in the park,” and Lot says to them, “You don't do that in Sodom. It's dangerous! Your life wouldn't be worth a thing if you did that.”

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May I say that maybe Los Angeles ought to change its name to Sodom. It would not be safe for you to sleep on the streets of Los Angeles; in fact, it is not safe at all to be on the streets of Los Angeles at night. Many women who live alone will not come out to church at night. One dear saint of God told me, “I just lock my door at dark, Brother McGee, and I do not open that door until the next morning at daylight. It's not safe in my neighborhood to even walk on the street.” The days of Sodom and Gomorrah are here again, and practically for the same reason. Lot says, “No, men, do not stay on the street. It wouldn't be safe for you.” When he “pressed upon them,” they came in. - McGee

***Gen 19:4-5 Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. And they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally."***

This is a sickening scene which reveals the degradation of this city—the city of Sodom. The name that has been put on this sin from that day to this is sodomy. Apparently, there was no attempt made in the city of Sodom to have a church for this crowd and to tell them that they were all right in spite of the fact that they practiced this thing. May I say to you that the Word of God is specific on this, and you cannot tone it down. Sodomy is an awful sin.

When this man Lot had gone down into the city of Sodom, he did not realize what kind of city it was—I'm sure of that. He got down there and found out that perversion was the order of the day, and he brought up his children, his sons and daughters, in that atmosphere. When he earlier had pitched his tent toward Sodom, he had looked down there and had seen the lovely streets and boulevards and parks and public buildings. And he had seen the folk as they were on the outside, but he had not seen what they really were. The sin of this city is so great that God is now going to judge it. God is going to destroy the city.

Let's draw a sharp line here. There is a new attitude toward sin today. There is a gray area where sin is not really as black as we once thought it was. The church has compromised until it is pitiful. In Southern California we have a church made up of those who are homosexuals, and, lo and behold, they all admit that the pastor of the church is one also! May I say to you, the lesson of Sodom and Gomorrah is a lesson for this generation. God is not accepting this kind of church.

The idea today seems to be that you can become a child of God and continue on in sin. God says that is impossible—you cannot do that, and this city of Sodom is an example of that fact. Paul asks the question: “Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?” And the answer is “God forbid,” or, Let it not be (see Rom\_6:1-2). The idea that you can be a Christian and go on in sin is a tremendous mistake, especially to make light of it, as I judge is being done in this particular case.

This is what they were doing in Sodom and Gomorrah—and God destroyed these cities. Don't say that we have a primitive view of God in Genesis but that we have a better one today. Don't argue that, after all, Jesus received sinners. He sure did, but when He got through with them, He had changed them. The harlot who came to Him was no longer in that business. When she came to God, she changed. That is the thing that happened to other sinners. A publican came to Him, and he left the seat of customs. He gave up that which was crooked when he came to the Lord. If you have come to Christ, you will be changed. Many people write and try to explain to me that we are living in a new day and I need to wake up. My friend, we are living in a new day, but it just happens to be Sodom and Gomorrah all over again. – McGee

## **Genesis 19 – First Abraham now God rescues Lot, and Sodom’s sin leads to destruction.**

***Gen 19:6-7 So Lot went out to them through the doorway, shut the door behind him, and said, "Please, my brethren, do not do so wickedly!"***

The men of Sodom were outside the door, asking that these guests in the home of Lot be turned over to them. Lot said, "I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly." That is the way Lot looked at it, and he had been down there in Sodom a long time. It wasn't new morality to him; it was just old sin. - McGee

***Gen 19:8-9 See now, I have two daughters who have not known a man; please, let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you wish; only do nothing to these men, since this is the reason they have come under the shadow of my roof." And they said, "Stand back!" Then they said, "This one came in to stay here, and he keeps acting as a judge; now we will deal worse with you than with them." So they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near to break down the door.***

When a man entertained a guest in that day, he was responsible for him. Lot was willing to make this kind of sacrifice to protect his guests! "And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: ..." You see, Lot was advancing in the political arena there. – McGee

***Gen 19:10-11 But the men reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. And they struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they became weary trying to find the door.***

If Lot's guests had not done this, both they and Lot would have been destroyed, because that was the intention of the men of Sodom. – McGee

***Gen 19:12-14 Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city—take them out of this place! For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it." So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, "Get up, get out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city!" But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking.***

Lot is in a very bad situation. He had spent years down in the city of Sodom. He had learned to tolerate this sort of thing, although he calls it wickedness. He had seen his sons and daughters grow up, and they apparently had married among people with those ethical standards. When the time came that Lot got this word from the Lord to leave the city, he went to his sons-in-law and said, "Let's get out of here. God is going to destroy this city." They laughed at him. They ridiculed him. I suppose they knew that the week before Lot had invested a little money in real estate there. He had lived so long as one of them, without any real difference, that they took his warning as big joke. This man was out of the will of God in this place, and he had no witness for God. He did not win anybody for the Lord in this city. The same principle is true today: when you go down to their level, my friend, you do not win them. I think that that is being clearly demonstrated in this hour.

Frankly, I would agree with Abraham that this man Lot wasn't saved, but remember what Peter said: "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds)" (2Pe\_2:6-8). I tell you, Lot never enjoyed it down there in Sodom. Now

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that he is going to leave the city, he cannot get anyone to leave with him except his wife and two single daughters. - McGee

***Gen 19:15-16 When the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot to hurry, saying, "Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of the city." And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city.***

Here is a man who was God's man in spite of everything. If I only had the Book of Genesis, I am not sure I would believe that Lot was saved, but since Peter calls him a righteous man, we know that he was. Lot had become righteous because he had followed Abraham—he believed God, and he had offered the sacrifices. God extends mercy unto Lot, and he now believes God and gets out of the city. – McGee

***Gen 19:17-23 So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed." Then Lot said to them, "Please, no, my lords! Indeed now, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have increased your mercy which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil overtake me and I die. See now, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one; please let me escape there (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live." And he said to him, "See, I have favored you concerning this thing also, in that I will not overthrow this city for which you have spoken. Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there." Therefore, the name of the city was called Zoar.***

Even Lot didn't want to leave. He would get out of the city, but he couldn't make it to the mountain.

This city was a little place called Zoar, and that is where Lot went. You see, this man came out of Sodom, but he did not come clean even out of there. And, of course, he got into a great deal of trouble at that particular time. - McGee

***Gen 19:23-26 The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar. Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. So, He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. But, his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.***

I think this verse (26) has been greatly misunderstood. Why in the world did Mrs. Lot turn and look back? I think that the reason is twofold. First of all, she turned and looked back because she did not want to leave Sodom. She loved Sodom. She loved Lot, too, but it was a lot of Sodom that she loved. And she didn't want to leave it. She was probably a member of the country club, the sewing club, and the Shakespeare club. In fact, there wasn't a club in town that she was not a member of. She just loved these little get-togethers in the afternoon. I'm not sure but what they met and studied religion in a nice little religious club also. She was right in the thick of it all, my friend, and she didn't want to leave. Her heart was in Sodom. Her body walked out, but she surely left her heart there.

This is a tremendous lesson for us today. I hear a great many Christians talking about how they want to see the Lord come, but they are not living as if they mean it. On Sunday morning, it is difficult to get them to leave their lovely home. And on Sunday night, they are not going to leave their lovely home because they love television, too. They have a color television, and they are going to look at the programs on Sunday night because there are



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some good ones then. But when the Lord comes, my friend, you are going to leave the television; you are going to leave that lovely home; you are going to leave everything. I have just one question to ask you: Will it break your heart to leave all of this down here?

I have asked myself that question many times. To be honest with you, I am not anxious to leave. I would love to stay. I have my friends and loved ones whom I want to be with. And I have the radio ministry that I want to continue. I'll be frank with you, I hope the Lord will just let me stay here awhile longer. But I also want to be able to say that when He does call, I will not have a thing down here which will break my heart to leave—not a thing. I love my home too, but I would just as soon go off and leave it. How do you feel about that today? Mrs. Lot turned and looked back, and this is one of the explanations.

The other reason that she looked back is simply that she did not believe God. God had said, “Leave the city, and don't look back.” Lot didn't look back; he believed God. But Mrs. Lot did not believe God. She was not a believer, and so she didn't really make it out of the city. She was turned to a pillar of salt.

I want to conclude this chapter by looking at Abraham. What did Abraham think of all this? - McGee

***Gen 19:27-28 And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD. Then he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain; and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace.***

When Abraham looked down toward Sodom, I think his heart was sad. I am not sure whether or not he knew that Lot had escaped. He probably learned about it later on. When he looked down there, he probably was sad for Lot's sake, but Abraham had not invested a dime down there. When judgment came, it did not disturb him one whit because he wasn't in love with the things of Sodom and the things of the world.

Remember that we are told, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world ...” (1Jn\_2:15). I sometimes preach a sermon which I have entitled “Sightseeing in Sodom.” First, I look at Sodom through the eyes of Lot himself: he sure had a wrong view of it. And then of Mrs. Lot: she fell in love with it. You can also sightsee in Sodom with Abraham: he lost nothing down there. Finally, you can go through Sodom with the Lord and see it as He sees it. It is too bad that the church today is not looking at the sin of sodomy as God looks at it. I do not think it is any more prevalent today than it has been in the past, but there is a tremendous percentage of our population who are homosexuals engaging in perversion. We speak of it in a more candid manner than we ever have, and it is something that is right in our midst.

What is to be the attitude of the Christian toward homosexuality? Even Lot in his day said, “You are doing wickedly.” And God judged it. Isn't it enough for the child of God to know that he cannot compromise with this type of thing? This is a sin! The world indulges in it and then calls it a sickness. The same thing is said about the alcoholic. Sure, he's sick. Of course, he's sick. But what made him take that first drink and continue to drink until he became sick? Sin did it, my friend. Sin is the problem, and homosexuality is a sin. It is so labeled in the first chapter of Romans where God says He gave them up (see Rom\_1:18-32). Genesis 19 is a very important chapter for this present generation in which we are living today. – McGee

***Gen 19:29 And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot had dwelt.***

His backslidden life nullified his testimony when the crisis came. When the morning dawned, the angels escorted Lot, his wife, and daughters out of Sodom. Even then Lot temporized, preferring to stay in Zoar, one of the



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satellite sin cities. Not even ten righteous men were found in the city of Sodom, so God destroyed it. But Abraham's prayer was not unanswered, for God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow.

Though Lot's wife left the city, her heart was still in it, and she fell under the judgment of God. In the words "Remember Lot's wife" (Luk\_17:32), Christ held her up as a warning to all who trifle with His offer of salvation. – BBC

***Gen 19:30 Then Lot went up out of Zoar and dwelt in the mountains, and his two daughters were with him; for he was afraid to dwell in Zoar. And he and his two daughters dwelt in a cave.***

***Gen 19:31-38 Now the firstborn said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is no man on the earth to come in to us as is the custom of all the earth. Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father." So they made their father drink wine that night. And the firstborn went in and lay with her father, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. It happened on the next day that the firstborn said to the younger, "Indeed I lay with my father last night; let us make him drink wine tonight also, and you go in and lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father." Then they made their father drink wine that night also. And the younger arose and lay with him, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father. The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab; he is the father of the Moabites to this day. And the younger, she also bore a son and called his name Ben-Ammi; he is the father of the people of Ammon to this day.***

Leaving Zoar, Lot fled to a mountain cave. There his daughters made him drunk and enticed him to commit incest with them. The older daughter subsequently bore a son named Moab, and the younger . . . bore a son, Ben-Ammi. Thus began the Moabites and Ammonites, who became recurring thorns in Israel's side. It was Moabite women who later seduced the men of Israel to commit immorality (Num\_25:1-3) and Ammonites who taught Israel the worship of Molech, including the sacrifice of children (1Ki\_11:33; Jer\_32:35). We know from 2Pe\_2:7-8 that Lot was a just man, but because of his worldliness he lost his testimony (v. 14), his wife (v. 26), his sons-in-law, his friends, his communion (there was none in Sodom), his property (he went in rich but came out poor), his character (v. 35), his life's work, and nearly his life (v. 22). The depraved behavior of his daughters shows that they had been influenced by Sodom's vile standards. There is no escape (Heb\_2:3). – BBC

I am not going to go into the story of Lot's two daughters in verses Gen\_19:31-38. It is as sordid as it can be. Frankly, Lot did not do well in moving down to the city of Sodom. He lost everything except his own soul. His life is a picture of a great many people who will not judge the sins of their lives. They are saved, "yet so as by fire." The Lord has said in a very definite way to these folk who have put all their eggs in a basket like this that if they will not judge their sin down here, He will judge it. Apparently, that was the case in Lot's story. - McGee

## CHAPTER 20

THEME: Abraham misrepresents Sarah.

Chapter 20 seems about as necessary as a fifth leg on a cow. It is a chapter that you feel as if you would like to leave out, because in it Abraham repeats the same sin which he committed when he went down into the land of Egypt and lied concerning Sarah, saying, "She is my sister." It is the same sordid story, but this chapter is put here for a very important reason. Abraham and Sarah are going to have to deal with this sin before they can have Isaac, before they can have the blessing. May I say to you, until you and I are willing to deal with the sin in our lives, there is no blessing for us.

## ABRAHAM MISREPRESENTS SARAH

I am going to hit just the high points of chapter 20.

And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar.

***Gen 20:1-2 And Abraham journeyed from there to the South, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, and stayed in Gerar. Now Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.***

This is quite interesting. Do you think that Sarah was beautiful? Well, at this time she is almost ninety years old, and she's beautiful. Not many senior citizens can qualify in this particular department.

Notice also that Abraham is getting quite far south in the land. He has gone beyond Kadesh—Barnea where the children of Israel later came up from Egypt and refused to enter the land. Abraham has gone down to Gerar, which I do not think he should have done, but be that as it may, he lies about Sarah again.

I want you notice Abraham's confession because this is the thing which makes this chapter important and reveals the fact that Abraham and Sarah cannot have Isaac until they deal with this sin that is in their lives—and it goes way back.

***Gen 20:3-5 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, "Indeed you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife." But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, "Lord, will You slay a righteous nation also? Did he not say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she, even she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands I have done this."***

God protects Sarah again!

***Gen 20:6-8 And God said to him in a dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her. Now therefore, restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours." So Abimelech rose early in the morning, called all his servants, and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were very much afraid.***

Notice: Abimelech is said to have integrity in his heart, yet being pagan.

**Do you judge people by the outward appearance or the integrity of their heart?**

***Gen 20:9-11 And Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? How have I offended you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done." Then Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you have in view, that you have done this thing?" And Abraham said, "Because I thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will kill me on account of my wife.***

Abraham is now talking to Abimelech who is greatly disturbed that Abraham would do a thing like lying about his wife. Again, Abraham was not trusting God. He felt that he was moving down into a godless place, but he finds out that Abimelech has a high sense of what is right and wrong. Abimelech puts a tremendous value upon character and apparently is a man who knows God. Poor Abraham doesn't look good by the side of Abimelech here. – McGee

***Gen 20:12 But indeed she is truly my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.***

Abraham lets it all out now. He says, "To tell the truth, it's half a lie. Sarah is my half sister, and she is my wife." – McGee

**Confession – Finally! Have you ever been there? Have something you have not confessed to God?**

***Gen 20:13 And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her, 'This is your kindness that you should do for me: in every place, wherever we go, say of me, "He is my brother." ' ' "***

Abraham did not have complete confidence and trust in God, and so when they started out, he and Sarah made a pact that anywhere they went where it looked as if Abraham might be killed because of his wife, Sarah would say that Abraham was her brother. Abraham and Sarah thought that that would keep Abraham from being killed. They made that little agreement, and they had used it down in Egypt, and here they have used it again. This sin must be dealt with before God is going to hear and answer Abraham's prayer in sending a son. Isaac will not be born until this is dealt with.

How many Christians are there who will not judge sin in their lives, and as a result, there is no blessing in their lives? If those who are in places of leadership in our fundamental churches would confess their sins and deal with the sins that are in their lives, I frankly believe that we could have revival. I do not believe there will be any blessing until sin is dealt with. Listen to Paul in 1 Corinthians: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1Co\_11:28-32). Blessing is being withheld from the church and from the lives of many believers because we will not deal with the sin in our lives. This is a tremendous spiritual lesson here in the twentieth chapter of the Book of Genesis. – McGee

**Gen 20:14-18** *Then Abimelech took sheep, oxen, and male and female servants, and gave them to Abraham; and he restored Sarah his wife to him. And Abimelech said, "See, my land is before you; dwell where it pleases you." Then to Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver; indeed this vindicates you before all who are with you and before everybody." Thus she was rebuked. So Abraham prayed to God; and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants. Then they bore children; for the LORD had closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.*

It seems incredible to us that Abraham would again try to pass off Sarah as his sister within twenty years of the same blunder with Pharaoh— incredible, that is, until we remember our own perpetual proneness to sin! The incident with Abimelech in Gerar is almost a replay of Abraham's duplicity in Egypt (Gen\_12:10-17). God intervened to work out His purposes in the birth of Isaac, which might otherwise have been frustrated. He threatened Abimelech with death. He is more than just a spectator on the sidelines of history. He can overrule the evil of His people, even through the lives of the unregenerate. The pagan Abimelech acted more righteously in this incident than Abraham, the "friend of God." (Abimelech is a title, and not a proper name.) It is shameful when a believer has to be justly rebuked by a man of the world! When a half-truth is presented as the whole truth, it is an untruth. Abraham even tried to shift some of the blame onto God for making him wander in the first place. He would have been wiser to humbly acknowledge his guilt. Nevertheless, he was still God's man. And so the Lord sent Abimelech to him so that Abraham would pray that his household be healed of its barrenness.

The expression "this vindicates you" (v. 16) is literally "it is a covering of the eyes," meaning a gift given for the purpose of appeasing. Thus it might read, "It is given to you as a payment in satisfaction as evidence to all who are with you and to all men that the wrong has been righted." - Believers' Bible Commentary

Skipping forward....

**Genesis 21:22-24** *And it came to pass at that time that Abimelech and Phichol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, "God is with you in all that you do. Now therefore, swear to me by God that you will not deal falsely with me, with my offspring, or with my posterity; but that according to the kindness that I have done to you, you will do to me and to the land in which you have dwelt." And Abraham said, "I will swear."*

**Do others say to you "God is with you in all that you do"?**

In other words, Abimelech wants to make a contract or a treaty with this man Abraham—and they become good friends because of this. Notice: How Abraham approached this conflict? How did Abimelech receive this news?

**Gen 21:25-28** *Then Abraham rebuked Abimelech because of a well of water which Abimelech's servants had seized. And Abimelech said, "I do not know who has done this thing; you did not tell me, nor had I heard of it until today." So Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant. And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves.*

21:22-34 The Abimelech in verse 22 is not necessarily the same one as in chapter 20. This chieftain's servants had taken a well of water from Abraham's men. When Abimelech and Abraham made a treaty of friendship, the patriarch told Abimelech about the well that had been seized. The result was a

covenant granting the well to Abraham. He promptly named it Beersheba ("well of the oath"). The place later became a city, marking the southernmost boundary of the land. Abraham planted a tamarisk tree as a memorial. – Believers' Bible Commentary

***Gen 21:29-34 Then Abimelech asked Abraham, "What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs which you have set by themselves?" And he said, "You will take these seven ewe lambs from my hand, that they may be my witness that I have dug this well." Therefore, he called that place Beersheba, because the two of them swore an oath there. Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba. So Abimelech rose with Phichol, the commander of his army, and they returned to the land of the Philistines. Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God. And Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines many days.***

Abraham is calling upon God's name everywhere he goes. We are told later that Abraham was always a stranger and a pilgrim in this land that God had promised to him, and this is an evidence of it.- McGee

## Genesis 21 – Isaac the son of promise, The Birth of Isaac, and *Hagar and Ishmael cast out*

In the preceding chapter, we saw the sin that must be dealt with, confessed, and put away before Isaac could be born to Abraham and Sarah. Now in chapter 21 we have the birth of Isaac.

***Gen 21:1-2 And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.***

You will notice that there is a very striking similarity between the birth of Isaac and the birth of Christ. I believe that the birth of Isaac was given to us to set before mankind this great truth before Christ came. Isaac was born at the set time God had promised, and Paul says, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal\_4:4). - McGee

***Gen 21:3-7 And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him—whom Sarah bore to him—Isaac. Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. And Sarah said, "God has made me laugh, and all who hear will laugh with me." She also said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne him a son in his old age."***

There are some very remarkable truths here that we need to lay hold of. First of all, the birth of Isaac was a miraculous birth. It was contrary to nature. In the fourth chapter of Romans, Paul writes that Abraham "... considered not his own body now dead ... neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb" (Rom\_4:19). Out of death God brings forth life: this is a miraculous birth. We need to call attention to the fact that God did not flash the supernatural birth of Christ on the world as being something new. He began to prepare men for it, and therefore way back here at the birth of Isaac we have a miraculous birth.

We also find here that God had to deal with both Sarah and Abraham. They had to recognize that they could do nothing, that it would be impossible for them to have a child. Abraham is 100 years old; Sarah is 90 years old. In other words, the birth of Isaac must be a birth that they really have nothing to do with. – McGee

**What is too big for God? Do you have areas of your life that seem dead? Do you believe God can resurrect those areas of your life? Do did you learn from Abraham and Sarah's example on what our part is to Him resurrecting the dead things in our lives?**

### ***God Protects Hagar and Ishmael***

***Gen 21:8 So the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the same day that Isaac was weaned.***

Isaac was probably from two to five years old when he was weaned. Ishmael would have been between thirteen and seventeen. – Believers Bible Commentary

This little fellow first lived by feeding on his mother's milk, but there came a day when he had to be weaned. Even this has a lesson for us. When mamma is getting the bottle ready for the little baby in the crib, everything in his entire body is working. He's got his feet up in the air, he's got his hands up in the air, and he's yelling at the top of his voice—he wants his bottle! "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1Pe\_2:2). It is wonderful to be a new Christian with an appetite like that for the milk of the Word. But the day comes when you are ready to start growing up as a believer. Instead of just reading Psalm 23 and John 14—wonderful as they are—try reading through the entire Bible. Grow up. Don't be a babe all of the time.

## **Genesis 21 – Isaac the son of promise, The Birth of Isaac, and *Hagar and Ishmael cast out***

Notice God's admonishment in Heb\_5:13-14. "For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age ..." Grow up, friend. – McGee

**Milk is good, but the disciple will grow and desire meat – not milk alone! What are you feeding on?**

***Gen 21:9-10 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing. Therefore she said to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac."***

The coming of this little boy Isaac into the home sure did produce a great deal of difficulty. We find that the boy who was the son of Hagar, Ishmael, was mocking. We begin now to see the nature and the character of Ishmael. Up to this point, he seems to be a pretty nice boy, but now, with the appearance of this other son in the family, Ishmael really shows his true colors.

This is an illustration, by the way, of the fact that a believer has two natures. Until you are converted, you have an old nature, and that old nature controls you. You do what you want to do. As the old secular song put it, you are "doing what comes naturally." What you do that comes naturally is not always the nicest sort of thing. But when you are born again, you receive a new nature. And when you receive a new nature, that is where the trouble always begins. Paul writes in the seventh chapter of Romans of the battle going on between the old nature and the new nature: "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil; which I would not, that I do" (Rom\_7:19). That is, the new nature doesn't want to, but the old nature wants to do it, and the old nature is in control. The time comes when you have to make a decision as to which nature you are going to live by. You must make a determination in this matter of yielding to the Lord. You either have to permit the Holy Spirit to move in your life, or else you have to go through life controlled by the flesh. There is no third alternative for the child of God. The son of the bondwoman must be put out. That is exactly what we have here in Genesis: the son of the bondwoman Hagar had to be put out. - McGee

***Gen 21:11 And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham's sight because of his son.***

After all, as far as the flesh is concerned, Ishmael is Abraham's son just as much as Isaac is. Isaac has just been born, and a little bitty baby doesn't know too much about him yet. But this boy Ishmael has been in the home for a good many years—he's a teen-ager now, and Abraham is attached to him. The thing is very grievous if Abraham is going to have to send him away. Again, I go back to that which we said before: God did not approve of the thing which Sarah and Abraham did, and God cannot accept Ishmael. This is sin. God just did not approve of it, and He doesn't intend to approve of it at all. It was a heartbreak to Abraham, but in order to relieve the embarrassment, he had to send that boy away. Poor Sarah just couldn't take it with this older boy around mocking her.

As a believer you cannot live in harmony with both natures. You are going to have to make a decision. James says, "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways" (Jas\_1:8). This explains the instability and the insecurity among many Christians today. They want to go with the world, and yet they want to go with the Lord. They are spiritual schizophrenics, trying to do both—and you cannot do that. The Greeks had a race in which they put two horses together, and the rider would put one foot on one horse and the other foot on the other horse, and the race would start. Well, it was a great race as long as the horses were together. You and I have two natures—one is a black horse, and the other is a white horse. It would be great if they would go together, but they just will not

## Genesis 21 – Isaac the son of promise, The Birth of Isaac, and *Hagar and Ishmael cast out*

work together. The white horse goes one way and the black horse another way. When they do this, you and I have to make up our minds which one we are going with—whether we are going to live by the old nature or the new nature. This is why we are told to yield ourselves: “yield yourselves unto God ... and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom\_6:13). Paul goes on to say that what the law could not do through the weakness of the flesh, the Spirit of God can now accomplish (see Rom\_8:3-4). The law tried to control man's old nature and failed. Now the Spirit of God, empowering the new nature, can accomplish what the law could never do.

The character of Ishmael, the son of Hagar, begins to be revealed. This is the nature that we find manifested later on in that nation, a nation that is antagonistic and whose hand is against his brother. This has been the picture of him down through the centuries.

In the birth of Isaac, as I have already suggested, we have a foreshadowing of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. God did not suddenly spring the virgin birth on mankind. He had prepared us by several miraculous births before this, including the birth of John the Baptist, the birth even of Samson, and here the birth of Isaac. I would like to call your attention to the remarkable comparison between the births of Isaac and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(1) The birth of Isaac and the birth of Christ had both been promised. When God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees twenty-five years earlier, God had said to him, “I am going to give a son to you and Sarah.” Now twenty-five years have gone by, and God has made good His promise. God also said to the nation Israel, “A virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son.” When the day came that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, it was a fulfillment of prophecy. Both births had been promised.

(2) With both births there was a long interval between the promise and the fulfillment. Actually, there were about twenty-five years from the time God promised it until the birth of Isaac. With the birth of Christ, you could go back many generations. For example, God had promised that there would come One in David's line—and that was a thousand years before Christ was born. This is quite a remarkable parallel here.

(3) The announcements of the births seemed incredulous and impossible to Sarah and to Mary. You will recall that the servants of the Lord visited Abraham as they were on the way to Sodom, and they announced the birth of Isaac. It just seemed impossible. Sarah laughed and said, “This thing just can't be. It is beyond belief.” And, after all, who was the first one to raise a question about the virgin birth? It was Mary herself. When the angel made the announcement, she said, “... How shall this be, seeing I now not a man?” (Luk\_1:34).

(4) Both Isaac and Jesus were named before their births. Abraham and Sarah were told that they were going to have a son and that they were going to name him Isaac. And with the birth of the Lord Jesus, we find that He was also named beforehand. The angel said to Joseph, “... thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Mat\_1:21).

(5) Both births occurred at God's appointed time. Verse 2 of this chapter says that at the set time which God had spoken to them of, Sarah brought forth Isaac. And regarding the birth of Jesus, we note that Paul says, “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Gal\_4:4).

(6) Both births were miraculous. The birth of Isaac was a miraculous birth, and, certainly, the birth of the Lord Jesus was—no man had any part in that.



## Genesis 21 – Isaac the son of promise, The Birth of Isaac, and *Hagar and Ishmael cast out*

(7) Both sons were a particular joy of their fathers. We read that “Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac,” meaning laughter. This was the name he gave his son because back at the time when God made the announcement, he laughed because of his sheer joy in it all. Referring to the Lord Jesus, we read that the Father spoke out of heaven and said, “... This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Mat\_3:17). Both sons were a joy.

(8) Both sons were obedient to their fathers, even unto death. In chapter 22 we are going to see that this boy Isaac was offered up by his father. He was not a small boy of eight or nine years. Isaac just happened to be about thirty–three years old when this took place, and he was obedient to his father even unto death. That was true of Isaac, and that was certainly true of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a marvelous picture of the birth and life of Christ in the birth and life of Isaac.

(9) Finally, the miraculous birth of Isaac is a picture of the resurrection of Christ. We have already noted Paul's words that Abraham “considered not his own body now dead ... neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb” (Rom\_4:19). Out of death came life—that's resurrection, you see. After Paul emphasizes this, he goes on to say of the Lord Jesus, “Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Rom\_4:25). We have in Isaac quite a remarkable picture of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now we find how God graciously deals with Abraham and also with Hagar and her son Ishmael. - McGee

***Gen 21:12-13 But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called. Yet I will also make a nation of the son of the bondwoman, because he is your seed."***

God makes it clear to Abraham that He is not going to accept Ishmael as the son He had promised. God had said, “Of thy seed, I will make nations to come from you,” and therefore He now says that a great nation will come from this boy Ishmael also. - McGee

***Gen 21:14-16 So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water; and putting it on her shoulder, he gave it and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba. And the water in the skin was used up, and she placed the boy under one of the shrubs. Then she went and sat down across from him at a distance of about a bowshot; for she said to herself, "Let me not see the death of the boy." So she sat opposite him, and lifted her voice and wept.***

When Hagar and the boy almost perished from thirst in the desert south of Canaan, God caused them to find a well, and they were spared. Ishmael was in his teens at this time; therefore, verse 15 probably means that Hagar pushed him under one of the shrubs in his weakness. - Believers Bible Commentary

***Gen 21:17-21 And God heard the voice of the lad. Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, "What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a great nation." Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink. So God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. He dwelt in the Wilderness of Paran; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.***

Ishmael's name, "God hears," is found twice in verse 17—“God heard” and “God has heard.” Children and young people should be encouraged to pray. God hears and answers! – Believers Bible Commentary

**Why does Hagar not hear God? What is keeping you from hearing God?**

## Genesis 22 – The sacrifice of Isaac – The Lord Provides

### *The Sacrifice of Isaac*

***Gen 22:1 Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."***

The word tempt is a little bit too strong; actually, the word means “test.” James makes it very clear in his epistle that God never tempts anyone with evil. God tempts folks in the sense that He tests their faith. God did test Abraham, and He asked him to do something very strange. - McGee

***Gen 22:2 Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."***

Right after this chapter, we are told that Sarah was 127 years old when she died (see Gen\_23:1). When you put that down with this chapter, you find that this boy Isaac was not just a little lad. Sarah was 90 years old when Isaac was born and 127 when she died. That means that 37 years elapsed here. Since he is called a “lad” in this chapter, you would not gather that he actually was in his thirties—probably around 30 or 33 years of age.

“Take now thy son [notice how this plays upon the heartstrings of Abraham and of God Himself], thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest.” “Take now thy son”—the Lord Jesus has taken the position of the Son in the Trinity. “Thy son, thine only son”—the Lord Jesus is said to be the only begotten Son. “Thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest”—the Lord Jesus said, “The Father loves Me.”

“And get thee into the land of Moriah.” It is the belief of a great many that Moriah—that is, this particular part—is the place where the temple was built centuries later and also the place that the Lord Jesus was sacrificed—right outside the city walls. When I was in Jerusalem, I had the feeling that Golgotha and the temple area were not very far apart. They belong to the same ridge. A street has been cut through there, and the ridge has been breached, but it is the same ridge, and it is called Moriah. Let's not say that the Lord Jesus died in the exact spot—we don't know—but certainly He died on the same ridge, the same mountain, on which Abraham offered Isaac.

“And offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.” The burnt offering was the offering up until the time of Mosaic law; then a sin offering and a trespass offering were given. Here the burnt offering speaks of the person of Christ, who He is. This is an offer of a human sacrifice, and, frankly, it raises this moral question: Isn't human sacrifice wrong? Yes, it is morally wrong. Had you met Abraham on that day when he was on his way with Isaac, you might have asked him, “Where are you going, Abraham?” He would have replied, “To offer Isaac as a sacrifice.” And you would have then asked, “Don't you know that that is wrong?” Abraham would have said, “Yes, I've been taught that it was wrong. I know that the heathen nations around here offer human sacrifice—the Philistines offer to Molech—but I have been taught otherwise.” You would then question him further, “Then why are you doing it?” and he would explain, “All I know is that God has commanded it. I don't understand it. But I've been walking with Him now for over fifty years. He has never failed me, nor has He asked me to do anything that did not prove to be the best thing. I don't understand this, but I believe that if I go all the way with Him that God will raise Isaac from the dead. I believe that He will do that.” – McGee

***Gen 22:3-4 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off.***

## Genesis 22 – The sacrifice of Isaac – The Lord Provides

Abraham takes Isaac with him, and he takes the wood for the burnt offering. It took Abraham three days to get there, but remember that it was on the third day that Abraham received Isaac alive, back from the dead, as it were. That is the way that Abraham looked at it: Isaac was raised up to him the third day. What a picture we have here. - McGee

***Gen 22:5 And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you."***

The transaction that is going to take place is between the father and the son, between Abraham and Isaac. And actually, God shut man out at the cross. At the time of the darkness at high noon, man was shut out. The night had come when no man could work, and during those last three hours, that cross became an altar on which the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world was offered. The transaction was between the Father and the Son on that cross. Man was outside and was not participating at all. The picture is the same here: it is Abraham and Isaac alone. - McGee

***Gen 22:6-8 So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together.***

"Abraham took the wood ... and laid it upon Isaac his son." Remember that Christ carried His own cross. The fire here speaks of judgment, and the knife speaks of the execution of judgment and of sacrifice.

Verse Gen\_22:13 tells us that shortly after this there was a ram that was caught in the thicket by his horns, and Abraham got that ram and offered it. Abraham says here that God will provide Himself a lamb. But there was no lamb there; it was a ram, and there is a distinction. The Lamb was not provided until centuries later when John the Baptist marked Him out and identified Him, saying, "... Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (Joh\_1:29). "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering"—it is very important to see that Abraham was speaking prophetically.

Abraham is now ready to offer this boy on the altar although he does not quite understand. - McGee

***Gen 22:9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood.***

Isaac is not just a little boy whom Abraham had to tie up. He is a grown man, and I believe that Isaac could have overcome Abraham if it had come to a physical encounter. But Isaac is doing this in obedience. The Lord Jesus went to the cross having said, "Not My will, but Thine be done." He went to the cross to fulfill the will of God. What a picture we have here! - McGee

***Gen 22:10 And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.***

At this point you and I might have said, "Abraham, are you going through with it? It looks now like God is going to permit you to." He would have said, "I sure am. I've been taught that it is wrong, and I don't understand, but I've also learned to obey God."

This is a real crisis in Abraham's life. God has brought this man through four very definite crises, each of which was a real exercise of his soul, a real strain upon his heart. First of all, he was called to leave all of his relatives in

## Genesis 22 – The sacrifice of Isaac – The Lord Provides

Ur of the Chaldees. He was just to leave the whole group. That was a real test for Abraham. He didn't do it very well at the beginning, but, nevertheless, the break finally came. Then there was the test that came with Lot, his nephew. Abraham loved Lot—he wouldn't have been carrying Lot around with him if he hadn't. But the time came when they had to separate, and Lot went down to Sodom. Then there was the test with this boy of his, the son of Hagar, Ishmael. Abraham just cried out to God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before Thee!" He loved that boy; he hated to be separated from him. Now Abraham comes to this supreme test, the fourth great crisis in his life: he is asked to give up Isaac. Abraham does not quite understand all the details for the very simple reason that God has told him, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." Abraham believed God would raise Isaac from the dead (see Heb\_11:19), but as far as Abraham is concerned, he is willing to go through with the sacrifice. – McGee

Perhaps no scene in the Bible except Calvary itself is more poignant than this one, and none gives a clearer foreshadowing of the death of God's only, well-beloved Son on the cross. The supreme test of Abraham's faith came when God ordered him to offer up Isaac as a burnt offering in the land of Moriah. Actually God had no intention of allowing Abraham to go through with it; He has always been opposed to human sacrifice. Moriah is the mountain range where Jerusalem is situated (2Ch\_3:1) and also where Calvary stood. God's words, "your only son Isaac, whom you love," must have pierced Abraham's heart like ever-deepening wounds. Isaac was Abraham's only son in the sense that he was the only son of promise—the unique son, the son of miraculous birth.

The first occurrence of a word in the Bible often sets the pattern for its usage throughout Scripture. Love (v. 2) and "worship" (v. 5) are first found here. Abraham's love for his son is a faint picture of God's love for the Lord Jesus. The sacrifice of Isaac was a picture of the greatest act of worship—the Savior's self-sacrifice to accomplish the will of God. – Believers Bible Commentary

***Gen 22:11-12 But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."***

"Abraham, Abraham" is the first of ten name duplications found in the Bible. Seven are spoken by God to man (Gen\_22:11; Gen\_46:2; Exo\_3:4; 1Sa\_3:10; Luk\_10:41; Luk\_22:31; Act\_9:4). The other three are Mat\_7:21-22; Mat\_23:37; Mar\_15:34. They introduce matters of special importance. The Angel of the LORD (v. 11) was God (v. 12). – Believers Bible Commentary

Now God knows that Abraham fears Him. How does He know? By his actions, by his works; previously it was by his faith. God sees your heart—He knows whether you are genuine or not—but your neighbors and your friends do not know. They can only know by your works. That is the reason James could say that "faith without works is dead." Faith has to produce something.

God tested Abraham. I believe that any person whom God calls, any person whom God saves, any person whom God uses is going to be tested. God tested Abraham, and God tests those who are His own today. He tests you and me, and the tests are given to us to strengthen our faith, to establish us, and to make us serviceable for Him. This man Abraham is now given the supreme test, and God will not have to ask anything of him after this. – McGee

***Gen 22:13 Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.***

## Genesis 22 – The sacrifice of Isaac – The Lord Provides

All the way from the Garden of Eden down to the cross of Christ, the substitution was this little animal that pointed to His coming—and God would not permit human sacrifice. But when His Son came into the world, His Son went to the cross and died: “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Rom\_8:32). That cross became an altar on which the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world was offered. It is very important to see that. - McGee

***Gen 22:14 And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided."***

Abraham now names this place which a great many people believe is where Solomon's temple was built. Golgotha, the place of a skull, is right there on that same ridge where the temple stood. There Abraham offered his son, and it was there that the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified. This is a glorious, wonderful thing to see. Abraham calls the name of this place Jehovah-jireh, meaning Jehovah will provide. Here is where God intervened in his behalf.

***Gen 22:15-19 Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son— blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.***

The LORD swore by Himself because He couldn't swear by anyone greater (Heb\_6:13). God's promise here, confirmed by His oath, includes the blessing of the Gentile nations through Christ (see Gal\_3:16). In verse 17c God adds to the already vast blessing promised: Abraham's seed would possess the gate of his enemies. This means that his descendants would "occupy the place of authority over those who would oppose them. The capture of the city gate meant the fall of the city itself." – The Believers Bible Commentary

***Gen 22:20-24 Now it came to pass after these things that it was told Abraham, saying, "Indeed Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor: Huz his firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram, Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel." And Bethuel begot Rebekah. These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother. His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah, Gaham, Thahash, and Maachah.***

Abraham's brother Nahor had twelve sons, whereas Abraham had only two—Ishmael and Isaac. How this must have tested Abraham's faith concerning God's promise of descendants as the stars of the sky! It may have prompted him to send Eliezer in search of a wife for Isaac (chap. 24). Notice the name Rebekah in Gen\_22:23. – Believers Bible Commentary

*A break in the home circle*

*Perhaps we who lead briefer and, at the same time, more stirring and varied lives, with rapid change and a multitude of interests to divide attention, cannot fully realize how the members of such a home circle as Abraham’s grew into each other, or how one out of such a circle would be missed. Through long unbroken periods they lived constantly together, and were everything to one another. Of society, except that of their own slaves, there was little or none. The round of easy occupations which made up their shepherd life left ample leisure for domestic converse. It was inevitable that their lives should grow together as if welded into one. Husband and wife, parent and child, must have moulded one another’s character to an extent hardly possible in other states of society. Stronger natures impressed themselves upon feebler ones. The older generation made that which succeeded it. The experiences and the teaching of the aged father created an unwritten family code, which ruled alike his son and his grandson. Each memorable incident in the family annals crystallized itself, no doubt, through constant repetition, and passed down with hardly any change of form as part of the family tradition. From such a close circle of relations the disappearance of one loved and familiar face would leave a blank never to be filled and scarcely ever to be forgotten. This must have been especially the case when death made its first breach in the family, and, at the ripe age of a hundred and twenty-seven years, Sarah, princess, wife, and mother, fell asleep. Her death made Abraham a lonely man. It broke the final link to his ancestral home. It robbed him of the only one who cherished with him a common memory of his father’s house and the happy days of youth. She alone was left of those who, sixty-two years before, had shared his venturous emigration from Haran. He was her senior by ten years; and her removal must have come to him like a warning that before him likewise there lay another emigration, more venturous than the last—one final journey into a land still farther off. (J. O. Dykes, D. D.)*

***Sarah's Death and Burial***

***Gen 23:1-2 Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; these were the years of the life of Sarah. So Sarah died in Kirjath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.***

Notice that Sarah's age is given as 127 years old. She was 90 when Isaac was born, which means that at the time of her death (which took place after the offering of Isaac by several years, I suppose), Isaac was 37 years old.

We are told that Sarah died in Kirjath–arba, which is Hebron. Abraham even had to buy a cave in which to bury his dead in the very land that God had given to him. Why didn't he take Sarah somewhere else to bury her? It is because the hope they have of the future is in that land. As we move on down in this chapter, we will see that although there are the arrangements for a funeral, which is not very exciting or interesting and is perhaps even a little morbid to some, it is very important to see a great truth here. – McGee

Died at Hebron = alliance. The alliance with Abraham dissolved, and her eternal alliance with Abraham’s God, and one who was before Abraham Joh\_8:58), now inaugurated. Happy are those who compose the bride—the Lamb’s wife; the day of death is with them the day of their

espousals. The alliances of earth, abandoned for a better and more lasting one. – Biblical Illustrator

**Gen 23:3-4** *Then Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying, "I am a foreigner and a visitor among you. Give me property for a burial place among you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight."*

Abraham calls himself a stranger and a sojourner even in the Promised Land which God had promised to give to him.

