**Genesis**

**“In The Beginning God”**

**Outline:**

1. **1: -2:3 The creation account**

# 2:4 – 4:26 The history of the first family

1. **5:1 –6:8 The history of early man**
2. **6:9 – 9:29 The history of Noah**
3. **10:1 – 11:9 The history of the descendants of Noah**

# 11:10 – 25:11 The history of Abraham

1. **25:12 – 36:43 The history of Isaac and his family**
2. **37:1 – 50:26 The history of Jacob and his family**

**Genesis**

1:1-13 The creation account

Ordinary history is recorded in a way that reveals the achievements and progress of people. Telling what battles they fought, where they lived, what their culture was like and what shaped their future does this. Now though the Bible records some of this it is not the aim of it. Instead the Bible’s chief aim is to record the progress of God’s revelation of Himself to that which He created, (specifically) man. Genesis, like other books of the Bible, seeks to reveal how God showed His character and nature of holiness, justice, love and mercy. Furthermore it records how this revelation was received and what effects it produced in those who plainly saw Him. It can be summed up this way “*The Bible is the revelation of God to man* and *the relation of man to God!*”

 The word Genesis comes from the Greek word that simply means “*origin*” or source. The Hebrew word is “*Bereshith*” which simply means “*In the beginning*”. This is the first of a fivefold work compiled by Moses called “Penta” = “five” “teuch” = books. Several things to note:

1. It is written to a people who believed in God: Thus it was not written to those who do not believe. Its aim therefore was not to prove what it puts forth, as truth it already presupposes that those who read its pages believe.
2. It was written to this group of believers who believed that their God was, One, personal, all knowing, all powerful and eternal: Thus it seeks not to prove these points to those who refuse to believe.
3. It presents this same God to believers as the only creator without explanation, apology or argument: Thus the creation account is practical and stated as fact because it’s aim is to further the faith of its readers. That’s not to say that is contrary to science. The fact is that no real mistake has ever been demonstrated in the Bible in either science or history!

Vs. 1-5 Creations first day: At the writing of this book there were already several speculations and philosophies as to the origin of the world.

1. Materialist: All matter is eternal and that there is an inherent principal in matter that is working all things as they are now over a long period of time.
2. Pantheist: All matter emanates from a common divine substance, which is working everywhere in nature.

Here in these 10 words, (7 in Hebrew) we have something quite remarkable when compared to all the other opinions as to the origin of the universe. All other philosophies start with what the senses can detect (time, space and matter) then attempt to understand how those things might have become what we now sense. For instance *evolution has time, space and matter existing from nothing then evolving into complex systems*. But it fails to answer the question, “*How did it all get here to begin with*?” I remind you that the perspective of Genesis is not to be a text book of science or as someone well said, “*Its purpose is not to tell us how the heavens go but rather how to go to heaven*!” This then is the only place in the entire world of religion and philosophy where that question is answered. We are simply told of the existence of these three:

1. Time: *In the beginning*
2. Space: *The heavens*
3. Matter: *The earth*

But before these three things existed we are told of the existence of the Creator, (the uni-plural form of the name Elohim). The “*im*” in the Hebrew makes the name plural but its meaning is singular. This name describes God as eternal existing before the universe as all-powerful, all knowing and everywhere at once. Therefore nothing is impossible for God! In fact science affirms specific creation instead of evolution. There is a law in science that states “*That no effect can be greater than its cause.*” Simply put: The existence of time, space and matter is proof of an intelligent, eternal, powerful person, which had to create them to begin with! “*Well how did He do it*?” We are told right here in this verse with the use of the word “*created*” which means to “*create something out of nothing*.” When we create something we do so by assembling together existing materials but that is not the way that God created. Evolution speaks of the forming of the world by chance or self-generation through random impersonal powers of nature. Yet the Bible speaks of the intelligent design of the world through creation. Based upon that we can conclude that the *creation was not random chance but rather a special creation by a personal God*!

 “*Ok, how was this creating something out of nothing accomplished*?”