*THE BURIAL. "That I may bury my dead out of my sight." The object that once most pleased the eye must be put "out of sight," as a loathsome thing. Life, a fountain of beauty and attractiveness. How glorious that world must be where they die no more, and are never put out of sight. Those who die in the Lord, and are put out of sight, will presently be in sight for ever. The aged man before the grave of his wife. The parting is not for long. A few more steps, and he will be at home with his princess for ever. But with all this Christian hope, the loss of dear friends and the Sunderings of long companionships is painful. At such times may we be able to say, "Thy will be done." Learn:*

- 1. The great and good and best loved must die.*
- 2. The earthly dissolution may be the beginning of our eternal union.*
- 3. It is little the world can furnish us besides a place to lie down in at the end of the journey.*
- 4. Happy are those who, being saved themselves, have a good hope of meeting those who are "not lost, but gone before." (J. C. Gray.) – Biblical Illustrator*

**Gen 23:5-6** *And the sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him, "Hear us, my lord: You are a mighty prince among us; bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places. None of us will withhold from you his burial place, that you may bury your dead."*

This is a very generous offer made by the children of Heth who live in this land. They probably said to Abraham, "Just pick your burying spot in any of our sepulchers—that's it. We'd be delighted to have you." Abraham had made a tremendous impression. They call him "a mighty prince." This man's influence counted for something. – McGee

#### ***A burying-place***

*Constantine the Great, in order to reclaim a very worldly man, marked out, with a lance, a piece of ground the size of a human body, and then said, "If you could increase your possessions till you acquired the whole world, in a short time such a spot as this will be all you will have." – Biblical Illustrator*

***Gen 23:7-9 Then Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, the sons of Heth. And he spoke with them, saying, "If it is your wish that I bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and meet with Ephron the son of Zohar for me, that he may give me the cave of Machpelah which he has, which is at the end of his field. Let him give it to me at the full price, as property for a burial place among you."***

The cave of Machpelah was the place Abraham chose, but he wanted to buy it; he wanted nothing given to him. In other words, until God gives him that land, he will buy what he needs and wants. So now he actually buys a burying place.

Again, I ask the question: Why didn't Abraham take Sarah somewhere else to bury her? He buried her here because it is the Promised Land, and the hope of the future is here. As you go through the Bible, you will find that there are two great hopes and two great purposes which God has. He has an earthly purpose, and He has a heavenly purpose. He has an earthly purpose; that is, this earth on which you and I live is going into eternity. It is going to be traded in on a new model. There will be a new heaven and a new earth. But there will be an earth, and it will be inhabited throughout eternity. This is the promise that God gave to Abraham and to those after him. God is not going to put this earth on which you and I live in the garbage can after He gets through with the program which He is carrying out today; nor is it going to be disposed of in a wrecking yard for old and battered cars. God is not going to get rid of it. He intends to trade it in on a new model. The new earth will go into eternity, and there will be people to inhabit it. This was the hope of Abraham. Abraham wanted to be buried in that land so that, when the resurrection came, he and Sarah would be raised in that land. He never knew how many were coming after him, but there are going to be literally millions raised from the dead. This is their hope. It is an earthly hope, and it will be realized.

In the Upper Room, our Lord said this to His disciples who were schooled in the Old Testament and who had the Old Testament hope: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (Joh\_14:1-3). He is speaking of the New Jerusalem which He is preparing today and which is the place to which the church will go. The New Jerusalem will be the eternal abode of the church. This teaching was brand-new to the disciples, and I am afraid that it is brand-new to a great many Christians. God never told Abraham that He would take him away from this earth to heaven. Rather, He kept telling him, "I am going to give you this land." Abraham believed God, and that was the reason that he wanted Sarah buried in that land. It became the place for him to bury his dead. He intended to be buried there, and he is buried there.

The exact location of Abraham's burying place is at Hebron, about twenty miles south of Jerusalem. When we made a trip there, we visited the Moslem mosque which is built over that spot. Frankly, on our entire trip through that land, I never felt uncomfortable or even a little afraid, except at Hebron. We had been warned to be very careful in Hebron, that there was a great deal of antagonism toward tourists and, actually, toward everyone who did not belong there. Of course, they allowed us to visit the mosque because it meant tourist dollars. After we went in, we looked through a little hole in the floor and down into the cave where Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah are all supposed to be buried. (Rachel is buried at Bethlehem.) These folk are all buried in Israel because of their hope of being raised from the dead in that land. It is an earthly hope. Our hope as New Testament believers is a



heavenly hope. I trust that that is clear to you so that you can understand why this burial was so important to Abraham at this particular time.

Abraham now makes a deal to buy the cave. Notice the transaction: - McGee

***Gen 23:10-12 Now Ephron dwelt among the sons of Heth; and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the presence of the sons of Heth, all who entered at the gate of his city, saying, "No, my lord, hear me: I give you the field and the cave that is in it; I give it to you in the presence of the sons of my people. I give it to you. Bury your dead!" Then Abraham bowed himself down before the people of the land;***

Notice Abraham and the generosity of these people and of this man Ephron in particular. They certainly were polite in that day. We have the impression that these were cavemen who carried clubs around ready to club each other. If Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the other Old Testament saints—even the men who are mentioned in this chapter—were in Los Angeles today and could go back and report to their folk, I think they would say, “Do you know that our offspring are a bunch of cavemen? They're highly uncivilized! They are rude and crude and a disgrace.” I think they would say that of us, but we have the advantage that we can talk about them. It is interesting to note how polite they are. “And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land.” - McGee

***Gen 23:13-16 and he spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, "If you will give it, please hear me. I will give you money for the field; take it from me and I will bury my dead there." And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, "My lord, listen to me; the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver. What is that between you and me? So bury your dead." And Abraham listened to Ephron; and Abraham weighed out the silver for Ephron which he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, currency of the merchants.***

Abraham bargained with the Hittite inhabitants of Hebron for the purchase of the cave of Machpelah as a burial place—his only purchase of real estate during his long life of pilgrimage. The passage gives a priceless description of the bargaining that is so typical in Eastern lands. At first, the Hittites suggested that Abraham choose any one of their burial places. With overflowing courtesy, Abraham refused and insisted on paying full price for a cave owned by Ephron. At first Ephron offered not just the cave but the entire field as an outright gift, but Abraham understood that this was just a polite gesture. The owner really had no intention of giving it away. When Abraham countered by insisting on his desire to purchase it, Ephron suggested a price of four hundred shekels of silver, pretending that this was a great bargain. Actually it was an extortionate price, and ordinarily the buyer would have continued to haggle. So, it was a surprise to everyone when Abraham agreed to Ephron's first asking price. Abraham didn't want to be indebted to an unbeliever, and neither should we. – Believers Bible Commentary

That is, Abraham paid for the field and cave in the legal tender of that day.

### **What does the US Constitution say about money?**

*From Article I, Section 8, there is “Congress shall have Power...to coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin.” And from Section 10, “no state...shall make any Thing but gold and silver Coin a Tender in Payment of Debts.”*

***Gen 23:17-20 So the field of Ephron which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field and the cave which was in it, and all the trees that were in the field, which were within all the surrounding borders, were deeded to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city. And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. So the field and the cave that is in it were deeded to Abraham by the sons of Heth as property for a burial place.***

Apparently, this place is where the mosque is built at Hebron today. It is considered either the second or third most important mosque in the world of Islam. They have many mosques in Cairo and other places, and the ones I have seen are absolutely beautiful. The most important one, of course, would be at Mecca. I am not sure whether the one at Hebron or the one at Jerusalem would be number two, but the other would then be number three. You can see how important this is, because the Arabs all trace their lineage back to Abraham.

## II. THE GRAVE. (Biblical Illustrator)

1. A cave. We are of the earth, earthy. Dust, and must return to dust.

2. Purchased. Abraham selected one that would receive his own remains. (“The family meeting-place” is an epitaph at Pere la Chaise.) Men sometimes think more of their sepulchres than of death; and make greater preparation for the temporary repose of the body than the eternal rest of the soul. It was all that Abraham purchased of the promised land. The country was given to the living. The promised land of heaven for the living is a free gift, and there will be no bargaining for graves there. Man sells a place for the dead, God gives a home for the living.

## Would you be willing to move 400 miles and marry sight unseen?

Genesis 24 – Isaac and Rebekah

Isaac had 3 tremendous events in his life – miraculous birth, Sacrifice & his wife. However, in one generation, Isaac had already slipped digging wells before alters.

***24:1 Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.***

Imagine what it would be like to be like Abraham and be blessed in all things.

***24:2-4 So Abraham said to the oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had, "Please, put your hand under my thigh, and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; but you shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac."***

Putting your hand under the thigh was taking an oath not to marry a Canaanite. **Do we take the decision on who to marry as serious as Abraham? Will you trust in the Lord for him to bring a daughter or son of the King to marry your child? When you were looking for a spouse was this your first criteria in a mate? Are you praying for your children's spouse today?**

***24:5-6 And the servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I take your son back to the land from which you came?" But Abraham said to him, "Beware that you do not take my son back there."***

**Why did Abraham not want to send his son to that land he left?**

***24:7-9 The LORD God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my family, and who spoke to me and swore to me, saying, 'To your descendants I give this land,' He will send His angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. And if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be released from this oath; only do not take my son back there." So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter.***

True Faith is not blind faith. Abraham is the father of the faith but he rests on the words on God not on empty promises. He knows God is in control but He also knows he cannot test or tell God what to do. He leaves room for God's sovereign decision. Beware of those that tell you your faith was not strong enough that's why God did not answer your prayer. **Trust in His words and Let God be God! Be still and know He is God. Have faith that God cannot work it out another way.**

***24:10 Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and departed, for all his master's goods were in his hand. And he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor.***

Notice the servant has charge of all that the Abraham has.

**Do you trust God and the Holy Spirit with all you have?**

**24:11 – 12** *And he made his camels kneel down outside the city by a well of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw water. Then he said, "O LORD God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham.*

He follows etiquette. He was not supposed to water himself and his camels before those who own the well, so He patiently waits and prays for the Father to lead him. **Did you do that when you selected a bride?**

**24:13 -14** *Behold, here I stand by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. Now let it be that the young woman to whom I say, 'Please let down your pitcher that I may drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink'—let her be the one You have appointed for Your servant Isaac. And by this I will know that You have shown kindness to my master."*

The servant puts Himself where the ladies are at the time they are out and chooses a criteria that is quite unlikely to pick. Knowing that his camels need to be watered and require up to 300 gallons, asking the Lord to provide a lady willing to do that is a high bar. Israel wells are excavated in the limestone, with steps descending to them meaning this well very likely required her to do the stairs along the way as well for good measure.

Recap: He was sent by the Master, went to where the women were, waited patiently, prayed, and set a high standard based on Love (Philia).

**Are you praying for rain, but not preparing the fields? Do you assume He is not coming through and settle for your best instead of God's best? This has far reaching application beyond just marriage.**

**24:15 -20** *And it happened, before he had finished speaking, that behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her pitcher on her shoulder. Now the young woman was very beautiful to behold, a virgin; no man had known her. And she went down to the well, filled her pitcher, and came up. And the servant ran to meet her and said, "Please let me drink a little water from your pitcher." So she said, "Drink, my lord." Then she quickly let her pitcher down to her hand, and gave him a drink. And when she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking." Then she quickly emptied her pitcher into the trough, ran back to the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.*

How pretty was she if the bible says she was beautiful? Servant ran to meet her. God is not against beauty it just has to be more than skin deep.

**24:21 -25** *And the man, wondering at her, remained silent so as to know whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not. So it was, when the camels had finished drinking, that the man took a golden nose ring weighing half a shekel, and two bracelets for her wrists weighing ten shekels of gold, and said, "Whose daughter are you? Tell me, please, is there room in your father's house for us to lodge?" So she said to him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel, Milcah's son, whom she bore to Nahor." Moreover she said to him, "We have both straw and feed enough, and room to lodge."*

The servant waits to see if this is God's leading. Nahor is Abraham's brother. Being in the way, the Lord led him. If you have a willing heart, the Lord will lead you. 10 Shekels = 4 ounces of Gold. As bride she is to be adorned, and like us she gets adorned from the Father based on her works. **How about you? Do you want your bling here or in Heaven?**

**24:26-27 Then the man bowed down his head and worshiped the LORD. And he said, "Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken His mercy and His truth toward my master. As for me, being on the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren."**

He says thanks and stops to praise the Lord, and recognizes it is the Lord.

**Consider the servant's response to meeting Rebekah (vv 26-27). What do his words and actions reveal about the character of this man whom Abraham sent to find a wife for Isaac?**

**24:28 So the young woman ran and told her mother's household these things.**

You know this is a real story, but she gets the bling and runs to Mom's house to tell her everything! However, the brother, Laban see an opportunity and he has a different plan. She sees and imagines Prince Charming, but he is already thinking "Show me the Money!" **Does this happen to us as well?**

**24:29-33 Now Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban, and Laban ran out to the man by the well. So it came to pass, when he saw the nose ring, and the bracelets on his sister's wrists, and when he heard the words of his sister Rebekah, saying, "Thus the man spoke to me," that he went to the man. And there he stood by the camels at the well. And he said, "Come in, O blessed of the LORD! Why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house, and a place for the camels." Then the man came to the house. And he unloaded the camels, and provided straw and feed for the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. Food was set before him to eat, but he said, "I will not eat until I have told about my errand." And he said, "Speak on."**

Laban was all about the stuff. He ran when he saw all the camels and sure sign of wealth. When he saw the gold and the camels, big dollars signs went off in his head. Jacob will learn a few things from Laban later on.

See the sarcasm. "Oh Blessed of the Lord" coming from the guy with idols from many gods (Gen 31:19) and saying while he is calculating the dowry price....

The Servant had just finished a journey over four hundred miles by camel caravan. Certainly, he would want to eat and rest. How do you explain his urgency to get to the matter at hand (vv. 28-33)?

When and how did you realize the importance of finding God's choice in marriage?

**Gen 24:34 So he said, "I am Abraham's servant. The LORD has blessed my master greatly, and he has become great; and He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys. And Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master when she was old; and to him he has given all that he has. Now my master made me swear, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell; but you shall go to my father's house and to my family, and take a wife for my son.' And I said to my master, 'Perhaps the woman will not follow me.' But he said to me, 'The LORD, before whom I walk, will send His angel with you and prosper your way; and you shall take a wife for my son from my family and from my father's house. You will be clear from this oath when you arrive among my family; for if they will not give her to you, then you will be released from my oath.'**

**Gen 24:42-49 "And this day I came to the well and said, 'O LORD God of my master Abraham, if You will now prosper the way in which I go, behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass that when the virgin comes out to draw water, and I say to her, "Please give me a little water from your pitcher to**

*drink," and she says to me, "Drink, and I will draw for your camels also,"—let her be the woman whom the LORD has appointed for my master's son.' "But before I had finished speaking in my heart, there was Rebekah, coming out with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down to the well and drew water. And I said to her, 'Please let me drink.' And she made haste and let her pitcher down from her shoulder, and said, 'Drink, and I will give your camels a drink also.' So I drank, and she gave the camels a drink also. Then I asked her, and said, 'Whose daughter are you?' And she said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him.' So, I put the nose ring on her nose and the bracelets on her wrists. And I bowed my head and worshiped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, who had led me in the way of truth to take the daughter of my master's brother for his son. Now if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me. And if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left."*

Rebekah had met the servant and his caravan at the well; she had accepted the costly jewelry from him (v.22), no doubt with an idea of what it meant; but she had not heard his story. Imagine her now as she hears him explain his mission (vv.34-49). **What would be her apprehensions? What about her hopes?**

Abraham was the first in his family to believe in the Lord, and he left his father's household shortly afterward (Gen 12:1-4). Rebekah may not have known the Lord. Her brother Laban possessed images that were "household gods" (Gen 31:19). **As Rebekah listened to the servant's story, what would she learn about the Lord? As you tell your stories, can others who may not have a personal relationship with the Lord (like Rebekah) get a glimpse of the Lord?**

*Gen 24:50-61 Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, "The thing comes from the LORD; we cannot speak to you either bad or good. Here is Rebekah before you; take her and go, and let her be your master's son's wife, as the LORD has spoken." And it came to pass, when Abraham's servant heard their words, that he worshiped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth. Then the servant brought out jewelry of silver, jewelry of gold, and clothing, and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother. And he and the men who were with him ate and drank and stayed all night. Then they arose in the morning, and he said, "Send me away to my master." But her brother and her mother said, "Let the young woman stay with us a few days, at least ten; after that she may go." And he said to them, "Do not hinder me, since the LORD has prospered my way; send me away so that I may go to my master." So they said, "We will call the young woman and ask her personally." Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go." So they sent away Rebekah their sister and her nurse, and Abraham's servant and his men. And they blessed Rebekah and said to her: "Our sister, may you become The mother of thousands of ten thousands; And may your descendants possess The gates of those who hate them." Then Rebekah and her maids arose, and they rode on the camels and followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah and departed.*

**What role does Rebekah's own willingness play in the story? (vv.50-61)**

When Rebekah set out to marry Isaac, she was accompanied by her servants and her nurse who had taken care of her in childhood (vv.59-61). **When we marry, we still maintain ties to our earlier lives. How is marriage affected by a partner's reaction to those ties? How could some of these ties caused conflict their relationship? How do this play out in our relationships today?**

*Gen 24:62-67 Now Isaac came from the way of Beer Lahai Roi, for he dwelt in the South. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening; and he lifted his eyes and looked, and there, the camels were*

*coming. Then Rebekah lifted her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from her camel; for she had said to the servant, "Who is this man walking in the field to meet us?" The servant said, "It is my master." So she took a veil and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent; and he took Rebekah and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.*

Isaac does not appear in the story until verse 62. **From verses 62-67, what do discern about what was going through Isaac's heart all this time?**

*If you are married what difference will it make in your marriage if you have complete confidence that the Lord has brought the two of you together? If you are single, how can you more fully submit your future to the will and wisdom of God?*

*How will you honor God's wisdom and sovereignty in the choice of marriage partners in your marriage or singleness? In other marriages?*

Case Study for Marriage – Spiritually and Physically

Father	Son	Holy Spirit	Church
Abraham	Isaac	Servant	Rebekah
God	Jesus	Helper (Holy Spirit)	Bride

24:34-38

Paraphrased it is our story.

The servant sent by the Father speaks of Father's Glory, and the many mansions (Heaven), He tells of the miraculous birth of a Son. The Son is given all that the Father has. Then He says the servant was sent to find a wife for the son from his father's house (Called out / believers).

The servant does not live by bread alone and will not be deterred or delayed from his mission. Are we that way? I am afraid I am so easily distracted, delayed and drawn away from my mission daily.

24:39-46 Recap. Followed by asking for her hand in marriage.

24:53 Once she is released to Jesus. The Spirit comes with gifts. Believers receive the gifts – spiritual gifts.

24:54-57 Early in the morning the Spirit desires for her to go the Son. Yet her former life pulls back wanting her to stay and delay being with the Lord, but ultimately it is a personal decision. Rebekah has to decide for herself to say or go. How many times does the world pull us back as we start on the path? Did this happen in your marriages where friends or the world try to pull you back?

24:58 Just picture this beautiful young girl hearing the Servant tell of the father and the Son, and she quietly takes it all in. Then the question finally comes to her, and she says "I will go". **How about you? Do you hesitate? Do you put conditions? Do you ask but what does he look like?** Not her, she simply trusted in the Holy Spirit and say I will go!

24:59-61 She is blessed and sent off which is now fulfilled prophecy. But before she can meet the Son she has a long rough camel ride in the desert.

**Now, how many of ya'll felt like you were on a long camel ride before you met your wife?**

24:62-63 The camels were coming! This is a picture of the dead in Christ who will see Jesus coming to meet in the clouds. Here physically you hear the song playing "here comes the bride" set to a trumpet of course.

24:64-67 the church will be veiled in a robe of righteousness after our ride through the desert. Jesus loves the Church, and He is comforted with everyone who says, I will go.

### Camels

Camel milk is the basic food of the Somali people, and many nomad tribes of the desert depend on the camels, like the Tuaregs of Sahara and Arab Bedouins, for transporting, milk, meat, wool (1.5 kg from a dromedary, 4.5 kg from a Bactrian camel) and leather. In , the Bactrian Camels offer the hair from which the felt, the material for traditional yurt tents, is made.

Camel meat is taboo for the Non-Muslim populations of the Middle East and North Africa: Jews, Egyptian Coptic (Christians), Zoroastrians (Iran), Mandaeans (Iraq, Iran), Neo-Assyrians (Syria, Iraq, Turkey), Ethiopians (Christians), while for Muslims in Egypt and other countries of Near East, basturma (salty camel meat) is considered a delicacy.

In many areas, camels were used for paying the bride's price.

Camels are gregarious and well adapted to their environment, the desert. They can carry heavy cargoes, stand sand storms and large temperature differences. Camels are called the "desert ships", and they can swim when they encounter water. The north Borollos has a depth varying between 20 cm and 2 m (0.6 to 6 ft). It cannot be crossed by boat or vehicles, and only camels can be used in this case.

A camel can resist 17 days without drinking under a scorching heat. It was wrongly believed its resistance resided in the water kept in the hump or in a stomach pouch. If it doesn't drinking anything for 17 days, a camel can lose a third of its weight, without being affected. But when it catches the opportunity, it can drink 104 liters of water at once (the Bactrian Camel, which is larger, can drink up to 120 liters), in 7-8 minutes! But three days later, there is no sign of water in its stomach or hump.

To resist the lack of water, the camels have several means of adjusting to the situation. Their body temperature varies depending on the environment: in the cooler morning is of 34°C, whereas during the hot afternoon it goes up to 40-41°C. The kidneys' function is regulated depending on the water availability: they produce 7 liters of urine when water is abundant, and 500 g when it does not drink for days. When thirsty, transpiration is reduced towards zero.

Camel's feces are dry (and used for fueling fire when drought) compared to other ruminants (just 40-60 % water): a dromedary loses 2.5 kg liters of water daily through feces while a cattle 20-40 liters! Camel feces are consumed by insects and gerbils (desert rats) (which recover this way a part of the water).



**Gen 25:1-5 Abraham again took a wife, and her name was Keturah. And she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. Gen 25:3 Jokshan begot Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim. And the sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abidah, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah. And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac.**

Now he has quite a family. He had his biggest family after the death of Sarah. Somebody will raise the question, “I thought that at the time of the birth of Isaac Abraham was dead as far as his capability of bringing a child into the world.” Granted, he was. But when God does something, He really does it. This is the reason I believe that anything God does bears His signature. Right here we see that this man Abraham was not only able to bring Isaac into the world, but he now brings in this great family of children.

The interesting thing that we have before us here is the mention of Medan and Midian. The other boys will have nations come from them also, but I can't identify them. I'm not interested in them because they do not cross our pathway in Scripture, but Midian does. We will find later that Moses will go down into the land of Midian and take a wife from there. Remember that the Midianites are in the line of Abraham and so are the Medanites. So we find here the fact that there are other sons of Abraham, but the Lord has said it is through Isaac that Abraham's seed is called—not through any of these other sons. It is not through Ishmael, nor through Midian, nor Medan. All of these were nomads of the desert. – MCGee

**Gen 25:6-10 But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had; and while he was still living he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east. This is the sum of the years of Abraham's life which he lived: one hundred and seventy-five years. Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people. And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, the field which Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth. There Abraham was buried, and Sarah his wife.**

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**Keturah** is called Abraham's concubine. Verse 6 seems to confirm this. Thus she was a *lesser wife*, one who did not enjoy the full privileges of a wife in the home. Once again God records marital irregularities that He never approved. – Believers Bible Commentary

Ishmael comes for the funeral because, after all, Abraham is his father. So Isaac and Ishmael together bury Abraham. Then Isaac goes down to live at the place where he first met Rebekah.- McGee

Genesis 25 - Jacob and Esau

**Gen 25:11-18** *And it came to pass, after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac. And Isaac dwelt at Beer Lahai Roi. Now this is the genealogy of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's maidservant, bore to Abraham. And these were the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: The firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadar, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These were the sons of Ishmael and these were their names, by their towns and their settlements, twelve princes according to their nations. These were the years of the life of Ishmael: one hundred and thirty-seven years; and he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people. (They dwelt from Havilah as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt as you go toward Assyria.) He died in the presence of all his brethren.*

Abraham breathed his last at one hundred and seventy-five years of age and became the second person to be buried in the cave at Hebron. The twelve sons of Ishmael listed in verses 12-16 fulfilled God's promise to Abraham: "He shall beget twelve princes" (Gen\_17:20). With the death of Ishmael, Isaac moves to center stage in the narrative. – Believers' Bible Commentary

In verses Gen\_25:12 to Gen\_25:18 we have the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham. The list of them is given here. I call to your attention again the fact that the Holy Spirit uses this method in the Book of Genesis. The rejected line is given first and then set aside and not mentioned anymore. Then the line that is leading to Christ is given and followed. So, it is after the line of Ishmael is given that we come to the line of Isaac. – McGee

The Birth of Esau and Jacob

**Gen 25:19-22** *This is the genealogy of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham begot Isaac. Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah as wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan Aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian. Now Isaac pleaded with the LORD for his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived. But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If all is well, why am I like this?" So, she went to inquire of the LORD.*

It is interesting that Rebekah, like Sarah, was barren. But Isaac pled with God on her behalf, and now she is pregnant with twins. The struggle of these two boys, which began before their birth, represents the struggle which still goes on in the world today. There is a struggle between light and darkness, between good and evil, between the Spirit and the flesh. Every child of God knows something of this struggle which Paul sets before us in the seventh chapter of Romans.

Rebekah didn't understand the struggle which was going on within her, and she went to the Lord with the question, "Why am I thus?"- McGee

**Gen 25:23-25** *And the LORD said to her: "Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger." So when her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, indeed there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau.*

God makes the statement to her that the elder shall serve the younger. She should have believed it, and her younger son should have believed it. The name *Esau* means "red" or "earth-colored." Because he is born first, he is considered the elder. But the elder is to serve the younger. - McGee

**Gen 25:26-27** *Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel; so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them. So the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents.*

## Genesis 25 - Jacob and Esau

Isaac and Rebekah had been married for about twenty years before the children were born. The older one was Esau, and they called him "Red," if you please. Jacob took hold on Esau's heel; so they called him Jacob, meaning the usurper, because he was trying to become the elder or to take his place—but God had already promised that to him.

Now we will look at these two boys as they grow up in this home. Here they are, twins, but no two boys were ever more different than these two. They not only struggled in the womb, but they are against each other from here on out. They have absolutely different viewpoints, different philosophies of life. Their thinking is different, and their attitudes are different. At the beginning, I must confess, Esau is more attractive than Jacob. But we learn that one can't always judge by the outward sign. We must judge by what takes place on the inside. We learn that in this particular case.

"The boys grew." This fellow Esau was a cunning hunter, the outdoor boy, the athletic type. He is the one we would call the all-American boy today. He went in for sports. He went in for everything that was physical, but he had no understanding or capacity or desire for spiritual things. He was only interested in that which was physical. He represents the flesh.

Jacob was a plain man. I think that you can make of that anything you want to. He lived indoors. He was mama's boy and was tied to her apron strings. You will notice that he did what she told him to do. Jacob is really a mama's boy.

And this boy Esau is papa's boy—McGee

***Gen 25:28 And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.***

Here is the problem in the home. You feel that under these circumstances they are going to have trouble, and they are. When one parent is partial to one child and the other parent is partial to the other child, you have trouble. That is exactly what took place here.

Isaac loved him because he ate of his venison. Esau went out hunting, and he always got something when he went hunting. He brought home the venison. Isaac liked that, and he liked this outdoor type of boy. Rebekah loved Jacob because he was a mama's boy.

As I have said before, at this juncture the boy Esau is much more attractive than Jacob. He seems to be a more wholesome boy. The boy Jacob is cunning; he tries to be clever. The fact of the matter is that he doesn't mind stooping to do things that are absolutely wrong. (And God will deal with him for this.) The interesting thing is that although Esau was very attractive on the outside, down underneath he really had no capacity for God whatever. If ever there was a man of the world, he is that man. He is just a physical man and that is all. That is all that he lived for.

Down underneath in Jacob there was a desire for the things that are spiritual. It took God a long time to rub off all the debris that was on top and to remove all the coverings in order to get down to where the spiritual desire was, but He finally did it. Before we are through with our study of Jacob (and his story goes almost all the way through the Book of Genesis), we will see that he was God's man all along, although he didn't demonstrate it until late in life.

Now we are told of an incident which took place in the home. You can well understand that the partiality shown by both father and mother would cause difficulty and conflict. It could not be called a happy home. — McGee

## Esau Sells His Birthright

***Gen 25:29-32 Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary. And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary." Therefore his name was called Edom. But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day." And Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?" Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.***

This incident reveals the nature of both of these men. Esau came from the field. He had been outdoors, and he was tired. He was not starving to death as some would imply. No one who had been brought up in the home of Abraham would starve to death. There would always be something for him to eat. The thing was that there was nothing prepared right at that moment but this pottage, this stew, which Jacob had made. Jacob was the indoor boy. Evidently he was a good chef.

“Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red (notice in your King James Version that the word pottage is in italics, meaning that the word has been supplied by the translators); for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom.” Edom means red or earthy just as Esau does. This man asks for some of the stew, and Jacob saw his chance. He is a trickster and a traitor, and he wanted the birthright. He said, “Sell me this day thy birthright.”

Let's stop and look for a minute at the value of the birthright and what it means. It means that the one who had it was the head of the house. It also means that the one who had it was the priest of the family. In this particular family, it means that the one who had it would be the one who would be in the line that would lead to Christ. Do you think that Esau had valued it at all? Jacob knew that he didn't. He attached no importance to it, and he didn't want to be the priest of the family. In fact, that's the last thing that he wanted to be.

In our day, sometimes when a Christian is asked to do something for the cause of Christ, he replies, “Oh, I'm not a preacher; I can't do that!” There are too many folk today who do not want to do that which is spiritual. They don't even want to give the impression that they are interested in spiritual things.

That was Esau. He didn't want to give that impression. If anyone would have called him “deacon” or “preacher,” it would have insulted him. He didn't want the birthright. He didn't care about being in the line that led to Christ. No one could have cared less about being in that line.

Jacob sees this, and he says to him, “I'll tell you what I'll do, if you'll give me your birthright, I'll give you a bowl of stew.” Esau was very happy with the bargain. He said, “I'll be very happy to do it; what profit is the birthright to me? What do I care about the birthright? I'd rather have a bowl of stew.” That is the value which he attached to spiritual things.

Let us remember that Jacob also was wrong in what he did. God had promised, “The elder shall serve the younger.” The birthright is coming to Jacob in God's own time. Jacob can't wait; so he reaches out to take that which God has promised him. He takes it in a clever, tricky fashion. He should have waited for God to give it to him.

This man operated on the principle that he would do what he could for himself. He thought that as long as he could help himself there was no reason to look to God to perform it. He felt thoroughly capable of taking care of his business. At the beginning he really did rather well as far as the world would measure him. But there came a day when God sent this man off to college, and Uncle Laban was the president of the college. It was known as the college of hard knocks, and Jacob was going to learn a few things in the college of hard knocks. But here he is still operating on the principle that he is clever enough to get what is coming to him.- McGee

***Gen 25:32-34 And Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?" Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.***

“Esau despised his birthright” is the important thing to see at this juncture. So Esau sat down and ate his stew. He had surrendered his birthright because it meant nothing to him. Nothing that was spiritual meant anything to him. Unfortunately, I'm afraid we have church members like that. They have no spiritual capacity and no understanding of spiritual truths. I believe that the mark of a true Christian is one whom the Spirit of God can teach and guide. It is as if a man today had a very valuable heirloom, let's say an old family Bible which had belonged to his grandfather. Another

Genesis 25 - Jacob and Esau

grandson wants it and offers to give him a quarter for it. So the owner says, "Give me the twenty-five cents because I was going to throw the old thing away anyway." That is exactly what Esau would have done.

But Jacob is wrong also, and we'll see more of his cleverness and trickery in chapter 27. – McGee

As the firstborn, Esau was entitled to a double portion of his father's possessions—that is, twice as much as any other son might inherit. He also became the tribal or family head. This was known as the birthright. In Esau's case, it would also have included being the ancestor of the Messiah. One day, as Esau was returning from a hunting trip, he saw Jacob cooking some red stew. He asked for some of the red stuff so imploringly that he got the nickname "Red" (Edom), and it stuck to him and to his posterity, the Edomites. When Jacob offered some soup in exchange for Esau's birthright, Esau foolishly agreed. "No food except the forbidden fruit was as dearly bought as this broth." The prophecy of verse 23 is partially fulfilled in verses 29-34. God does not condone Jacob's wheeling and dealing, but one thing is apparent—Jacob valued the birthright and a place in the godly line, while Esau preferred the gratification of his physical appetite to spiritual blessings.

The chapter closes by emphasizing Esau's treatment of his birthright rather than Jacob's treatment of his brother. Esau's descendants were bitter foes of Israel. Their final doom is pronounced in Obadiah. – Believers Bible Commentary

## Genesis 26 -God's Promise to Isaac – Lots of Wells and one altar

***Gen 26:1-2 There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, in Gerar. Then the LORD appeared to him and said: "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you.***

This is now the second famine that is mentioned. You remember the famine in the days of Abraham when Abraham and Lot took off for Egypt.

Why did God say that to Isaac? Well, he had an example before him of his father who had run off down to the land of Egypt. This reveals the fact that "like father, like son," sins are carried from father to son. You can talk about the generation gap all you want, but there is no generation gap of sin. It just flows right from one generation to the other. Generally, the son makes very much the same mistakes that the father did, unless something intervenes.

So God gives definite instructions to Isaac at the time of famine. And He confirms the covenant which He had made with Abraham. -McGee

**Gerar** was sort of a halfway house on the route to Egypt. – Believers Bible Commentary

***Gen 26:3-6 Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." So, Isaac dwelt in Gerar.***

God told Isaac to stay temporarily in Gerar but instead Isaac dwelt there. God also reconfirmed to him the unconditional covenant that He had made with Abraham. – Believers Bible Commentary

God says to Isaac, "Don't leave this land, don't go down to Egypt. I want to confirm with you the covenant which I made with Abraham." And He repeats the threefold promise: (1) the land—"I will give unto thy seed all these countries"; (2) the nation—"I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven"; (3) the blessing—"and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

At this point God had not yet given the Mosaic Law; Abraham was not under the Mosaic system. However, the important thing is that, when God told Abraham something, he believed God and acted upon it. He demonstrated his faith by action.

We have too many folks today who complain of a lack of reality in their Christian lives. A lady came in to talk to me some time ago who said that she believed but that she just couldn't be sure and that she didn't feel anything. Such uncertainty! I didn't have to talk to her long to find out that there was no action in her life. She was just sitting in the corner, twiddling her thumbs, saying, "I believe," and then expecting some great something to take place. That just doesn't happen. When you believe God, you act upon His promises. If you would call me right now to tell me that there is a certain amount of money in a bank in downtown Los Angeles and that you have put it in there for me and I should go down to get it, do you think I would just sit right here the rest of the day? My friend, if you know me, you will know that by the time you hung up the telephone I would have my hat on my head, and I'd be going down there. Faith is what you act on. Faith is something that you step out on. Abraham believed God, and God counted it to him for righteousness. God is now telling Isaac that He wants him to be that same kind of man. - McGee

Isaac and Abimelech

***Gen 26:7-8 And the men of the place asked about his wife. And he said, "She is my sister"; for he was afraid to say, "She is my wife," because he thought, "lest the men of the place kill me for Rebekah, because she is beautiful to behold." Now it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked through a window, and saw, and there was Isaac, showing endearment to Rebekah his wife.***

Isaac is repeating the sin of his father. God had warned him not to go to Egypt; so he didn't go there but went to Gerar instead. In Gerar he must have seen the men casting glances toward Rebekah; so he says to her, "You tell them that you're my sister, not my wife." The difference between Abraham and Isaac is that Abraham told half a lie and Isaac told a whole lie. The one he is telling was cut out of the whole cloth. - McGee

**Gen 26:9-11** *Then Abimelech called Isaac and said, "Quite obviously she is your wife; so how could you say, 'She is my sister'?" Isaac said to him, "Because I said, 'Lest I die on account of her.' " And Abimelech said, "What is this you have done to us? One of the people might soon have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on us." So Abimelech charged all his people, saying, "He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death."*

Isaac reacted to fear as his father had done. He misrepresented his wife as his sister to the men of Gerar. It is the sad story of a father's weakness being repeated in his son. When the deceit was exposed and rebuked, Isaac confessed. Confession leads to blessing. – Believers Bible Commentary

**Gen 26:12-14** *Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and the LORD blessed him. The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous; for he had possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great number of servants. So, the Philistines envied him.*

Don't miss the fact that Isaac is greatly blessed. His field brings forth a hundredfold! The impression some of us have is that Abraham was outstanding, and Jacob was also, but not Isaac. Let me say that Isaac is also outstanding.

It is significant that the life of Isaac is tied in with that of Abraham. Isaac's birth and his life are interwoven with Abraham's experiences. Although Isaac was important when he was offered there upon the altar, again it was Abraham and Isaac together. Why should it be so presented? Well, we have already seen that all these things happened unto them for examples to us. It presents a wonderful picture of the intimacy between the Lord Jesus Christ and the Father. Jesus said, "... he that hath seen me hath seen the Father ..." (Joh\_14:9). And in the high priestly prayer of Jesus, He said, "... I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (Joh\_17:4). Also, He said, "... My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (Joh\_5:17). Therefore, it is very proper that the story of Isaac and the story of Abraham be identified together. Now here in the chapter before us we see Isaac standing on his own two feet, and he doesn't look too attractive. He exhibits a weakness and repeats the sin of Abraham. However, the Word of God makes it clear that Isaac was a very great man in that land—McGee

Then Isaac sowed in that land—During his sojourn in that district he farmed a piece of land, which, by the blessing of God on his skill and industry, was very productive (Is 65:13; Ps 37:19); and by his plentiful returns he increased so rapidly in wealth and influence that the Philistines, afraid or envious of his prosperity, obliged him to leave the place (Pr 27:4; Ec 4:4). This may receive illustration from the fact that many Syrian shepherds at this day settle for a year or two in a place, rent some ground, in the produce of which they trade with the neighboring market, till the owners, through jealousy of their growing substance, refuse to renew their lease and compel them to remove elsewhere. - Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible, vol. 1 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 30.

**Gen 26:15-17** *Now the Philistines had stopped up all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, and they had filled them with earth. And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we." Then Isaac departed from there and pitched his tent in the Valley of Gerar, and dwelt there.*

The Philistines had stopped up the wells which Abraham had dug—an unfriendly act signifying that the newcomers were not welcome. – Believers Bible Commentary

**Gen 26:18-20** *And Isaac dug again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham. He called them by the names which his father had called them. Also Isaac's servants dug in the valley, and found a well of running water there. But the herdsmen of Gerar*

***quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water is ours." So he called the name of the well Esek, because they quarreled with him.***

Isaac cleaned out the wells. Strife ensued with the Philistines at Esek (contention) and Sitnah (enmity). – Believers Bible Commentary

This reveals the struggle that was carried on.

I feel that the water is a picture of the Word of God. We are to drink deeply of it. It is called the “water of the Word” and is for drinking purposes to slake our thirst, and it is also for washing. Jesus said that we are cleansed through the Word which He has spoken.

Water is a very necessary item in life. You can't have life without water. You can fly over the deserts of Arizona, New Mexico, and California and see plenty of arid land. Then all of a sudden you see an area of lush green and wonder what has happened down there. Water is the only explanation.

And, my friend, water is the explanation for the differences between God's children in any church—the water of the Word of God. There is a great difference in the lives of believers who study God's Word. And there will be a struggle. I think that you will always have to pay a price if you are really going to study the Word of God. The devil will permit you to do anything except get into the Word of God. - McGee

***Gen 26:21-22 Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that one also. So, he called its name Sitnah. And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth, because he said, "For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."***

Then he calls the well Rehoboth. It means “there is room for us.” Before that he would dig a well and they would take it away from him. He'd move up, dig another one, and they would take that away from him. He would just keep moving up. This certainly reveals that Isaac is a man of peace and a man of patience. David wouldn't have done this, I can tell you that. Simon Peter wouldn't have done that. And if you want to know the truth, Vernon McGee wouldn't have done that. It is a real lesson for us here. This is especially applicable when we apply it to the study of the Word of God. - McGee

***Gen 26:23-25 Then he went up from there to Beersheba. And the LORD appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for My servant Abraham's sake." So he built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD, and he pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well.***

He went from there to Beersheba, where the LORD reassured him with the promise of blessing, and where Isaac built an altar (worship), pitched a tent (abiding), and dug a well (refreshment). Just as water is a basic essential in the physical realm, so is the water of the Word in the spiritual. – Believers Bible Commentary

God appears to him to comfort him. God appeared to all the patriarchs with the exception of Joseph. He appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He goes on again, digging wells. You can always put a well down next to Isaac. You can put an altar down next to Abraham, and you can put a tent down next to Jacob, as we shall see later on. - McGee

***Gen 26:26-29 Then, Abimelech came to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath, one of his friends, and Phichol the commander of his army. And Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, since you hate me and have sent me away from you?" But they said, "We have certainly seen that the LORD is with you. So we said, 'Let there now be an oath between us, between you and us; and let us make a covenant with you, that you will do us no harm, since we have not touched you, and since we have done nothing to you but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the LORD.' "***

Although Isaac almost seems weak in his dealing with the men of Gerar, the king of Gerar was so impressed that he followed Isaac to Beer-sheba in order to establish good relations. The influence of Isaac in that land was not that of a weak man. - McGee



***Gen 26:30-33 So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank. Then they arose early in the morning and swore an oath with one another; and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace. It came to pass the same day that Isaac's servants came and told him about the well which they had dug, and said to him, "We have found water." So, he called it Shebah. Therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day.***

Concerning verses 26-31, Williams says: It is when Isaac definitely separates himself from the men of Gerar that they come to him seeking blessing from God . . . . The Christian best helps the world when living in separation from it. . . .