1. John 1:1-3 “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made*.”
2. Col. 1:15-17 “*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.*”

Vs. 2 Some suppose there to be a gap between this verse and verse 1 because they see it as inconsistent for God to create anything “*without form and void*”. To further their position they quote Isa. 45: 18 where the same word for void is rendered vain. Several views come from this same position all of which try to reconcile the evolutionary theory of geological ages with the Bible. So they put in between these two verses a long gap to explain these geological ages. There are three basic views:

1. *Theistic evolution*: Says that God created all things but then let them evolve.
2. *Creation*: God created everything 6,000 to 10,000 years ago.
3. *Gap theory*: Traditionally is used to explain these geological ages, which personally are better explained, by Noah’s flood. Pastor Chuck believes that there is a gap of time between these two verses but not for the purpose to explaining the geological ages but rather to explain the creation of the angelic beings as well as the fall of Lucifer or Satan in Isa. 14:12. That being the case then according to that view Genesis 1:2-11 is a recreation.

One possible solution to the problem of the earth being without form and void is that perhaps what is being described here is the further development or shaping of the earth for habitation. All this was being done; it appears, in darkness so that there was a time when there was different aspects of waters in darkness and the Spirit of God was moving or “*breathed*” or it. *With this view we don’t have to do inventing as far as the text is concerned, the text doesn’t say there was a gap so I’m not going to say there was a gap*. “*But what about the angelic creation?*” Well the Bible doesn’t say here when that was created unless you suggest that when God created the heavens in verse 1 that they were created at that time?

Vs. 3-5 In verse 2 the Spirit of God moved or “*breathed*” over the waters now we see the manner in which god created, “*God said*.” God created by way of His Word. Heb. 11:3 tells us “*By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible*.” Then we are told in Ps. 33:9 that, “*He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast*.” The result of His word, “*Become light was light became*!” The most basic form of energy is light, which includes every form of light not just that which is visible, but short-wave (ultra-violet, x-rays) and long- wave (infra-red, radio waves) as well as heat, sound, magnetic and so on. The fact light is mentioned prior to the sun, moon and stars of verse 16 suggests that what is in mind here is energy in all its forms. This is further suggested by the fact that the earth is now rotating upon its axis as we have night and day. The word day “*yom*” is for the first time used in the Bible where it is used to describe a solar day.

 What we learn through the first day of creation is that God specifically created a habitation by which he would bring forth man. And before he brought forth this man, Adam, He knew that given a choice this man would choice disobedience. He also knew that He would provide a way back for His fallen creation. The way in which He would do so would be by His Son who was the instrument of creation. The way in which His Son would come would be through a man named Abraham. Through his family God would bring forth a nation and through that nation in a lonely stable a Child would be born as Isa. 9:6-7 tells us, “*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this*.”

Vs. 6-8 We come now to the third step in creation:

1. Step one: Creation of heaven and earth
2. Step two: Creation of light and its separation from darkness
3. Step three: Creation of the sky

The word “*firmament*” is literally to spread out to thinness. The idea is that of spreading something out to an infinite thinness. God created on the second day, a space between the waters above and the waters below. The purpose of this appears to produce an atmosphere in which billions of gallons of water would be above the earth and thus a *hydraulic cycle* was produced which caused water to be condensed into vapor and then vapor would then be redistributed back into rain, ice or snow. Just as light is absolutely necessary for life so too is water. This would have produced continual spring like conditions on earth known as the greenhouse effect.

 I remind you that God was creating all of this for man to dwell in, that was His purpose and plan. This speaks to us about His desire for us to have fellowship with Him. I reminded of a tombstone with the words, “*Remember, friend, as you pass by as you are now, so once was I, as I am now, you to shall be, prepare for death and follow me.* ” Someone having read this man’s final words wrote underneath his, “*To follow you I’m not content until I know which way you went!*”

Vs. 9-10 There is a double work done on the third day of land **and** plant life. It seems that the waters under the heavens contained the material elements for dry earth so the earth that was without form now by God’s spoken word comes into form and the complex minerals and metals now are loosed from there watery matrix.It appears from this scripture that originally the land surfaces were all together. There was a time when there was a drift of the continents. Genesis indicates that this happened in the days of Peleg saying that, the earth was divided. Now today we realize that even though all the water were gathered together in one place that some of the water’s went into the sea’s, others were gathered into great basins called lakes indicates still others were trapped under the earth’s service yet they are all seemingly connected. So they are all in one place yet there are many seas!