Isaac's servants . . . found water the same day that Isaac made a nonaggression pact with Abimelech. Abraham had previously named the place Beersheba because he made a covenant there with his contemporary, Abimelech (Gen\_21:31). Now, under similar circumstances, Isaac renames it Shebah or Beersheba. – Believers Bible Commentary

***Gen 26:34-35 When Esau was forty years old, he took as wives Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. And they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah.***

If the pious feelings of Abraham recoiled from the idea of Isaac forming a matrimonial connection with a Canaanitish woman [Ge 24:3], that devout patriarch himself would be equally opposed to such a union on the part of his children; and we may easily imagine how much his pious heart was wounded, and the family peace destroyed, when his favorite but wayward son brought no less than two idolatrous wives among them—an additional proof that Esau neither desired the blessing nor dreaded the curse of God. These wives never gained the affections of his parents, and this estrangement was overruled by God for keeping the chosen family aloof from the dangers of heathen influence. - Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, vol. 1 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 30.

## Isaac Blesses Jacob

THEME: Jacob takes Esau's birthright; Jacob flees to Laban.

This chapter has as its theme Jacob and Rebekah conniving to get the blessing of Isaac for Jacob. It is the blessing which Isaac intended for Esau. You see, Jacob wanted the blessing of his father. He knew God had promised his mother that the elder would serve the younger; so the blessing was his already. However, he did not believe God. Rebekah, his mother, did not believe God. Evidently Isaac, the father, didn't believe God or he would never have attempted to bypass Jacob and give the blessing to Esau. He followed his own feelings and appetite in contradiction to the distinct Word of God.

The method Jacob used in obtaining the birthright cannot be supported on any grounds whatsoever. He used fraud and deceit. His conduct was despicable. God did not condone this any more than He condoned the conduct of Sarah and Abraham in the matter of Hagar and Ishmael. God could not use the trickery and cleverness of Jacob. As we shall see, God deals with this man in a very definite way. Jacob had to pay for his sin in the same coin in which he sinned. You will note that as we get into this chapter.

Chapter 26 concluded with Esau, who was about forty years old, marrying two Hittite women. This was a grief to Isaac and to Rebekah. Now they recognize that, if Jacob is not to marry a Hittite or a Philistine, he must be sent away to Haran where Isaac got his bride from the family of Abraham. - McGee

***Gen 27:1-4 Now it came to pass, when Isaac was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see, that he called Esau his older son and said to him, "My son." And he answered him, "Here I am." Then he said, "Behold now, I am old. I do not know the day of my death. Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me. And make me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die."***

Approximately thirty-seven years have passed since the events of the previous chapter. Isaac is now 137, his sight has failed, and he thinks he is about to die, perhaps because his brother Ishmael had died at that age (Gen\_25:17). But he will live forty-three more years. – Believers Bible Commentary

We have seen that Isaac was an outstanding man, a great man. Abimelech and the Philistines came to make a treaty with him since they feared him. He was patient and peace loving but also prominent and powerful. Here, however, he reveals that weakness of the flesh. All during his life, Esau had been his favorite while Jacob had been the favorite of Rebekah. Esau was the outdoor boy who would go out and bring in a deer or some other animal. He would barbecue it, and the old man would enjoy it. Now Isaac is very old and he wants to bless his favorite son. He knows very well that God has said the elder will serve the younger, but he bypasses that because he wants to bless Esau. So, he tells Esau to go out and bring in some meat and he will bless him because of it. What a revelation this is of this family.

Have you noticed the family strife since we have come to this last major section of Genesis? There was strife in the family of Abraham because of Hagar. Now there is strife in this family over these twins. - McGee

***Gen 27:5-8 Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt game and to bring it. So Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son, saying, "Indeed I heard your father speak to Esau your brother, saying, 'Bring me game and make savory food for me, that I may eat it and bless you in the presence of the LORD before my death.' Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to what I command you."***

Rebekah overheard what Isaac said. Jacob is her favorite; so she conceives this deceitful plan. It is absolute trickery, and it cannot be condoned on any basis whatever. God is recording it as history, but He condemns it. We will see that. Remember the things that are being done here, and later you will see the chickens come home to roost for Jacob. Now Rebekah goes on to say to him: - McGee

**Gen 27:9-12** *Go now to the flock and bring me from there two choice kids of the goats, and I will make savory food from them for your father, such as he loves. Then you shall take it to your father, that he may eat it, and that he may bless you before his death." And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "Look, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth-skinned man. Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him; and I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing."*

Esau was not only an outdoor man and a red man, but he was also a hairy man. Not only will he *seem* to be a deceiver; he is a deceiver. - McGee

**Gen 27:13-17** *But his mother said to him, "Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, get them for me." And he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and his mother made savory food, such as his father loved. Then Rebekah took the choice clothes of her elder son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. And she put the skins of the kids of the goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. Then she gave the savory food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.*

My friend, I can't help but comment on this. She put that skin of the kid of the goat on the back of his neck and on the back of his hands so that when his father would feel him, he'd think it was Esau. She also dressed him in Esau's clothes so he would smell like him! Apparently the deodorant that Esau was using was not very potent. The fact of the matter is, I think he was like the whimsical story I heard about two men who were working in a very tight place. One of them finally said to the other one, "Wow! I think the deodorant of one of us has quit working." The other fellow answered, "It must be yours because I don't use any!" Well, I don't think that Esau used any either, and I'm not sure he had a shower very often. Even if you couldn't see him, you could smell him. – McGee

Take note sowing and reaping is law that God has, and see it play out here where the son uses a goat to deceive the father. Many other religions believe in concepts out of the bible as the foundation of their religion. Sowing and reaping is true, but many call it Karma.

**Gen 27:18-20** *So he went to his father and said, "My father." And he said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?" Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn; I have done just as you told me; please arise, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me." But Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?" And he said, "Because the LORD your God brought it to me."*

Believe me, this boy at this particular point is typical of pious frauds. You find many such frauds even in fundamental circles today. They talk about the Lord leading them. My, sometimes the Lord "leads" them to do some very unusual things! I find out sometimes that Christian men think they can do things that the Mafia would be arrested for. But these men can very piously pray about it and say that it is the Lord's will. Believe me, Jacob at this point is a pious fraud. The Lord had nothing to do with this deception. - McGee

**Gen 27:21-22** *Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not." So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau."*

Although Rebekah planned the deception, Jacob was equally guilty for carrying it out. And he reaped what he sowed. C. H. Mackintosh observed that:

. . . whoever observes Jacob's life, after he had surreptitiously obtained his father's blessing, will perceive that he enjoyed very little worldly felicity. His brother sought to murder him, to avoid which he was forced to flee from his father's house; his uncle Laban deceived him. . . . He was obliged to leave him in a clandestine manner. . . . He experienced the baseness of his son Reuben . . . the treachery and cruelty of Simeon and Levi towards the Shechemites; then he had to feel the loss of his beloved wife . . . the supposed untimely end of Joseph; and to complete all, he was forced by famine to go into Egypt, and there died in a strange land. . . . Believers Bible Commentary

**Gen 27:23-27** *And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him. Then he said, "Are you really my son Esau?" He said, "I am." He said, "Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's game, so that my soul may bless you." So he brought it near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank. Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near now and kiss me, my son." And he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his clothing, and blessed him and said: "Surely, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field Which the LORD has blessed.*

You can tell that Isaac suspected something was wrong, but Rebekah knew Isaac very well and she had worked out every detail. – McGee

**Be careful when you plan in deceit, even your successes come at high cost as we will see. Anyone ever lied thought they got away with it, only later to find it cost them dearly in the long run?**

**Gen 27:28-29** *Therefore, may God give you Of the dew of heaven, Of the fatness of the earth, And plenty of grain and wine. Let peoples serve you, And nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, And let your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, And blessed be those who bless you!"*

Isaac is giving the blessing which *he* had received—he is passing it on. The interesting thing is that it already belonged to Jacob. God had said that it did. God had already blessed Jacob. God is not accepting this deception at all. – McGee

Isaac blessed Jacob with prosperity, dominion, and protection. It is interesting that the blessings spoken by the patriarchs were prophetic; they came to pass literally because, in a real sense, these men spoke by inspiration. – Believers Bible Commentary

**Gen 27:30** *Now it happened, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.*

**Gen 27:31** *He also had made savory food, and brought it to his father, and said to his father, "Let my father arise and eat of his son's game, that your soul may bless me."*

**Gen 27:32-33** *And his father Isaac said to him, "Who are you?" So he said, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esau." Then Isaac trembled exceedingly, and said, "Who? Where is the one who hunted game and brought it to me? I ate all of it before you came, and I have blessed him—and indeed he shall be blessed."*

Somebody may ask whether venison tastes like lamb or goat. It surely does. I remember several years ago when I was pastor in Pasadena that I went deer hunting in Utah with one of the officers of the church. We got a deer, and so we invited the congregation for a dinner just to have a time of good, wholesome fellowship and a lot of fun. We didn't have quite enough meat for all the people; so we bought two lamb legs and cooked that along with the rest of the meat. Nobody could tell the difference, and everyone said the venison was good. Both meats tasted very much alike. - McGee

**Gen 27:34-37** *When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me—me also, O my father!" But he said, "Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing." And Esau said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright, and now look, he has taken away my blessing!" And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?" Then Isaac answered and said to Esau, "Indeed I have made him your master, and all his brethren I have given to him as servants; with grain and wine I have sustained him. What shall I do now for you, my son?"*

**Gen 27:38 -40** *And Esau said to his father, "Have you only one blessing, my father? Bless me—me also, O my father!" And Esau lifted up his voice and wept. Then Isaac his father answered and said to him: "Behold, your dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth, And of the dew of heaven from above. By your sword you shall live, And you shall serve your brother; And it shall come to pass, when you become restless, That you shall break his yoke from your neck."*

When Esau returned and learned of the deception, he sought the blessing tearfully. But the blessing had been granted to Jacob and it couldn't be retracted (Heb\_12:16-17). However, Isaac did have a word for Esau, as follows:

Far from rich soil on earth shall you live, far from the dew of heaven on high; you shall live by the sword and serve your brother; but when you grow restive, his yoke you shall break (vv. 39, 40—Moffatt).

This suggests that the Edomites would live in desert places, would be warriors, would be subject to the Israelites, but would one day rebel against this rule. This latter prophecy was fulfilled in the reign of Joram, King of Judah (2Ki\_8:20-22). – Believers Bible Commentary

***Gen 27:41 So Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, "The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then I will kill my brother Jacob."***

***Gen 27:42 And the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said to him, "Surely your brother Esau comforts himself concerning you by intending to kill you."***

***Gen 27:43 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice: arise, flee to my brother Laban in Haran.***

Esau is thinking. *My father is old and won't live much longer. Just as soon as my father dies, I'll kill Jacob. I'll get rid of him!* This is the thought of his heart, and he evidently talked about it to others.

Here again we see Rebekah taking things into her own hands. She tells Jacob, "You are going to have to leave home." Little did she know that she would pay for her part in this, her sin. She never saw this boy again. She said she would send him over there for a little while but it was a long while and she died before he got back.

We must remember that Jacob is her favorite. She wants Jacob to go to her brother, Laban, and that is where she will send him. This is where Jacob is going to learn his lesson. This is where the chickens will come home to roost. Old Uncle Laban is going to put him through school and teach him a few things. Jacob thought he was clever, but Uncle Laban is an expert at cleverness. Poor Jacob will find he is just an amateur, and he is going to cry out to God in desperation before it is all over. - McGee

***Gen 27:44-46 And stay with him a few days, until your brother's fury turns away, until your brother's anger turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him; then I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereaved also of you both in one day?"***

Notice that she says she will send him away for a few days. A few days lengthened to twenty years, and during that interval she died. She never saw her boy, her pet, her favorite, again.

We can picture the life of Rebekah during those years when we consider that Esau probably did not think much of his mother after that little episode.- McGee

***Gen 27:46 And Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth, like these who are the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?"***

Remember that Esau had married these heathen, godless women. Already that was ringing sorrow into the home, and even Rebekah was overwhelmed by it. Now she tells Isaac that if Jacob stays there he will probably do the same thing. She could use this as an excellent excuse to get Jacob away from home to protect him from Esau. She has this little conference with Isaac to convince him that the thing to do is to send Jacob back to her family, to her brother Laban. Remember how Abraham's servant had gone there to get her. So now the point is to get Jacob back there to find a wife, but also to get him out of danger. Very frankly, I think that if he had stayed at home, Esau would have tried to kill him. However, the way it turned out, Rebekah was the first to die, and Jacob got back for his father's funeral. But he never again saw his mother. - McGee

## Jacob Sent to Laban

THEME: God appears to Jacob at Bethel; Jacob makes a vow.

In the previous chapter we saw Jacob doing one of the most despicable things any man could do. He did it at the behest of his mother. You know, sometimes people excuse themselves for being mean by saying it is because their mother didn't love them when they were little. Believe me, Jacob couldn't say that. Jacob was loved and spoiled. When he was asked to do something that was not the honorable thing to do, he did it. He stole the birthright from his brother.

The birthright was already his. The formality of his father giving a blessing wasn't necessary at all. Abraham hadn't given the blessing to Isaac—God had! And it is God who gave it to Jacob. His trickery was not only unnecessary, but God will deal with him because of it, you can be sure of that.

The plan that Rebekah has now thought of is plausible and logical. It probably was the right thing to do in this case. She didn't mention to Isaac that she wanted to send Jacob to her brother so that he'd get away from the wrath of his brother Esau, but she did mention the fact that he could choose a wife back there from among her family.

In this chapter we will find Jacob leaving home. He comes to Beth-el where God appears to him and confirms to him the covenant made to Abraham. - McGee

***Gen 28:1 Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, and said to him: "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan."***

All the way through the Old Testament we find that God does not want the godly to marry the ungodly. That, again, is my reason for believing that in the sixth chapter of Genesis, where it says the sons of God looked upon the daughters of men, it is saying that the godly line married with the godless line of Cain. This finally resulted in the judgment of the Flood with only one godly man left.

Intermarriage always leads to godlessness. I say this as a caution. I recognize that we are living in a day when young people are not very apt to take advice from an old preacher. They wonder what he knows about it all. Frankly, if you want to know the truth, I know a whole lot about this particular matter. I've done years of counseling and have had many, many couples come to me and have been able to watch them through the years. The story is pretty much the same. A young lady or a young man will say they have met the right person, the one they wish to marry. That person is not a Christian. However, they want to marry that person and win him or her for the Lord. May I say this, young lady, if you cannot win him for the Lord before you get married, you will not win him after you are married. May I say this, young man, if you cannot win her for the Lord before you get married, you will not win her after you are married. God forbids the godly to marry the godless. It always entails sorrow. I have seen literally hundreds of cases, and I have never yet seen a case where it has worked. Never yet! You can't beat God. God has put it down indelibly all the way through the Word that the godly are not to marry the godless. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2Co\_6:14). The New Testament strictly tells Christians that they are not to be unequally yoked. You don't get unequally yoked by sitting

on a platform with an unbeliever, as some critics have accused me of doing! You do it by intermarrying. That's the way you join up with them. And God strictly forbids it.- McGee

***Gen 28:2-5 Arise, go to Padan Aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and take yourself a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother. "May God Almighty bless you, And make you fruitful and multiply you, That you may be an assembly of peoples; And give you the blessing of Abraham, To you and your descendants with you, That you may inherit the land In which you are a stranger, Which God gave to Abraham." So Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Padan Aram, to Laban the son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.***

It is obvious now that Isaac understands that God had given the blessing to Abraham, that God had transferred it to him, and that this blessing is to be passed on to his son, Jacob.

If you were to give the nationality of this family, you would have to say they were Syrians because that is what they are called in the Scriptures. Sometimes the question is asked, "Was Abraham a Jew? Was he an Israelite?" No, actually he was not. There were no Israelites until the time of Jacob whose name was changed to Israel. His twelve sons were Israelites. The line came from Abraham, he is the father of the race, but you're not going to call Abraham a Midianite, I hope, and yet he is the father of the Midianites, also.

Esau Marries an Ishmaelite

***Gen 28:6-9 Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Padan Aram to take himself a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan," and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and had gone to Padan Aram. Also Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan did not please his father Isaac. So Esau went to Ishmael and took Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife in addition to the wives he had.***

Now lest someone misunderstand what I meant when I said we were through with the line of Ishmael, let me say that the Bible will not follow his line. However, his line will be mentioned as it crosses the line leading to Christ. So here, Esau goes out and marries the daughter of Ishmael. He thinks it will please his father. You see what a lack of spiritual perception he has. The Ishmaelites were as much rejected as the Canaanites or the Philistines. - McGee

### ***Jacob's Dream***

***Gen 28:10-11 Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep.***

The place he has come to, as we shall see in a moment, is Bethel, literally, "the House of God." Bethel is twelve miles north of Jerusalem, and the home which Jacob left was probably twenty-five or thirty miles south of Jerusalem. This means that Jacob covered at least forty miles that first day. You can see that he is really hotfooting it away from Esau. He wants to get as far from him as he can, but the farther he gets away from Esau, the farther he gets away from home.

What do you think he was feeling that night? Well, he was very lonely, that is for sure. He was probably homesick. As far as the record is concerned, this was his first night away from home.

My friend, do you remember the first night that you were away from home? I certainly remember the first night I went away from home. We lived in the country in a little place called Springer, Oklahoma. They tell me it hasn't done any springing since then. It's still a small place, just a wide place in the road. We had some very wonderful friends who lived down the road. I suppose it couldn't have been over a mile, but at that time I thought it was five or more miles. I've been back there, and I was amazed to find out how close together things are. When I was little, I thought it was all pretty well spread out. Well, these people invited me to come down and spend the night. They had a boy about my age—we were nine or ten, I guess. He had come up to get me, and we went down to his house together. I shall never forget that experience. We had a delicious dinner, a good country dinner, and I enjoyed it that evening with these folks. Then we played hide-and-seek until it got dark which kept me occupied, but every now and then I looked into the darkness and began to get just a little homesick. Then someone said it was time to go to bed. They put a pallet down in the front room, and I put on the little nightshirt that I had brought under my arm, and I lay down on that pallet. Friend, I have never been so lonely in all my life. Homesick! Oh, how I wanted to go home! I rolled and tossed there for a long time. I finally dozed off and I slept for a while, but I awoke very early in the morning. Do you know what I did? I took off my nightshirt and put on my clothes, put my nightshirt under my arm and started running home. I didn't stop until I got there. Nobody was up, but I was sure glad to be home. First night away from home. After that, I went a long way from home, but I never was more homesick than I was that first night.

I have often wondered about Jacob. He's actually a man now, a pretty big boy, but I think he is homesick. This is the first time he is away from Rebekah. He's been tied to his mama's apron strings all of his life, and now he is untied. He is out on his own, and this is his first night away from home.

Notice what happens. He lies down and puts stones for pillows. Bethel is a dreary place. It has been described as a bleak moorland with large, bare rocks exposed. It is twelve hundred feet above sea level, in the hills. There are many places out in the desert of California that would correspond to it.

When traveling around in the proximity of Bethel, I was with a bus tour. Others wanted to go other places which to me weren't nearly as important as Bethel. We drove within about a half mile of it and I wanted to walk to it, but the bus driver said we didn't have time. I could see it in the distance, and the topography looked bleak and forbidding. Yet this was the high point in the spiritual life of Jacob, not only at this time but also later in his life. So this is the place he came to, and here he lay down to sleep. - McGee

***Gen 28:12-14 Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: "I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.***

It was right in that area, by the way, where God first appeared to Abraham after he had reached the land of Palestine. Now God is giving to Jacob exactly what He had given first to Abraham; He had repeated it to Isaac, and now He confirms it, and He reaffirms to Jacob that He will do this. – McGee

***Gen 28:15 Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you."***



ou can see that this would be comforting and helpful to a lonesome, homesick boy who really had to leave home in a hurry. He is on his way to a far country, and this first night God says to him, "I'm going to be with you, Jacob, and I'm going to bring you back to this land."

The vision that God gave to him in the dream was of a ladder that reached up to heaven. What does that ladder mean? Well, the Lord Jesus interpreted it when He called Nathanael, as recorded in Joh\_1:45-51. By the way, Nathanael was a wiseacre, and when he heard of Jesus, he said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Our Lord dealt with this fellow. Nathanael asked, "How in the world do you know me like that?" And Jesus said, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael's response was, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel." He was pretty easy to convince, although he was a skeptic at the beginning. Let me give you the exact quote: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man" (Joh\_1:50-51).

What is that ladder? That ladder is Christ. The angels were ascending and descending upon the Son of man. The angels ministered to Him; they were subject to His command. Nathanael will hear from the top of that ladder the voice of God, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." My friend, God is speaking to mankind through Christ in our day. We cannot come to the Father directly. Every now and then I hear someone say in a testimony, "When I was converted, I came directly to God. I have access to God." We do not, my friend. We come through Christ; we have access to the Father through Christ. That is the only way we can get into God's presence. The Lord Jesus said, "... I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (Joh\_14:6). The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the ladder—not one that we can climb but one that we can trust.

This truth was given first to Jacob, the usurper. To Nathanael our Lord said, "You are an Israelite in whom there is no guile"—that is, no Jacob. Nathanael was a wiseacre, a humorist, but he was not a trickster like Jacob. But this man, Jacob—God is going to have to deal with him. God has given him this wonderful, glorious promise, but, oh, Jacob has so much to learn!

Isn't that true of all of us today? No wonder God has to school us. No wonder God has to discipline us. He scourges every son whom He receives. He disciplines. He did it to Abraham and He did it to Isaac. He is going to do it to Jacob. Up to this point, everything has been going Jacob's way. I received a letter from a couple who had lost their two-year-old boy suddenly one night. Up to that time everything had been going their way. They were church members, but they were hypocrites. So many people are just members of the church, yet they don't know the Lord personally. The Lord has to shake us. He allows trials to come to us to discipline us. They put iron in our backbone; they put courage in our lives and enable us to stand for God.

Jacob has a long way to go. Notice what he does—McGee

***Gen 28:16-17 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it." And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!"***

This is the passage of Scripture that I use many times in dedicating a new church. "How dreadful is this place!" I think I shock some people, especially when the congregation has come in to dedicate a lovely new facility. I get up and look around and say, "How dreadful is this place." During the rest of the time I try to win them back to being friends of mine by telling them that the place is dreadful only for a fellow like Jacob, a sinner, trying to run away from God. Every house of God, every church, ought to be a dreadful place to any sinner running away from God. It is the place where the sinner ought to be able to meet God, come face to face with God, through the Ladder who has been sent down from heaven, even Christ.

When Jacob ran away from home, he had a limited view of God. He thought that when he ran away from home, he was running away from God, also. But he found that he had not left God back home. He exclaimed, "Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not!"- McGee

***Gen 28:18-21 Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel; but the name of that city had been Luz previously. Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God.***

Now listen to Jacob. He has a lot to learn, and this is an evidence of it.

What is he doing? He wants to trade with God. He says, "Now, God, if You will do this for me...." But God has already told him that He is going to do every one of these things for him—"I am going to keep you; I am going to bring you back to this land; I am going to give you this land; and I'm going to give you offspring." Then Jacob turns around and bargains with Him, "If You will do it, then I'll serve You."

God doesn't do business with us that way. He didn't do business that way with Jacob either. If He had, Jacob would never have made it back to that land. God brought him back into that land by His grace and mercy. When Jacob did finally come back to Bethel, he came back a wiser man. Do you know what he came back to do? To worship and praise God for His mercy. God had been merciful to him.

Many people even today say they will serve the Lord if He will do such and such. You won't do anything of the kind, my friend. He doesn't do business that way. He will extend mercy to you, and He will be gracious to you without asking anything in return. But He does say that if you love Him, you will really want to serve Him. That will be the bondage of love. It is the same kind of love a mother has for the little child. She becomes its slave. That's the way that He wants you and me. - McGee

***Gen 28:22 And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."***

So Jacob erects this stone. He is trying to make a deal with God! And a great many of us are trying to make a deal with God. Oh, my friend, He just wants to become your Father through faith in Christ.

## Jacob and Rachel - Gen 29

**"7 years labor seem only like a few days because of his Love for her."**

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### **Introduction:**

*Jacob - Heel Grabber (deceiver). This story illustrates many truths but Jacob is clearly a textbook example for sowing and reaping and also provides a story of an amazing love that overcomes all.*

*Jacob is one of my favorite characters in the bible. Jacob is in the rarified air of being mentioned in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Yet, by all standards today, we would call him "a hot mess." He was a total screw-up for most of his life which in part qualified him to be used by God greatly. That is encouraging to me, because much of my life was a hot mess.*

*This story starts with our lead character on the run. Left town in a hurry under the threat of death. The mama's boy who hung around the tents finds himself scared and alone in the desert, then reality starts to hit. At that very point, God meets him and gives him a dream.*

*Yet, Jacob is still negotiating with God. Later, he wrestles with God, but in the end. He is humbled, receives a new name and walks with a limp a visual reminder of God's encounter.*

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***Genesis 29:1-3 So Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the East. And he looked, and saw a well in the field; and behold, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks. A large stone was on the well's mouth. Now all the flocks would be gathered there; and they would roll the stone from the well's mouth, water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the well's mouth.***

We see here the importance of water in that country. It still is a very important item because there is a shortage of it in many places. It must be husbanded and protected; that is why at a certain time during the day the stone was removed from the top of the well, and then everybody watered their sheep—everybody got the water he needed. Then the stone was put back on to close the well.

Now Jacob arrives on the scene before they take the stone away from the well. Believe me, he is as cocky as ever. - McGee

### **Why is the description of the well and the customs in the passage?**

***Genesis 29:4-6 And Jacob said to them, "My brethren, where are you from?" And they said, "We are from Haran." Then he said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" And they said, "We know him." So he said to them, "Is he well?" And they said, "He is well. And look, his daughter Rachel is coming with the sheep."***

**vv. 4-6 How do you think Jacob felt when he heard they were from Haran and they knew Laban?**

Oh yes, they knew him. But Jacob didn't know him—yet. But, oh my, Jacob is going to get acquainted with him. - McGee

## Jacob and Rachel - Gen 29

**"7 years labor seem only like a few days because of his Love for her."**

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**Genesis 29:7-8** Then he said, "Look, it is still [a]high day; it is not time for the cattle to be gathered together. Water the sheep, and go and feed them." But they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together, and they have rolled the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep."

Here Jacob has just arrived in the land and he is telling them how to water their sheep and what they should do! This is typical of him, by the way. - McGee

**What words would you use to describe the guy who comes out of nowhere with no sheep and tells you and all of your fellow shepherds how to take care of sheep?**

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**Genesis 29:9-12** Now while he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept. And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's relative and that he was Rebekah's son. So she ran and told her father.

**Who told Jacob he could roll away the stone? What drove him to do it? What is the significance of her being a daughter of Laban? Gen 28:2 (Isaac's words to Jacob)**

**Who kisses a girl and cries aloud?** Talking about giving up your man card!

**Genesis 29:13-14** Then it came to pass, when Laban heard the report about Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. So he told Laban all these things. And Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him for a month.

**Old Laban is back...What do you think Laban is thinking about when he hears Rebekah son is coming? Can you imagine being at the dinner table with Jacob in full cocky mode telling all things?**

You can see the prelude to contest coming up. Youth and skill vs. old age and treachery. You see all of his sowing of trickery and deceit with his brother and his father is about to come back and haunt him. Little Jacob is about to go to the Uncle Laban school of hard knocks.

I imagine that Jacob had quite a bit to talk about. I wouldn't be surprised to find that he entertained them at dinner with his story of how he tricked his brother to get his birthright, and how he used trickery to get the blessing, and how clever he was. Probably he told about that night at Bethel, too. "He told Laban all these things." - McGee

**Do you see any difference in the approach of Abraham's servant vs. Jacob at the well? Do you think the approach taken influences the outcome for us?**

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## Jacob and Rachel - Gen 29

**"7 years labor seem only like a few days because of his Love for her."**

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What differences do you see in the reaction of Rebekah vs Rachel?

**Genesis 29:15** Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what should your wages be?"

Read this carefully. What does this say about Laban? What does this say about Jacob?

**Genesis 29:16-17** Now Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah's eyes were delicate, but Rachel was beautiful of form and appearance.

**What do you think about the descriptions of Leah and Rachel?** In early Greek literature, if a lady was beautiful it was a common complement to say she was cow-eyed. Likewise, we can only assume what weak-eyed meant.

**Genesis 29:18-19** Now Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter." And Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to another man. Stay with me."

Young Jacob was in love, and proposes seven years service for the hand of Rachel. Later, in Exodus God commands that Hebrew Servants work six years and in the seventh year that they be freed. In essence, Jacob was agreeing to be a slave as payment for Rachel dowry. Love and Fear are some of the strongest motivations. Laban has the girls so he is holding all the cards, and he knows it. Laban of course accepts this. It is free labor for 7 years and the payment is only on completion of the work. Laban, I am sure is thinking this 7 years is going to give him time to figure how to make even more money. He is likely licking his chops and remembering the camels and gold and jewelry from Abraham's house last time. **Consider Jacob's bargain with Laban. What does it tell you about Rachel's worth in Jacob's eyes?**

The traditional rule of thumb for engagement rings has been between 1-3 months salary, yet we see Jacob laying out 7 years salary for Rachel. Wow!

**When you dated or courted your wife did you communicate to her how valuable she was to you in the same way? What are some ways you can show how highly you value each other?**

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**Gen 29:20** So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed only a few days to him because of the love he had for her.

This is one of the high points of Jacob's early life that his love for her was so true and strong that 7 years working for Laban was but a few days. **Do you think working for Laban was a picnic? How important is for you to have that kind of love and joy during courtship and demonstrate it?**

**What is the role of hope in marriage (generally)? What is the hope in a Christian Marriage?**

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## Jacob and Rachel - Gen 29

**"7 years labor seem only like a few days because of his Love for her."**

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***Genesis 29:21-25 Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in to her." And Laban gathered together all the men of the place and made a feast. Now it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her. And Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a maid. So it came to pass in the morning, that behold, it was Leah. And he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served you? Why then have you deceived me?"***

Jacob ask for the hand of Rachel now that he has served his 7 years, and Laban has a plan. By this time, Uncle Laban has figured out his herds have grown extensively and he is not about to let the golden goose fly away. Can't you just see Laban order extra wine and insisting on a big production. Probably, everyone else knew old Laban was up to something, but Jacob still with goo goo eyes for Rachel, he never saw it coming!

*Sow and Reaping: Gen 27 describes how Jacob steals his father's blessing meant for the first born son by pretending to be his older brother. God does not condone deceit and the tables are turned on Jacob. The older daughter now pretends to be the younger and he does not figure it out until after the consummation of the very public marriage.*

***Genesis 29:26-27 And Laban said, "It must not be done so in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. Fulfill her week, and we will give you this one also for the service which you will serve with me still another seven years."***

Laban is smooth. Now on top of the sowing a reaping, Laban is going to inform of the customs that he violated. But no fear, this time Laban proposes solution - seven more years!

***Genesis 29:28-30 Then Jacob did so and fulfilled her week. So he gave him his daughter Rachel as wife also. And Laban gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as a maid. Then Jacob also went in to Rachel, and he also loved Rachel more than Leah. And he served with Laban still another seven years.***

Jacob ends up with two wives. Does this mean God condones polygamy? Does God approve of everything in the bible?

1. When Jacob discovered the deception, what do you think were his possible choices of action? What can you learn from Jacob and his dysfunctional marriages?
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2. Which did he choose and why? (vs 27-30)
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## Jacob and Rachel - Gen 29

**"7 years labor seem only like a few days because of his Love for her."**

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3. Even in the face of Laban's deception, God worked out a way for Jacob and Rachel to be together. When has God overcome an obstacle in your marriage (or in some other important relationship)?
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4. This story is full of imperfect people, but the Lord cared enough to meet their needs of love. Where do you need to trust the Lord to meet your needs?
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***Genesis 29:31-35 When the Lord saw that Leah was unloved, He opened her womb; but Rachel was barren. So Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben; for she said, "The Lord has surely looked on my affliction. Now therefore, my husband will love me." Then she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the Lord has heard that I am unloved, He has therefore given me this son also." And she called his name Simeon. She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore his name was called Levi. And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now I will praise the Lord." Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she stopped bearing.***

God seems to always work through the unlikely. Leah the one who is unloved in the story. She is the one that God honors and puts in the line of Christ. You see she is loved greatly by God who chooses to work through her because of her humble obedience.

**Does it give you peace to know that God loves you and will reward your humble obedience?**

**Do you really trust in that peace? Would your actions say you are confident staying the course in humble obedience?**

It is easy to say, but hard to do. **What areas in our marriages/relationships do we need to act in humble obedience?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

## Genesis 30 – Jacob and Laban negotiate over wages, as Sister Wives continue.

**THEME:** *Birth of Jacob's sons; birth of Joseph to Rachel; Jacob prepares to leave Laban.*

When we come to this chapter, we see that God is moving in spite of Jacob's sin. God is not moving because of it, but in spite of it. The theme of the chapter is the family of Jacob and the birth of his sons. Jacob longs to leave Laban, and Jacob makes a shrewd bargain with him. - McGee

**Gen 30:1-2** *Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister, and said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die!" And Jacob's anger was aroused against Rachel, and he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"*

**Give me children, or else I die**—either be reckoned as good as dead, or pine away from vexation. The intense anxiety of Hebrew women for children arose from the hope of giving birth to the promised seed. Rachel's conduct was sinful and contrasts unfavorably with that of Rebekah (compare Ge 25:22) and of Hannah (1 Sa 1:11). – Critical Commentary and Explanation on the whole bible - JFB

You see, a woman in that day was disgraced unless she had an offspring, and the more children she had, the better was her position.

We find here Jacob and Rachel reverting to the practice of that day. Remember that Abraham and Sarah had done the same thing. God did not approve of it then, and He is not going to approve of it now. The Bible gives us an accurate record, but that does not mean that God approved of all that was done. In fact, it is quite obvious that He disapproved of this. My, the strife that we have already called to your attention in Abraham's family. It was also in the family of Isaac. Now it is in Jacob's family already—and he is in for a great deal more trouble. – McGee

**Was Jacob's response appropriate or Christ-like to Rebecca's outcry?**

**Gen 30:3-6** *So she said, "Here is my maid Bilhah; go in to her, and she will bear a child on my knees, that I also may have children by her." Then she gave him Bilhah her maid as wife, and Jacob went in to her. And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. Then Rachel said, "God has judged my case; and He has also heard my voice and given me a son." Therefore she called his name Dan.*

Bilhah ... Zilpah—Following the example of Sarah with regard to Hagar, an example which is not seldom imitated still, she adopted the children of her maid. Leah took the same course. A bitter and intense rivalry existed between them, all the more from their close relationship as sisters; and although they occupied separate apartments, with their families, as is the uniform custom where a plurality of wives obtains, and the husband and father spends a day with each in regular succession, that did not allay their mutual jealousies. The evil lies in the system, which being a violation of God's original ordinance, cannot yield happiness. – Critical Commentary and Explanation on the whole bible – JFB

Dan – sounds like the Hebrew word for Judge.

**Gen 30:7-13** *And Rachel's maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. Then Rachel said, "With great wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, and indeed I have prevailed." So she called his name Naphtali. When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing, she took Zilpah her maid and gave her to Jacob as wife. And Leah's maid Zilpah*



## Genesis 30 – Jacob and Laban negotiate over wages, as Sister Wives continue.

**bore Jacob a son. Then Leah said, "A troop comes!" So she called his name Gad. And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. Then Leah said, "I am happy, for the daughters will call me blessed." So she called his name Asher.**

Bilhah bore two sons, Dan and Naphtali. Not to be outdone by Rachel, Leah gave her maid, Zilpah, to Jacob, and two more sons were born, Gad and Asher. – Believers Bible Commentary

**Gen 30:14-21 Now Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes." But she said to her, "Is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son's mandrakes also?" And Rachel said, "Therefore he will lie with you tonight for your son's mandrakes." When Jacob came out of the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, "You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son's mandrakes." And he lay with her that night. And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. Leah said, "God has given me my wages, because I have given my maid to my husband." So she called his name Issachar. Then Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son. And Leah said, "God has endowed me with a good endowment; now my husband will dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons." So she called his name Zebulun. Afterward she bore a daughter, and called her name Dinah.**

20. And Leah said, God hath endued me with a good dowry—The birth of a son is hailed with demonstrations of joy, and the possession of several sons confers upon the mother an honor and respectability proportioned to their number. The husband attaches a similar importance to the possession, and it forms a bond of union which renders it impossible for him ever to forsake or to be cold to a wife who has borne him sons. This explains the happy anticipations Leah founded on the possession of her six sons.

21. afterwards, she bare a daughter—The inferior value set on a daughter is displayed in the bare announcement of the birth. - Critical Commentary and Explanation on the whole bible - JFB

**Gen 30:22-24 Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. And she conceived and bore a son, and said, "God has taken away my reproach." So she called his name Joseph, and said, "The LORD shall add to me another son."**

This is the boy who will go down into the land of Egypt. We will follow him later in the book, as he is quite a remarkable person. Later on Benjamin will be born to Rachel. We will conclude this chapter by listing the twelve sons of Jacob because they are important. The twelve tribes of Israel will come from them and finally the nation of Israel.- McGee

**Gen 30:25-27 And it came to pass, when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my country. Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me go; for you know my service which I have done for you." And Laban said to him, "Please stay, if I have found favor in your eyes, for I have learned by experience that the LORD has blessed me for your sake."**

when Rachel had born Joseph—Shortly after the birth of this son, Jacob's term of servitude expired, and feeling anxious to establish an independence for his family, he probably, from knowing that Esau was out of the way, announced his intention of returning to Canaan (Heb 13:14). In this resolution the faith of Jacob was remarkable, for as yet he had nothing to rely on but the promise of God (compare Ge 28:15). Critical Commentary and Explanation on the whole bible - JFB

This is quite interesting. You may recall that Abimelech, king of Gerar, found that he was blessed when Isaac was in his midst. Now Uncle Laban has discovered that God is with Jacob and has blessed him for Jacob's sake. So Uncle Laban says, "My boy, don't rush off; don't leave me. I've been blessed, and I want to raise your wages."- McGee

## Genesis 30 – Jacob and Laban negotiate over wages, as Sister Wives continue.

Laban said ... I have learned—His selfish uncle was averse to a separation, not from warmth of affection either for Jacob or his daughters, but from the damage his own interests would sustain. He had found, from long observation, that the blessing of heaven rested on Jacob, and that his stock had wonderfully increased under Jacob's management. This was a remarkable testimony that good men are blessings to the places where they reside. Men of the world are often blessed with temporal benefits on account of their pious relatives, though they have not always, like Laban, the wisdom to discern, or the grace to acknowledge it. - Critical Commentary and Explanation on the whole bible - JFB

**Gen 30:28-30** *Then he said, "Name me your wages, and I will give it." So Jacob said to him, "You know how I have served you and how your livestock has been with me. For what you had before I came was little, and it has increased to a great amount; the LORD has blessed you since my coming. And now, when shall I also provide for my own house?"*

**appoint me thy wages, and I will give it**—The Eastern shepherds receive for their hire not money, but a certain amount of the increase or produce of the flock; but Laban would at the time have done anything to secure the continued services of his nephew, and make a show of liberality, which Jacob well knew was constrained. - Critical Commentary and Explanation on the whole bible - JFB

Jacob knows by now that, any time Uncle Laban makes a deal, he is the one who will come off the winner. Jacob has learned this lesson, and he wants to leave. Listen to Jacob complaining. He is singing the blues! He is saying, "All I've got out of all this service for you are two wives with their two maids and a house full of boys." In fact, he has eleven boys at this point. What in the world is he going to do? How is he going to feed them? He says, "God has blessed *you* and He has prospered *you*, and I don't have anything." - McGee

**Gen 30:31-31** *So he said, "What shall I give you?" And Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything. If you will do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep your flocks: Let me pass through all your flock today, removing from there all the speckled and spotted sheep, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and these shall be my wages.*

In other words, the pure breeds will be Laban's, but the offbreeds, those that are not blue-ribbon cattle, will be Jacob's. Jacob said, "You just let me have these, and that will be my wages." That sounds like a pretty good proposition for Laban. - McGee

31. Jacob said, Thou shalt not give me any thing—A new agreement was made, the substance of which was, that he was to receive remuneration in the usual way, but on certain conditions which Jacob specified.

32. I will pass through all thy flock to-day—Eastern sheep being generally white, the goats black, and spotted or speckled ones comparatively few and rare, Jacob proposed to remove all existing ones of that description from the flock, and to be content with what might appear at the next lambing time. The proposal seemed so much in favor of Laban, that he at once agreed to it. But Jacob has been accused of taking advantage of his uncle, and though it is difficult to exculpate him from practising some degree of dissimulation, he was only availing himself of the results of his great skill and experience in the breeding of cattle. But it is evident from the next chapter (Ge 31:5–13) that there was something miraculous and that the means he had employed had been suggested by a divine intimation. - Critical Commentary and Explanation on the whole bible - JFB

**Gen 30:33-35** *So my righteousness will answer for me in time to come, when the subject of my wages comes before you: every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the lambs, will be considered stolen, if it is with me." And Laban said, "Oh, that it were according to your word!" So he removed that day the male goats that were speckled and spotted, all the female goats that were speckled*

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***and spotted, every one that had some white in it, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and gave them into the hand of his sons.***

They would not be able to breed with the others. Jacob would take the off-breeds so that only the full breeds would mate and bear offspring, and those would belong to Uncle Laban. The others would be his. Jacob is making a very interesting deal. – McGee

***Gen 30:36-39 Then he put three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks. Now Jacob took for himself rods of green poplar and of the almond and chestnut trees, peeled white strips in them, and exposed the white which was in the rods. And the rods which he had peeled, he set before the flocks in the gutters, in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, so that they should conceive when they came to drink. So the flocks conceived before the rods, and the flocks brought forth streaked, speckled, and spotted.***

There have been various explanations of this. There are those who say this is nothing in the world but pure superstition. Others say it is an old wives' tale and is certainly something which ought not to be in the Bible record. It is my judgment that it is important that this record appears in the Word of God. Of course, there were genetic factors involved, but I don't feel that we should rule out this as being a superstition. The point is that both Laban and Jacob *believed* that the white streaks in the rods caused the offspring to be ringstraked. That is the important part of the story. Maybe you are too smart to believe it, but these two boys believed it. Regardless of whether or not there was value in it, Jacob is using trickery. He had been quite a trickster, but he has met an uncle who is a better trickster than he is, and now Jacob is trying to make a comeback.

This is all I will say about it at this point, and we will see that the next chapter will throw new light on this entire incident.

Now here is the list of Jacob's twelve sons who will eventually comprise the twelve tribes of the nation Israel.

Born to Leah:	Rachel	Billah, Rachel's maid	Zilpah, Leah's maid:
1. Reuben	1. Joseph	1. Dan	1. Gad
2. Simeon	2. Benjamin	2. Naphtali	2. Asher
3. Levi			
4. Judah			
5. Issachar			
6. Zebulun			
7. Dinah, daughter			

Believe me, Jacob had his hands full with these twelve boys! Also, we find that there was a girl, and her name was Dinah.

We will see in the next chapter that God has called Jacob to leave Haran and return to the land which He has promised to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I am sure that God is thinking of Jacob's children—He doesn't want them to grow up in the environment of Laban's household. - McGee

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**Gen 30:40** *Then Jacob separated the lambs, and made the flocks face toward the streaked and all the brown in the flock of Laban; but he put his own flocks by themselves and did not put them with Laban's flock.*

**Gen 30:41** *And it came to pass, whenever the stronger livestock conceived, that Jacob placed the rods before the eyes of the livestock in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods.*

**Gen 30:42** *But when the flocks were feeble, he did not put them in; so the feebler were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's.*

**Gen 30:43** *Thus the man became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks, female and male servants, and camels and donkeys.*

When breeding Laban's herd, Jacob put rods that he had peeled in front of them, whether they were of solid color or marked. The lambs or kids were born streaked, speckled, and spotted. This, of course, meant that they belonged to Jacob. Did these rods actually determine the markings on the animals? There may or may not have been a scientific basis to the method. (New genetic evidence suggests that there might have been.) How else might the animals have been born with the markings Jacob desired?

First of all, it may have been a miracle (see Gen\_31:12).

Or it may have been a clever trick on Jacob's part. There are indications in the narrative that he knew the science of selective breeding. By careful breeding, he not only produced animals with the markings he desired, but he was also able to produce stronger animals for himself and feeble ones for Laban. Perhaps the peeled rods were just a trick to hide his breeding secrets from others. Whatever the explanation, Jacob's wealth increased during his final six years of serving Laban. – Believers Bible Commentary

**37. Jacob took rods, &c.**—There are many varieties of the hazel, some of which are more erect than the common hazel, and it was probably one of these varieties Jacob employed. The styles are of a bright red color, when peeled; and along with them he took wands of other shrubs, which, when stripped of the bark, had white streaks. These, kept constantly before the eyes of the female at the time of gestation, his observation had taught him would have an influence, through the imagination, on the future offspring.

**38. watering troughs**—usually a long stone block hollowed out, from which several sheep could drink at once, but sometimes so small as to admit of only one drinking at a time. - Critical Commentary and Explanation on the whole bible - JFB

## Genesis 31 – Jacob flees Laban

### CHAPTER 31

THEME: Jacob flees from Haran; the Mizpah covenant.

In this chapter we find that Jacob leaves Laban without giving notice. They don't even have a farewell party for him. Laban takes out after him and overtakes him. Finally, Jacob and Laban made another contract, this time not to defraud or hurt each other. Then they separate in an outwardly friendly manner.

We will see that God wants to get Jacob out of that land. He recognizes that the influence of Laban's household is not good for Jacob and his growing family. The boys are going to be heads of the twelve tribes of Israel, and God is anxious to get them out from that environment and back into Abraham's country, the country which He had promised to Abraham.

We are in a section of the Word of God which God has given to minister to our needs. It deals with a man who is a very sinful man in many ways and a man whom God would not give up. You and I can take courage from this. The Lord will never give us up as long as we keep coming back to Him. He will always receive us. If He will take a fellow like Jacob and a fellow like I am, He will take you, my friend.

You will recall that Jacob has had a pretty sad ordeal of twenty years with Uncle Laban. Uncle Laban has really given him a course in the college of hard knocks, and poor Jacob is beginning to wince because of all the pressure he has been under. However, since the new deal which he had made with Laban regarding cattle breeding, Jacob is now getting more than Uncle Laban is getting. Uncle Laban doesn't like it, nor do his sons like it. – McGee

***Gen 31:1-3 Now Jacob heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, "Jacob has taken away all that was our father's, and from what was our father's he has acquired all this wealth." And Jacob saw the countenance of Laban, and indeed it was not favorable toward him as before. Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your family, and I will be with you."***

God called Jacob to leave, and so he is now preparing to do that. He calls Rachel and Leah to meet him in the field because he is afraid to talk this over at home for fear some servant or possibly even Laban or Laban's sons might overhear him. He doesn't want them to see him plotting with Rachel and Leah. – McGee

After **Jacob** discovered that **Laban** and his **sons** were growing jealous and resentful, the **LORD** told him that the time had come to **return to** Canaan. – Believers Bible Commentary

**Do you take a hint that conditions are changing and listen for God?**

***Gen 31:4-7 So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field, to his flock, and said to them, "I see your father's countenance, that it is not favorable toward me as before; but the God of my father has been with me. And you know that with all my might I have served your father. Yet your father has deceived me and changed my wages ten times, but God did not allow him to hurt me."***

That is one thing upon which we can agree with Jacob and say to his credit. He had worked hard, but I'm of the opinion that we ought to give Laban credit for that. I believe that Laban got his money's worth out of anyone who worked for him. Notice that ten times in those twenty years old Laban had changed his wages! Poor Jacob. But when he was perplexed and frustrated, not knowing where to turn, God intervened. - McGee

***Gen 31:8-10 If he said thus: 'The speckled shall be your wages,' then all the flocks bore speckled. And if he said thus: 'The streaked shall be your wages,' then all the flocks bore streaked. So God has taken away the livestock of your***

## Genesis 31 – Jacob flees Laban

*father and given them to me. "And it happened, at the time when the flocks conceived, that I lifted my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the rams which leaped upon the flocks were streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted.*

Jacob is explaining to Rachel and Leah that it is God who has blessed him, to the extent that Laban and his sons have become very jealous of him; in fact, they hate him. Now Jacob tells the actual reason why he wants to leave—

***Gen 31:11-12 Then the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream, saying, 'Jacob.' And I said, 'Here I am.' And He said, 'Lift your eyes now and see, all the rams which leap on the flocks are streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted; for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you.***

You probably thought that in the previous chapter I was not giving a satisfactory answer for what had taken place in the breeding of cattle. I was waiting until we came to this portion of Scripture, because God says, "I did it!" We don't need to look for natural explanations, although I am confident that God used one of them. However, since God didn't tell us which one it is, we simply do not know. There are several explanations, and you may take the one you want, but I like this one: God says, "I saw what Laban was doing to you, and I blessed you." – McGee

***Gen 31:13 I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar and where you made a vow to Me. Now arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your family.' "***

"I am the God of Beth—el." God goes back to the time He appeared to this boy when he was running away, that first night away from home which he spent at Bethel.

"Now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred." God wants him to leave Haran because he has at this time eleven boys who are growing up, and they are already beginning to learn some things which they should not be learning. God wants to get Jacob and these boys away from the place of idolatry just as He got Abraham out of a home of idolatry.

***Gen 31:14-16 Then Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, "Is there still any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not considered strangers by him? For he has sold us, and also completely consumed our money. For all these riches which God has taken from our father are really ours and our children's; now then, whatever God has said to you, do it."***

They are saying that certainly, as the daughters of their father, they should receive some inheritance, and that ought to keep Laban from being so antagonistic. But, friend, old Laban cannot be trusted.

Unfortunately, there are many Christians today who demonstrate in the way they handle their own money and the money of others that they cannot be trusted either. This is, I feel, a real test of an individual. I could tell you some stories that would make your hair stand on end. Christians, and Christian leaders, do things with money that ought not to be done. - McGee

First he **called Rachel and Leah** and discussed the matter, rehearsing how Laban had cheated him and **changed his wages ten times**, how God had overruled so that the flocks always bred in his favor, how God had reminded him of the vow he had made twenty years earlier ([Gen 28:20-22](#)), and how the Lord had told him to **return to Canaan**. His wives agreed that their father had not dealt honestly and that they should leave.

Griffith Thomas points out several interesting principles for discerning God's guidance here. First, Jacob had a desire ([Gen 30:25](#)). Secondly, circumstances necessitated a change of some sort. Thirdly, God's word came strongly to him. And finally, there was confirming support from his wives, despite their natural ties to Laban. . . . Note that the Angel of God (v. 11) is the God of Bethel (v. 13). – Believers Bible Commentary

## Genesis 31 – Jacob flees Laban

Do you have a biblical lens like this to confirm God's will in your life or be sensitive to the signs? Sometimes, the process is not straightforward, because the enemy will be trying to thwart the plans and discourage you from following God's Will.

***Gen 31:17-21 Then Jacob rose and set his sons and his wives on camels. And he carried away all his livestock and all his possessions which he had gained, his acquired livestock which he had gained in Padan Aram, to go to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan. Now Laban had gone to shear his sheep, and Rachel had stolen the household idols that were her father's. And Jacob stole away, unknown to Laban the Syrian, in that he did not tell him that he intended to flee. So he fled with all that he had. He arose and crossed the river, and headed toward the mountains of Gilead.***

Here is a revelation of something that is quite interesting. Jacob rises up and leaves posthaste again. You remember that this is the same way he left home when he was escaping from his brother. Now he is leaving his uncle—but it is not all his fault this time. It is obvious that he is prepared for this. He has all the cattle and the servants ready to march.

“Rachel had stolen the images that were her father's.” I told you that they were in a home of idolatry. God didn't want Jacob's boys to be brought up there. But, you see, Rachel had been brought up in a home of idolatry, and she wanted to take her gods with her. What a primitive notion she had! Even Jacob had thought that he could run away from God when he left his home as a boy. But at Bethel God appeared to him. He found that he couldn't run away from God. In fact many years later David wrote: “Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell [sheol], behold, thou art there” (Psa\_139:7-8). That is, death won't separate you. “If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me” (Psa\_139:9-10). You won't get away from God by even going to the moon. You simply cannot get away from Him.

“And Laban went to shear his sheep.” Jacob waited until Laban went out to shear sheep. Probably Laban went quite a few miles away from home because the sheep grazed over a very large area in that day. They still do, for that matter, because it takes a large area to feed them. While Laban is away from home, Jacob just “forgets” to tell him that he is leaving. – McGee

They have come within sight of Mt. Gilead, which is just east of the Jordan River. They have covered a lot of ground.

***Gen 31:22-24 And Laban was told on the third day that Jacob had fled. Then he took his brethren with him and pursued him for seven days' journey, and he overtook him in the mountains of Gilead. But God had come to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said to him, "Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad."***

Laban really had been traveling fast to overtake him. You may be sure that Laban doesn't mean any good as far as Jacob is concerned. I am of the opinion that he is angry enough to kill him. But God intervened— In other words (God Said), “You be very careful what you say and do.” - McGee

***Gen 31:25-27 So Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mountains, and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mountains of Gilead. And Laban said to Jacob: "What have you done, that you have stolen away unknown to me, and carried away my daughters like captives taken with the sword? Why did you flee away secretly, and steal away from me, and not tell me; for I might have sent you away with joy and songs, with timbrel and harp?"***

Listen to Uncle Laban. He's a clever rascal, by the way. He's been coming, breathing out fire and brimstone, and wanting to recover all the possessions which Jacob had taken. He probably wanted to kill Jacob and take back the two daughters and their children.

## Genesis 31 – Jacob flees Laban

How clever Uncle Laban is, how diplomatic! He tries to make Jacob feel guilty for depriving his family of wonderful send-off party. He would have had a great celebration and a fond farewell. That's what he says, but I don't think that is what he would have done. Then he goes on to appeal to sentiment. – McGee

**God protects you, but remember what we talk about the enemy. Obviously, Laban is trying to thwart God's will. Does this happen to you? That when you take a stand, the resistance from the enemy comes?**

***Gen 31:28-29 And you did not allow me to kiss my sons and my daughters. Now you have done foolishly in so doing. It is in my power to do you harm, but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad.'***

v.28 These "sons" would be his grandsons. They are destined to be very prominent as far as the history of this world is concerned. – McGee

Laban lets him know that he didn't mean good by him but that God had prevented him from doing bad.

**Had Laban turned toward God think of the legacy he could have had?**

***Gen 31:30-32 And now you have surely gone because you greatly long for your father's house, but why did you steal my gods?" Then Jacob answered and said to Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I said, 'Perhaps you would take your daughters from me by force.' With whomever you find your gods, do not let him live. In the presence of our brethren, identify what I have of yours and take it with you." For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.***

Now he asks about the stolen gods. Actually, Jacob didn't know that Rachel had stolen the gods. When he answers Laban, he is answering about his running away without letting him know.

Jacob knew that Laban wouldn't have let him take his wives and his family and that which belonged to him. Now he replies to the charge of the stolen gods—

He is sure no one would have stolen them from Laban. You see, Jacob didn't believe Laban. But if you think that Laban believed Jacob, you're wrong. They had absolutely no confidence in each other. It's been a nice, pleasant twenty years together, hasn't it? - McGee

***Gen 31:33-35 And Laban went into Jacob's tent, into Leah's tent, and into the two maids' tents, but he did not find them. Then he went out of Leah's tent and entered Rachel's tent. Now Rachel had taken the household idols, put them in the camel's saddle, and sat on them. And Laban searched all about the tent but did not find them. And she said to her father, "Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise before you, for the manner of women is with me." And he searched but did not find the household idols.***

He really expected one of his daughters to have them. Rachel is quite a clever girl herself, isn't she? She is the daughter of her father! She had taken them and put them in the camel's furniture, which is the box that went on the camel's back. Then she sat down on them and excused herself to her father. She said she couldn't get up because she didn't feel well that day. All the while, she is sitting on them. What a realistic picture we get of this family!

Rachel's taking the teraphim from her father was probably much more serious than we had imagined. The possession of those household gods implied leadership of the family, which meant that Jacob was going to inherit everything old Laban had! That is the reason Laban was so wrought up over it. He surely did not want Jacob to get his estate—he felt he had gotten too much already.



## Genesis 31 – Jacob flees Laban

Jacob gets a little confidence now. They can't locate the images, and Jacob is sure that they aren't anywhere around. He wants to rebuke his father-in-law who has come after him.- McGee

**Gen 31:36 -39** *Then Jacob was angry and rebuked Laban, and Jacob answered and said to Laban: "What is my trespass? What is my sin, that you have so hotly pursued me. Although you have searched all my things, what part of your household things have you found? Set it here before my brethren and your brethren, that they may judge between us both! These twenty years I have been with you; your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried their young, and I have not eaten the rams of your flock. That which was torn by beasts I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it. You required it from my hand, whether stolen by day or stolen by night.*

Now Jacob voices his complaint. He has passed the course in the college of hard knocks, and now he is getting his degree. He didn't even get his meals. He had to pay for those. He couldn't even get any insurance. When a lamb was stolen or killed by a wild animal, Jacob had to pay for it. Believe me, this Laban is a hard taskmaster! - McGee

**Gen 31:40-41** *There I was! In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from my eyes. Thus I have been in your house twenty years; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times.*

He didn't get a vacation in the summer. When the weather grew cold, he still had to stay out with the sheep and with the animals. Many nights he had to watch to protect the flock.

This is what has happened to Jacob. Here is the man who is clever, who thought that he could get by with sin, but God didn't let him get by with it because God has made it very clear that whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap. Jacob refused submission to God at home; so he had to submit to his uncle. Jacob came to receive a wife in dignity, but he was made a servant because God respects the rights of the firstborn. Jacob had deceived his father; so he was deceived by his father-in-law. Jacob, the younger, became as the older. Then he found out that he was given the older when he thought he was getting the younger. He revealed a mercenary spirit that displayed itself in the way he got the birthright, allowing his mother to cover his hands with the skins of kids of goats. Later on, we will see that his own sons will deceive him in very much the same way. They killed a kid and in its blood they dipped Joseph's coat of many colors. He deceived his father about being the favorite son, and he will be deceived about his favorite son, Joseph. Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap. - McGee

**Gen 31:42-50** *Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God has seen my affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked you last night." And Laban answered and said to Jacob, "These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and this flock is my flock; all that you see is mine. But what can I do this day to these my daughters or to their children whom they have borne? Now therefore, come, let us make a covenant, you and I, and let it be a witness between you and me." So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. Then Jacob said to his brethren, "Gather stones." And they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there on the heap. Laban called it Jegar Sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed. And Laban said, "This heap is a witness between you and me this day." Therefore its name was called Galeed, also Mizpah, because he said, "May the LORD watch between you and me when we are absent one from another. If you afflict my daughters, or if you take other wives besides my daughters, although no man is with us—see, God is witness between you and me!"*

Laban avoided the issue by lamely protesting that he would not harm his own daughters, grandchildren, or cattle, then suggested that they should make a pact. It was not a gracious, friendly covenant, asking the Lord to watch over them while they were separated. Rather, it was a compact between two cheats, asking the Lord to make sure that they did what was right when they were out of sight from one another! It was, in effect, a nonaggression treaty, but it also charged Jacob not to treat Laban's daughters harshly nor to marry other wives. Laban called the pillar of stones marking

## Genesis 31 – Jacob flees Laban

the pact Jegar Sahadutha, an Aramaic expression. Jacob called it Galeed, a Hebrew word. Both words mean "the heap of witness." Neither man was to pass the stone-heap to attack the other. – Believers Bible Commentary

***Gen 31:51-55 Then Laban said to Jacob, "Here is this heap and here is this pillar, which I have placed between you and me. This heap is a witness, and this pillar is a witness, that I will not pass beyond this heap to you, and you will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. The God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, and the God of their father judge between us." And Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac. Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain, and called his brethren to eat bread. And they ate bread and stayed all night on the mountain. And early in the morning Laban arose, and kissed his sons and daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned to his place.***

Laban swore by the God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, and the God of their father, Terah. The capitalization of God in the NKJV (also Moffatt, NIV, etc.) indicates that the translators felt Laban was referring to the one true God that Abraham came to know. However, since the Hebrew does not have upper and lower case letters, we can't tell if Laban might have been referring to the pagan gods which these men had worshiped in Ur. Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac—that is, the God whom Isaac feared. Isaac had never been an idolater. Jacob first offered a sacrifice, then made a banquet for all those present and camped all that night on the mountain.

Early in the morning, Laban kissed his grandchildren and daughters goodbye and left for home. – Believers Bible Commentary

## Gen 32 – Jacob Wrestles God and settles old conflicts.

THEME: Crisis in the life of Jacob; wrestling at Peniel; Jacob's name changed to Israel.

Jacob wrestles God. Jacob (heal grabber / deceiver). Jacob also knows about living the consequences. God saved him but let him know God's law of sowing and reaping is as sure as gravity. Jacob deceived his brother and his Dad, and stole his brother's birth right. The consequences were: had to flee from his family never to see his mother again, tricked by Laban multiple times and served under him for 21 years, you would think this was enough, but no Jacob was stubborn. Hmmmm...Reminds me of someone I know. Jacob is about to face his brother and fearful, when God shows up. What we see is Love and Power balanced. - Cody

Chapter 32 is the high point in the life of Jacob and can be called the turning point in his life. However, this is not Jacob's conversion, by any means. In spite of the fact that he was living in the flesh, this man was still God's man. This is the reason that we are told to be very careful about judging folk as to whether they are Christians or not. There are a lot of people who do not look like they are Christians, but I am almost sure that they are. Whether they are or not is in the hands of the Lord. They just don't act like Christians—that's all; they give no evidence that they are. And this man Jacob gave no such evidence, except in very faint instances when God appeared to him and he did respond in a way.

Jacob, who is God's representative and witness in the world, has been a bad witness, but he cannot continue that way, and so God is going to deal with him. To tell the truth, God will cripple him in order to get him. The Lord also disciplines us: "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth ..." (Heb\_12:6). That is His method. He disciplines in that way. Lot also did not look like he was a child of God—but he was, for Peter says that Lot "vexed his righteous soul" (see 2Pe\_2:7-8). But I tell you, Lot certainly was put through the fire. He escaped the fire of Sodom and Gomorrah, but the Lord put him through the fires of testing. This is Jacob's experience also. He got his college degree at the college of hard knocks. Uncle Laban was president and dean of the school. At graduation, this boy Jacob gave a pitiful valedictorian address. It took him twenty years to get his degree, and he certainly worked for it. Old Laban changed the requirements ten times. Every two years, Jacob had a new contract with Uncle Laban, and it was always to Jacob's disadvantage. This was the experience of this man.

We come now to this test in which God is going to have to deal with Jacob because he is going to represent God. God will deal with him and will move in on him in this thirty-second chapter. At the beginning, I would like to write this verse of Scripture over this chapter: "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength" (Isa\_40:29). This is the experience of Jacob. – McGee

***Gen 32:1-2 So Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. When Jacob saw them, he said, "This is God's camp." And he called the name of that place Mahanaim.***

God is beginning to deal with Jacob directly in order to bring him into the place of fruit bearing and of real, vital service and witness for Him. – McGee

En route to Canaan, Jacob met a band of **angels** and called the place **Mahanaim** (*two hosts* or *double camp*). The two camps may be God's army (v. 2) and Jacob's entourage. Or two hosts may be a figurative expression for a great multitude (v. 10). – Believers Bible Commentary

***Gen 32:3-5 Then Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. And he commanded them, saying, "Speak thus to my lord Esau, 'Thus your servant Jacob***

## Gen 32 – Jacob Wrestles God and settles old conflicts.

***says: "I have dwelt with Laban and stayed there until now. I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight." ' ' "***

This fellow Jacob is still clever, isn't he? He just cannot let go, even after his experience with Laban. He is returning back to the land, and he remembers the last time he saw Esau twenty years ago, when Esau was breathing out threatenings against him. Notice that Jacob sends servants and instructs them, saying, "When you get to Esau my brother, say to him, 'My lord Esau.'" Of all things! And then he has them refer to himself as "Thy servant Jacob." That's not the way Jacob had spoken before. He had manipulated for the birthright and had stolen the blessing. He had been a rascal, but now his talk is different. I guess he had learned a few things from Uncle Laban. "My lord Esau ... thy servant Jacob."

***Gen 32:6-8 Then the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him." So Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies. And he said, "If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the other company which is left will escape."***

This message absolutely frightened poor Jacob because he didn't know what all that meant. Esau did not indicate his intentions to the servants at all. I suppose that Jacob quizzed them rather thoroughly and said, "Did you detect any note of animosity or bitterness or hatred toward me?" And I suppose that one of the servants said, "No, he seemed to be glad to get the information that you were coming to meet him, and now he's coming to meet you." But the fact that Esau appeared glad was no comfort to Jacob. It could mean that Esau would be glad for the opportunity of getting revenge. Anyway, poor Jacob is upset.

Jacob is in a bad way, he thinks. With this brother of his coming to him, he divides up his group. He is being clever. He reasons that if his brother strikes one group, then the other one can escape. Notice what Jacob does now. He appeals to God in his distress:

**Are we this way too? God sends us out, and as soon as we respond and go, the enemy attacks with our biggest fear. It is usually associated with an area of unresolved sin. Notice: He divided up the family, and then prayed. Do we sometime react first, and then pray?**

***Gen 32:9-12 Then Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the LORD who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your family, and I will deal well with you': I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies. Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me and the mother with the children. For You said, 'I will surely treat you well, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.' "***

This man now appeals to God and cries out to Him on the basis that He is the God of his father Abraham and the God of his father Isaac. I begin now to detect a little change in Jacob's life. This is the first time I have ever heard him say, "I am not worthy of the least of thy mercies." For the first time, he is acknowledging that he might be a sinner in God's sight. Do you know that there are a great many "Christians" who do not acknowledge that they are sinners? For years I knew a man who was incensed that I would indicate that he was a sinner. He told me all that he had done and that he had been saved and now was not a sinner. My friend, he is a sinner. We are all sinners, saved by grace. As long as we are in this life, we have that old nature that isn't even fit to go to heaven. And do you know that God is not

## Gen 32 – Jacob Wrestles God and settles old conflicts.

going to let it go to heaven? Vernon McGee cannot go there. That is the reason God had to give me a new nature; the old one wasn't even fit to repair. This fellow Jacob is beginning now to say that he is not worthy. When any man begins to move toward God on that basis, he will find that God will communicate with him.

Jacob makes this very interesting statement: “for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.” He went over the Jordan with just his walking stick, his staff—that's all he had. Now he is coming back, and he has become two companies. This is Jacob for you.

Jacob really cried out to God. That night was a very difficult night for him, and he didn't have any aspirins he could take. – McGee

***Gen 32:13-16 So he lodged there that same night, and took what came to his hand as a present for Esau his brother: two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milk camels with their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten foals. Then he delivered them to the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass over before me, and put some distance between successive droves."***

This is Jacob's tactic. He will send out a drove, a very rich gift, for his brother, and when that first drove arrives, Esau will say, “What is this?” The servants will reply, “We are bringing you a gift from your brother Jacob.” Esau will receive that gift and then ride on a little farther to meet another drove of the same size. He will ask the servants, “Where are you going?” They will say, “We're going to meet Esau with a gift from his brother Jacob.” And he will say, “I am Esau.” Believe me, by the time Esau gets down where Jacob and the family are, he will be softened.

Jacob has prayed to God and has reminded the Lord, “You told me to return to my country. You said You would protect me.” But does he believe God? No. He goes right ahead and makes these arrangements, which reveals that he isn't trusting God at all. I am afraid that we are often in the same position. Many of us take our burdens to the Lord in prayer. We just spread them out before Him—I do that. Then when we get through praying, we get right up and put each little burden right back on our back and start out again with them. We don't really believe Him, do we? We don't really trust Him as we should. – McGee

***Gen 32:17-21 And he commanded the first one, saying, "When Esau my brother meets you and asks you, saying, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going? Whose are these in front of you?' then you shall say, 'They are your servant Jacob's. It is a present sent to my lord Esau; and behold, he also is behind us.' " So he commanded the second, the third, and all who followed the droves, saying, "In this manner you shall speak to Esau when you find him; and also say, 'Behold, your servant Jacob is behind us.' " For he said, "I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me." So the present went on over before him, but he himself lodged that night in the camp.***

Jacob next sent three successive droves of animals totaling 580 head as gifts for Esau, hoping to appease him. Esau would get the gift in three installments. Jacob's maneuvers manifested his unbelief or at least a mixture of faith and unbelief. – Believers' Bible Commentary

Jacob has prayed to God and has reminded the Lord, “You told me to return to my country. You said You would protect me.” But does he believe God? No. He goes right ahead and makes these arrangements, which reveals that he isn't trusting God at all. I am afraid that we are often in the same position. Many of

## **Gen 32 – Jacob Wrestles God and settles old conflicts.**

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***Gen 32:22-23 And he arose that night and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of Jabbok. He took them, sent them over the brook, and sent over what he had.***

This is the night of the great experience in Jacob's life. The land where he crossed the Brook Jabbok is very desolate. When I was there, I purposely got away from my group and took a walk across the bridge that is there today. The United States built a very lovely road through that area for the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan. There are several things in that area which you would not be able to see if there wasn't that good road, because it is quite a wilderness area. I took pictures of sheep that were drinking down at the Brook Jabbok. The crossing there is a very bleak place, right down between two hills, in that very mountainous and very rugged country. Here is where Jacob came that night. He is not a happy man, and he is filled with fear and doubts. You see, chickens are coming home to roost. He had mistreated Esau. God had never told him to get the birthright or the blessing in the way he did it. God would have gotten it for him. That night Jacob sends all that he has across the Brook Jabbok, but he stays on the other side so that, if his brother Esau comes, he might kill Jacob but spare the family. And so Jacob is left alone. – McGee

***Gen 32:24 Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day.***

There are several things I would like to get straight as we come to this wrestling match. I have heard it said that Jacob did the wrestling. Actually, Jacob didn't want to wrestle anybody. He has Uncle Laban in back of him who doesn't mean good at all, and he has his brother Esau ahead of him. Jacob is no match for either one. He is caught now between a rock and a hard place, and he doesn't know which way to turn. Do you think he wanted to take on a third opponent that night? I don't think so.

This is the question: Who is this one who wrestled with Jacob that night? There has been a great deal of speculation about who it is, but I think He is none other than the preincarnate Christ. There is some evidence for this in the prophecy of Hosea: "Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind: he daily increaseth lies and desolation; and they do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried into Egypt. The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will he recompense him. He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Beth-el, and there he spake with us; Even the LORD God of hosts; the LORD is his memorial" (Hos\_12:1-5). "The LORD is his memorial"—or, "the Lord is His name." It was none other than Jehovah, the preincarnate Christ, who wrestled with Jacob that night. – McGee

***Gen 32:25-26 Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!"***

What happens now? Jacob is just holding on; he's not wrestling. He is just holding on to this One. He found out that you do not get anywhere with God by struggling and resisting. The only way that you get anywhere with Him is by yielding and just holding on to Him. Abraham had learned that, and that is why he said amen to God. He believed God, and He counted it to him for righteousness. Abraham reached

## Gen 32 – Jacob Wrestles God and settles old conflicts.

the end of his rope and put his arms around God. My friend, when you get in that condition, then you trust God. When you are willing to hold on, He is there ready to help you. - McGee

The hip joint involves the two largest bones in your body and 5 strong and dense ligaments hold the joint together. The injury is extremely painful and dislocation requires a tremendous amount of force – typically a car accident today. Jacob walked with a limp all his life as a reminder and to humble him.

1. See the Love and Patience of God. He wrestled with Jacob all night. Have you ever felt you were wrestling with God? How can we live our lives so God does not have to wrestle with us to get our attention – much less take out our hip?
2. When we find ourselves in those situations, are we throwing in the towel, or not letting go until we get the blessing?

***Gen 32:27-32 So He said to him, "What is your name?" He said, "Jacob." And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell me Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why is it that you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there. So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." Just as he crossed over Peniel the sun rose on him, and he limped on his hip. Therefore to this day the children of Israel do not eat the muscle that shrank, which is on the hip socket, because He touched the socket of Jacob's hip in the muscle that shrank.***

Although Jacob lost the encounter physically, he won a great spiritual victory. He learned to triumph through defeat and to be strong through weakness. Emptied of self and of confidence in his own cleverness, he confessed he was Jacob, a supplanter, a "con man." God then changed his name to Israel (variously translated as "God rules," "one who strives with God," or "a prince of God"). Jacob called the name of the place Peniel (the face of God) because he realized he had seen the Lord. – Believers Bible Commentary

No different than our own children, God asks us to trust Him and fall back. David did it with lion and the bear before he faced the giant. Jonah knew the heart of God and ran because he did not want his enemies to experience God's grace, but as the waters closed in the fish came. The world would say this is disaster, but it was God's deliverance. In our lowest times in the very act of disobedience, God is there to save us always, if we cry out. Jacob started out life as heal grabber, but God gave him a new name and even dislocated his hip to humble him and get his attention. Then, you see a changed humbled Jacob in the end (see Genesis 47:7-10).

### **Application:**

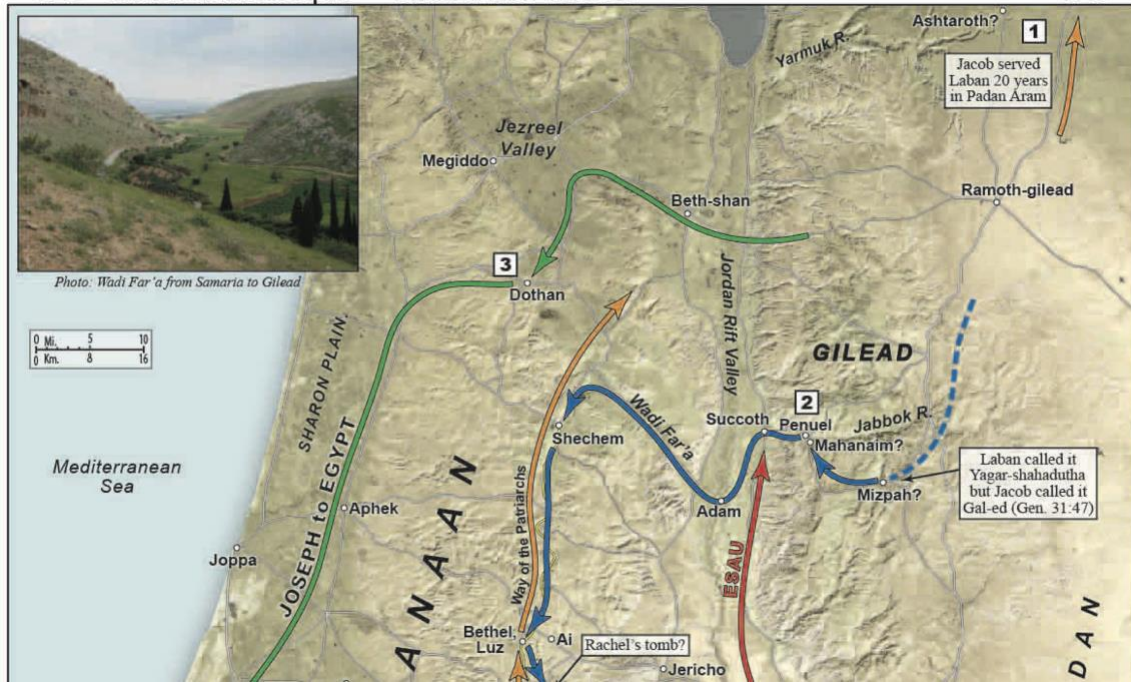
- **Don't shrink from the Giants of your life – God knows your situation as he has you hemmed in.**
- **Don't run from God or hide from Him. Where are you going to run? He will chase you if you're His child.**
- **Humble yourself and obey. Your stubbornness sometimes just ends up in scars and limps.**

# Gen 32 – Jacob Wrestles God and settles old conflicts.

2-3 Jacob and Joseph

Date: c. 1930-1876 BC

2-3





**THEME:** *Jacob meets Esau; Jacob journeys to Shalem.*

In the previous chapter we saw the high point in the life of Jacob, which was his encounter with God. On that night “a man” wrestled with him, and the “man,” not Jacob, did the wrestling. Jacob was not looking for another fight. He has Uncle Laban in back of him and Brother Esau ahead of him, and the last time he saw both of them they were breathing out threatenings against him. This man Jacob is not in a position to take on someone else. Therefore, the “man” took the initiative; He was the aggressor. He was, as we have seen, the preincarnate Christ. Jacob resisted Him until the touch of God crippled him. Then, recognizing at last who He was, Jacob clung to Him until He blessed him. From this point on we will begin to see a change in Jacob. As we follow his life in the chapter before us, we will think that we have met a new man. To tell the truth, he *is* a new man.

**Gen 33:1-3** *Now Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and there, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maidservants. And he put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children behind, and Rachel and Joseph last. Then he crossed over before them and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.*

Jacob wants to spare his family; so he separates them from the others. I would love to have a picture of Jacob meeting his brother Esau! I suppose that while he was a mile away from him, he started bowing. He is coming with his hat in his hand because Esau has four hundred men with him, and Jacob doesn't know if he is coming as friend or foe. - McGee

**Gen 33:4** *But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.*

Well, they are twins, they are brothers. Let bygones be bygones. It looks as if God has certainly touched Esau's heart because he had sworn vengeance that he would kill Jacob. - McGee

**Gen 33:5-7** *And he lifted his eyes and saw the women and children, and said, "Who are these with you?" So he said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant." Then the maidservants came near, they and their children, and bowed down. And Leah also came near with her children, and they bowed down. Afterward Joseph and Rachel came near, and they bowed down.*

As Esau drew near, Jacob lapsed back into fearfulness and merely natural behavior, arranging his household in such a way as to afford maximum protection for those he loved most. Jacob bowed himself to the ground seven times as he approached his brother. Esau, by comparison, was relaxed, warm, and effusive as he met Jacob first, then Jacob's wives and children. – Believers Bible Commentary

**Gen 33:8** *Then Esau said, "What do you mean by all this company which I met?" And he said, "These are to find favor in the sight of my lord."*

Apparently Jacob believes for a moment that his strategy of approaching his brother has worked. But it wasn't necessary. Listen to Esau—what a change! - McGee

**Gen 33:9-11** *But Esau said, "I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself." And Jacob said, "No, please, if I have now found favor in your sight, then receive my present from my hand, inasmuch as I have seen your face as though I had seen the face of God, and you were pleased with*

***me. Please, take my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough." So he urged him, and he took it.***

Esau is saying, "You didn't need to send that to me. I have plenty already." This is almost a humorous scene. Up to this time, each was trying to get something from the other. This was especially true of Jacob. Now we find Jacob in a new role altogether. Here he is insisting that his brother take a gift. Esau says, "You don't have to give it to me. I have plenty." But Jacob insists that he accept it. Believe me, something has happened to Jacob! - McGee

He protested mildly against the extravagant gift of livestock but finally consented to accept it. Jacob seems to have shown undue servility to his brother, speaking of himself as his servant. – Believers Bible Commentary

***Gen 33:12-14 Then Esau said, "Let us take our journey; let us go, and I will go before you." But Jacob said to him, "My lord knows that the children are weak, and the flocks and herds which are nursing are with me. And if the men should drive them hard one day, all the flock will die. Please let my lord go on ahead before his servant. I will lead on slowly at a pace which the livestock that go before me, and the children, are able to endure, until I come to my lord in Seir."***

Esau is saying, "Now as you return to the land, let me go before you, show you the way, and be a protection for you." Jacob says, "I'm moving my family, and we have little ones, also we have young among the flocks and herds. We can't go very fast. You, of course, with that army of four hundred will probably want to move much faster; so you go ahead." - McGee

***Gen 33:15-17 And Esau said, "Now let me leave with you some of the people who are with me." But he said, "What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord." So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, built himself a house, and made booths for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.***

Esau lived in southern Canaan in Seir, the "land of Edom," at this time. After their father's death, he moved to Mount Seir, which God subsequently gave to Esau for a possession (Deu\_2:5). - McGee

When Esau suggested that they travel back together, Jacob pretended that this would be impossible because of the slow pace required by the children and young animals. Jacob promised to meet Esau in Seir (Edom), although he had no intention of doing so. Even when Esau tried to leave behind some of his men to travel with Jacob's household, the latter refused the offer without revealing the real reasons—fear and suspicion. – Believers Bible Commentary

Now let us not pass by so quickly and easily here that we do not pay attention to what has happened. A great change has come over this man Jacob. You see, all of Jacob's clever scheming to present a gift to his brother Esau has just come to naught. God had prepared the heart of Laban not to harm Jacob, and God had prepared the heart of Esau to receive Jacob. Now he has peace on both fronts. Esau did not want the gift of Jacob because Esau himself had an abundance. When Jacob insisted, he took the gift out of courtesy. Both these brothers seem to be generous and genuine in their reconciliation. We have no reason to doubt it. Since Esau is now prosperous, and since he attached no particular value to his birthright anyway, there is no reason why he should not be reconciled to his twin brother.

## Gen 33 – Jacob and Esau met

Now the sunshine is beginning to fall on Jacob's life. Laban is appeased and Esau is reconciled. God had arranged all of this for him. Had Jacob been left to his own cupidity and his own cleverness, he would have come to his death in a violent manner. Before too long Jacob is going to look back over his life, and when he does, he is going to see the hand of God in his life, and he is going to give God the glory. However, the evil that he has sown is yet to bring forth a full harvest. Trouble is in the offing for this man. It is there waiting for him.

Esau rides off to Seir, and we bid good-bye to him for the time being. He will be back, however, for the funeral of his father Isaac, as we will see in chapter 35. - McGee

***Gen 33:18-20 Then Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan Aram; and he pitched his tent before the city. And he bought the parcel of land, where he had pitched his tent, from the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money. Then he erected an altar there and called it El Elohe Israel.***

Instead of traveling south to Mount Seir, Jacob went northwest. At length he arrived at Shechem and settled there, erecting an altar which he (perhaps presumptuously) called El Elohe Israel (God, the God of Israel). Twenty years earlier, when God had appeared to him at Bethel, Jacob had vowed that the Lord would be his God, that he would give a tenth of his wealth to the Lord, and that he would establish Bethel as God's house (Gen\_28:20-22). Now, instead of returning to Bethel, he settles thirty miles away in the fertile area of Shechem, probably for the sake of his livestock. (Shechem represents the world.) God does not speak directly to him until several years later, when He calls on Jacob to fulfill his vow (chap. 35). In the meantime, the tragic events of chapter 34 take place.- Believers Bible Commentary

V 18-19 - Jacob is sometimes criticized because he stopped here at Succoth and at Shalem and did not proceed on to Bethel. Actually, we ought not to expect too much of Jacob at this time. He's been crippled, and he is just learning to walk with his spiritual legs.

v.20 Jacob builds an altar here, just as his grandfather Abraham was accustomed to building altars wherever he went. The fine feature is that Jacob identifies his new name with the name of God. He calls it El-elohe-Israel which means, "God, the God of Israel." This indicates real growth in a man who is just learning to walk. Let's put it like this. This man is on the way to Bethel, but he hasn't arrived there yet. First he journeys to Succoth.

## Genesis 34 – Dinah and the Disaster that follows

THEME: Dinah defiled by Shechem; Simeon and Levi slay the men of Hamor.

Frankly, Jacob made a mistake by stopping in Shalem, for there is going to be a scandal at this point in the family of this man. Dinah, the daughter of Jacob by Leah, is defiled by Shechem, son of Hamor the Hivite. Then Simeon and Levi, Dinah's full brothers, avenge this act by slaying all the inhabitants of the city of Hamor. This cannot be justified, and it is a dark blot on the family of Jacob. It reveals the fact that Jacob did not get away too soon when he left his Uncle Laban down in the land of Haran. We need to see that God was right in getting him away from that environment.