Vs.11-13 The second act of creation on the third day is the appearance of life in the form of vegetation. **Two important things come out of this verse**:

1. Vs. 11 The fact that the earth was able to immediately sustain plant life that flourished shows that the earth was extremely fertile. The soil had an abundance of nutrients to sustain vegetation on the very day it was created this flies in the face of the evolutionist that suggests “*billions and billions*” of years were necessary for rocks to erode to produce enough soils to sustain life.
2. Vs. 11 Second we see that evolution again is thwarted by the words, “*yielding seed*”. ***Seeds came from plants not plants from seeds***!
3. **Grass**: The word means damp would include those plants that reproduce by other means then seed, (moss, ferns, lichens) all of which carpet the earth.
4. **Herbs**: Literally “*yielding seed*” this would be plants that produce seed as a means of reproduction everything from grasses to flowers and shrubs.
5. **Trees**: Literally “*trees of fruit*”. The idea is that of the seed being inside the fruit.

The phrase “*after its kind*” is repeated **9 times** in this chapter. Each type of vegetation would have its own complex DNA which would only allow it to reproduce after its own species. In other words ***DNA allows for a wide variety with in its own kind but no variation outside its kind***. This is just a fact of nature and by this ***evolution cannot be possible***! You can have a wide variety of dogs and a wide variety of monkeys but you will not find a single “***dogkey***”! **There has never been one single documented case of any of nature producing anything outside of its kind**.

Everything that God created was going along just as He ordained it should thus it was good. Creation was to support life, most of which was to support you and me. What does that tell you? **It tells you that you are not an accident that your life and existence is part of His wonderful plan**. You and I fit into His design and plan. We were created to have fellowship with the Creator and to enjoy all the benefits of that relationship. So we too will produce fruit according to His design for us. That’s what we are told in Eph. 2:4-10 (*turn and read this*). Our Creator is rich in mercy because of who He is. His love is based upon His nature not our worthiness. So that even when we were dead and unproductive He was at work to make us bear fruit.

**Genesis**

1:14-31

“Then God blessed them”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 14-23 Signs of life

III. Vs. 24-31 Made in God’s image

I. Intro.

In the creation account the focus is more “why” then “how”. With that said the established facts of science completely agree with the truths found in Genesis chapter 1. The other thing that is real obvious in this account is what Solomon observed in Eccl. 3:1 “*There is a time for everything, a season for every activity under heaven.*” God chose to create in stages or days, when He could of clearly have chosen to create everything in one “Word” and everything that He created function just as He planned.

II. Vs. 14-23 Signs of life

Vs. 14-19 These verses present a difficulty because we have already read in verse 3 that God created light. The word in verse 3 is a different word then the word “lights” found here in this verse. There it describes “light” in all its forms as energy here it describes what was visible from the earth. The how is not answered but we are given a three-fold reason as to why:

1. Vs. 14, 16, and 17 *To give light upon the earth both during the day & the night:* Two different words are used God’s action in placing these lights in the firmaments.
2. Vs. 16 “Made”: This is not the word in 1:1 “bara” (created something out of nothing) instead it is the word “asah” which means to carve out, labor or produce. God produced to great lights.
3. Vs. 17 “Set”: “nathan” which has the idea of relocation or perhaps you might say that God “presented” them in the firmament. The picture is that of the sky being a display window or a picture frame.
4. Vs. 14 “*For signs and seasons*”: The word sign is the same word used for Noah’s sign of the rainbow. God arranged the stars not randomly but specifically as a sign for those upon the earth. They were to speak of the glory of their creator and have been harnessed by man to navigate. Eclipses have been used to mark mileposts in human history. Through seasons then we see God setting up climate controlled seasons throughout the calendar year.
5. Vs. 14 “*for days and years*”: They exist as an instrument to measure time. God made the stars and all of this was visible which tells us that God’s creation “was a mature one!” These stars would have been billions of light-years away but at the very moment of their creation they were visible upon the earth. The light energy trail that would be necessary to see them from earth was created at the same time they were formed in the sky.

Vs. 20-23 On the 5th day we are given the creation of the aquatic life and those things that fly in the lower reaches of the sky. In verse 21 the word created is the same as 1:1 meaning that God created something from nothing, in other words God did not use any preexisting material in their formation. Up to this point there has been no animal life and as He now brings forth animal life from nothing we realize that contrary to the evolutionary theory which states “*that life evolved from lifeless matter*” we are told that God did not create it that way. Science has been unable to support any other theory based upon the fossil record. Simply put there are NO intermediary links between inorganic matter and the first appearances of life. Neither are there any links between early life forms and more complex forms. Looking at the fossil record life just “sprang” into existence a fact that scientists have observed calling it the “*Cambrian Explosion*”.