There are two things that God spends a great deal of time with in Genesis. First of all, there is heredity. God is very much concerned that a believer marry a believer and that a believer not marry an unbeliever. That is important for the sake of heredity. The second thing of concern is the environment of the individual. We see this especially in the life of Jacob. He has a big family. Not only were there twelve sons, but there were also daughters. We are given the record of only this one daughter because she features in this very sad chapter.

There is something else for us to note that is important to the understanding of Genesis, and that is that there is trouble in the families. Have you noticed that? There was strife and trouble in the family of Abraham. There was strife and trouble in the family of Isaac. Esau was Isaac's favorite, and Rebekah's favorite was her son Jacob—and that caused a great deal of trouble in the family. Now we will see that there was a great deal of trouble in the family of Jacob.

Jacob stops and stays in Shalem for awhile, and it is going to cause a great deal of sorrow to him. Very frankly, chapter 34 is a sad, sordid chapter, and this must have been a heartbreak to old Jacob at this time. Jacob (or Israel, as we should call him) has built an altar, and he is now giving a testimony to the living and true God. There is a change in his life, but it is a slow growth, a development. This should be a lesson to us today: Don't expect that, as a Christian, you are going to become full grown overnight. God adopts us as full-grown sons into the family where we are able to understand the divine truth because the Holy Spirit is our Teacher. But our spiritual growth and our progress are very slow. We may learn truths in the Bible, but we will find that in our lives we are very much like Simon Peter, stumbling here and falling down there. Thank God that Simon Peter kept getting up and brushing himself off, and there came a day when he had a very close walk with the Lord. In fact, he walked to a cross even as our Lord did. You and I need to recognize that in our own lives the growth is slow, and therefore the growth in others will also be slow. Sometimes parents of converted children expect too much of them. Let's not expect too much of other folk, but let's also expect a great deal of ourselves.

There are three chapters in the Book of Genesis that are not pretty at all, and they all concern the children of Leah, the elder daughter of Laban who was given to Jacob. I believe that this gives evidence of the fact that God does not approve of plurality of marriages. The very fact that it was forced on Jacob to a certain extent did not make it right, by any means—Jacob at least went along with it. We find in this section that the children of Leah are all involved in sin. She had four boys. In this chapter it is Simeon and Levi. In chapter 35 we come to another of the sons, Reuben, the firstborn. In chapter 38 it will be Judah. Every one of Leah's sons turned out rather badly, and there was flagrant sin in their lives.

We have already noted that there was a great deal of strife in all of these families, but now another element has entered in. There is sordidness and a shoddiness that has seeped into the family of Jacob that was not in the family of Abraham or of Isaac. They had a great deal of difficulty and many problems, but nothing like we see in Jacob's family. Again, God wanted to get this man Jacob and his family out from the home of Laban, out from that atmosphere, because the very atmosphere gave the background for these awful sins that are mentioned here.- McGee

### DINAH DEFILED BY SHECHEM

Jacob has stopped here at Shalem and has bought himself a nice little place out in the suburban area of town. He is attempting, as it were, to orient himself to the culture of that day. Well, it wasn't a good place, and God wants to

## Genesis 34 – Dinah and the Disaster that follows

separate this man from this area also. And believe me, after you read this chapter you will come to the conclusion that God had better separate him from it! – McGee

**Gen 34:1-2** *Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her, and violated her.*

Trouble normally happens when you are out where you are not supposed to be and with folks you should not be hanging around. Anyone else made this mistake? Out with the wrong crowd?

Let me put it in the language of the news media today: He raped her. If they can say it in print and on radio and television, certainly this poor preacher can say it. Sin needs to be spelled out. There was a time when sin was sin, but now they've taken the "s" off of it, and you're in the "in" group if you're a sinner. But that's not the way God spells sin. He still spells it S-I-N. And you will notice that "I" is right in the middle of the word—that's where all of us are. – McGee

**Gen 34:3-4** *His soul was strongly attracted to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the young woman and spoke kindly to the young woman. So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Get me this young woman as a wife."*

The very interesting thing is that the boy Shechem was apparently in love with the girl and really wanted to marry her. - McGee

**Gen 34:5-7** *And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter. Now his sons were with his livestock in the field; so Jacob held his peace until they came. Then Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him. And the sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard it; and the men were grieved and very angry, because he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, a thing which ought not to be done.*

We certainly agree that it should not have been done, but it had been, and now the fellow wants to marry her. When Jacob heard it, he waited for his boys to come in, and they had a war counsel. I am of the opinion that Jacob probably should not have made as much of it as he did. When Hamor, the father of Shechem, came out to him, it is obvious that he wanted to get the girl for his son's wife. Jacob probably should have yielded to that, because that was, shall I say, the best way out at the time. Certainly, the way it was handled was not the best by any means, and God did not approve of it. – McGee

**Did Jacob agree to it and the boys settled the score anyway, or was there trickery on both sides?**

**Gen 34:8-9** *But Hamor spoke with them, saying, "The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter. Please give her to him as a wife. And make marriages with us; give your daughters to us, and take our daughters to yourselves.*

Although intermarriage would have been wrong, it seems that Dinah should have been given to Shechem because that would have prevented a worse sin. This, of course, is hindsight, and "Monday morning quarterbacks" are not always right. – McGee

**Gen 34:10-13** *So you shall dwell with us, and the land shall be before you. Dwell and trade in it, and acquire possessions for yourselves in it." Then Shechem said to her father and her brothers, "Let me find favor in your eyes, and whatever you say to me I will give. Ask me ever so much dowry and gift, and I will give according to what you say to me; but give me the young woman as a wife." But the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father, and spoke deceitfully, because he had defiled Dinah their sister.*

## Genesis 34 – Dinah and the Disaster that follows

All of this reveals that Jacob is going to have to move on. This is no place for him, mixing with these people in this land. I feel that Jacob should certainly have taken the leadership in his family. First of all, he should have prevented his sons from deceiving Shechem and Hamor. – McGee

**Gen 34:14** *And they said to them, "We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that would be a reproach to us.*

The thing that disturbs me about this incident is that the real reproach—the sin of rape—is ignored, and they make the reproach on the basis of the rule which God had given them regarding intermarriage with the uncircumcised.- McGee

**Gen 34:15-17** *But on this condition we will consent to you: If you will become as we are, if every male of you is circumcised, then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters to us; and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. But if you will not heed us and be circumcised, then we will take our daughter and be gone."*

The thing that Jacob's sons ask them to do is to go through the ritual of circumcision. **Do we do that today? Go through something that we don't mean for other reasons.**

Mark Twain was not a Christian, and he was in love with a very beautiful, wonderful Christian girl. She would not marry him until he became a Christian. He professed to have accepted Christ as his Savior, and they started out their marriage that way. Well, Mark Twain became very famous, and he was entertained by many famous people in the world. One day when he came back to his home in Missouri and she wanted to go to church, he said, "Look, I can't keep up the front any longer. You go on to church. I know now that I'm not a Christian." May I say that made a very unhappy home, and it absolutely spoiled the life of this lovely Christian girl.

Here the sons of Jacob are saying, "If you'll go through the rite of circumcision, it will make everything all right." A great many people think that if you join the church, nod your head, and are able to use the right vocabulary and quote the right verse, that means you are a Christian. My friend, that does not mean you are a Christian. If you have trusted in Christ, something has happened, and you are a different person. – McGee

**Gen 34:18-19** *And their words pleased Hamor and Shechem, Hamor's son. So the young man did not delay to do the thing, because he delighted in Jacob's daughter. He was more honorable than all the household of his father.*

I agree that this boy is doing the honorable thing at this point. – McGee

Ironically, at this point in the story, this young man is the most honorable out of all of them.

**Gen 34:20-23** *And Hamor and Shechem his son came to the gate of their city, and spoke with the men of their city, saying: "These men are at peace with us. Therefore let them dwell in the land and trade in it. For indeed the land is large enough for them. Let us take their daughters to us as wives, and let us give them our daughters. Only on this condition will the men consent to dwell with us, to be one people: if every male among us is circumcised as they are circumcised. Will not their livestock, their property, and every animal of theirs be ours? Only let us consent to them, and they will dwell with us."*

The sons of Jacob had no intention of giving Dinah to Shechem, but they lied that they would do so if the men of the city would be circumcised. The sacred sign of God's covenant was to be used wickedly. In good faith, Hamor, Shechem, and all the men of their city met the condition. – Believers Bible Commentary

In other words, through intermarriage these men expected to eventually own everything that Jacob had. – McGee

## Genesis 34 – Dinah and the Disaster that follows

**A religious ceremony performed on the basis of deceit and greed, but that would never happen today, right?**

***Gen 34:24 And all who went out of the gate of his city heeded Hamor and Shechem his son; every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city.***

Performing the rite of circumcision on unbelievers was as phony as it could be. It is like joining a church when you are unconverted.-McGee

***Gen 34:25 Now it came to pass on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword and came boldly upon the city and killed all the males.***

This was real trickery. Simeon and Levi were Dinah's full brothers, and they wanted to get revenge. In their revenge, they go too far. Neither the rape nor the fact that Hamor intended to dispossess Jacob and his sons of the great wealth which Jacob had accumulated in Haran can in any way justify the brutal act of Simeon and Levi, but it does reveal the impossible situation of dealing with the inhabitants of that land. The thing they have done is a very terrible thing. – McGee

***Gen 34:26-27 And they killed Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem's house, and went out. The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and plundered the city, because their sister had been defiled.***

The other sons joined in on this. This reveals greed in the family of Jacob that is not right and which they had learned in the home of Laban. – McGee

But while the Shechemites were recovering from the surgery, Simeon and Levi treacherously murdered them and plundered their wealth – Believer's Bible Commentary

***Gen 34:28-30 They took their sheep, their oxen, and their donkeys, what was in the city and what was in the field, and all their wealth. All their little ones and their wives they took captive; and they plundered even all that was in the houses. Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have troubled me by making me obnoxious among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and since I am few in number, they will gather themselves together against me and kill me. I shall be destroyed, my household and I."***

Notice something that is obviously wrong here in the life of Jacob. Jacob rebukes Simeon and Levi for giving him a bad name, but he doesn't rebuke them for the sin that they have committed. We sometimes get a wrong perspective of sin and of our actions. We think only of the effect that it is going to have. There are many men and women in our churches who will not take a stand on certain issues. Why? Well, the little crowd they run with may not accept them. They are with a little clique, and they don't dare stand for anything that the little clique wouldn't stand for. It is never a question of whether it is right or wrong; it's a question of whether it ingratiates them to the crowd. God have mercy on Christians who shape their lives by those who are around them and who are constantly looking for the effect their conduct is going to have on others. They do not look on whether this is the right thing or the Christian thing or whether as a child of God this is something they should or should not do. This is the reason our churches are filled with those who compromise, and it is little wonder that we have so many frustrated, unhappy Christians today. It is a wonderful thing to stand for the truth, and when you stand for it, then you don't have to compromise. How wonderful it is when we will do that. Poor old Jacob is growing, but he hasn't grown that far.

Then these boys, of course, attempt to defend themselves: - McGee

## Genesis 34 – Dinah and the Disaster that follows

When Jacob administered a mild rebuke, Simeon and Levi answered that their sister should not have been treated like a harlot. Actually Jacob seemed to be more concerned about his own welfare than the horrible injustice that had been done to the men of Shechem. Notice his eight uses of the first-person pronoun in verse 30. – Believers' Bible Commentary

***Gen 34:31 But they said, "Should he treat our sister like a harlot?"***

That's a good question. I would say that if they wanted to take the judgment into their own hands, they first of all should have heard this boy out and let him marry their sister. It would have been the best thing to do under the circumstances, but it is not the right thing, by any means. Certainly that would have been better than to go to the extreme of murdering the inhabitants of that land. There is no excuse that can be offered, and I have no defense to offer for them at all. They should not have done the thing that they did, but we must understand that they were not living in the light of Rom\_12:19-21 which says: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." For a Christian today Romans 12 is the policy that he should follow. The very minute we attempt to take revenge or get vengeance, it means that we are no longer walking by faith. We are saying that we cannot trust God to work it out. However, I am not sure that you could bring Jacob—and certainly not his sons—up to such a spiritual level at that particular time. But you cannot justify this terrible deed which they have committed. You can well understand that they acted because of their feeling for their sister and the shame which had been brought upon the family. Jacob was beginning to see that a whole lot of chickens—not just a few—were coming home to roost.



## Genesis 35-36 – Jacob’s trouble

Introduction: As soon as Esau had turned his back and started home, Jacob took his family down to Shalem. It is a tragic move. Jacob was still depending upon his own cleverness. Dinah was raped, and Simeon and Levi, her full brothers, went into the city of Shalem to the prince who was responsible. Although he wanted to marry her, they murdered him, and the sons of Jacob conducted a slaughter that would make a gang shooting in Chicago look pretty tame. When they came home, Jacob said, “You have made my name to smell among the people of my land.”

Many expositors say that it was a tragic thing for Jacob to stop in Shalem, and I must say that I have to go along with that partially. But I have one question to ask: Was Jacob ready for Bethel? Was he ready for the experiences that God was going to give him? No, I think that the tragic things that took place in chapter 34 were the result of a man who had been walking in the energy of the flesh. There had been a deflation of self, but there was no discernible faith in God. Because he did not have faith to go on to Bethel, he stopped at Shalem. These tragic things which took place in his life reveal that this man was not a leader in his own family. He was not taking the proper place that he should have. He was no spiritual giant, by any means. And to have those eleven boys to herd was really a job for which this man Jacob was not prepared. After this tragic event, Jacob now is beginning to see the hand of God in his life, and now he makes the decision that he probably should have made beforehand. - McGee

### God Blesses and Renames Jacob

***Gen 35:1-3 Then God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother." And Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments. Then let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone."***

We need to recognize that the years we spend in living a shoddy, shabby Christian life are a waste of time, absolutely a waste of time. God called the children of Israel to get out of Egypt and into the land of promise. God appeared to them and told them to go into the land, but they didn't go in. Forty years they wandered around, and then God appeared to Joshua and said, “Go into the land.” He picked up right where He had left off. They had wasted forty years. How many people are wasting their lives as Christians? My, the tremendous spiritual lessons that are here for us! I don't know about you, but some of us are just like Jacob, and that's the reason this is so applicable to us today. Thank God that He says He is the God of Jacob. I love that! If He'll be the God of Jacob, He'll be the God of J. Vernon McGee also—that's wonderful! This chapter is a great encouragement to us – McGee

**Have you put away your other gods? What and who do you worship?** If you are curious, look at your bank account and your free time to see if you are worshipping other gods?

***Gen 35:4-8 So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which were in their hands, and the earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree which was by Shechem. And they journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities that were all around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. So Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him. And he built an altar there and called the place El Bethel, because there God appeared to him when he fled from the face of his brother. Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under the terebinth tree. So the name of it was called Allon Bachuth.***

Chapter 35 opens with God's command to Jacob to fulfill the vow made about thirty years earlier (Gen\_28:20-22). The Lord used the tragic events of the previous chapter to prepare the patriarch to do it. Notice that God is referred to about twenty times in this chapter, in contrast to no references in chapter 34. Before obeying God's command to return to Bethel, Jacob first ordered his family to put away the foreign household gods and to put on clean clothes. As soon as they

## Genesis 35-36 – Jacob’s trouble

did this, they became a terror to their heathen neighbors. It was appropriate that Jacob should build an altar at "El Bethel" and worship the God who had protected him from his brother, Esau. – Believers Bible Commentary

Since Deborah was with Jacob at this time, we assume that Rebekah had already died, and Scripture does not tell us when her death took place. Poor Jacob never saw his mother again. That part is not as tragic as the fact that she never saw him again—she had just sent him away for a little while, you know. The nurse apparently had brought a message of Rebekah's death and had come to stay with Jacob—and now she dies. - McGee

***Gen 35:9-12 Then God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Padan Aram, and blessed him. And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name." So He called his name Israel. Also God said to him: "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body. The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land."***

All those years God had been trying to deal with Jacob. Now he picks up right where He had met him when he came to Bethel as a young man. Those years he spent down there with Uncle Laban, in many ways, were wasted years.

The Lord considers that pretty important property, by the way. This now is the third time He has promised them the land—first to Abraham, then to Isaac, and now to Jacob. The Lord had to tell each one of these men about it two or three times; in fact, He told Abraham many times. - McGee

***Gen 35:13-15 Then God went up from him in the place where He talked with him. So Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He talked with him, a pillar of stone; and he poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it. And Jacob called the name of the place where God spoke with him, Bethel.***

Here is the first mention of a drink offering. In the Book of Leviticus, five offerings are given, but not a drink offering. In fact, no instruction is given about it at all, but it is mentioned. Evidently this is one of the oldest offerings, and it has a very wonderful meaning to the believer today. The drink offering was just poured on the other offerings, and it went up in the steam. Paul told the Philippians that that is the way he wanted his life to be—just poured out like a drink offering. - McGee

### ***The Deaths of Rachel and Isaac***

***Gen 35:16-18 Then they journeyed from Bethel. And when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel labored in childbirth, and she had hard labor. Now it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said to her, "Do not fear; you will have this son also." And so it was, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-Oni; but his father called him Benjamin.***

What a wonderful thing this is—not the death of Rachel, but the way this took place. She says, "Call him 'son of my sorrow,'" but Jacob looked down at him and said, "I've lost my lovely Rachel, and this little fellow looks like her, so I'll just call him Benjamin, 'son of my right hand.'" Jacob was partial to the sons of Rachel.

Jacob's love for Rachel was perhaps the only fine thing in his life during those years in Padan-aram when there was so much evidence of the flesh and of self-seeking. He loved Rachel—there is no question about that. He was totally devoted to her. He was willing to do almost anything for her, such as permitting her to keep the images she had taken from her father. I don't think that Leah would have gotten by with it—or anyone else for that matter. But he was indulgent with Rachel. She had given Jacob his son Joseph, and now she gives birth to Benjamin. And it was at the birth of her second son that she died. His life meant her death. It was a great heartbreak to Jacob.

## Genesis 35-36 – Jacob’s trouble

The other ten boys were no joy to him at all. God reminded him, I think, every day for twenty–four hours of the day that it was sinful to have more than one wife. He didn't need all of them. However, God will overrule, of course. (And He overrules in your life and mine. We can thank Him for that!) But the facts reveal that God did not approve of this plural marriage. This is especially obvious in the treatment which Joseph received from his half–brothers.

Jacob loved Joseph and Benjamin and, very frankly, the other boys were jealous of that. He should not have shown such partiality to Joseph because he had experienced the results of partiality in his own home—he had been the one whom his father had more or less pushed aside. He knew the trouble it had caused. Although I don't try to defend Jacob, we can sympathize with him. He had lost his lovely Rachel, but he had Benjamin. While it was true that the boy was the son of Rachel's sorrow, Jacob could not call him Benoni. He was not the reason of his sorrow; he was the son of his right hand, his walking stick, his staff, the one he would lean on in his old age. It is important to recognize this because it will help us understand the great sorrow Jacob will go through later on. All of it will have its roots in Jacob's sin. God does not approve of the wrong in our lives, my friend. We think we can get by with it, but we will not get by with it—any more than Jacob got by with it. - McGee

***Gen 35:19-20 So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). And Jacob set a pillar on her grave, which is the pillar of Rachel's grave to this day.***

She is buried there today. I have several pictures that I have taken of her tomb that is there. That is, it was there until the time Moses wrote this, but it is also there to this very day. - McGee

***Gen 35:21 Then Israel journeyed and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder.***

In verses Gen\_34:22-26 we have a listing of the sons of Jacob by his different wives. Actually, Joseph and Benjamin were the two boys that were outstanding. The others just didn't turn out well. Again, this proves the fact that God does not bless a plurality of wives. The family of Jacob ought to illustrate that fact to us. Although Uncle Laban was responsible, of course, Jacob went along with it. - McGee

***Gen 35:22-27 And it happened, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine; and Israel heard about it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve: the sons of Leah were Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; the sons of Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin; the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maidservant, were Dan and Naphtali; and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maidservant, were Gad and Asher. These were the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Padan Aram. Then Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre, or Kirjath Arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had dwelt.***

I suspect that the death of their father Isaac was the only occasion which brought these two boys together in the years following Jacob's return to the land.

Have you noticed that this chapter is made prominent by death? First there is the death of Deborah, the maid of Rebekah. In this there is the suggestion of the death of Rebekah herself. Then there is the death of lovely Rachel. Finally, the chapter closes with the death of Isaac. - McGee

***Gen 35:28-29 Now the days of Isaac were one hundred and eighty years. So Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, being old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.***

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## Genesis 35-36 – Jacob’s trouble

Have you noticed that this chapter is made prominent by death? First there is the death of Deborah, the maid of Rebekah. In this there is the suggestion of the death of Rebekah herself. Then there is the death of lovely Rachel. Finally, the chapter closes with the death of Isaac. - McGee

### *Esau's Descendants*

**Gen 36:1-5** *Now this is the genealogy of Esau, who is Edom. Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite; Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite; and Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth. Now Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, and Basemath bore Reuel. And Aholibamah bore Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah. These were the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan.*

Chapter 36 is devoted to the descendants of Esau, who dwelt in the land of Edom, southeast of the Dead Sea. The genealogy represents the fulfillment of the promise that Esau would be the head of a nation (Gen\_25:23). Esau had three or possibly four wives, depending on whether some of the women had two names (compare Gen\_26:34; Gen\_28:9; 36:2-3). – Believers Bible Commentary

Again we are told that Esau is Edom. Esau, you recall, had married two Canaanite women and also an Ishmaelite woman. - McGee

**Gen 36:6-7** *Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the persons of his household, his cattle and all his animals, and all his goods which he had gained in the land of Canaan, and went to a country away from the presence of his brother Jacob. For their possessions were too great for them to dwell together, and the land where they were strangers could not support them because of their livestock.*

Remember that Abraham and Lot had had that same problem. There was not enough grazing land for them. Each one had too many cattle. They had separated and now Esau leaves the Promised Land, leaves it on his own, due to economic circumstances. – McGee

**Gen 36:8-11** *So Esau dwelt in Mount Seir. Esau is Edom. And this is the genealogy of Esau the father of the Edomites in Mount Seir. These were the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, and Reuel the son of Basemath the wife of Esau. And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz.*

Now Esau moves from “the land of Seir” in Canaan, where he lived when Jacob returned from Padan–aram (Gen\_32:3), to Mount Seir, which I have already described. Now Esau moves from “the land of Seir” in Canaan, where he lived when Jacob returned from Padan–aram (Gen\_32:3), to Mount Seir, which I have already described. - McGee

**Gen 36:12** *Now Timna was the concubine of Eliphaz, Esau's son, and she bore Amalek to Eliphaz. These were the sons of Adah, Esau's wife.*

This is the beginning of the Amalekites. Down through the centuries those tribes which were there in the desert pushed out in many directions. Many of them pushed across North Africa. All the Arab tribes came from Abraham—through Hagar, the Egyptian, and through Keturah, whom he married after the death of Sarah. And there has been intermarriage between the tribes. They belong to the same family that Israelites belong to.

In the Mideast I met an Arab who expressed hostility to a statement I had made about the nation Israel in a message I had given to our tour group. Although he was a Christian Arab, he told me how he hated the nation Israel. I said to him, “But he is your brother.” Believe me, that did antagonize him! He said, “I have no relationship with him at all.” I insisted that he did. I said, “You are both Semitic people. You are a Semite as much as they are.” Well, he had to admit that was true.

## Genesis 35-36 – Jacob’s trouble

**Gen 36:13-16** *These were the sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These were the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife. These were the sons of Aholibamah, Esau's wife, the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon. And she bore to Esau: Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah. These were the chiefs of the sons of Esau. The sons of Eliphaz, the firstborn son of Esau, were Chief Teman, Chief Omar, Chief Zepho, Chief Kenaz, Chief Korah, Chief Gatam, and Chief Amalek. These were the chiefs of Eliphaz in the land of Edom. They were the sons of Adah.*

**Gen 36:17-19** *These were the sons of Reuel, Esau's son: Chief Nahath, Chief Zerah, Chief Shammah, and Chief Mizzah. These were the chiefs of Reuel in the land of Edom. These were the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife. And these were the sons of Aholibamah, Esau's wife: Chief Jeush, Chief Jaalam, and Chief Korah. These were the chiefs who descended from Aholibamah, Esau's wife, the daughter of Anah. These were the sons of Esau, who is Edom, and these were their chiefs.*

Where in the world did they get these dukes? Well, here is the beginning of nobility—they just assumed these titles. Each one of them became a duke. It is not just a nickname—they mean business by it. The beginning of nobility is in the family of Esau.

They have dukes in the family now. A great many people in my country can trace their ancestry back to royalty. It makes me wonder if anybody who came from Europe were folk who worked in vineyards, made pottery, and ran shoe shops. Everybody seems to have come from royalty. Well, Esau turned out quite a few of them. In fact, he went further than producing dukes—

**Gen 36:20-24** *These were the sons of Seir the Horite who inhabited the land: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These were the chiefs of the Horites, the sons of Seir, in the land of Edom. And the sons of Lotan were Hori and Hemam. Lotan's sister was Timna. These were the sons of Shobal: Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam. These were the sons of Zibeon: both Ajah and Anah. This was the Anah who found the water in the wilderness as he pastured the donkeys of his father Zibeon.*

This was that Anah that found the mules in the wilderness—The word “mules” is, in several ancient versions, rendered “water springs”; and this discovery of some remarkable fountain was sufficient, among a wandering or pastoral people, to entitle him to such a distinguishing notice.

Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible, vol. 1 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 38.

**Gen 36:25-30** *These were the children of Anah: Dishon and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah. These were the sons of Dishon: Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran. These were the sons of Ezer: Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan. These were the sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran. These were the chiefs of the Horites: Chief Lotan, Chief Shobal, Chief Zibeon, Chief Anah, Chief Dishon, Chief Ezer, and Chief Dishan. These were the chiefs of the Horites, according to their chiefs in the land of Seir.*

**Gen 36:31-34** *Now these were the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the children of Israel: Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom, and the name of his city was Dinhabah. And when Bela died, Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his place. When Jobab died, Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his place.*

This business of having kings was not God's plan for His people. But this was the lifestyle of Edom. They had dukes and kings over them. If you had belonged to the family of Esau, you would have needed a title, because that is the type of

## Genesis 35-36 – Jacob’s trouble

folk they were. It is interesting to note that the people of Esau had kings long before the people of Israel had kings. In fact, later on the people of Israel will say to Samuel, “... make us a king to judge us like all the nations” (1Sa\_8:5). They could have said, “Our brothers down south, the Edomites, have kings. We would like to have kings like they do.” - McGee

***Gen 36:35-39 And when Husham died, Hadad the son of Bedad, who attacked Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his place. And the name of his city was Avith. When Hadad died, Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his place. And when Samlah died, Saul of Rehoboth-by-the-River reigned in his place. When Saul died, Baal-Hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his place. And when Baal-Hanan the son of Achbor died, Hadar reigned in his place; and the name of his city was Pau. His wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.***

This business of having kings was not God's plan for His people. But this was the lifestyle of Edom. They had dukes and kings over them. If you had belonged to the family of Esau, you would have needed a title, because that is the type of folk they were. It is interesting to note that the people of Esau had kings long before the people of Israel had kings. In fact, later on the people of Israel will say to Samuel, “... make us a king to judge us like all the nations” (1Sa\_8:5). They could have said, “Our brothers down south, the Edomites, have kings. We would like to have kings like they do.” - McGee

***Gen 36:40-43 And these were the names of the chiefs of Esau, according to their families and their places, by their names: Chief Timnah, Chief Alvah, Chief Jetheth, Chief Aholibamah, Chief Elah, Chief Pinon, Chief Kenaz, Chief Teman, Chief Mibzar, Chief Magdiel, and Chief Iram. These were the chiefs of Edom, according to their dwelling places in the land of their possession. Esau was the father of the Edomites.***

This is the family history of the rejected line. When the chapter gives the final resumé, it lists again the dukes that came from the line of Esau. There must have been a lot of bowing and scraping to each other when they got together. “I want you to meet my brother here. He is Duke Alvah” and “I want you to meet my friend. He is Duke Timnah.” And the kings—I doubt if you could even get in to see them!

This is a very interesting chapter for anyone who is interested in the study of anthropology or ethnology. A chapter like this gives a family history which probably extends farther back than any other source could go.

So the chapter closes with a list of the dukes and mentions again that their habitation is in the land of their possession which is Edom. “He is Esau the father of the Edomites.” We see the working out of this in the prophecies of Obadiah and in Malachi. This is quite remarkable, friend, and something we cannot just pass by. - McGee

# Genesis 37- Joseph - a representation of Jesus

## Joseph Study – Introduction

### Jesus and Joseph Comparisons

1. Miraculous Birth
2. Sent to save mankind
3. Sold and Betrayed for pieces of Silver
4. Despised by his brothers
5. Jesus had 2 thieves on either side of him at the cross (1 went to heaven and 1 did not). Likewise, Joseph had the Butler and the Baker one was restored to serve the King and the other was executed.
6. Jesus went to the cross before the throne likewise Joseph had to go to the pit and prison before he was at the throne.
7. Jesus was tempted greatly and prevailed as did Joseph.
8. Jesus was 33 when he was risen and Joseph was in his early 30s when he was called up to the throne from prison.
9. Jesus carried out the Father's will as did Joseph.
10. Jesus is the bread of Life and Joseph provided bread to the whole world.

### Themes:

- Joseph is an optimist despite circumstances.
- He is faithful to God, Father, Potiphar, Jailer, brothers and Pharaoh.
- God is in firm control throughout his life.
- Joseph is a picture of Humility always giving God the Glory.
- Joseph's life seems to have had a destiny or a vision God planted in him.

### Issues / Topics in Study

- Broken Relationships
- Cost of following Jesus
- Answered and Unanswered Prayers
- Temptation
- Integrity
- Discernment
- Long Range Planning
- Forgiveness/Restoration
- Perseverance

### Gen 37 - McGee

As we resume the story of the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, we come to the fourth outstanding fixture in this last section of Genesis. From here, all the way through the Book of Genesis, the central figure is Joseph, although we are still dealing with the family of Jacob. More chapters are devoted to Joseph than to Abraham or Isaac or to anyone else. More chapters are devoted to Joseph than to the first whole period from Genesis 1–11. This should cause the thoughtful student to pause and ask why Joseph should be given such prominence in Scripture.

There are probably several reasons. One is that the life of Joseph is a good and honorable life. He is the living example of the verse: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue,

# Genesis 37- Joseph - a representation of Jesus

and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Php\_4:8). God wants us to have whatever is good, virtuous, and great before us, and Joseph's life is just that.

There is a second reason, and it is a great one. There is no one in Scripture who is more like Christ in his person and experiences than Joseph. Yet nowhere in the New Testament is Joseph given to us as a type of Christ. However, the parallel cannot be accidental. As we go on into his story, we shall mention many of these parallels. There are at least thirty which I shall list later.

So now we resume the story of the line of Jacob which is that line leading to the Messiah, the Christ. Jacob is living in Canaan as the story of Joseph begins.

## Joseph's Dreams

***Gen 37:1-2 Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. This is the history of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father.***

Jacob has moved down, apparently, south of Bethlehem and has come to Hebron. This is the place where Abraham had made his home. This is the place of fellowship, of communion with God.

We can see that the bunch of boys Jacob had were real problem children (with the exception of Joseph and Benjamin). It took these men a long time to learn the lessons God would teach them.

Notice now that the emphasis shifts from Jacob to Joseph. Joseph was only seventeen, just a teenager, when this incident took place. He was the youngest of the boys out there with the flocks. Benjamin was still too young, you see, and was still at home. Joseph brought to his father a bad report about the other boys. Of course, they didn't like that. I'm sure they called him a tattletale.- McGee

***Gen 37:3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colors.***

***Gen 37:4 But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.***

Jacob should have learned a lesson in his own home. He knew that to play favorites would cause trouble in a family. His own father had favored the elder brother, and Jacob knew what it was to be discriminated against. But here he practices the very same thing. We can understand his feelings, knowing that Rachel was the wife whom he really loved—she was the one fine thing in his life—and Joseph is really a fine boy, and Jacob loves him dearly. While all this is true, it still is not an excuse. He should not have made him that coat of many colors.

Another possible translation of "coat of many colours" would be the "coat with sleeves," a long-sleeved robe. You see, the ordinary robe in those days consisted of one piece of cloth about ten feet long. They would put a hole in the middle of it and stick the head through this hole. Half of the cloth would drop down the front of the body and half the cloth down the back of the body. They would tie it together around the waist or seam up the sides, and that would be their coat. They didn't have sleeves. So to put sleeves in the coat of any person would set him off from the others. And certainly a coat of many colors would set him apart, also. Naturally, the brothers hated him for being the favorite of his father. They couldn't even speak peaceably to him. So here we see strife in this family also. I tell you, I don't care whose family it is, sin will ruin it. Sin ruins lives, and sin ruins families; sin ruins communities, and it ruins nations. This is the problem with our families and cities and nations today. There is just one cause: God calls it sin.



# Genesis 37- Joseph - a representation of Jesus

So here we find that this boy Joseph is the object of discrimination. His father discriminates in his love for him. The brothers discriminate in their hatred against him. - McGee

***Gen 37:5-6 Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more. So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed:***

How can we explain his conduct here? Why would he go to his father and tattle on his brothers in the first place when he knew it would incur their hatred? Well, I think he just didn't know how bad this world can be. He had no idea how bad his brothers were. I'm of the opinion that he was a rather gullible boy at this time. It took him a long time to find out about the ways of the world, but he certainly did learn. Eventually he probably knew as much about the world and the wickedness of man to man as anyone. But that was later on, not now.

You can just imagine how Joseph has been protected. His father centered all of his affection on Rachel. He had fallen in love with her at first sight and had worked fourteen years for her. Then many years went by before she bore him a child. Finally Joseph was born. What a delight that must have been for Jacob. But now Rachel is gone; so he centers his affection on this boy. He shouldn't have done that—he has other sons to raise—but that is what he has done. Joseph has been loved and protected. - McGee

***Gen 37:7-8 There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf." And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.***

Can't you imagine how they sneered? I'm sure they were cynical. They didn't really believe that he would rule over them. Yet, they hated him because he had this dream. This doesn't end the dreams, though. He had another one. -McGee

***Gen 37:9 Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me."***

***Gen 37:10 So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?"***

***Gen 37:11 And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind.***

e told them this dream and they understood what he was talking about. This same image appears in Rev\_12:1 where a woman is described clothed with the sun, and the moon is under her feet, and she had a crown of twelve stars upon her head. That means the nation of Israel. These brethren understood that Joseph was telling them about themselves, the sons of Israel.

We are seeing the nation of Israel at its beginning here. Genesis is like a bud, and the flower opens up as we go through the Scripture. Here is a bud that is not going to open up until we get into the Book of Revelation. It is a late bloomer, by the way, but it is going to open up there. We need to understand what is being said rather than try to make guesses. We don't need to be guessing when it is made this clear.

Old Jacob understood it exactly, and he chided, "Does this mean that your father, your mother, and your brothers are going to bow down to you?" All Joseph could answer was, "That was the dream." He didn't try to interpret it because it was evident. His brothers just dismissed it, paid no attention to it. They thought it wasn't even in the realm of possibility, as far as they were concerned. They knew that not one of them would ever bow down to Joseph! But Jacob observed the saying. - McGee

# Genesis 37- Joseph - a representation of Jesus

## *Joseph Sold by His Brothers*

**Gen 37:12** *Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.*

**Gen 37:13** *And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." So he said to him, "Here I am."*

**Gen 37:14** *Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem.*

Now this is quite a journey, and he is sent to his brothers that hate him, wearing "the coat of many colors" which might as well have been a red cape at a bull fight!

**If you are Joseph, do you ask questions here or do you just say "yes, Here I am send me!"?**

**Gen 37:15** *Now a certain man found him, and there he was, wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, "What are you seeking?"*

**Gen 37:16** *So he said, "I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding their flocks."*

**Gen 37:17** *And the man said, "They have departed from here, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.' " So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan.*

I can imagine that this man had seen Joseph pass his tent several times; so he asks him who he is looking for. Dothan is a long way north of Shechem. It is near the Valley of Esdraelon, and this is where the brothers have moved the sheep. And at last Joseph found them—there they were. - McGee

**Gen 37:18** *Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him.*

**Gen 37:19** *Then they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming!"*

**Gen 37:20** *Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!"*

ow they hated Joseph! Here they are probably almost one hundred miles from home, and they say to each other, "Let's get rid of him now, and we'll see what will become of his dreams!"

Before we go on with the story, I want to call to your attention the comparison of Joseph to the Lord Jesus. You just should not miss the analogy.

1. The birth of Joseph was miraculous in that it was by the intervention of God as an answer to prayer. The Lord Jesus is virgin born. His birth was certainly miraculous!
2. Joseph was loved by his father. The Lord Jesus was loved by His Father, who declared, "This is My beloved Son."
3. Joseph had the coat of many colors which set him apart. Christ was set apart in that He was "separate from sinners."
4. Joseph announced that he was to rule over his brethren. The Lord Jesus presented Himself as the Messiah. Just as they ridiculed Joseph's message, so they also ridiculed Jesus. In fact, nailed to His cross were the words: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

## Genesis 37- Joseph - a representation of Jesus

5. Joseph was sent by his father to his brethren. Jesus was sent to His brethren—He came first to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

6. Joseph was hated by his brethren without a cause, and the Lord Jesus was hated by His brethren without a cause.

As we return to the story now, remember that Joseph is approaching his brothers, and they are plotting against him. He is wearing that coat of many colors or with the sleeves, which was a mark of position. We must remember that Joseph was younger than his brothers yet was in a position above them. So there is all this hatred and jealousy—to the point of murder!

Reuben has already lost his position as the firstborn. However, he stands in a good light here. He has more mature judgment than the others. - McGee

***Gen 37:21 But Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill him."***

***Gen 37:22 And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit which is in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him"—that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father.***

***Gen 37:23 So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him.***

They would have killed him right then and there if Reuben had not intervened. It was Reuben's avowed purpose, after Joseph had been put into the pit, to slip back again and take him out of the pit and take him home to his father. That coat Joseph wore was like waving a red flag in front of a bull. They hated it because it set him apart from them. According to the law of primogeniture, the older brothers had a prior claim; so they stripped off from Joseph the hated coat. - McGee

***Gen 37:24 Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it.***

***Gen 37:25 And they sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry them down to Egypt.***

***Gen 37:26 So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood?"***

***Gen 37:27 Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh." And his brothers listened.***

***Gen 37:28 Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.***

This was a caravan of traders that was going by. Now Judah intervenes when he sees some traders going by. It is a very mercenary plan that he has, but at least he doesn't want murder to take place. He doesn't want the blood of Joseph to be on their hands. The brothers were satisfied with the suggestion because what they wanted was to get rid of him—they didn't care how it was accomplished. They realized the Ishmeelites would take him down to Egypt and would sell him there as a slave. At least they would be rid of him. Slavery in most places was a living death, and they knew they would certainly never hear from him again.

Who are the Ishmeelites? They are the descendants of Ishmael, the son of Abraham. Who are the Midianites? They are the descendants of Midian, a son of Abraham. Ishmael was the son of Abraham by Hagar, and Midian was the son of

# Genesis 37- Joseph - a representation of Jesus

Abraham by Keturah whom he married after the death of Sarah. They are all brethren—they are actually kin to this group of boys who are selling their brother! At this time, who was an Israelite? They would travel together. - McGee

**Gen 37:29** *Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph was not in the pit; and he tore his clothes.*

**Gen 37:30** *And he returned to his brothers and said, "The lad is no more; and I, where shall I go?"*

**Gen 37:31** *So they took Joseph's tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood.*

Scripture does not tell us whether they told Reuben what they actually had done, but I'm of the opinion they did. And they probably said it was no use chasing after the merchants because they were a long way off by now; so he might as well help them think up a good story to tell Jacob. - McGee

**Gen 37:32** *Then they sent the tunic of many colors, and they brought it to their father and said, "We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son's tunic or not?"*

**Gen 37:33** *And he recognized it and said, "It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces."*

Pretty clever, isn't it? They act as if they had never seen Joseph. They pretend they just found this coat. Believe me, they knew that hated coat! But they pretend they don't recognize it and ask their father whether he recognizes it. Jacob knew whose coat it was. He comes to a natural conclusion and, of course, the conclusion to which the brothers intended for him to come.

Let's pause and take another look at this. They killed a kid of the goats and used that blood on the coat. Does this matter of deceiving a father with a goat remind us of something we've heard before? Remember that when Rebekah and Jacob were conniving, they used a kid for the savory meat dish, and they took the skin of the goat and put it on the hands and arms of Jacob to deceive his father. Now the brothers of Joseph are using the blood of a goat to deceive their father, who is none other than Jacob himself. They hand the coat to him and say, "Do you recognize it? We just found it up there in the mountains. It looks like a wild beast must have got to him." Old Jacob came to the conclusion that his son Joseph had been killed.

Notice this very carefully. Jacob is deceived in exactly the same way that he had deceived. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal\_6:7)—not something else, not something similar, but the same thing. This man Jacob did some bad sowing. He used deception, and now that he is a father, he is deceived in the identical way that he had deceived his own father years before.

When we sow corn, we reap corn. When we sow tares, we reap tares. We get exactly what we sow. This is true in any realm you wish to move in today. It is true in the physical realm, in the moral, and in the spiritual realm. That is true also for the believer. If you think you can get by with sin because you are a child of God, you have another thought coming. In fact, you'd better take that other thought and not commit the sin because God is no respecter of persons. He said this is the way it is going to be, and you are not an exception. I talked to a minister who had gotten involved with another man's wife. As I talked with him, he tried to justify himself on the basis that he was someone special to the Lord. He felt that because he was who he was, he could operate on a little different plane and by a different rule book than anyone else. But he found that God is no respecter of persons. - McGee

**Gen 37:34** *Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days.*

**Gen 37:35** *And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, "For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning." Thus his father wept for him.*

## Genesis 37- Joseph - a representation of Jesus

Perhaps some will think his grief is a demonstration of how much Jacob loved his son Joseph. I'll admit that he certainly loved this boy. But it reveals that Jacob had not learned to walk by faith yet, friend. You recall the experience he had at Peniel. It was the deflation of the old ego. The flesh collapsed there, but now he must learn to walk by faith. He hasn't learned that yet. In fact, the faith of Jacob is mentioned in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, but nothing in his life is mentioned there as an example of his faith until the time of his death. Then faith is exhibited.

Compare his grief here to the grief of a man like David (2Sa\_12:15-23). David wept over the baby boy of his who died. He loved that little one just as much as Jacob loved Joseph, but David was a man of faith. He knew the little one couldn't come back to him, and he also knew that he was going to the little fellow some day. What faith! You see, Jacob is not walking by faith, friend. This is abnormal grief.

Christian friend, perhaps you have lost a loved one. Perhaps you just can't get over it. I want to say to you kindly, not brutally, but kindly: learn to walk by faith. You manifest faith when you recognize that you can't bring that one back by grieving. It does no good at all. If you are a child of God and you are grieving over one who is a child of God, then walk by faith. You will see that one again and never be separated. The world has no faith—they grieve as those without hope. Christian friend, you can walk by faith.

***Gen 37:36 Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.***

To Be Continued in Chapter 39.

## Chapter 38 – Tamar is more righteous than Judah

### Introduction:

This chapter deals with the sin and the shame of Judah. This leads me to say that the sons of Jacob were certainly not very much of a comfort to him. It looks as if all the sons were problem children, with the exception of Joseph and Benjamin. And Joseph was no comfort because his father was heartbroken about his disappearance. All of this reveals to us that Jacob spent too much time in Padan-aram accumulating a fortune rather than teaching his children. How different he was from Abraham. You remember that God had said of Abraham: “For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him” (Gen\_18:19).

Well, Jacob didn't do that. He was so busy down there contending with Uncle Laban that he didn't have much time for his boys. That was tragic, because each one of them seemed to have gotten involved in something that was very sinful.

There is, I believe, a further reason for including this chapter in the Word of God at this juncture. Beginning with the next chapter, we go down to the land of Egypt with Joseph. God is sending Joseph ahead, as he very clearly detected from the fortuitous concurrence of circumstances in his life, to prepare the way for the coming down of the children of Israel into Egypt. It would preserve their lives during the famine in Canaan, but more than that, it would get them out of the land of Canaan from the abominable Canaanites into the seclusion of the land of Goshen in Egypt. Had Jacob and his family continued on in Canaan, they would have dropped down to the level of the Canaanites. The chapter before us reveals the necessity of getting the family of Jacob away from the degrading influence of the Canaanites.

This is the story of Judah, whose line will be the kingly line among the tribes of Israel. - McGee

The sordid story of Judah's sin with Tamar serves to magnify the grace of God when we remember that the Lord Jesus was descended from Judah (Luk\_3:33). Tamar is one of five women mentioned in the genealogy in Matthew 1; three of them were guilty of immorality—Tamar, Rahab (v. 5), and Bathsheba (v. 6). The others are Ruth, a Gentile (v. 5) and Mary, a godly virgin (v. 16). – Believers Bible Commentary

**Gen 38:1** *It came to pass at that time that Judah departed from his brothers, and visited a certain Adullamite whose name was Hirah.*

**Gen 38:2** *And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua, and he married her and went in to her.*

**Gen 38:3** *So she conceived and bore a son, and he called his name Er.*

He went down to do business with a certain Adullamite, and when he got down there he saw this Canaanite woman, and he had an affair with her. Judah called his name Er—and Judah certainly had *erred*; he had sinned. - McGee

**Gen 38:4** *She conceived again and bore a son, and she called his name Onan.*

**Gen 38:5** *And she conceived yet again and bore a son, and called his name Shelah. He was at Chezib when she bore him.*

**Gen 38:6** *Then Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar.*

This is the first appearance of Tamar. She gets into the genealogy of Christ this way! Now, look at this family. It is just loaded with sin. - McGee

**Gen 38:7** *But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD killed him.*

## Chapter 38 – Tamar is more righteous than Judah

**Gen 38:8** *And Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and marry her, and raise up an heir to your brother."*

**Gen 38:9** *But Onan knew that the heir would not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in to his brother's wife, that he emitted on the ground, lest he should give an heir to his brother.*

**Gen 38:10** *And the thing which he did displeased the LORD; therefore He killed him also.*

This reminds us of the present hour when there is so much emphasis on sex. – McGee

**Notice:** The closer you are to Christ the higher the obedience required. This is a principle you will see throughout scripture. Many of us today want a tight relationship with the Lord and He is willing, but we unfortunately are not willing for that level of obedience. How about you?

**Gen 38:11** *Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house till my son Shelah is grown." For he said, "Lest he also die like his brothers." And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.*

**Gen 38:12** *Now in the process of time the daughter of Shua, Judah's wife, died; and Judah was comforted, and went up to his sheepshearers at Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite.*

**Gen 38:13** *And it was told Tamar, saying, "Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep."*

It was the custom of that day that when a man died, his brother was to marry his widow. Onan refused to do it, and he was smitten with death. Now Judah has another son who is growing up, and he tells his daughter-in-law to follow the custom of returning to her father's house until the younger son is ready for marriage.

Apparently this deal that Judah had, which concerned seeing this Adullamite by the name of Hirah, was in connection with sheep. They were raising sheep and must have had a tremendous flock together. Judah goes up there to shear them. In the meantime, Tamar has been waiting all this while at home. She comes to the conclusion that Judah is not going to give Shelah to her as her husband. - McGee

**Gen 38:14** *So she took off her widow's garments, covered herself with a veil and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place which was on the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given to him as a wife.*

**Gen 38:15** *When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot, because she had covered her face.*

**Gen 38:16** *Then he turned to her by the way, and said, "Please let me come in to you"; for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. So she said, "What will you give me, that you may come in to me?"*

Shelah was, of course, the third son of Judah. Tamar sees that Judah doesn't intend to give her to him as his wife; so she takes action. She takes off her widow's clothes and sits by the wayside with her face covered as was the custom of harlots. We get a picture of Judah. He had propositioned the Canaanite woman, Shuah's daughter. Now he does the same thing with Tamar. This is a very black picture and an ugly story that we have here. Judah thought she was a harlot. She saw the opportunity of taking advantage of him, and she did it. - McGee

**Gen 38:17** *And he said, "I will send a young goat from the flock." So she said, "Will you give me a pledge till you send it?"*

**Gen 38:18** *Then he said, "What pledge shall I give you?" So she said, "Your signet and cord, and your staff that is in your hand." Then he gave them to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him.*

**Gen 38:19** *So she arose and went away, and laid aside her veil and put on the garments of her widowhood.*

## Chapter 38 – Tamar is more righteous than Judah

When Shelah grew up and Judah still did not arrange his marriage to Tamar, she decided to "hook" Judah by laying a trap. She dressed as a harlot and sat in an open place on the road to Timnah, where Judah was going to join his sheepshearers. Sure enough, he went in and had illicit relations with her, not knowing it was his own daughter-in-law. The agreed fee was a young goat from the flock, but until he could send it to her, the "harlot" demanded Judah's signet, cord, and staff. The cord may have been the string by which the seal-ring was suspended. When Judah tried to deliver the kid and have the pledges returned, he couldn't find the "harlot." - Believers Bible Commentary

**Gen 38:20** *And Judah sent the young goat by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive his pledge from the woman's hand, but he did not find her.*

**Gen 38:21** *Then he asked the men of that place, saying, "Where is the harlot who was openly by the roadside?" And they said, "There was no harlot in this place."*

**Gen 38:22** *So he returned to Judah and said, "I cannot find her. Also, the men of the place said there was no harlot in this place."*

**Gen 38:23** *Then Judah said, "Let her take them for herself, lest we be shamed; for I sent this young goat and you have not found her."*

**Gen 38:24** *And it came to pass, about three months after, that Judah was told, saying, "Tamar your daughter-in-law has played the harlot; furthermore she is with child by harlotry." So Judah said, "Bring her out and let her be burned!"*

**Gen 38:25** *When she was brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, "By the man to whom these belong, I am with child." And she said, "Please determine whose these are—the signet and cord, and staff."*

Three months later, Tamar was accused of playing the harlot because she, a widow, was with child. Judah ordered her to be burned. At this point she returned the pledges with the announcement that their owner was the father of her expected child. They furnished positive proof that Judah had had sex with her. Walter C. Wright describes the scene vividly:

The companions of Judah bring him word that his daughter-in-law, Tamar, has played the harlot. His judgment is quick and decisive: let her be burned. There is neither hesitation nor compromise. As he utters this fearful sentence, we cannot detect even a tremor in his voice. The Israelitish society must be preserved from such folly and wickedness. The word goes out; the day is fixed; the preparations go forward; the stake is planted; the pile is arranged; the procession forms; the crowd gathers; the woman walks to her apparent doom. But she bears in her hands the tokens; the pledges are with her; she carries the staff and the ring. And the staff is the staff of Judah, and the ring is his ring! The pledges become the accusation of her judge. What weight will his sentence have now? – Believers Bible Commentary

**Application:** Do you pass judgement on others while not holding yourself to the same standards?

Notice: Tamar's actions are shocking, but it is clear God judges the heart, and she, unlike Judah, was found righteous in this situation. She makes the list of one of only five women listed in Jesus's genealogy. God works in and through humans for His Will. She may well have heard of the Abrahamic covenant promises and took her responsibility to heart.

**Gen 38:26** *So Judah acknowledged them and said, "She has been more righteous than I, because I did not give her to Shelah my son." And he never knew her again.*

This was repulsive even to Judah, but we can see how he adopted some of the customs of the Canaanites.



## Chapter 38 – Tamar is more righteous than Judah

May I pause for a moment to make an application? Remember, all these things are written for our learning. They are examples unto us. Today we hear that if we are going to witness to this generation and if we are going to communicate to them, we've got to get down to their level. I disagree with that. God has never used that method to witness. God has always, under all circumstances, asked His people to live on a high and lofty plane. – McGee

Notice: There is a balance we need to reach people, but not descend to their sin. Paul explains it in:

### ***1 Corinthians 9:21-23 Amplified Bible, Classic Edition***

***21 To those without (outside) law I became as one without law, not that I am without the law of God and lawless toward Him, but that I am [especially keeping] within and committed to the law of Christ, that I might win those who are without law.***

***22 To the weak (wanting in discernment) I have become weak (wanting in discernment) that I might win the weak and overscrupulous. I have [in short] become all things to all men, that I might by all means (at all costs and in any and every way) save some [by winning them to faith in Jesus Christ].***

***23 And I do this for the sake of the good news (the Gospel), in order that I may become a participator in it and share in its [blessings along with you].***

***Gen 38:27 Now it came to pass, at the time for giving birth, that behold, twins were in her womb.***

***Gen 38:28 And so it was, when she was giving birth, that the one put out his hand; and the midwife took a scarlet thread and bound it on his hand, saying, "This one came out first."***

***Gen 38:29 Then it happened, as he drew back his hand, that his brother came out unexpectedly; and she said, "How did you break through? This breach be upon you!" Therefore his name was called Perez.***

***Gen 38:30 Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet thread on his hand. And his name was called Zerah.***

When Tamar was giving birth and a baby's hand emerged, the midwife tied a scarlet thread on it, thinking that it would be born first. But the hand withdrew and another baby was the first to come forth. She named the firstborn Perez (breakthrough) and the other Zerah. Both twins are mentioned in Mat\_1:3, though the Messianic line goes through Perez. Zerah was an ancestor of Achan (Jos\_7:1). "It is simply astonishing" comments Griffith Thomas, "that God could take up the threads of this very tangled skein, and weave them into His own pattern."

Judah's marriage to the Canaanite woman (v. 2) was a first step in the intermingling of God's people with a race that was proverbial for its gross immorality. Israel would become contaminated by the unspeakable enormities of lewd nature worship. God is a God of separation; when we fraternize with the world, we pay an awful price. – Believers Bible Commentary

## Genesis 39 – Joseph – Passing the Test when Temptation Comes

*THEME: Overseer in the house of Potiphar; tempted, then framed by Potiphar's wife; Joseph imprisoned.*

We return to the story of Joseph after the interlude of chapter 38, which we classified as one of the worst chapters in the Bible because it certainly tells a sordid story of the man Judah.

We will discover that Joseph is altogether different from Judah. I have always felt that Joseph and Benjamin got a great deal of teaching, instruction, and personal attention that the other ten boys did not receive. These seemed to be the only two boys in whom Jacob was interested.

Because of the hatred and animosity of Joseph's brothers, he was sold into slavery and taken to the land of Egypt.

To be in a foreign land and sold into slavery is a very dreary prospect for a seventeen-year-old boy. There is certainly nothing in the outward aspect of things to bring any encouragement to his heart. Joseph seems to be more or less a hard luck boy. Even in the land of Egypt, just as things would begin to move smoothly for him, something else would happen. Of course, it always happened for a purpose, even though that was difficult for Joseph to see.

There is no person in the Old Testament in whose life the purpose of God is more clearly seen than Joseph. The providence of God is manifest in every detail of his life. The hand of God is upon him and the leading of the Lord is evident, but Joseph is the one patriarch to whom God did not appear directly, according to the text of Scripture. God appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but not to Joseph. Yet the direction of God in his life is more clearly seen than in any other. He is the Old Testament example of [Rom 8:28](#): "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Joseph himself expressed it in rather vivid language. At the death of their father, Joseph's brothers felt that Joseph might turn on them, and they came to him asking for mercy. He told them that he held no grudge against them at all and said, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive" ([Gen 50:20](#)). Although everything seemed to go wrong for him and the outward aspect was dark—it looked *terrible*—each event was a step bringing to fruition God's purpose in this man's life.

My friend, in our own lives we need to reckon on the fact that "... whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" ([Heb 12:6](#)). If we are the children of God, in the will of God, we can have the assurance of God that nothing comes to us without His permission. God works all things together for good to them who love Him. Even our misfortunes, heartbreaks, and sufferings are for our good and His glory.

There is a hedge about every child of God, and nothing gets through it without the permission of God. You remember that, when Satan wanted to test Job, he said to God: "Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land" ([Job 1:10](#)). Satan asked God to let the hedge down. Even if Satan gets God's permission to test us, still all things will work for our good.

Dr. Torrey used to say that [Rom 8:28](#) is the soft pillow for a tired heart. And someone else has put it like this: "God nothing does, nor suffers to be done, but what we would ourselves, if we but could see through all events of things as well as He."

There is another aspect of the life of Joseph which should be an encouragement to every child of God. None of God's children today have ever had a direct revelation from God. Some modern false prophets claim to the contrary, but God has not appeared directly to any person today. It is for our encouragement that God did not appear to Joseph directly because we can still know that He is leading

## Genesis 39 – Joseph – Passing the Test when Temptation Comes

and directing us. – McGee

***Gen 39:1 Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there.***

***Gen 39:2 The LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.***

Life is great up to this point. You'd like to add that they all lived happily ever after, but they didn't. This is not a story; it is reality. The child of God is going to encounter temptation, trouble, and problems in this world. This is what is going to happen to Joseph. This fine-looking young man, seventeen years old, would be a prize as a slave in the market. He was bought by Potiphar who was a captain of the guard. Potiphar was in the military, he had his office in the Pentagon of that day, and he was part of the brass, a prominent official. Immediately, when he gets into the home of Potiphar who is an officer of Pharaoh, it is obvious that the Lord is with Joseph. Blessing came to that home when Joseph came. - McGee

***Gen 39:3 And his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD made all he did to prosper in his hand.***

***Gen 39:4 So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority.***

Life is great up to this point. You'd like to add that they all lived happily ever after, but they didn't. This is not a story; it is reality. The child of God is going to encounter temptation, trouble, and problems in this world. This is what is going to happen to Joseph. Just think of this! Because of the way Joseph serves, he is elevated to the position of handling all the material substance—the chattels and probably even the real estate—of Potiphar. The man trusted him with everything. – McGee

**Can a non-believer “Egyptian” say you are obviously Bless by the Lord?**

**Do you believe that God can bless you and show His favor even when you are in Slavery?**

***Gen 39:5 So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had in the house and in the field.***

***Gen 39:6 Thus he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.***

Potiphar trusted Joseph so much that he never even demanded an accounting—he didn't have to hire a C.P.A. to go over the books. He believed in the integrity of this young man. The only thing that Potiphar worried about, as an officer of Pharaoh, was that he should please Pharaoh and do a good job there. He let Joseph handle his personal affairs. When he sat down at the table, the food was put before him. That's all that he was interested in because he trusted this young man. – McGee

**Why is it important that Joseph has experience running the resources of the rich official both in the household and in the field?**

**Does God give you opportunities to gain experiences that He knows you will need later to accomplish His Will?**

***Gen 39:7 And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph,***

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*and she said, "Lie with me."*

Potiphar had given him the full run of his home, and Joseph had charge of everything. While Joseph was busy, Potiphar's wife was also busy. She was busy scheming. Joseph was a handsome young man. It may be that Potiphar was an old man because it was generally the custom in that day for an older man to have a young wife. She sees Joseph, and she attempts to entice him. - McGee

Note: a temptation of this nature to a hormone filled boy was quite a strong temptation indeed.

***Gen 39:8 But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand.***

***Gen 39:9 There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"***

Now do you notice that this young man is serving God in all of this? When he went down to Egypt, it was a land filled with idolatry just as much as Babylon was. In that land of idolatry, Joseph maintained a testimony for the living and true God and a high moral standard. When this woman enticed him, he said, "My master has turned over everything to me but you—you are his wife." Notice what a high viewpoint Joseph had on marriage.

You see, God has given marriage to all mankind. When a person begins to despise the marriage vows, he is beginning to despise God, my friend. A man who will break his marriage vows will generally break any vow he has made to God. It has been interesting for me to note in my ministry that a divorced person, that is, one who gets divorced because he or she has been unfaithful, generally will get as far from God as any person possibly can. I've seen that happen again and again.

Joseph here is attempting to be true to God. What a high viewpoint he has! Yet, look at what is going to come to pass because he attempts to serve the living and true God. - McGee

***Gen 39:10 So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her.***

This man, Potiphar, as an officer of Pharaoh, would be away from home a great deal. Maybe he was away from home too much. This woman didn't tempt Joseph only one time, but again and again and again. It was a constant temptation to him, yet this young man did not yield. You can imagine that there begins to well up in her a boiling resentment against Joseph. The old bromide has it, "Hell hath no fury like that of a woman scorned." Believe me, she is going to take revenge on Joseph. – McGee

**The enemy will continue to tempt you day by day, that is why we have to have the armor of God on and ready daily. Spiritual warfare is real today, and if we don't have the sword ready, and the shield oiled with the Holy Spirit, then the fiery darts can burn so up!**

***Gen 39:11 But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside,***

***Gen 39:12 that she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside.***

***Gen 39:13 And so it was, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and fled outside,***

***Gen 39:14 that she called to the men of her house and spoke to them, saying, "See, he has brought in to us a Hebrew to mock us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice.***

## Genesis 39 – Joseph – Passing the Test when Temptation Comes

Things weren't so well between Potiphar and his wife. Notice how she speaks of him in such a mean, degrading way. She says that he brought in a Hebrew to mock them. In other words, the wife probably had been guilty of this before. The man whom I feel most sorry for is Potiphar. He is the sap if there ever was one. Possibly he suspected something all along.

She is beginning now to cover up her tracks—McGee

***Gen 39:15 And it happened, when he heard that I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me, and fled and went outside."***

***Gen 39:16 So she kept his garment with her until his master came home.***

So here is the boy Joseph in his teens, down there alone in Egypt, and he is being framed in the most dastardly manner. She brings this charge against Joseph to the other men. Her husband was away from home; so she has all this story built up to tell him when he arrives. - McGee

***Gen 39:17 Then she spoke to him with words like these, saying, "The Hebrew servant whom you brought to us came in to me to mock me;***

***Gen 39:18 so it happened, as I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me and fled outside."***

***Gen 39:19 So it was, when his master heard the words which his wife spoke to him, saying, "Your servant did to me after this manner," that his anger was aroused.***

On the surface it seems that Potiphar believes her story, at least it made him angry at the moment. He was an officer in the army of Pharaoh and must have been a pretty sharp man to be among the brass. But he certainly was a stupid husband. It is my personal feeling that he recognized the kind of wife he had and thought the expedient thing was to throw Joseph into prison and forget the whole matter. I feel sorry for him, married to this woman. I'm of the opinion that she had been unfaithful many times before and that Joseph was just another one in her series of conquests—only it just didn't work with Joseph, so she framed him. – McGee

***Gen 39:20 Then Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined. And he was there in the prison.***

This boy is certainly having bad luck, is he not? There at home he was the favorite of his father, wearing a coat of many colors. The next thing he knew, his brothers had taken off the coat and put him down in a pit. He hears them dickering with some tradesmen, and then he is sold down to Egypt. He was only seventeen years old, and I am of the opinion that on the way down, and after he got there, he spent many nights wetting the pillow with his tears. He certainly was homesick.

Now he's getting along in this new position, just elevated to a high position because he is a capable and fine-looking young man. Then the wife of Potiphar attempts to lure him to commit sin. His high moral standard prevents him from yielding. As a result of that, she frames him. This poor boy just doesn't stand a chance.

We need to remember that, although Joseph had been elevated in his position, he is still a slave. Potiphar's wife would be like Caesar's wife—one just wouldn't dare say anything about her. Obviously, her word would be accepted. Poor Joseph! He doesn't need to even open his mouth. He is declared guilty before he can make any kind of a defense at all. He immediately finds himself put into prison, the

## Genesis 39 – Joseph – Passing the Test when Temptation Comes

prison where the prisoners of Pharaoh were placed. - McGee

**But where was this prison? It was in the Dungeon beneath the Palace.**

**Sometimes, the turns you take in life move you closer to your purpose than you even know.**

***Gen 39:21 But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.***

***Gen 39:22 And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison; whatever they did there, it was his doing.***

***Gen 39:23 The keeper of the prison did not look into anything that was under Joseph's authority, because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made it prosper.***

The hand of God is obvious in this young man's life, but over against it are the terrible things that happen to him. Now he finds himself in prison. How discouraging that would have been to the average person. But the interesting thing is that the Lord is with Joseph. Although He does not appear to him, as He had to the other patriarchs, He shows him mercy. First, He causes the keeper of the prison to like him and to trust him. Although Joseph is naturally a very attractive young man and has tremendous ability, the important thing to note is that all of this would have come to naught had not God been with him. God is with him and is leading him. All of these experiences are moving toward the accomplishment of a purpose in this young man's life.

Joseph recognized this, and it gave him a buoyancy, an attitude of optimism. The circumstances did not get him down. He lived on top of his circumstances. I have a preacher friend who tells me my problem is that the circumstances are all on top of me! I think many of us live that way. But Joseph was one who was living on top of his circumstances. The Lord was with him. He recognized the hand of God in his life, and so he was not discouraged. Discouragement is one of the finest weapons Satan has— discouragement and disappointment. This young man seems to have surmounted all of his circumstances. He reminds us of the passage in Hebrews: “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (Heb\_12:11).

Certainly, the chastening of the Lord is going to yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness in the life of this young man.

The story of Joseph reveals that not every man has his price. Satan says that he does, but there have been several men whom Satan could not buy. Joseph was one of these. Job was another, and the apostle Paul was still another. Satan despises mankind, but these and many more are men whom Satan found he could not buy.

Is it the will of God that Joseph be in prison? Well, my friend, it is almost essential that he be there. We'll see that in the next chapter. - McGee

**Do you have such firm faith that you believe you will honor God as a slave or in prison? Is it any wonder Joseph is promoted everywhere he goes? Even the unbelievers and idolators can see favor God has on him, but do you think it was hard for Joseph to see that favor at points through this story. Is this really any different than us?**



## Gen 40 – The Butler and the Baker

THEME: Joseph interprets dreams for the butler and baker; fulfillment of the dreams.

This chapter, rather than advancing the story of Joseph, seems to slow it down to absolutely no movement at all. We see Joseph in prison, and he is delayed and circumscribed by the ingratitude of the chief butler of Pharaoh. We may ask what all this means. May I say to you that all of this is accomplishing God's plan and purpose in Joseph's life. We will see this as we get into the chapter.

In chapter 37 we started a comparison between Joseph and the Lord Jesus. Now that we are farther along in the story, let us stop to make some more comparisons:

1. Joseph was sent to his brethren. The Lord Jesus Christ was sent to His brethren, the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
2. Joseph was hated by his brethren without a cause, and this is what the Lord Jesus says about Himself, "They hated me without a cause."
3. Joseph was sold by his own brothers, and the Lord Jesus was sold by one of His own brethren.
4. Joseph was sold for twenty pieces of silver. The Lord Jesus was sold for thirty pieces of silver.
5. The brothers plotted to kill Joseph. The brethren plotted to kill the Lord Jesus—"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."
6. Joseph was put into the pit which was meant to be a place of death for him. The Lord Jesus was crucified.
7. Joseph was raised up out of that pit. The Lord Jesus was raised from the dead on the third day.
8. Joseph obeyed his father. The Lord Jesus obeyed His Father so that He could say that He always did the things which pleased His Father.
9. Joseph's father had sent him to seek his brethren. We are told that the Lord Jesus Christ came to do the will of His Father when he came here not seek His brethren.
10. Joseph was mocked by his brethren. When they saw him coming, they said, "Behold, this dreamer cometh." The Lord Jesus was mocked by His brethren. When He was on the Cross, they said, "If He be the Christ, let Him come down now from the cross."
11. The brothers refused to receive Joseph, and the brethren of the Lord Jesus, the Jews, refused to receive Him.
12. They took counsel to kill Joseph, and we are told they took counsel to plot the death of the Lord Jesus.
13. Joseph's coat dripping with blood was returned to his father. They took the coat of the Lord Jesus and gambled for it.
14. After Joseph was sold into Egypt, he was lost sight of for many years. Christ ascended up into heaven. He told His disciples that they should see Him no more until His return.
15. Joseph was tempted by the world, the flesh, and the Devil, and he resisted. The Lord Jesus was tempted by the world, the flesh, and the Devil, and He won the victory.
16. Joseph became the savior of the world during this period, in the physical sense—he saved them from starvation. The Lord Jesus Christ in every sense is the Savior of the whole world.
17. Joseph was hated by his brothers, and they delivered him to the Gentiles. He couldn't defend himself, and he was unjustly accused. The Lord Jesus was also delivered by His own to the religious rulers who in turn delivered Him to the Gentiles. He was innocent.

## Gen 40 – The Butler and the Baker

18. Pilate did not believe the accusation which was brought against the Lord Jesus. He found Him innocent, yet he scourged Him. And Joseph had to suffer although Potiphar probably knew that he was innocent. Potiphar had to keep up a front before Pharaoh as Pilate had to keep up a front before Caesar.

19. Joseph found favor in the sight of the jailer. And in the case of Jesus, the Roman centurion said of Him, "Truly, this was the Son of God."

20. Joseph was numbered with the transgressors. He was a blessing to the butler, and he was judgment for the baker. The Lord Jesus was crucified between two thieves. One was judged and the other was blessed.

In the chapter before us we will begin to see why it was the will of God that Joseph be in prison at this time. - McGee

### ***Joseph Interprets Two Prisoners' Dreams***

***Gen 40:1-4 It came to pass after these things that the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their lord, the king of Egypt. And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief butler and the chief baker. So he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison, the place where Joseph was confined. And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them; so they were in custody for a while.***

That was no accident!

What does this reveal? It certainly reveals to us the arbitrary and dictatorial position and policy that the pharaohs of Egypt had. I don't know what the baker did—maybe he burned the biscuits for breakfast. For some whim, Pharaoh put him into prison. What did the butler do? Maybe he was bringing up a glass of wine to Pharaoh and stubbed his toe and spilled it on the Persian rug that was there. I don't know. It isn't told us why both the baker and the butler of Pharaoh were in the prison, but the important thing is that they are put where Joseph is. Joseph occupies a good position, even here in the prison. Everywhere he went, his ability was certainly recognized. "A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men" (Pro\_18:16). Certainly this was true for Joseph. And God is moving in his life with a very definite purpose.

Joseph got acquainted with them because he had charge of them. It was his business to take care of them while they were in prison. - McGee

***Gen 40:5-6 Then the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison, had a dream, both of them, each man's dream in one night and each man's dream with its own interpretation. And Joseph came in to them in the morning and looked at them, and saw that they were sad.***

Joseph was an optimistic type of individual, always bright and sharp, and he finds these two fellows, who occupy positions with Pharaoh, sitting dolefully with very dark looks upon their faces. - McGee

***Gen 40:7-8 So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in the custody of his lord's house, saying, "Why do you look so sad today?" And they said to him, "We each have had a dream, and there is no interpreter of it." So Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell them to me, please."***

Joseph gives God all the glory in this. Later on we will find another young Hebrew in a foreign court who will do the same thing—Daniel also gave God the glory. I wish Christians today would do this. Anything you or I do for the Lord should be done to the praise of God. Make sure that God gets the glory for it. I believe that one of the reasons many of us are not blessed as much as the Lord would like to bless us is because when we do receive something wonderful, we take it for granted and we do not give God the glory for it. We need to give God the glory. Joseph should give God the glory, and he does! He says, "Do not interpretations belong to God?" - McGee



## Gen 40 – The Butler and the Baker

**Gen 40:9-11** *Then the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, "Behold, in my dream a vine was before me, and in the vine were three branches; it was as though it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and its clusters brought forth ripe grapes. Then Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand."*

**Gen 40:12-13** *And Joseph said to him, "This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days. Now within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your place, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand according to the former manner, when you were his butler."*

It is interesting to see that God used dreams in the Old Testament. We don't find God moving that way in the New Testament, because then the canon of Scripture was complete. We don't need dreams today, but in that day, God did speak in dreams, and He used symbols that were meaningful to them. A butler would understand about serving wine—that was what he did for Pharaoh. Later on we will find King Nebuchadnezzar has a dream of an image. Now he was certainly acquainted with images and with idols—that would be something that he could understand very well.

Joseph was able to interpret the dream and promised the butler that he would be restored in three days. – McGee

**Joel 2:28 -29** *"In the last days I will send My Spirit on all men. Then your sons and daughters will speak God's Word. Your old men will dream dreams. Your young men will see special dreams. Yes, on My servants, both men and women, I will pour out My Spirit in those days."*

So which is it do you believe McGee that God used dreams in the Old Testament and has no need for to use them after the New Testament?

**Gen 40:14-15** *But remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house. For indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and also I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon."*

He says, "Now you will be out of here in three days, but I'll be here until I rot unless somebody moves in my behalf. I've interpreted your dream—please don't forget me!"

Although the record doesn't tell us, the butler probably promised that he would speak to Pharaoh in Joseph's behalf. - McGee

**Gen 40:16-19** *When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said to Joseph, "I also was in my dream, and there were three white baskets on my head. In the uppermost basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, and the birds ate them out of the basket on my head." So Joseph answered and said, "This is the interpretation of it: The three baskets are three days. Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head from you and hang you on a tree; and the birds will eat your flesh from you."*

The dream of the baker is in a symbol meaningful to him. He can understand a basket filled with little cookies, sweetmeats.

Joseph's interprets his dream for him but warns that it is not going to be good for him. In three days he is to be taken out and hanged, and the birds will eat his flesh. – McGee

**Are you faithful to give the message the Lord gives even when it is not good news? In some respects, this is simple honesty. Are you willing to issue the bad report, like Joseph has now twice?**

## Gen 40 – The Butler and the Baker

**Gen 40:20-23** *Now it came to pass on the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast for all his servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants. Then he restored the chief butler to his butlership again, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.*

**Do you see the contrast almost all the Characters in the story let Joseph down, but he is always faithful in every relationship? How about?**

**At times, do you feel forgotten? Feel like your slave or prison in a holding pattern?**

Poor Joseph! This seems like a hopeless predicament now. Here he is, not only a slave, but one who has been falsely accused. Believe me, the prison bars are just as real as if he were guilty of some crime. The poor boy is here, and it is the purpose of Potiphar to forget him. That is his way of covering up the scandal that was in his own home. Joseph has to pay for Potiphar's cover-up. Joseph's one glimmer of light had been that the butler would remember him to Pharaoh. This seemed to be such a marvelous way of getting the ear of Pharaoh. But the butler is so elated with going back to his job and being in favor with Pharaoh again that he forgets all about poor Joseph. God wants to leave him there for a purpose. Suppose the butler had said to Pharaoh, "There is a prisoner down there who is innocent. He should not be there—he has been falsely accused. And he interpreted my dream for me. I sure would appreciate it, Pharaoh, if you would let him out." Suppose Pharaoh had let him out, don't you see what would have happened? He would have been at home in the land of Canaan at the time that Pharaoh needed him to interpret his dream. God wants to keep him nearby, and prison is a convenient place to keep him—there will be no difficulty in Pharaoh's finding him when he needs him.

In spite of the discouragement, Joseph believed that God was moving in his life, and there were fruits of faith which were apparent. He was faithful in every relationship of his life. He was faithful to Potiphar. In prison he was faithful to the keeper of the prison. He was faithful to God, always giving Him the glory. We will see later on that he will be faithful to Pharaoh, and he will be faithful to his own brothers. You see, Joseph's faith made him faithful. My friend, I believe that if you are truly a believer, you will be faithful.

We are living in a day when one of the tragic things happening is that there are so few Christians one can depend upon. I have a friend who is the head of a large Christian organization. We had a chance to sit together alone in a foreign city, just he and I. He was telling me some of the problems he had. He is in a tremendous organization, and yet he was telling me how few men he could really trust in his organization. Remember, this is a Christian organization. We see so few men in true faithfulness to their positions. We thank God for those who are. I have always thanked the Lord that He has put around me, everywhere I have ever been, a few faithful ones. I tell you, they are dear ones who are a great encouragement.

Joseph was that kind of a man. His faith made him faithful. It also gave him his optimistic outlook on life, even under all his trials and temptations. And it was faith that gave him his sympathetic and kindly attitude toward everyone. Notice how kind he was to the butler and the baker. And later on we will see his kindness to his brothers. Another thing that his faith did for him was to make him a very humble man. He gave God the glory for all his achievements. What a wonderful person he was! And what was responsible? Well, he believed God. He believed God as his father Abraham had believed Him, and this was the fruit that faith produced in his life.

Here is Joseph—forgotten in the prison. But Someone has not forgotten him; God has not forgotten him, and He is at work in his life.

Friend, this has a message for you and me. I don't know what your circumstances are right now, but I do know, judging from the letters that I get, that many folk are in a hard place. One man wrote to me, "I am between a rock and a hard place. Things look very dark." You don't see the way out, and you wonder if God cares. That is the reason God has given

## **Gen 40 – The Butler and the Baker**

this story of Joseph. He wants you to know that He cares and that He is moving in your life. If you are His child, He is permitting things to happen to you for your own good. His chastisements are always for our good. Friend, we can't miss! How wonderful our God is!

## Gen 41 – Joseph and Pharaoh – Dreams Cows and Grain

THEME: The dreams of Pharaoh; Joseph is made overseer of Egypt; Joseph's two sons—Manasseh and Ephraim.

What a difference this chapter is from the previous one where we left Joseph down in jail, forgotten, forlorn, and forsaken. Yet all of this was happening to him for God's purpose in his life. If we could recognize God's hand in our lives today, it would give us a different outlook on life! In the chapter before us we will see that Joseph is released from prison when he interprets the dreams of Pharaoh. He is made overseer over the entire land of Egypt, and he marries Asenath, the daughter of the Priest of On, who bears him Manasseh and Ephraim.

This is a story of rags to riches. I know of no fictitious story more thrilling than this episode in the life of Joseph. In this chapter we can certainly see the hand of God in his life. And Joseph was conscious of God's care even during the days of adversity. This developed in him many virtues which are the fruit of the Spirit. One of them was patience. The truth expressed in Rom\_5:3 that tribulation (or trouble) worketh patience is definitely illustrated in the life of Joseph.

We find here that this boy is brought into the presence of Pharaoh, the gentile king, just as later on Daniel will be brought in before Nebuchadnezzar. Both of them are to interpret dreams.

Then we will consider the famine at the end of the chapter. What purpose of God is to be accomplished by this? God will use it to get the family of Jacob out of Canaan, away from the sins of the Canaanites and to bring them to Egypt to settle in the secluded spot of Goshen. That is one of His objectives. God had, I am sure, many other reasons, but this one is obvious.

As we go along, I hope you are still taking note of the ways in which Joseph is like the Lord Jesus Christ. We will make more of these comparisons later on. It is something important for us to be noting. – McGee

**Gen 41:1-4** *Then it came to pass, at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh had a dream; and behold, he stood by the river. Suddenly there came up out of the river seven cows, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. Then behold, seven other cows came up after them out of the river, ugly and gaunt, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the river. And the ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven fine looking and fat cows. So Pharaoh awoke.*

Notice that it has been two full years since the close of the previous chapter. Joseph has spent two more years in jail, waiting for something to happen.

Here is Pharaoh's dream— “Kine” are cows. We are talking about cattle here. He saw seven cows that were well-fed, fine-looking, fat cattle. Then he saw seven really skinny cows. Pharaoh woke up and wondered what the dream meant. He didn't have the interpretation, but there was nobody to help him that day.

**Gen 41:5-8** *He slept and dreamed a second time; and suddenly seven heads of grain came up on one stalk, plump and good. Then behold, seven thin heads, blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. And the seven thin heads devoured the seven plump and full heads. So Pharaoh awoke, and indeed, it was a dream. Now it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them for Pharaoh.*

While all of these magicians and wise men were called in and Pharaoh was telling them his dream, the chief butler was there listening. After all, his position was to stand before Pharaoh and get him anything that he wanted. When none of the wise men could give Pharaoh an interpretation, the butler spoke up—

**Gen 41:9-13** *Then the chief butler spoke to Pharaoh, saying: "I remember my faults this day. When Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, both me and the chief*

## Gen 41 – Joseph and Pharaoh – Dreams Cows and Grain

***baker, we each had a dream in one night, he and I. Each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his own dream. Now there was a young Hebrew man with us there, a servant of the captain of the guard. And we told him, and he interpreted our dreams for us; to each man he interpreted according to his own dream. And it came to pass, just as he interpreted for us, so it happened. He restored me to my office, and he hanged him."***

I would call it a little more than a "fault!" It was a sin, in my opinion. But, you see, all of this was in the providence of God. We would call them the fortuitous concurrence of circumstances. The difficult experiences of Joseph could not be understood at the time, but God was letting them happen for a purpose. Now the chief butler says, "Oh, I just remembered that I promised a young fellow down there in prison that I would speak to you about him. And, by the way, Pharaoh, he can interpret dreams." Now he tells Pharaoh his own experience—

Pharaoh said, "Well, we've tried everybody else around here, and since that young man interpreted your dream and that of the baker, let's have him come because I have the feeling that my dreams are very significant."

***Gen 41:14 Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon; and he shaved, changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh.***

Note that Joseph shaved himself. You must remember that the Hebrews were not shaving in that day. But have you noticed that the statues and paintings of the Egyptians show a cleanshaven people? Many of the rulers sported a little goatee to add dignity to their position—if they couldn't grow their own, they wore a false one—but generally the Egyptians were without hair on their faces.

There is a tremendous message in this. This man is lifted up out of the prison now. He shaves, and changes his prison garb for proper court clothing. This is a new life that is before him. It is like a resurrection; he is raised up. Now he goes to the Gentiles. What a tremendous picture of Christ this gives to us here. – McGee

**Notice: Joseph did not say my clothes are good enough or say our custom is not shaving. Sometimes, God asks you to change so he can use you!**

***Gen 41:15-16 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that you can understand a dream, to interpret it." So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace."***

From Joseph's viewpoint, God must receive the glory. Again, let me say that the child of God should be very careful that God gets the glory for all of His accomplishments. If what we do is a blessing, it is because God is doing it through us. Joseph is aware of this, and he says, "It is not in me—I can't interpret it—but God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

Pharaoh repeats the dreams to Joseph. Actually, it is one dream of two parts, and it is treated as a single dream. - McGee

***Gen 41:17-25 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph: "Behold, in my dream I stood on the bank of the river. Suddenly seven cows came up out of the river, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. Then behold, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and gaunt, such ugliness as I have never seen in all the land of Egypt. And the gaunt and ugly cows ate up the first seven, the fat cows. When they had eaten them up, no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they were just as ugly as at the beginning. So, I awoke. Also I saw in my dream, and suddenly seven heads came up on one stalk, full and good. Then behold, seven heads, withered, thin, and blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. And the thin heads devoured the seven good heads. So, I told this to the magicians, but***

## Gen 41 – Joseph and Pharaoh – Dreams Cows and Grain

***there was no one who could explain it to me." Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do:***

Joseph says that the dream is one—both speak of the same thing. And the fact that it was repeated, given to Pharaoh twice, adds to its importance. The reason for the dream is that God is letting Pharaoh know what He is about to do. Here is the interpretation—McGee

***Gen 41:26-32 The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads are seven years; the dreams are one. And the seven thin and ugly cows which came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty heads blighted by the east wind are seven years of famine. This is the thing which I have spoken to Pharaoh. God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do. Indeed, seven years of great plenty will come throughout all the land of Egypt; but after them seven years of famine will arise, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine will deplete the land. So, the plenty will not be known in the land because of the famine following, for it will be very severe. And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.***

Called before Pharaoh, Joseph explained that there would be seven years of great plenty in Egypt, followed by seven years of famine which would devastate the land. The repetition or duplication of Pharaoh's dream meant that it was established by God and that He would shortly bring it to pass. We see this also in Joseph's two dreams concerning his future (Gen\_37:6-9) and in the similar visions of Daniel 2 and 7. In the Bible, two is the number of witness. Joseph gave the same reply to Pharaoh in the royal hall as he gave to his servants in the prison house. "It is not in me; God will give . . . an answer of peace" (v. 16; cf. Gen\_40:8). It is this humility that made it possible for the Lord to entrust Joseph with tremendous responsibility without fear that it would corrupt him. – Believers Bible Commentary

***Gen 41:33-36 "Now therefore, let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, to collect one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that are coming, and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. Then that food shall be as a reserve for the land for the seven years of famine which shall be in the land of Egypt, that the land may not perish during the famine."***

Joseph counseled Pharaoh to set aside reserves of grain during the years of plenty so that there would be sufficient during the famine years. His plan was what has since been called "the ever-normal granaries." – Believers Bible Commentary

### ***Joseph Rises to Power***

***Gen 41:37-41 So the advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?" Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you." And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt."***

Notice the significance of this. At the beginning this boy had been in the back of the prison, forgotten, forsaken, and forlorn. Now he is brought out at the right psychological moment because nobody else can interpret the dream of Pharaoh. Not only does he interpret it, but in his enthusiasm and because he is a man of ability, he suggests what Pharaoh should do. God is leading him in all of this, of course.