Vs. 20 The word “living creatures” is the Hebrew word “*nephesh*” for soul, so God is making a clear distinction between plants and animals. Biblically there are three major functions of the soul:

1. The rational: That is they can think
2. The emotional: That is they can feel
3. The volitional: that is they can decide

Though plants can reproduce after their own kind (*which shows they are alive*) they can’t fall in love, have any memory of the past or go through a guilty conscience. Now in the animal kingdom these functions of the soul vary from species to species in degree but all are evident.

Vs. 21-23 The words “*great sea creatures*” is literally long extended things and we are told that they “glided” in the water and reproduced again according to their own kind. So much for the Darwinian theory of the fish who skinned it’s under belly and grew appendages which over billions and billions of years became legs by which the fish now walked onto the land. The word for bird here is very broad and includes all things that fly including insects and bats.

 In the words “*it was good*” is implied that that which was created functioned just as God designed.

III. Vs. 24-31 Made in God’s image

We now come to the crowning achievement of God’s creation, the sixth day. First note that it was a double day of creation as creeping things, (cattle and the like) as well as mankind was created.

Vs. 24-25 It seems as though the land animals were created on the early part of the 6th day and we see that the act of creating them was from the earth as God spoke to the earth and it brought forth life. The same basic elements that make up the earth are in both animals as well as mankind. The “living creatures” (soul of life) are of three classifications but they do not correspond to the system used by modern biologists:

1. Cattle: “behemah” the root of this word means to be dumb or meek and would include all domesticated land animals, such as sheep, goats, cows, camels, dogs etc.
2. Creeping things: “r’emes” which means to move about lightly or glide about. It would include everything that moves about close to the earth, such as reptiles and non-flying insects.
3. Beasts of the earth: This word means to move about freely and would include large non-domesticated animals. It would seem that the dinosaurs would have been in this category.

Again notice the words “*according to its kind*” which flies in the face of Darwinian thought which suggested that the diversity of species could best be explained by way of natural process of adaptation into higher forms of life. Their principal works out this way; “*Giraffes were once animals with short necks who because the changing environment had to keep stretching their necks to get at the food supply, thus succeeding generations of giraffes adapted into a higher form of life with longer necks*.” Now if that were true then would we not see parents who in succeeding generations lost a leg eventually produce children with only one leg? The reality is that this has nothing to do with adaptation into higher forms or natural selection but everything to do with genetics. The Darwinian Theory rests upon mutation as the process for this change but the fact of science is that mutation damages life not causes it to evolve into higher forms. *What ultimately causes changes in species is that certain genes or traits are not suited for the environment over time get eliminated through death and thus are not passed on to* *succeeding generations*. Nothing new is created rather the species has adapted through genetic trait elimination and thus the species is “refined”.

Vs. 26 The first difference we see in the creation of mankind is that there is a divine consultation about this creation. Who is God speaking with? The word used here for God is “*Elohim*” which is plural meaning three or more. Notice the use of the plural with the singular, “us and our (*plural*) with image and likeness (*singular*)” which is the strongest yet of the trinity in scripture, God existing is a three-fold unity. According to verse 27 “*God created man in His own image; in the image of God*” the “us” and “our” of verse 26 must refer to God not some angelic being as some suppose. But what exactly does this mean?

1. “*Image*”: The root of the word means to “*carve out*” and speaks of the dignity of man. Man is not only made with deliberate purpose and plan *he is patterned after God*. Now this does not, as the Mormons maintain, mean that God has the same physical characteristics as we do. Their famous line is, “*As man is God was once, as God is man will become*!” The context of this passage makes it plain that it is us who have been in the image God, not God who has been made in our image! Whenever God is being described in *anthropomorphic* expressions in scripture you can’t take them literally otherwise in Ps. 17:8 God would have to have wings. Thus there is a human likeness that is “*carved out*” in man that is like the triune God. As we have seen in the animal kingdom they have:
2. Body: Just as mankind does
3. Soul: They have a varying ability to (think, feel and decide).