## Gen 41 – Joseph and Pharaoh – Dreams Cows and Grain

There is to be a worldwide famine, a famine so severe that even Egypt will be affected. Because Egypt is an irrigated land, it is not dependent upon rainfall. The Upper Nile, the Blue Nile, comes down from Central Africa and furnishes the water upon which Egypt depends. Egypt gets about an inch of rainfall in a good year; so it is famine all the time as far as rainfall is concerned. But the Nile overflows the land every year, bringing not only water, but sediment which fertilizes the soil. However, God has warned that there will be seven years of famine which will affect Egypt, also.

As Pharaoh listens to Joseph, what he says makes sense. It is too bad that in my own nation there have not been men in our government who have had some sense of the future. Our foreign policy since the years before World War II, even from the days of Hitler's rise to power, has been more or less a first-aid program, something rushed in as an emergency measure. Someone once asked Gladstone what is the measure of a great statesman. He said it is the man who knows the direction God is going for the next fifty years. Well, here in Genesis, Pharaoh is told what is going to happen for the next fourteen years. Our nation could use a man like this, also.

Now, who could take over better than Joseph? Pharaoh recognized that he was a man of ability. Now don't you see how God had been training him in the home of Potiphar? We may wonder why in the world God ever let him go into that home in the first place. Now we realize that he had received quite a bit of training in the home of Potiphar where he had charge of everything the man owned. Now he is going to have charge of everything in the land of Egypt. This is a tremendous transition in his life. He went all the way from the back of the jail to the throne next to that of Pharaoh. - McGee

***Gen 41:42 Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph's hand; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck.***

By the way, that ring had a signet on it. When that was put down in wax, it was just the same as Pharaoh's signature. Pharaoh is making Joseph his agent. He has the right to use the king's signature.- McGee

***Gen 41:43-45 And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried out before him, "Bow the knee!" So he set him over all the land of Egypt. Pharaoh also said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no man may lift his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt." And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-Paaneah. And he gave him as a wife Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On. So Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.***

I like the name Joe better than I like Zaphnath-paaneah, but that was the name that Pharaoh gave to him. It is a Coptic name, and it means "the revealer of secret things."- McGee

***Gen 41:46 Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.***

We are told Joseph's age here, and we see that he has been in the land of Egypt for thirteen years. We know that two of those years were spent in prison after the episode with the butler and the baker. He probably had been in the prison a year or so before that. So he may have been in the house of Potiphar close to ten years. This gives us some idea of how his life was divided into time periods while he was in the land of Egypt.

After these thirteen years in Egypt, Joseph finds himself in a position which would correspond, I believe, to prime minister. He was second only to Pharaoh in the land of Egypt. Have you ever wondered why Pharaoh was so willing to accept him? Primarily, of course, the answer is that God was with him. All the way along we have been seeing that. The hand of God, by His providence, was leading this man. Joseph says himself that the brothers meant it for evil but that God meant it for good. It is wonderful to know that.



## Gen 41 – Joseph and Pharaoh – Dreams Cows and Grain

There may be another very practical reason for Pharaoh's accepting Joseph so readily. Many scholars hold that the Pharaoh at this particular time in history was one of the Hyksos kings. The Hyksos were not native Egyptians but were Bedouins from the Arabian Desert. They were a nomadic group, and for a period they came in and took over the throne of Egypt. If this is true (and I think it is), Pharaoh was actually closer in nationality to Joseph than to the Egyptians, and this gave him confidence in Joseph. Actually, these Hyksos kings found it a little difficult to find someone in Egypt who would be loyal and faithful to them. Faithfulness was certainly characteristic of Joseph. His confidence that God was moving in his life produced in him a faithfulness to whomever he was attached. He was faithful to his task because he knew that God was in it. A racial bond with Pharaoh may well be a reason that Joseph found such a ready reception with him at this time, and he certainly proved to be faithful to him, as we shall see.

By the way, the Hyksos kings were later expelled from Egypt, which I believe to be the reason that in Exo\_1:8 we read: "Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph." The Pharaoh of the oppression certainly had no fellow-feeling with the Hebrews!

Note that Pharaoh placed a chain about Joseph's neck, which gave him the same authority that Pharaoh had. Also, Pharaoh gave him for a bride the daughter of the priest of On. Her name, Asenath, means "dedicated to Neith (the Egyptian Minerva)." Evidently she came right out of heathenism.

This event in Joseph's life furnishes another parallel in the life of the Lord Jesus. Joseph had a gentile bride, and the Lord Jesus Christ is presently calling out of this world a gentile bride, which we call the church.

And in this same verse there is still another parallel; Joseph stood before Pharaoh when he was thirty years old, and the Lord Jesus began His ministry when He was thirty years of age. So at thirty, Joseph takes up his work in Egypt. During these seven years of plenty, he is gathering into storehouses the abundant produce of the land. - McGee

***Gen 41:47-48 Now in the seven plentiful years the ground brought forth abundantly. So he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities; he laid up in every city the food of the fields which surrounded them.***

Notice that he "laid up the food in the cities." He was planning ahead for easy distribution. I remember that during the depression of the 1930s men stood in the lines of the soup kitchens of Chicago and New York, and the lines were blocks long. Although at that time there was an abundance of food, there was a problem of distribution. But Joseph is doing a very practical thing. He is laying up the food in the cities. He is gathering up the surplus, and he is putting it in the cities, ready for distribution. - McGee

***Gen 41:49-52 Joseph gathered very much grain, as the sand of the sea, until he stopped counting, for it was immeasurable. And to Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him. Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: "For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house." And the name of the second he called Ephraim: "For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."***

These boys were born before the famine. He called his first son Manasseh. I'd say a good name for him would be "Amnesia" because it means that God had made Joseph "forget." He was so much involved that he forgot about his father's house. He'd been a homesick boy at first, but he's not anymore.

In the first part of this chapter we saw that Joseph, when he was released from prison, changed his clothes and shaved himself before appearing before Pharaoh. It may seem to you that shaving may not be very important, that only the



## Gen 41 – Joseph and Pharaoh – Dreams Cows and Grain

Gillette Company would be interested in that fact. But to us it has a symbolic interest. The Hebrews wore beards, and when Joseph shaved himself and changed his clothing, it speaks to me of resurrection because he laid aside the old life and began the new life. From that point on, he dresses like an Egyptian; he talks like an Egyptian; he lives like an Egyptian. He says “God made me forget.” So he names his son Manasseh—and you may call him Amnesia if you want to!

The next boy he names Ephraim because that means “fruitful.” So you can call this next boy “Ambrosia” if you like. Someone may object that this is free translating. Maybe it is, but if you put those two boys' names into their English counterparts, that is exactly what they are. His boys were Amnesia and Ambrosia. Joseph gave them these names because God had made him forget his father's house and had made him fruitful in the land of Egypt. - McGee

***Gen 41:53-57 Then the seven years of plenty which were in the land of Egypt ended, and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. The famine was in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. So when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Then Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, do." The famine was over all the face of the earth, and Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians. And the famine became severe in the land of Egypt. So all countries came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, because the famine was severe in all lands.***

The seven years of bountiful crops are over now, and the famine will begin. At this time Joseph is thirty–seven years old. Keep that in mind for the next chapter.

May I call your attention to the fact that Joseph is the one who had the bread. There is another parallel here. Jesus Christ said, “I am the Bread of life.”

Notice that the famine is worldwide.- McGee

## Gen 42 – Brothers bow down to Joseph

### JOSEPH SEES HIS TEN BROTHERS

The true interpretation of Joseph's treatment of his brethren is to be found in the supposition that he repeated toward them, as nearly as possible, the behavior that they had shown to himself at the pit's mouth, and this with no thought of retaliation, but that their consciences might be awakened, and that he might discover if they would deal differently with Benjamin than they had dealt with him. He needed to be sure of their repentance before he could trust himself to them again. His purpose therefore was in part secured when he heard them saying to each other in the dear old home-tongue, which they never expected him to understand, "We are verily guilty because of our brother." So God deals with us. The east wind blows bitterly in our faces, the famine is behind and the harsh governor before. All these things are hard to bear; but behind them is the tenderest love, which struggles with its tears and is only eager to get us right before entrusting itself to us. – F.B. Meyer

***Gen 42:1-2 Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another? And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die.***

This illustrates faith. A great many people say that faith is so mysterious to them and that they don't know how to believe. I talked to a man who did not want to believe, but his argument was, "Well, how can I believe?" Notice here how Jacob believed. He heard something: "I have heard that there is corn in Egypt." He believed it, believed that it would bring life to them. So he acted upon his belief: "Get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die." My friend, that is what saving faith is. Some folk ask, "How can I believe in Jesus?" Can you imagine Jacob standing there before his ten sons and saying, "I've heard that there is corn down in Egypt, but how am I going to believe it?" Well, the way to believe it is to act upon it. The Bible says, "... Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved ..." (Act\_16:31). You hear something and you believe it. That is what old Jacob did. That is the way he got corn which brought life to his family. And the way you and I get eternal life is through faith in Christ. - McGee

***Gen 42:3-5 And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt. But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him. And the sons of Israel came to buy corn among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan.***

Suppose mischief befalls the other ten boys, then what? Well, for one thing they are older. But if you want to know the truth, it wouldn't hurt Jacob as much as to lose Benjamin. Benjamin and Joseph were Rachel's boys, and Rachel was the wife he had deeply loved. And now he sends out all ten and keeps only Benjamin with him.

Now we come to this dramatic moment— McGee

***Gen 42:6-8 And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth. And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food. And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him.***

## Gen 42 – Brothers bow down to Joseph

Joseph has been watching for them. He knew they would have to come. There had been delegations there from all over the inhabited earth of that day. The famine was worldwide. So he watches, and lo and behold, here come the ten men. They all bow down before him. They got right down on their faces before Joseph. You wonder how he felt. By the way, what do you think of? Here is the literal fulfillment of the dreams of Joseph. Do you remember how he had dreamed as a boy that all the sheaves bowed down to his sheaf? Here it is taking place—all his older brothers are down on their faces before him.

Do you know why he treated them roughly? He is testing them. We will find that he is going to test them all the way through. He is going to ask them some penetrating questions. - McGee

***Gen 42:9-13 And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come. And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. We are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies. And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come. And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not.***

Believe me, Joseph is pouring it on—

He is trying to get as much information as he can about his family without letting them know who he is. He accuses them of being spies.

There are only ten men there before him. They confess that they are really twelve and that one is home with their father. The other “is not” is what they think. In other words, they consider Joseph dead, but there he is standing before them! - McGee

***Gen 42:14-18 And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies: Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies. And he put them all together into ward three days. And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; for I fear God:***

Joseph is attempting to make contact with his youngest brother. These men are really half-brothers of his, but Benjamin is his full-brother, and he wants to see him. This is the way he attempts to accomplish this. He locked them up in the town bastille. Things look bad for them now, and they wonder what is going to happen.

If there was anything that should have given the brothers an inkling of an idea who Joseph was, this statement was it. He says, “I fear God.” Apparently in that day there were people other than just Jacob and his family who knew God. They knew that the way to God was by sacrifice. However, this sort of thing probably would not have excited the interest of these brethren. Maybe it even made them a little suspicious of this man. At least he gave a testimony for God. I want you to note that Joseph never misses an opportunity to give a testimony for God. Certainly he is giving one here. He always gives God the glory as the One who is directing his life. At least the statement that he fears God should have encouraged the brothers to believe that they would be treated justly at his hand. - McGee

## Gen 42 – Brothers bow down to Joseph

**Gen 42:19-20** *If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses: But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so.*

These brothers are men, some of them being over fifty years old, and now they find themselves in a real predicament. They are being dealt with by one who fears God, but they are afraid because they don't know what he is going to do. Joseph makes the pretext of testing them to see whether they are true men, but what he really wants is for his younger brother to come the next time. - McGee

**Gen 42:21-22** *And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us. And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required.*

What is taking place here is quite interesting. They are speaking in Hebrew, and Joseph can understand them. Joseph had been speaking to them through an interpreter. He didn't need to, but he did because he is posing as an Egyptian. They are making a real confession of their guilt.

They feel that what is happening to them is the vengeance of God upon them for the way they treated Joseph. - McGee

**Gen 42:23-24** *And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter. And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.*

They say that this evil thing is coming upon them because of the evil they had done to Joseph. They are really repentant now. Joseph hears every bit of it, and he is moved toward them. He would love to walk up to them, throw his arms around each one of them, and call them "brother." But he dares not do it because he would never get Benjamin there.

He gives them a real test now. They must leave one of the brothers, and it is Simeon who is to stay. Joseph was so moved, so emotionally charged by all this that he had to weep. But he goes aside and washes his face; then comes in again as if nothing has happened.

I don't have any idea why they chose Simeon. I take it that while Joseph was gone out of the room, his brothers made the choice for Simeon to stay, and Joseph accepted that choice. - McGee

**Gen 42:25-28** *Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them. And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence. And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money; for, behold, it was in his sack's mouth. And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and, lo, it is even in my sack: and their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us?*

They feel that this is the judgment of God upon them. Ordinarily it would have been good news and a wonderful thing to have your money returned to you! Let me ask you this: Wouldn't you like to go down to your favorite supermarket to do your weekend grocery shopping, load up several of those great big carts and buy for your whole family; then wouldn't you like to open up your grocery sack at home and

## Gen 42 – Brothers bow down to Joseph

find that they had given you back all of the money you had paid for the groceries? Do you think that would be bad news to you? Especially, would it worry you if you learned that the grocer was giving this to you as a gift from him? Don't we all agree that under ordinary circumstances that would be good news? We would actually take it as an encouragement.

Well, it wasn't that for these men. They already feel that they are in hot water with this hard-boiled ruler down there in Egypt who has made it so difficult for them. This only adds to their concern.

We may wonder why they didn't go back to Egypt immediately. What would you have done under the circumstances? I think they feared they would really be in hot water had they gone back. Then this man would accuse them of stealing the money. They are not taking any chances. They are going on home, intending to bring the money back when they return. – McGee

***Gen 42:29-33 And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befell unto them; saying, The man, who is the lord of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. And we said unto him, We are true men; we are no spies: We be twelve brethren, sons of our father; one is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan. And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye are true men; leave one of your brethren here with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and be gone:***

***Gen 42:34-36 And bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that ye are no spies, but that ye are true men: so will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall traffic in the land. And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack: and when both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid. And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.***

Poor old Jacob! He's not the cocky individual we once knew, nor is he quite the man of faith that we shall see a little later. But he is growing. He is not bragging now but is very pessimistic. He says, "All these things are against me." His son, Joseph, would not have said such a thing, but Jacob is saying it. Joseph would have said the same thing that Paul wrote so many years later: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom\_8:28). "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ" (Php\_1:6). - McGee

***Gen 42:37-38 And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again. And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.***

Jacob's life was wrapped up in the life of this boy Benjamin. You see, Joseph was his favorite because he was the firstborn of his lovely Rachel. Now Joseph is gone, which is a heartbreak to him. Now he faces the chance that he may lose this other son of Rachel, and he says that if this takes place he will die. Very candidly, he would have. His life was absolutely tied up in the life of Benjamin. He is the son of his right hand. He is the walking stick for Jacob. Jacob leans on him. That is what he has been doing these past years; so Jacob says that he will not let him go down to Egypt. In the meantime, poor Simeon is down there cooling his heels in jail! - McGee

## Gen 43 – Brothers return to Egypt

**THEME:** *Jacob sends his sons to Egypt; the brothers are entertained in Joseph's home.*

Due to the seriousness of the famine, the sons of Jacob are forced to return with Benjamin to Egypt where they again have an audience with Joseph and present Benjamin. Joseph does not make himself known unto them at this time.

This is doubtless the most dramatic chapter in the Book of Genesis. I know of nothing that is quite as moving as the appearance of Benjamin before Joseph. The thing that brings them down to the land again is the seriousness of the famine. If the famine had lifted, I think Simeon would have spent the rest of his life in jail down in the land of Egypt, at least until Joseph released him.

### Joseph's Brothers Return to Egypt

**Gen 43:1-2** *Now the famine was severe in the land. And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought from Egypt, that their father said to them, "Go back, buy us a little food."*

Jacob realized they would starve to death if they didn't go down to Egypt again. - McGee

**Gen 43:3-5** *But Judah spoke to him, saying, "The man solemnly warned us, saying, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.' If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. But if you will not send him, we will not go down; for the man said to us, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.'"*

"The man" is their brother Joseph, but they do not know it. He had presented to them a cut-and-dried proposition, and they knew he meant it. Judah tells his father very definitely, "If we go down there, we must have Benjamin with us. You wouldn't send him before, but there is no use going if he is not with us this time because the man won't see us." – McGee

Notice: God is willing to let Jacob and the family go hungry in order for them to make the right decision. He never oversteps freewill, but He can use circumstances and trials to bring us to our senses.

**Gen 43:6-7** *And Israel said, "Why did you deal so wrongfully with me as to tell the man whether you had still another brother?" But they said, "The man asked us pointedly about ourselves and our family, saying, 'Is your father still alive? Have you another brother?' And we told him according to these words. Could we possibly have known that he would say, 'Bring your brother down?'"*

Poor old Jacob is really frustrated. He says, "Why in the world did you tell the man in the first place that you even had another brother?" He doesn't realize that Joseph knew it anyway. But Jacob wishes his sons had kept their mouths shut. – McGee

**Gen 43:8-9** *Then Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones. I myself will be surety for him; from my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever."*

## Gen 43 – Brothers return to Egypt

The brothers were really quite reasonable in their answer to their father. They told him that they hadn't intended to tell "the man" everything but that he kept probing them. He was going to get his information and wouldn't stop until he did—we know that. Then Judah comes forward as a surety for Benjamin.

Friend, you and I have a Surety today, and He came from the tribe of Judah. The Lord Jesus took my place and became my Shepherd, took my place and took my penalty. I was not able to meet His standard. I was not able to come up to His level. But the Lord Jesus stepped in and became my Surety and gave His life for me. What a picture of Christ we have here! – McGee

***Gen 43:10-11 For if we had not lingered, surely by now we would have returned this second time." And their father Israel said to them, "If it must be so, then do this: Take some of the best fruits of the land in your vessels and carry down a present for the man—a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds.***

Judah says, "If you had let Benjamin go, we would have been there and back home by this time."

You will notice here that the thing they lacked was grain. They lacked bread, the staff of life. Apparently they had honey, nuts, and spices. So Jacob says they should send the man a gift. "Let's get on the sweet side of him" is actually what he is saying with the gift. – McGee

***Gen 43:12-15 Take double money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was an oversight. Take your brother also, and arise, go back to the man. And may God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may release your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved, I am bereaved!" So the men took that present and Benjamin, and they took double money in their hand, and arose and went down to Egypt; and they stood before Joseph.***

So old Jacob relinquishes Benjamin and lets him go along with his older brothers. Now the dramatic moment comes when they stand again before Joseph. You can well imagine Joseph's emotion as his eye singled out Benjamin! - McGee

***Gen 43:16-18 When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, "Take these men to my home, and slaughter an animal and make ready; for these men will dine with me at noon." Then the man did as Joseph ordered, and the man brought the men into Joseph's house. Now the men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, "It is because of the money, which was returned in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may make a case against us and seize us, to take us as slaves with our donkeys."***

The reason for Joseph's inviting them to his home is obvious. He wants to talk with them in the privacy of his own home. These men are really panicky now. They can't imagine him inviting them to his home for any good purpose. He had dealt with them so harshly before, and now he is inviting them to lunch!

Again, here is something that under ordinary circumstances would be something to brag about. Wouldn't you brag if the President of the United States had invited you to the Blue Room, or, better yet, the dining room for dinner? You would think it was a wonderful privilege. Yet, for these men, such a privilege brings no joy whatsoever. You see, they have a guilt complex. They feel guilty about everything that happens because they are the ones who sold their brother. Guilt changes joy into misery. In their

## Gen 43 – Brothers return to Egypt

fears, they wonder and begin to speculate. Could this man be plotting to take them as slaves because of the money in the sacks? Well, they had not hesitated to make a slave of Joseph when they sold him to the Ishmeelites for slavery in Egypt. – McGee

**Gen 43:19-23** *When they drew near to the steward of Joseph's house, they talked with him at the door of the house, and said, "O sir, we indeed came down the first time to buy food; but it happened, when we came to the encampment, that we opened our sacks, and there, each man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; so we have brought it back in our hand. And we have brought down other money in our hands to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks." But he said, "Peace be with you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money." Then he brought Simeon out to them.*

They are beginning to apologize, explain, and plead. They even appeal to this man who is conducting them to Joseph's home—who evidently was an official.

Apparently, this man, through the testimony of Joseph, had come to a knowledge of the living and true God. I think that Joseph had at least partially let him in on what was taking place. When he said, "I had your money," I imagine that frightened the brothers all the more. - McGee

**Gen 43:24-26** *So the man brought the men into Joseph's house and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys feed. Then they made the present ready for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they would eat bread there. And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed down before him to the earth.*

Here we see the custom of footwashing again. We saw it in the life of Abraham and then again down in the city of Sodom. It was the custom of that day.

Remember that old Jacob had told his sons to take a present to "the man." Notice that they "bowed themselves to him to the earth." Again the boyhood dreams of Joseph are being fulfilled.

**Gen 43:27-28** *Then he asked them about their well-being, and said, "Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?" And they answered, "Your servant our father is in good health; he is still alive." And they bowed their heads down and prostrated themselves.*

This is a dramatic moment! Joseph is probably seated, not necessarily on a throne, but on an elevation of prominence, as his brothers bow before him. When they stand to their feet, Joseph looks them right in the eye, and they look at him. Joseph asks, "Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he still alive?" You see, Joseph is acutely interested because he is *his* father, also.

Here they go down on their faces again. I would love to have a picture of this, wouldn't you? Benjamin is with them, and he goes down on his face, too. - McGee

**Gen 43:29-30** *Then he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "Is this your younger brother of whom you spoke to me?" And he said, "God be gracious to you, my son." Now his heart yearned for his brother; so Joseph made haste and sought somewhere to weep. And he went into his chamber and wept there.*



## Gen 43 – Brothers return to Egypt

Joseph looks at his brother Benjamin, “his mother's son.” The others are his half–brothers, but this boy is his full–brother, his mother's son. He asks, “Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me?” I suppose the brothers nodded. Joseph said to Benjamin, “God be gracious unto thee, my son.” What a dramatic moment! And Joseph can't contain his emotion—

“His bowels did yearn upon his brother”—that is, he was deeply moved, and his heart went out to him. I suppose he said to his brothers, “Excuse me for a moment—someone wants me on the telephone,” and he got out of the room as quickly as he could. He went into his own private quarters and he wept. After all these years, he sees his own brother Benjamin. It has been about twenty–two years. Joseph is almost forty now, and Benjamin is a young man. - McGee

***Gen 43:31-32 Then he washed his face and came out; and he restrained himself, and said, "Serve the bread." So they set him a place by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves; because the Egyptians could not eat food with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians.***

This is a marvelous, wonderful picture of something that is yet to be fulfilled. I hope that you will see this. The prophet Zechariah tells us that Jesus Christ is going to make Himself known unto His brethren someday. They are going to ask Him about the piercing of His side and the nail prints in His hands. He is going to say to them in that day, “These I received in the house of My friends.” Then they will recognize Him, and they will weep. He is the One who has provided salvation for them. He is the One who gave His life for their redemption. This is going to take place when the Lord Jesus comes back to the earth. He will be revealed to His brethren, the nation Israel. There will be a remnant there who will know Him. Many of His brethren did not believe on Him when He came the first time, but at that time they are going to know Him.

Likewise, the brothers of Joseph are the ones who delivered him into slavery. They sold him, got rid of him. But now he is going to make himself known to his brethren. Someday our Lord Jesus Christ is going to do just that.

My Christian friend, beware of anti–Semitism. Regardless of how blind the nation of Israel is or what they engage in today, and regardless if they are not all lovely people, it is still true that they are the brethren of our Lord. There is coming the day when He is going to make Himself known to them. It is a family affair. We had better let His family alone. No real Christian can engage in antiSemitism.

After Joseph had gone to his private quarters to weep, he regained control of his emotions, washed his face, and returned to his brothers. He said, “Let's eat.”

There are several things about this meal that the brothers would have noticed had they not been so frightened. The first thing is that Joseph did not eat with the Egyptians. The Egyptians ate alone. Joseph was separate from them. The brothers may have thought this was simply because he was the brass, the head man in this particular place.

Now here is something else—McGee

***Gen 43:33-34 And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked in astonishment at one another. Then he took servings to***

## Gen 43 – Brothers return to Egypt

*them from before him, but Benjamin's serving was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.*

Joseph arranged the place cards, and he put Reuben in his proper place, he put Benjamin in his proper place, and all the brothers were in their right order, according to their ages. They looked at each other in amazement and wondered how he knew all that.

Also notice that he served their places. I wish our Authorized Version had used another word here instead of “messes” because that sounds messy, but of course it means portions. And again, he just could not refrain from showing his affection for his own brother Benjamin, so that he gave him five times as much. Now that young man had been through a famine, and this was his first real meal for a long time.

“And they drank, and were merry with him.” It was a glorious affair. And what a wonderful day it will be when Joseph finally reveals himself to his brethren. – McGee

## Gen 44 – Joseph tests his brothers.

THEME: Joseph sends his brothers home; Judah volunteers to take Benjamin's place.

Again, we have a wonderful and dramatic chapter before us. Joseph has something else up his sleeve when he sends his brothers away with the grain. He tests his brothers relative to their relationship and their affection to Benjamin and their father. Remember, they had sold him into slavery. Have they changed? Will they be willing to let Benjamin go into slavery to save themselves? He needs to satisfy his mind in this regard before he makes himself known to them. The test he uses here would give him absolute proof that his brothers would not repeat the episode that he had experienced at their hands.

Judah acts as the spokesman for the group, and he is brought into a wonderful picture here. He is willing to take the place of Benjamin, and his eloquent defense of Benjamin is one of the most moving passages in the Bible.

***Gen 44:1-5 And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, "Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack. Also put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his grain money." So, he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. As soon as the morning dawned, the men were sent away, they and their donkeys. When they had gone out of the city, and were not yet far off, Joseph said to his steward, "Get up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, 'Why have you repaid evil for good? Is not this the one from which my lord drinks, and with which he indeed practices divination? You have done evil in so doing.' "***

Joseph sends them away, and the brothers start out, thinking everything is all right. They have no idea of the cup in the sack of Benjamin. But the steward of Joseph's house comes after them with specific instructions. When the brothers get out a little way, they are overtaken. Here comes a whole troop after them, and they are accused of taking the cup belonging to Joseph. – McGee

Later God's people were forbidden to practice divination ([Deu 18:10-12](#)). But even at this early date, it is unlikely that Joseph practiced the Egyptian forms of fortune-telling. His intuition and foresight came from the Lord, but perhaps by using the cup as a prop, he wished to confirm in his brother's minds that he was an Egyptian. - Believers Bible Commentary

*Discussion: Why do you think Joseph singled out Benjamin?*

***Gen 44:6-7 So he overtook them, and he spoke to them these same words. And they said to him, "Why does my lord say these words? Far be it from us that your servants should do such a thing.***

Note that the steward says that Joseph uses this cup for “divining.” Remember that Joseph was a prophet, and he was able to foretell the future. We know that is so because he interpreted the dreams of the baker, the butler, and of Pharaoh. He may have used this cup, or maybe that was part of the ruse that he used. We must understand that his gift of prophecy was a gift that God had given him, and this was before there was any written revelation. We are not to get a cup and look at tea leaves, nor are we to watch the horoscope—that is all absolute nonsense. It reveals the sad spiritual condition of people today when they turn to that sort of thing. Joseph had a gift. It was not in the cup. His gift was from God.

***Gen 44:8-10 Look, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? With whomever of***

## Gen 44 – Joseph tests his brothers.

***your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's slaves." And he said, "Now also let it be according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and you shall be blameless."***

Déjà vu – Didn't Jacob make a rash vow when confronted about stolen foreign gods when accused by Laban? Are the sons repeating the sins of their father? How have we repeated the sins of our fathers? Or what are we doing to ensure our kids don't repeat our sins?

*Discussion: Why does Joseph make this decision only to keep the guilty one as opposed to all of them?*

***Gen 44:11-13 Then each man speedily let down his sack to the ground, and each opened his sack. So, he searched. He began with the oldest and left off with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Then they tore their clothes, and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city.***

They were so sure that none of them had the cup. Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground and opened every man his sack. They "rent" or tore their clothes as a gesture of extreme distress. They all turned around to go back. They are not going home without Benjamin; you may be sure of that. Here they fall on the ground before Joseph again. This time it is in dismay and in agony— McGee.

***Gen 44:14-15 So Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, and he was still there; and they fell before him on the ground. And Joseph said to them, "What deed is this you have done? Did you not know that such a man as I can certainly practice divination?"***

Judah comes to the front, and the nobility of this man really stands out now. Remember it is from the tribe of Judah that the Savior is to come. This man makes one of the finest speeches ever recorded. He makes a full confession that it is because of their sin that this has come upon them. – McGee

*Discussion: Joseph again knows the truth. Why does he continue putting them through the ringer?*

***Gen 44:16-17 Then Judah said, "What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; here we are, my lord's slaves, both we and he also with whom the cup was found." But he said, "Far be it from me that I should do so; the man in whose hand the cup was found, he shall be my slave. And as for you, go up in peace to your father."***

Joseph wants to test them now regarding their love for their brother. He says that Benjamin is the guilty one; so, it is Benjamin who must stay. They had sold him into slavery; now he says, "Just leave Benjamin here, and he can be my slave. He is the guilty one. The rest of you can go home." Now listen to Judah— McGee

*Discussion: What is different about the brother's response the second time they are accused by Joseph (compare Genesis 42:10-11)?*

***Gen 44:18-24 Then Judah came near to him and said: "O my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord's hearing, and do not let your anger burn against your servant; for you are even like***

## Gen 44 – Joseph tests his brothers.

*Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father or a brother?' And we said to my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, who is young; his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father loves him.' Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.' And we said to my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.' But you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.' "So it was, when we went up to your servant my father, that we told him the words of my lord.*

*Gen 44:25-29 And our father said, 'Go back and buy us a little food.' But we said, 'We cannot go down; if our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we may not see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.' Then your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons; and the one went out from me, and I said, "Surely he is torn to pieces"; and I have not seen him since. But if you take this one also from me, and calamity befalls him, you shall bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave.'*

Judah here in this statement is recounting what has happened and the feelings of their father. Actually, the father had been deceived, and Joseph can see that now. He now knows exactly what the brothers told their father had happened to him so long ago. I believe that this is the first time any one of them has said that much. They had said previously that he “was not,” meaning that he was dead.

We can see something else. Jacob is growing in grace, but he hasn't arrived. Instead of trusting the Lord, he is leaning on this boy Benjamin. If anything had happened to Benjamin, it would have killed him—he would have gone down into his grave, sorrowing.

There are Christians today who reveal a very wonderful faith in God at the time when death comes to a loved one. Others collapse when this happens. I don't care how much you love a member of your family, friend, if you both are children of God, you know you are going to see each other again someday. The one walking by faith is not going to collapse at a time like that. Therefore, we can recognize that Jacob has not yet arrived. Although he is growing in grace, he still does not have a complete trust in God. – McGee

*Discussion: In chapter 45, we will learn Joseph's general reaction to Judah's speech. How do you think Joseph reacted specifically upon hearing Jacob's words in verses 27-29?*

*Gen 44:30-34 "Now therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad's life, it will happen, when he sees that the lad is not with us, that he will die. So, your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave. For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever.' Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?"*

Again, Judah is the spokesman for the group, and any one of them would have offered himself. Joseph tests his brothers, and they all pass the test. Rather than to see Benjamin go into slavery, they are willing to take his place.

## Gen 44 – Joseph tests his brothers.

My friend, later in history there came One in the line of Judah, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who bore the penalty for the guilty. "... God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom\_5:8). Christ took the place of the guilty. - McGee

Judah stood near Joseph and gave a detailed review of Benjamin's involvement—how Joseph had demanded the presence of the youngest son, how their father, still grieving over the loss of one son, had protested Benjamin's going to Egypt and how Judah had offered himself as surety for Benjamin's safety. Judah said that their father would die if the brothers went back without Benjamin, so he offered to stay in Egypt and serve as a slave in the place of Benjamin.

What a change had been worked in Judah! In chapter 37 he ruthlessly sold Joseph for profit, without concern for his father's heartbreak. In chapter 38 he was involved in deception and immorality. But God was working in his heart, so that in chapter 43 he became surety for Benjamin. Now in chapter 44 he pours out his heart in intercession before Joseph, offering himself as a slave so as not to bring upon his father the crushing sorrow of losing Benjamin. From selling his own brother into slavery to becoming a slave in his brother's stead; from callousness toward his father to sacrificial concern for his well-being—this is the progress of the grace of God in the life of Judah! – Believers Bible Commentary

*Discussion: Sir Walter Scott (19th-century Scottish novelist) described Judah's plea as "the most complete pattern of genuine natural eloquence extant in any language."*

- *What do you find commendable about the character of Judah?*
- *What do we learn about intercession from Judah's pleadings?*

***Joseph Provides for His Brothers and Family***

***Gen 45:1-2 Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Make everyone go out from me!" So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it.***

Joseph clears the room.

This time Joseph could not get out of the room. He just breaks down and begins to weep. No one knows why except Joseph. His own brethren at this time do not know, and the servants who are there do not know. Now there is no further reason for Joseph to conceal his identity from them, as he has fully tested his brethren.

Let me repeat that the day is coming when the Lord Jesus Christ is going to make Himself known unto His brethren, the Jews. When He came the first time, "he came unto his own, and his own received him not" (Joh\_1:11). In fact, they delivered Him up to be crucified. But when He comes the second time, He will make Himself known to His own people. "And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends" (Zec\_13:6). Christ will make Himself known to His brethren. And "in that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zec\_13:1). It will be a family affair between the Lord Jesus and His brethren. The episode of Joseph revealing himself to his brothers gives us a little inkling of how wonderful that day of Christ's revelation will be.

Joseph is so charged with emotion that he can't contain himself. In the house of Pharaoh they can hear the weeping. They can't understand what is happening over at Joseph's house. -McGee

***Gen 45:3-4 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; does my father still live?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me." So they came near. Then he said: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.***

"Troubled" in our translation is really not strong enough. The brothers were *terrified* at his presence. I tell you, if you think they were afraid before, they were really terrified now. It had been close to twenty-five years since they had seen him when they sold him to the Ishmaelites, and they are sure that now he will want to get his revenge. They are too shocked and frightened to speak.

"I'm your brother." Here is a dramatic moment! Can you imagine how they feel? Notice the reaction of Joseph here. He is not angry, and he does not seek revenge. That would be the normal, human reaction. Then why doesn't he seek revenge? – McGee

Why did he ask for them to come near? What convinced the brothers that he was Joseph despite their doubts?

***Gen 45:5-8 But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.***

## Genesis 45 – the Unveiling

You see, the thing that Joseph could see in all of this was that God had permitted it for a purpose. God was moving in his life.

If you and I could see the hand of God in our lives, would we become angry and seek revenge? I don't think we would. Again this man gives the glory to God.

Joseph was seventeen when he was brought into Egypt. He was thirty when he stood before Pharaoh. There had been seven years of plenty and now there have passed two years of famine. So Joseph is thirty-nine years old and has been living in the land of Egypt for twenty-two years. He sees the hand of God in all of this. - McGee

***Gen 45:9-11 "Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph: "God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry. You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children's children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have. There I will provide for you, lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty; for there are still five years of famine." "***

Jacob and his family could not have survived had they stayed in the land of Palestine at this particular time. They would have perished. Joseph wants to bring them down to the land of Goshen which is actually the best part of Egypt. It is in that land that God is going to make them a nation, sheltered from the rest of the world. The lives of the brothers revealed that they needed to get out of the land of Canaan. - McGee

***Gen 45:12-14 "And behold, your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my mouth that speaks to you. So you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; and you shall hurry and bring my father down here." Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck.***

I think that they stood there absolutely spellbound and were down on their faces and then up again and that they had absolutely nothing to say as they listened to Joseph speaking words that seemed unbelievable—they would have been unbelievable but Joseph was right there before them.

This is a tender scene between these two full-brothers. Joseph and Benjamin are both marvelous men. - McGee

***Gen 45:15-16 Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him. Now the report of it was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, "Joseph's brothers have come." So it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well.***

There was all this noise in the house of Joseph, and the people could hear it. Pharaoh wanted to know what was going on, and I suppose he asked one of the servants from Joseph's house what it all meant. The servant probably said, "Well, you know those eleven men who came down from Canaan—they're Joseph's brothers!" It delighted Pharaoh. Why would it delight him? Remember that Pharaoh was probably a Hyksos king and of the same racial strain as Joseph and his family. He hadn't been able to trust the Egyptians too much and was pleased with Joseph's faithfulness; so he was delighted that there were going to be more like him. - McGee

***Gen 45:17-20 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and depart; go to the land of Canaan. Bring your father and your households and come to me; I will give***



***you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land. Now you are commanded—do this: Take carts out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives; bring your father and come. Also do not be concerned about your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.' "***

Notice that Pharaoh orders wagons to be sent. The wheel was quite an invention, and these men from Canaan were not using wagons yet, but the Egyptians were more advanced.

“You won't need to bring anything extra; we'll furnish everything you need.”

***Gen 45:21-26 Then the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them carts, according to the command of Pharaoh, and he gave them provisions for the journey. He gave to all of them, to each man, changes of garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of garments. And he sent to his father these things: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and food for his father for the journey. So he sent his brothers away, and they departed; and he said to them, "See that you do not become troubled along the way." Then they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father. And they told him, saying, "Joseph is still alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt." And Jacob's heart stood still, because he did not believe them.***

When Pharaoh heard what was going on, he told Joseph's brothers to bring their father and families from Canaan, but not to bother bringing their heavy furniture and goods because he would provide everything they needed. So they went back to Canaan with wagons provided by Pharaoh, and with beautiful garments, animals, and provisions from Joseph. Benjamin got a gift of money and a special wardrobe. Fearing that his brothers might accuse each other for their guilt in mistreating him years earlier, Joseph warned them not to quarrel on their homeward journey.

On reaching home, they broke the news **to Jacob**. At first it was too much for him. But when he heard the full story and saw the loaded **carts**, he knew it was true—**Joseph** was **still alive** and they would meet again! – Believers Bible Commentary

***Gen 45:27-28 But when they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived. Then Israel said, "It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."***

On reaching home, they broke the news to Jacob. At first it was too much for him. But when he heard the full story and saw the loaded carts, he knew it was true—Joseph was still alive and they would meet again!

Joseph mentions his father five times in this chapter. This reveals his Christlikeness in addition to the free forgiveness he extended to his brothers. It was our Lord's love for His Father and His desire to do the Father's will that brought Him into the world to redeem fallen man. Joseph's love for Jacob is but a faint shadow of that love. – Believers Bible Commentary

## Gen 47 - Jacob Bless Pharaoh

THEME: Joseph presents father and brothers to Pharaoh; Joseph promises Jacob burial in Canaan.

We have seen how Jacob and all his family have arrived in the land of Egypt. Joseph, as a move of strategy, brought them into the land of Goshen. This actually was the richest land in that day, but right now they are in the midst of a famine and no land is very valuable to the owner at this particular time.

We are going to find that this is the best chapter in the life of Jacob so far. Jacob doesn't appear in a good light when we first meet him in Scripture. In fact, not until he makes his trip to Egypt do we begin to see that he has become a man of faith. This chapter, more than any other, reveals that.

The famine becomes more intense as it draws to an end. Although all the people of the world are involved in this, Canaan and Egypt are the lands which are mentioned because they are the particular areas in the development of the story which is told to us here. - McGee

### ***Jacob's Family Settles in Goshen***

***Gen 47:1 Then Joseph went and told Pharaoh, and said, "My father and my brothers, their flocks and their herds and all that they possess, have come from the land of Canaan; and indeed they are in the land of Goshen."***

Joseph is going to present his father and his brothers to the Pharaoh of Egypt. He put them in the land of Goshen before he asked for a place for them. You can see the strategy in that. If they were already there, Pharaoh would be more apt to give them that land. After all, they would already be moved in and have unpacked their goods. – McGee

***Gen 47:2-3 And he took five men from among his brothers and presented them to Pharaoh. Then Pharaoh said to his brothers, "What is your occupation?" And they said to Pharaoh, "Your servants are shepherds, both we and also our fathers."***

We saw that shepherds and cattlemen didn't get along in those days. Egyptians just didn't care for shepherds, neither did they care for shepherding. So that opened up an opportunity for the children of Israel to do something that the Egyptians would not want to do. – McGee

***Gen 47:4-6 And they said to Pharaoh, "We have come to dwell in the land, because your servants have no pasture for their flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Now therefore, please let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen." Then Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, saying, "Your father and your brothers have come to you. The land of Egypt is before you. Have your father and brothers dwell in the best of the land; let them dwell in the land of Goshen. And if you know any competent men among them, then make them chief herdsmen over my livestock."***

Since shepherding was not popular for the Egyptians, Pharaoh needed someone to care for his cattle.

Now Joseph presents his own father to Pharaoh, and this is really quite remarkable. I want you to notice that Jacob now stands in the best light in which we've ever seen him during our study of him. - McGee

***Gen 47:7 Then Joseph brought in his father Jacob and set him before Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.***

## Gen 47 - Jacob Bless Pharaoh

Notice that it is Jacob who is blessing Pharaoh. He is beginning to live up to his name. He is a witness for God now. The lesser is always blessed of the greater, and Jacob blesses Pharaoh as a witness for God. - McGee

***Gen 47:8-9 Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How old are you?" And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are one hundred and thirty years; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage."***

At this point, if Jacob were living by that old nature which controlled him at the beginning, he would have said, "Well, Pharaoh, I am 130 years old, and I want to tell you what I have accomplished in my lifetime. I would like to tell you how I outsmarted my brother when I was a young fellow and how I became rich by outsmarting my father-in-law." And he could have bragged about his family—"I've got twelve sons...." He could have gone on and on. But Jacob is a different man now. Listen to him—

First of all, notice that he was 130 years old when he came down to the land of Egypt, and he will be 147 years old when he dies. Therefore, he will spend 17 years in the land of Egypt. I imagine that he was right on the verge of death—one foot in the grave and the other foot on a banana peel—when he came down to Egypt. But the joy of finding Joseph alive and of being with him in Egypt prolonged his life 17 years.

Again, this audience with Pharaoh is an opportunity for the old man to boast, but notice how changed this man Jacob is. He says that he is 130 years old and his life is really nothing to brag about. "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been." He doesn't brag about pulling a trick on his old father. Instead, he says he doesn't measure up to his fathers. I "have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." Isn't this a changed man? It doesn't sound like the old Jacob, does it? He's giving glory to God for his life, and he is making no boast that he has accomplished a great deal.

***Gen 47:10-11 So Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh. And Joseph situated his father and his brothers, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded.***

Had Joseph been less noble he might have shrunk from introducing his lowly relatives to the mighty Pharaoh! But such thoughts were submerged in the great love which claimed that withered, aged, halting man as his father. Let us never be ashamed of our Savior, who has done more for us than even Jacob for his sons. This confession that the days of his pilgrimage had been few and evil is set to a sad minor chord; and to the superficial gaze Esau had enjoyed a much more prosperous career; but when Jacob stood before Pharaoh the mighty monarch recognized his moral supremacy, and bent beneath his benediction. Surely the less is blessed of the greater. Here was the harvest of his tears! – FB Meyer

***Gen 47:12-13 Then Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father's household with bread, according to the number in their families. Now there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished because of the famine.***

Frankly, my feeling is that Jacob has arrived. What an opportunity he has to boast, but he doesn't take advantage of it. Someone else might have thought, Pharaoh is a great ruler, but I want him to know that I

## Gen 47 - Jacob Bless Pharaoh

was a pretty big man up yonder in the land of Canaan! But Jacob doesn't brag—he is just a sinner, saved by the grace of God.

In our day we hear so much boasting on the part of many Christians. Sometimes in our own circles, we attempt to applaud certain men for what they have done. We talk about how great they are. Well, if we all told the truth, we would say that we are just a bunch of sinners and we haven't anything to brag about except a wonderful Savior who has been gracious and patient with us down through the years. He is all any of us have to boast about.

Neither can we say that we are superior to our fathers. A friend of mine, who is now a seminary professor, told me how ashamed he had been of his dad. When he first went off to college, his dad was coming to that college to speak because he was a preacher and a Bible teacher. My friend said he was so ashamed of his dad that he wouldn't even go to the meeting where he spoke. He pretended to be sick so he would not have to go. He said, "I was so ashamed of him that I didn't want to be known as his son!" He spent four years in college and then went into the business world for a couple of years. He said, "I had a rough time, and I changed my thinking about my dad. I had thought he was pretty stupid, but I realized that he had supported his family and had been an excellent Bible teacher. After I had experienced some rough times in the business world, I came home, and my, how my dad had improved! No one has ever learned as much as my dad had learned during those brief years I had been away from home!" He came to the conclusion that his dad was a lot smarter than he had thought him to be. Isn't that same kind of story true of many of us? But it is not true of Jacob here. He takes a humble place because he is a changed man now.

The land of Rameses is the land of Goshen.

The reason that only Egypt and Canaan are mentioned is because they are the two geographical locations which are involved in our story. If Jacob had remained in Canaan with his family, they would have perished. Grain had been stored in the land of Egypt, but the land is not producing grain anymore. Evidently the famine has spread all over Africa, because the Nile River is not overflowing, which is so necessary for Egypt's crop production. - McGee

***Gen 47:14 And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, for the grain which they bought; and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house.***

We are coming now to something for which Joseph has been criticized. People say he took advantage of poverty and he bought up the land. In other words, he closed in on the mortgages and bought the land. I feel that this is an unfair criticism of Joseph. To begin with, he is the agent of Pharaoh. None of this is for himself; he is making no effort to enrich himself. He was not crooked in any sense of the word. He did not gain personally because of the famine.

An illustration of this is the scarcity of and demand for uranium during wartime in my own country. When some men found that they had uranium in their properties—especially in Arizona—they were paid handsome sums for their land. Were they taking advantage of their government? I don't think so. The law of supply and demand was in operation.

It seems to me that this same principle was in operation in the land of Egypt. Joseph bought the land for Pharaoh, and he is enabling the people to live by furnishing them food. I think that Joseph stayed within the confines of the law of supply and demand. - McGee

## Gen 47 - Jacob Bless Pharaoh

**Gen 47:15-20** *So when the money failed in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give us bread, for why should we die in your presence? For the money has failed." Then Joseph said, "Give your livestock, and I will give you bread for your livestock, if the money is gone." So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for the horses, the flocks, the cattle of the herds, and for the donkeys. Thus he fed them with bread in exchange for all their livestock that year. When that year had ended, they came to him the next year and said to him, "We will not hide from my lord that our money is gone; my lord also has our herds of livestock. There is nothing left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our lands. Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants of Pharaoh; give us seed, that we may live and not die, that the land may not be desolate." Then Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for every man of the Egyptians sold his field, because the famine was severe upon them. So the land became Pharaoh's.*

There is no doubt that the famine was a very terrible thing. - McGee

**Gen 47:21** *And as for the people, he moved them into the cities, from one end of the borders of Egypt to the other end.*

There was a great migration into the urban areas so that they would be near the center of supply where the grain was stored. You remember that Joseph had chosen these centers throughout Egypt at the very beginning. He now brings the people where they will be close to the supply of food. – McGee

**Gen 47:22-26** *Only the land of the priests he did not buy; for the priests had rations allotted to them by Pharaoh, and they ate their rations which Pharaoh gave them; therefore they did not sell their lands. Then Joseph said to the people, "Indeed I have bought you and your land this day for Pharaoh. Look, here is seed for you, and you shall sow the land. And it shall come to pass in the harvest that you shall give one-fifth to Pharaoh. Four-fifths shall be your own, as seed for the field and for your food, for those of your households and as food for your little ones." So they said, "You have saved our lives; let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants." And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt to this day, that Pharaoh should have one-fifth, except for the land of the priests only, which did not become Pharaoh's.*

When the people of Egypt and Canaan had spent all their money for food, Joseph accepted their livestock in payment. Then later he bought all the land, except that belonging to the Egyptian priests, gave the people seed with which to plant crops, and charged them one-fifth of the crop for land rental, a very fair arrangement. – Believers Bible Commentary

The slender stores of the Egyptians were soon exhausted, and had it not been for Joseph the streets would have been filled with the dying and dead. His Egyptian name means "the savior of the world;" and the confession of the Egyptians proved how true it was: "Thou hast saved our lives." How closely the parallel holds! Joseph rose from the pit and the prison to save his brethren as well as the myriads of his adopted fellow-countrymen: Jesus rose from the grave to be a Prince and a Savior. Joseph's bread cost him nothing, while Jesus gave us that which cost him Calvary. Joseph sold his corn for money; our Lord gave himself without money or price. You may go to Him without reluctance, though your sack is empty and you have no money in your hand; but He will give and give again, without stint. – FB Meyer

## Gen 47 - Jacob Bless Pharaoh

***Gen 47:27-31 So Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions there and grew and multiplied exceedingly. And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. So the length of Jacob's life was one hundred and forty-seven years. When the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, "Now if I have found favor in your sight, please put your hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me. Please do not bury me in Egypt, but let me lie with my fathers; you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place." And he said, "I will do as you have said." Then he said, "Swear to me." And he swore to him. So Israel bowed himself on the head of the bed.***

I think there are several factors which entered into Jacob's request to be buried back in the land of Canaan. First of all, he is now 147 years old, and he becomes alarmed that he will die in the land of Egypt. I think that is clear to him now. Then, the success of Joseph in acquiring all the land for Pharaoh makes him believe that his family might become comfortable in Egypt and never want to return to Canaan. His age certainly told him that he would die shortly.

We need to recognize this request as an evidence of the faith of Jacob in the covenant which God had made with his fathers. We need to note this because it will come up several times as we go through the Bible. The hope of the Old Testament is an earthly hope. Abraham believed that he would be raised from the dead in that land, so he wanted to be buried there. Isaac believed the same. Now Jacob is expressing that same faith. You see, the hope in the Old Testament is not to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and enter the city of the New Jerusalem, which is the eternal and permanent abode of the church.

The hope of the Old Testament is in Christ's Kingdom which will be set up on this earth. When that happens, Israel's great hope will be fulfilled, and these people will be raised for that Kingdom. The first thousand years of it will be a time of testing, and after that the eternal Kingdom will continue on and on. This is why Jacob does not want to be buried in Egypt. If he had no faith or hope in God's promise to him, what difference would it make where he was buried?

For believers today it makes no difference where we are buried. At the time of the Rapture, wherever we are, we shall be raised, and our bodies will join our spirits; that is, if we have died before the Rapture takes place. If we are still living, then we shall be changed and caught up to meet the Lord in the air. So it won't make any difference if we are buried in Egypt or in Canaan or in Los Angeles, or in Timbuktu. The living "in Christ" and the dead "in Christ" in all of these places will be caught up. It won't make any difference where we are. We don't need to go to a launching pad in Florida and take off from there. No, our hope is a heavenly hope.

The hope of the Old Testament is an earthly hope, and the fact that Jacob wants to be buried back in the land is an evidence of his faith in the Resurrection. He hopes to be raised from the dead in the Promised Land. Jacob is now becoming a man of faith.

## Gen 48 - Jacob Blesses Ephraim and Manasseh

HEME: Joseph visits Jacob during his last illness; Jacob blesses Ephraim and Manasseh.

This tells us of Jacob's last sickness and his blessing of the two sons of Joseph. We are told in Heb\_11:21 that "by faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff."

This chapter gives us another occasion to see further evidence of the spiritual growth of Jacob. He has come a long, long way since his early days. We may feel that it is unfortunate that these traits which appear in the last days of Jacob were not present in his early life. But isn't it wonderful to be able to observe in this that spiritual life is a growth and a development! It is not some sensational experience which takes place in a moment of time, but it is described scripturally as a walk in the Spirit. There was too much of the old nature in Jacob when he was a young man, and the new nature is not discerned until he is an old man.

A fine-looking couple in Memphis, Tennessee, had come forward after a service. I asked them what they came forward for. They said they wanted all that God had for them. I found out that they came forward every Sunday. They thought they would have some sensational, momentous experience that would all of a sudden make them fully grown Christians. Scripture tells us we are to "... grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2Pe 3:18). We see in Jacob that we must wait for the fruit of the Spirit to develop. But thank God for the possibility of growth in our lives and for the patience of God which permits it. Also, we can thank Him that He doesn't move in, as we would, and try to force growth. God very patiently dealt with Jacob, and He will deal very patiently with you and me. - McGee

***Gen 48:1-3 Now it came to pass after these things that Joseph was told, "Indeed your father is sick"; and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. And Jacob was told, "Look, your son Joseph is coming to you"; and Israel strengthened himself and sat up on the bed. Then Jacob said to Joseph: "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me,***

Can you imagine the thrill that fills the heart of this old man? Here comes Joseph, his favorite son, with his two young boys. Jacob never dreamed he would see Joseph again because he thought he had been killed. Yet he sees Joseph elevated to this important position in Egypt, and he can trace the way God had worked out the affairs of his life. Jacob had been in Egypt for 17 years now. He is an old man and is dying, but he musters his strength to sit at the edge of his bed. Notice that his thinking goes back to the time God appeared to him at Luz, and he says to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me." Jacob has come a long way. We see now the faith of Jacob. He is now trusting God. He is not bragging about himself. As a young man he was clever and could get what he wanted—or so he thought—and he would use any kind of method to get it. But now, as he looks back over his life, he remembers when God appeared to him at Bethel, both when he was leaving the land of Canaan and when he was returning. He says, "God appeared to me there, and God blessed me."

Now we see the faith of Jacob—McGee

***Gen 48:4 and said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a multitude of people, and give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession.'***



## Gen 48 - Jacob Blesses Ephraim and Manasseh

Let's pay special attention to God's promise that Jacob mentions, which runs through the Old and New Testaments. He made the promise to the line of the patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. There are three specific points to the covenant: (1) the nation, (2) the land, and (3) the blessing. But the two important things for Jacob right here are these: (1) "I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people"; (2) "and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession."

The third part of the covenant is important for you and me. "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

The reason that you and I are sitting down with the Bible right now is because God has made good two-thirds of this promise which He covenanted thousands of years ago. The one-third is still not fulfilled. The Jews do not have the land of Israel yet. Oh, they have a little border of it, but it is certainly a bone of contention. When they get the land from the hand of God, they will live there in peace. Every man will be under his vine and his fig tree. They will own property and pay no taxes. That sounds like the Millennium, doesn't it? Well, that is what it will be. – McGee

***Gen 48:5-6 And now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. Your offspring whom you beget after them shall be yours; they will be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance.***

These two grandsons, the two sons of Joseph, will each become a tribe. One would conclude that there are thirteen tribes of Israel, since there are twelve sons, and now the two sons of Joseph are each to become a tribe. There was no tribe of Joseph, but there were the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, and that makes thirteen in any man's mathematics. Yet the Bible counts twelve tribes. You see, the tribe of Levi was not counted as a tribe. They became the high priestly tribe and were not given any land or territory but were scattered as priests throughout the other tribes. So, they were not counted as a tribe. You may consider that to be a rather devious way of counting, but I didn't do it; the Word of God counts it that way. That is the way God wanted it to be, and so that is the way God made it.

Ephraim and Manasseh are over 17 years old because they were born before Jacob came to Egypt. They each become a tribe.

Notice now that Jacob's mind goes back to Rachel, his beloved, the mother of Joseph. - McGee

***Gen 48:7 But as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died beside me in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)."***

My friend, when you and I sing "O Little Town of Bethlehem," we think of the birth of Jesus, but if Jacob could hear us, he would think primarily of the death of his beloved and beautiful Rachel. Here he is on his deathbed, and his thoughts go back to the place where he buried her. That was his heartbreak. - McGee

***Gen 48:8-9 Then Israel saw Joseph's sons, and said, "Who are these?" Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me in this place." And he said, "Please bring them to me, and I will bless them."***



## Gen 48 - Jacob Blesses Ephraim and Manasseh

Have you noticed that both Isaac and Jacob had trouble seeing when they got old? The brightness of the sun may have something to do with it. Even today there is a lot of eye disease in the Mideast countries. When I was in the Arab countries, I noticed a great many old people who seemed to have difficulty getting around. They weren't entirely blind, but they certainly couldn't see very well. So, we notice here that Jacob didn't recognize the boys. - McGee

***Gen 48:10-12 Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see. Then Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced them. And Israel said to Joseph, "I had not thought to see your face; but in fact, God has also shown me your offspring!" So, Joseph brought them from beside his knees, and he bowed down with his face to the earth.***

Perhaps the fellows are a little embarrassed by their grandfather's show of affection for them. It seems that the two boys tried to get away from their grandfather when he lavished his affection upon them. - McGee

***Gen 48:13-14 And Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near him. Then Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn.***

Joseph is bringing the boys to their grandfather that he might bless them. The one who would stand before Israel at his right hand would be the one with priority.

Ephraim is to become the leader above Manasseh. Later on, we will see that the tribe of Manasseh marched under the banner of the tribe of Ephraim in the wilderness march, as described in Numbers. Joshua came out of the tribe of Ephraim, by the way, and there were many great men from that tribe. It became the tribe with priority—there is no question about that.

Do you see what happened here? Even though Jacob couldn't see too well, he could tell what Joseph was doing. Joseph was pushing the older son to the position of Jacob's right hand and the younger son toward the left hand. So, what did old Jacob do? Well, he just switched hands. He crossed his hands and put his right hand on the younger son.

Why did he do this? There is no doubt that he had tender affection for both boys. They were the sons of his favorite son Joseph. He knowingly gives the blessing to the younger, and I think one reason may have been that he was the younger and he had received the blessing. So, he passes the blessing on to the younger son here.

This is an interesting principle that runs all the way through the Scriptures. For instance, in the choice of David, David was the youngest of the sons of Jesse. Why did God choose him? God is illustrating for you and me a great spiritual truth. God does not accept primogeniture—that is, natural birth. Never will He accept it. There must be the new birth. Therefore, God does not pay attention to our customs. We say that the oldest boy has the responsibility in a family. Well, the oldest boy is not the one whom God always chooses. That is, God does not choose the natural man—He chooses no man because of his natural ability. How we need to learn this truth in our day! Now don't misunderstand me. God can use talent, but it must be dedicated to Him! If it took talent alone to bring about revival, we would have had revival in California years ago. We have Christian talent all around, but we don't have revival. Why not?

## Gen 48 - Jacob Blesses Ephraim and Manasseh

Because the talent is not dedicated to God. I tell you, my friend, it must be yielded to Him to be used of Him.

And old Jacob crossed his hands as he laid them on the heads of his grandsons so that he gave the younger boy the priority. – McGee

**Note: Even Joseph wants to control things and tries to politely correct Jacob. Do you struggle with control issues? Here we see that we have to give it all to God!**

**God's economy does not work like ours. We have to remember that He usually uses people we would not think of like fisherman, tax collectors, and terrorists to be disciples.**

***Gen 48:15-16 And he blessed Joseph, and said: "God, before whom my father's Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has fed me all my life long to this day, The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, Bless the lads; Let my name be named upon them, And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."***

"The God which fed me all my life long unto this day." He reaches spiritual heights here, my friend. "The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." He has nothing to boast about except a wonderful Redeemer. And they did "grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth" just as he said. – McGee

**Do you act like Joseph and credit all your successes and even the food you have as blessing from God? If you don't now, don't worry as you recall it took old Jacob till past 100 years to figure that out.**

***Gen 48:17-19 Now when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; so, he took hold of his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. And Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head." But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations."***

Then Jacob blessed the grandsons, giving the birthright to Ephraim, who was the younger. Joseph tried to correct this in favor of Manasseh, the firstborn, but Jacob said that he had done this intentionally. What memories must have gone through his mind as he, by faith, gave the blessing to the younger. Years earlier his own father had unknowingly blessed him, the younger. But now he was blessing the younger, not through ignorance, but because he was in touch with the God who holds the future. - McGee

***Gen 48:20-22 So he blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will bless, saying, 'May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh!' " And thus he set Ephraim before Manasseh. Then Israel said to Joseph, "Behold, I am dying, but God will be with you and bring you back to the land of your fathers. Moreover I have given to you one portion above your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow."***

## Gen 48 - Jacob Blesses Ephraim and Manasseh

Notice Jacob's *faith* in God. That is, Joseph, through his *two* sons, would have a greater inheritance than the other brothers would have.

This apparently was a personal gift made by Jacob to Joseph (see [Joh 4:5](#)). It was a ridge near Sychar where Joseph was buried. It compensated for the fact that two tribes came from Joseph and they needed more territory. It was a parcel of land which Jacob first bought from the Amorite, then later they retook it by force. Jacob returned the compliment, and by force he reclaimed it. It has been an area of controversy up to the present time. It is here that modern Israel wants to build on the West Bank.

Notice: The extra blessing is a land where bravery and faith is required, and it is still under conflict today.

**Do you ever feel like some of the blessings you have are the subject of conflict?**

## Gen 49 - Jacob Blesses His Sons

THEME: Jacob's deathbed blessing and prophecy; final words and death of Jacob.

This is another remarkable chapter, as it is the deathbed scene of old Jacob. In fact, in the previous chapter we saw him on that deathbed as he strengthened himself, sat upon the bed, and blessed the sons of Joseph.

After that interview, the rest of Jacob's sons came in, so that around him now are all twelve of his sons. He has a farewell message for each of them. He begins with the eldest and goes right down the list. Anything that a man says on his deathbed is important because generally, if he ever tells the truth, he tells it on his deathbed. This deathbed message is dramatic because it is prophetic. It tells what will happen to the twelve sons of Jacob when they become tribes. What was prophetic then has now become largely historical.

This is our final opportunity to see another evidence of faith in the life of Jacob. He spoke to his boys who were to become the twelve tribes in the nation of Israel and would be dwelling in the land of Canaan. What faith! Remember that the Canaanite was then in the land and that Jacob's family was favorably situated in Egypt. - McGee

***Gen 49:1 And Jacob called his sons and said, "Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days:***

We come here to an important expression. We find that there are certain expressions which the Bible uses over and over again. One of those expressions is right here: "in the last days." The last days of the nation Israel will be different from the last days of the church. There is a very sharp dispensational distinction which needs to be made. Now he is talking about the last days of the nation Israel and what is going to happen then to the twelve tribes which will develop from his sons and will form the nation.

A friend of mine in seminary (a very intelligent young man who did a great deal of studying) wrote his thesis on the prophecies concerning the twelve sons of Jacob and the tribes that came from them. I enjoyed talking with him because he always had something new to offer. I came to appreciate at that time the marvelous fulfillment there has been of these prophecies to the tribes, especially those given by Moses in Deuteronomy 33.

Many folk talk about the fact that certain prophecies concerning the nation Israel have been fulfilled, and that is true. But we can narrow it down further by dividing Israel into twelve parts and recognizing that God has had something to say concerning each of the twelve. Not only have His prophecies concerning the nation been fulfilled, but prophecies concerning each tribe have been fulfilled. My friend, that makes it remarkable indeed. In the chapter before us we will see the prophecies of what will befall each tribe in the "last days." While some of them have been fulfilled already, most of them wait for final fulfillment. I will be hitting only the highlights, but if you want a more comprehensive study, I recommend two sources listed in the bibliography at the end of this book: Paradise to Prison: Studies in Genesis by Davis, and The Genesis Record by Morris. – McGee

***Gen 49:2 "Gather together and hear, you sons of Jacob, And listen to Israel your father.***

Here now is the old man sitting up in bed. I've seen pictures of him stretched out in bed looking like he wouldn't be able to raise his head. But that is not true! He was leaning on his staff, as we learn in Heb\_11:21. Frankly, old Jacob had been on the go all of his life, and he wanted to keep going. Death is really an embarrassment. It comes at a most inconvenient time, a time when we want to keep going down here. (I have made appointments two years ahead, and I don't know whether I'll fulfill them or not. I accept them with one stipulation: "provided I'm alive.") Jacob found that he couldn't keep going. He was leaning on his staff. He wanted to keep going, but he couldn't. What a remarkable man he was in many ways. - McGee

## Gen 49 - Jacob Blesses His Sons

**Gen 49:3-4** *“Reuben, you are my firstborn, My might and the beginning of my strength, The excellency of dignity and the excellency of power. Unstable as water, you shall not excel, because you went up to your father's bed; Then you defiled it—He went up to my couch.*

These patriarchs recognized the great subject of heredity that is of so much concern today. Like father, like son. Jacob recognizes that and sees that this boy Reuben is a great deal like himself. “Unstable as water” could have described Jacob in his early years. It was true of his oldest son, also. “Thou shalt not excel.” Reuben never did. He never did win a blue ribbon. He won a couple of red ribbons and some white ribbons, but he was never in first place.

There are a lot of folks like that today. They are satisfied and do not wish to excel. I have a preacher friend who is a wonderful man. He could have been an outstanding writer, but he didn't want to be. I think he wrote two little pamphlets. He could have been a great Bible teacher, but he didn't want to be. He just did what he wanted to do. He was satisfied with the red ribbon and never won a blue ribbon.

The story about Reuben which Jacob mentions here is a sordid story. I didn't dwell on it when we went through Genesis because I see no reason to dwell on that. Contemporary literature, plays, movies, and television give us enough of the sordid to make us sick of it. God does not intend for us to dwell on man's sins. In fact, He gives us these instructions: “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Php\_4:8). But God records human sins so that we may have an accurate picture of the human family.

The next two boys are classed together. They were full—brothers, sons of Leah. - McGee

**Gen 49:5-7** *“Simeon and Levi are brothers; Instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place. Let not my soul enter their council; Let not my honor be united to their assembly; For in their anger, they slew a man, and in their self-will, they hamstrung an ox. Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; And their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel.*

You remember how they went to Shalem, a city of Shechem, and killed all the inhabitants of the city because one man was guilty of raping their own sister. They took their revenge on the whole town! They should not have done that, of course, and Jacob reminds them of this.

In Levi, we see an exhibition of the marvelous grace of God. It is true that they were scattered in Israel, but this was because they were made the priestly tribe. It was the grace of God that could take a cruel person like Levi and make him the head of the priestly tribe.

It is the grace of God that has transformed us sinners into a kingdom of priests, my friend. All believers are priests today. Among them are converted drunkards, converted harlots, converted murderers. I have had several of them in the churches where I have served. How did they become priests in the Kingdom of God? Just as we all did—by the marvelous grace of God. “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1Pe\_1:18-19). Then he goes on in 1Pe\_2:5 to say, “Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” Who is he talking about? Those who have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ!

## Gen 49 - Jacob Blesses His Sons

Reuben lost first place, and Simeon and Levi also lost first place. The king will not come from any of these tribes. There is another boy who was also a sinner. We will see what the grace of God did for him: - McGee.

***Gen 49:8-9 "Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise; Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; Your father's children shall bow down before you. Judah is a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He bows down, he lies down as a lion; And as a lion, who shall rouse him?"***

Judah (meaning praise) would be praised and respected by his brothers because of his victories over his enemies. He is likened to a lion that goes forth to capture prey, then returns to well-deserved rest that no one dares disturb. – Believers' Bible Commentary

***Gen 49:10 The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people.***

"Until Shiloh comes"—Shiloh is the ruler.

This is one of the more remarkable prophecies in all the Word of God. Already we have been told that there will be a seed of the woman. That was the first prophecy of Christ: "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" (Gen\_3:15). The "seed" of the woman is the One who will do the bruising of the serpent's head. He will be the One to get the victory. This first prophecy was in Genesis; then that Seed was confirmed to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. Now it is confirmed to Judah—out of Judah's line He is coming. Also, the word Shiloh means "rest and tranquility." Christ is the One who will bring rest. Remember that when the Lord Jesus walked here on earth, He turned from those who had rejected Him, and He said to the populace, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will rest you" (Mat\_11:28). That is Shiloh—Shiloh had come.

Not only is Christ Shiloh, but also, He is the One who will hold the scepter. The scepter of this universe will be held in nail-pierced hands. In the last part of verse Gen\_49:24 of this chapter we read that from God will come the Shepherd, the

Stone of Israel. So, this Shiloh is also a shepherd and a stone. When we get to Num\_24:17 we will find that a Star is prophesied. Think of all that the coming of Christ means. He is the Seed promised to the woman and to the patriarchs. He is the Shiloh who brings rest. He is the King who holds the scepter. He is the Shepherd who gave His life, and He is the Chief Shepherd who is coming someday. He is the Stone that the builders disallowed but who is now the headstone of the corner. He is the Star, the bright and morning Star for His church. This is the line that went from Adam to Seth (after Abel was murdered). From Seth it went through Noah to Shem and to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and now to Judah. Friend don't miss this wonderful fact that God is moving according to a pattern and a program here. This is very important for us to see. - McGee

***Gen 49:11-12 Binding his donkey to the vine, and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, He washed his garments in wine, And his clothes in the blood of grapes. His eyes are darker than wine, And his teeth whiter than milk.***

Who is this talking about? It is Christ who came riding into Jerusalem on a little donkey, offering Himself as the Messiah, the King, and the Savior. "He washed his garments in wine"—what kind of wine? Blood, His own blood. But when Christ comes the next time, His garments will be red. The question is asked, "Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treaded in the wine vat?" (Isa\_63:2). At this time, it will not be His own blood but the blood of His enemies. This predicts Christ's second coming when He returns in judgment. - McGee

## Gen 49 - Jacob Blesses His Sons

***Gen 49:13 "Zebulun shall dwell by the haven of the sea; He shall become a haven for ships, and his border shall adjoin Sidon.***

Zebulun would enjoy prosperity from maritime commerce. Since this tribe's territory in OT times was landlocked, this prophecy may look forward to the Millennium. – Believers Bible Commentary

Zebulun was the tribe which lived along the coast up in the northern part of the land. – McGee

**Notice: There is a key factual difference between the commentaries. This underscores the fact that we have to be Bereans!**

***Gen 49:14-15 "Issachar is a strong donkey, lying down between two burdens; He saw that rest was good, And that the land was pleasant; He bowed his shoulder to bear a burden, And became a band of slaves.***

Issachar was also finally located way up in the northern part of the land. They were the ones who did a great deal of the work that constituted the backbone of the nation. They were the workers, and that is the thought here. We hear a great deal about the silent majority today, that is, the average person like you and me. We don't get on television. It is the unusual, often the peculiar, people whom we see on television and whom people consider to be great. People try to convince us that these are the kind of folk who are the important people. But, my friend, they are not the backbone of this nation, or of any nation. The little tribes, like Zebulun and Issachar, which we tend to pass over were really the backbone of the nation Israel when they got settled in the Promised Land. - McGee

***Gen 49:16-18 "Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, A viper by the path, that bites the horse's heels So that its rider shall fall backward. I have waited for your salvation, O LORD!***

Dan, true to the tribe's name, would concern itself with judging the people. Verse 17 is difficult. It may allude to Dan's introducing the idolatry which caused the nation's fall (Jdg\_18:30-31). Many think that it is a veiled reference to the Antichrist's springing from Dan, and that this is why this tribe goes unmentioned in 1Ch\_2:3; 1Ch\_8:40 and Rev\_7:3-8. In verse 18, Jacob injects a prayer for the final deliverance of his people from their foes or for his own deliverance. – Believers' Bible Commentary

***Gen 49:19-21 "Gad, a troop shall tramp upon him, but he shall triumph at last. "Bread from Asher shall be rich, and he shall yield royal dainties. "Naphtali is a deer let loose; He uses beautiful words.***

Gad, unprotected in its territory east of the Jordan, would be subjected to frequent enemy raids. But the tribe would trample the troops of its foes.

Happily, for Asher (happy), this tribe would have fertile agricultural land, producing delicacies fit for a king.

Naphtali is likened to a doe that has been released from confinement. It springs forth with tremendous speed to carry good news. All the disciples except the traitor came from the territory of Naphtali, and much of the Lord's ministry was there (Mar\_4:13-16).

***Gen 49:22-26 "Joseph is a fruitful bough, A fruitful bough by a well; His branches run over the wall. The archers have bitterly grieved him, shot at him and hated him. But his bow remained in strength, And the arms of his hands were made strong By the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob (From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel), By the God of your father who will help you, And by the Almighty who will bless you With***

## Gen 49 - Jacob Blesses His Sons

***blessings of heaven above, Blessings of the deep that lies beneath, Blessings of the breasts and of the womb. The blessings of your father Have excelled the blessings of my ancestors, up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. They shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers.***

Compassing the territories of Ephraim and Manasseh, Joseph is a fruitful bough, sending out blessings far beyond his own borders. He was the object of bitter hostility, but he did not yield, because he was strengthened by the Mighty God of Jacob—the One from whom the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel (that is, the Messiah) comes forth. God blesses Joseph with rain in abundance, wells and gushing springs, and numerous progenies. Jacob humbly felt that he had been blessed more richly than his ancestors. Now he wishes that such blessings might come to Joseph, the one who was separate from his brothers. - McGee

***Gen 49:27 "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; In the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil."***

This is a strange prophecy concerning Benjamin. Benjamin was closely identified with Judah, so much so that Benjamin went with the tribe of Judah at the division of the kingdom. The tribe of Benjamin was the only one that stayed with the house of David. - McGee

### ***Jacob's Death and Burial***

***Gen 49:28-31 All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father spoke to them. And he blessed them; he blessed each one according to his own blessing. Then he charged them and said to them: "I am to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite as a possession for a burial place. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah.***

We see that death to Jacob was not the end of it all. He was going to be with his people. He wanted his body to be buried in the cave that Abraham had bought and paid for. He wanted to make sure that he stayed in that land until the day when he would be raised from the dead to live in that land.

We can see how much this man knew of his own family history. I don't imagine that he was carrying with him a written record at this time, yet he carried this information in his mind.

It is not so much that he was interested in being buried by Leah (after all, Rachel was buried up in Bethlehem), but he wants to be buried where he will be raised from the dead at the Resurrection so he will be right there when God fulfills His promises to the nation Israel. – McGee

***Gen 49:32-33 The field and the cave that is there were purchased from the sons of Heth." And when Jacob had finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed and breathed his last and was gathered to his people.***

It is interesting to see that up to the very last Jacob kept his feet on the floor. He started out in life as a man of the flesh. He took hold of his brother's heel at birth which was why he was called Jacob, "the supplanter." He lived up to that name, which was certainly characteristic of him. He held on to everything that he could find, and he was always trying to be first. He started out on all fours, and he took what he wanted by any method. As a young man he walked on his own two feet in his own strength and ability. He depended on his own cleverness



## Gen 49 - Jacob Blesses His Sons

and ingenuity. He thought he could take care of himself and did not need God. He was self-sufficient, self-opinionated, self-assertive, aggressive, contemptible, and despicable.

At Peniel God crippled him. God had to “break” him to get him, and I think God was prepared to break his neck! After that, he went through life limping. He had to go on three legs, using a staff or walking stick, because he could no longer walk by himself. Here, before his death, he is sitting on the bed, leaning on his staff. Now the time has come. He pulls his feet up into the bed, puts down the staff, and lies down to die. This is Jacob. He has walked a long way through life. He ends in a final act of faith, looking forward to the day when he will be raised from the dead in the land, according to the promise of God.

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Heb\_11:13). - McGee

## CHAPTER 50 – God’s Vision 50/20

THEME: Burial of Jacob in Canaan; Joseph allays the fears of his brethren; death and burial of Joseph in Egypt.

This chapter tells of the burial of Jacob in Canaan and the death and burial of Joseph in Egypt. There is, therefore, a touch of sadness about this last chapter of Genesis. We have already called attention to the emphasis put upon death in the Book of Genesis. God had told Adam, "... For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen\_2:17). Paul wrote later, "... so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom\_5:12). The Book of Genesis is a full example of the fact of sin and the reality of death. It opens with God and man in the Garden of Eden and ends in a coffin in Egypt. This book recounts the entrance of sin into the human family but also relates the faithfulness of God in providing a way of life for man.

### **BURIAL OF JACOB IN CANAAN**

***Gen 50:1-2 Then Joseph fell on his father's face and wept over him, and kissed him. And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel.***

Naturally, he sorrowed. He loved his father. We know that the Egyptians were quite expert at this sort of thing. We hear of the mummies of Egypt. They had a method of preserving bodies that we have not learned yet today. So Joseph called in the physicians to embalm his father. We don't laugh at a funeral, but I can't help but smile when I think of their making old Jacob up into a mummy, and I am of the opinion that his mummy is in Hebron today.

Remember, it had been his request to be taken and buried in the cave of Machpelah because his hope was an earthly hope. When he is raised from the dead, he will be there in the land with the nation Israel. The hope of the believer today, the member of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, is to be caught up with the Lord in the air and to go to a place called the New Jerusalem out in space. There are two different hopes, and they are both glorious. - McGee

***Gen 50:3 Forty days were required for him, for such are the days required for those who are embalmed; and the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days.***

It took them forty days to embalm. Evidently there are several processes involved. And we note that the Egyptians mourned for him. I don't think this was professional mourning. I think he had become a real saint in the land of Egypt and was probably respected as the father of Joseph. Joseph was the deliverer, but I believe that his father Jacob was at this time a real saint of God.

***Gen 50:4-6 Now when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, please speak in the hearing of Pharaoh, saying, 'My father made me swear, saying, "Behold, I am dying; in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me." Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father, and I will come back.' " And Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear."***

Then Pharaoh gave Joseph permission to accompany the body back to Canaan, with a great procession of officials, relatives, and servants. – Believers' Bible Commentary

***Gen 50:7-8 So Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, as well as all the house of Joseph, his***

## CHAPTER 50 – God’s Vision 50/20

**brothers, and his father's house. Only their little ones, their flocks, and their herds they left in the land of Goshen.**

You can see how this man was greatly respected, loved, and honored in the land of Egypt. This is probably the longest funeral procession that the world has ever seen. It went all the way from Egypt to Hebron in Canaan.

One wonders whether Pharaoh required that they leave their little ones and their flocks so that he could be sure they would come back. Pharaoh didn't want to lose Joseph because he still needed him. – McGee

**Gen 50:9-14 And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen, and it was a very great gathering. Then they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, and they mourned there with a great and very solemn lamentation. He observed seven days of mourning for his father. And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "This is a deep mourning of the Egyptians." Therefore its name was called Abel Mizraim, which is beyond the Jordan. So his sons did for him just as he had commanded them. For his sons carried him to the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite as property for a burial place. And after he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers and all who went up with him to bury his father.**

You may wonder why Jacob wasn't buried with Rachel in Bethlehem, which was probably not more than twenty miles farther north. I think the reason is stated here. Abraham had bought this cave, and Jacob wanted to be buried with his fathers in a place that was bought and paid for to make sure that he would stay in the land. So, he was buried with the other patriarchs. They all had the same hope of resurrection. – McGee

They stopped east of the Jordan and mourned for seven days so deeply that the Canaanites . . . called the place Abel Mizraim, the meadow (or mourning) of Egypt. Following the burial in the cave . . . of Machpelah at Hebron, Joseph and his entourage returned to Egypt. – Believers’ Bible Commentary

### **God's Good Purposes**

**Gen 50:15-17 When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "Perhaps Joseph will hate us, and may actually repay us for all the evil which we did to him." So they sent messengers to Joseph, saying, "Before your father died he commanded, saying, 'Thus you shall say to Joseph: "I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you." ' Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father." And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.**

Evidently the brothers had gone to Jacob before he died and had expressed their fears regarding what would happen to them after he was gone. They were afraid that Joseph would turn on them and be against them once the father was gone. So Jacob had given them a message to tell to Joseph, and he was sure that Joseph would not persecute them to attempt to get even with them. When the brothers do come to Joseph with this confession, Joseph breaks into weeping because of it. Now they are repenting because of their sin. - McGee

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**Notice: It is never too late to ask for forgiveness. These brothers carried that guilt way too long. Possibly, Jacob knew that prompted them to repent to Joseph and mend the relationships. Do you have relationships that you need to give forgiveness, so you can move on as well and let go of guilt or bitterness?**

***Gen 50:18-19 Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, "Behold, we are your servants." Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God?***

You see, the prophecy of their falling down before him has repeatedly come true. Joseph gives God the glory in every case. - McGee

**Do you put God in perspective before making decisions in all things? Obviously, Joseph did, and I think we could all learn from that example.**

***Gen 50:20-21 But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.***

Friend, God has a far-off purpose that you and I do not see. I must confess how human I am about this because I can't see any further than my nose when trouble comes to me, and I ask, "Why does God permit this to happen?" We need to remember that He has a good purpose in view. He is not going to let anything happen to you unless it will accomplish a good purpose in your life. - McGee

How significant that sentence: "God meant it for good!" There are meanings in life. Things do not happen by chance, and what happens is meant for good. All things work together for good for them that love God. Ninety-three years had passed since he was lifted from the pit; sixty since he buried his father. Finally, Joseph's end came. His bones were not buried, but awaited the summons for the Exodus. That coffin seemed to be the end of all. Nay! it was the seed of the coming harvest. – F. B. Meyer  
Commentary

***Romans 8:28-30 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.***

### ***The Death of Joseph***

***Gen 50:22-23 So Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father's household. And Joseph lived one hundred and ten years. Joseph saw Ephraim's children to the third generation. The children of Machir, the son of Manasse, were also brought up on Joseph's knees.***

Joseph was apparently the first of the twelve sons of Jacob to die. This was fifty-four years after his father's death. His faith that God would take the people of Israel back to Canaan is eulogized in Heb\_11:22. He gave instructions that his bones be buried in that land.

It has been pointed out that Genesis opens with God's perfect creation and closes with a coffin in Egypt. It is a book of biographies. Whereas two chapters are devoted to an account of the creation of the heavens and earth, forty-eight chapters are largely concerned with the lives of men and women. God is

## CHAPTER 50 – God’s Vision 50/20

interested primarily in people. What a comfort and challenge to those who know Him! – Believers Bible Commentary

***Gen 50:24-26 And Joseph said to his brethren, "I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." Then Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here." So Joseph died, being one hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.***

This is the way the Book of Genesis ends. It began with God creating the heaven and the earth, and it ends with a coffin in Egypt. What had happened to the human family? Sin had intruded into the creation of God.

Why was not Joseph taken up to Canaan and buried there at this time? I think it is obvious that Joseph was a hero in the land of Egypt and his family would not have been permitted to remove his body from Egypt at that time. I think he was one of the outstanding patriots whom the Egyptians revered. Probably they had a monument raised at his grave.

But Joseph says to his own people, “When you go back to Canaan, don't leave my bones down here!” In Joseph we see the same hope that we saw in Jacob; that is, a confidence that God would give them the land of Canaan as an eternal possession. And they wanted to be raised from the dead in their own land. Joseph believed that God would raise up His earthly people to inherit the land of promise.

The Book of Hebrews mentions this as the crowning act of faith in the life of Joseph. “By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones” (Heb\_11:22).

In Exodus 13 we will see how wonderfully God honored Joseph and answered his request. Moses and the children of Israel took the bones of Joseph with them when they left Egypt. - McGee