There is something here that makes mankind unique in all of God’s creation and it’s that mankind is a spiritual creature. Jesus told the women at the well,

“*God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and truth*.” Based upon what we have seen thus far in Genesis we can see three things that appear to be unique in God’s nature that we too possess.

 1. Creativity: The ability to imagine, conceptualize and then fashion what

we imagined. We cannot create something out of nothing as God did but we can take that which is existing and fashion it into what we desired. No other of God’s creatures can do this.

2. Communication: God speaks or conveys ideas and discusses matters. Animals cannot communicate as we do. They make noises or even mimic our sounds but they are unable to pass on ideas in which they have discussed information. None of the animal kingdom has been able to advance its civilization through its communication.

3. Conscious choice: We call this free will and we alone have the free moral agency to distinguish and then act things that are good and evil. Just as we have seen God in this chapter declare that what He created was good.

1. “*According to our likeness*”: The word here implies resemblance or similarity to the ideal. We have been given everything necessary for us to function properly to God’s character and nature. Thus we are told to be holy for He is holy. In 2 Peter 1:3 we are told that*, “His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness.*” Adam not only had the capacity to be godly he was, he was creative, communicated rightly and prior to the fall made godly conscience choices. He was function as God had created him to in His likeness.

Clearly something has happened to mankind by which he has lost the ability to consistently function as God designed him to. Even though he still possess the image, (Creativity, Communication, Conscious and Choice) he can no longer function according to God’s likeness or if you function as God Himself would.

It was in this sphere that God gives mankind “*dominion*” or mastery over the rest of His creation. *Nothing points so vividly to mankind’s fall then does the fact that we have become so much like that which we were designed to master*!

Vs. 27 Women was not an afterthought even though we are told that she was not created until after Adam named the animals. Both were in God’s image and likeness thus they equally possessed the same spiritual nature that we have already scene. God will fill in the details of her creation in 2:18-25.

Vs. 28 God’s giving them mastery over His creation excluded mastery over their fellow man! If we would not have fallen then all of this inhumanity towards each other would never be! There is a similarity but also dissimilarity between all other creatures in their self-perpetuation; both are blessed and told to be fruitful and multiply but God’s plan is clearly marriage as we shall see in 2:24. In everything mankind was in God’s Image thus “*God -like*” and he functioned as designed thus “*God-able*” so man’s authority to function in the environment that was created for him was perfect or just as God himself would.

Vs. 29-31 It appears that God’s design for his creation was to be vegetarians (not until 9:3 are we told that God told Noah that every moving thing was food for him). No doubt there was a never-ending supply as plants were designed to continually replicate themselves through their own seed. As it was to be over all the earth we know that all that God had created was a paradise.

 The animals appear not to be carnivorous at this time so there would have been no predators and all of God’s creation was living in perfect harmony, something that we are told that in the future will be restored. Everything that God created He now calls “*very good*” according to Ezekiel even the angelic world was perfect as we are told in 28:15 that even Lucifer was “*perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you.*” Thus there could not have been a gap between verse 1 and verse 2!

Genesis 2:1-25

“The beginning of our history”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-7 Resting in His presence

III. Vs. 8-17 Self-centered or God-centered

IV. Vs. 18-25 God’s gift to man

I. Intro.

The first chapter of Genesis gives us an overall view of the first six days of God’s creation. It was meant to supply only a summary of the events not a detailed account. This is further brought out in the 4th verse of chapter 2 where we read, “*This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.*” The word history is literally *generations* and is where we get the title of the book and serves as a key to the many divisions in the book. When you see these words they will be followed by the name of a particular patriarch, which followed the practice of other ancient cultures. These names are of the men that wrote each section recording those generations. They would then pass down the tablets to the next generation that again would record the history of their generations. This happened up to the time when all of the tablets came into the hands of Moses who wrote the final chapters (37:3 – chapter 50) of Genesis he also organized and edited all of the proceeding generations. Genesis chapter 1 – 2:3 are the events God told Adam as he was not yet created. Genesis 2:4-25 is a more detailed account of the 6th day of creation, the day in which Adam was formed and Eve from him.

II. Vs. 1-7 Resting in His presence

Vs. 1 At the close of every other day were the words, *“So the evening and the morning were the \_\_\_\_ day.*” When we come to the 7th day those words do not appear instead we are told that things were “*finished* and *ended*”. The word “*finished*” in verse 1 and the word “*ended*” in verse 2 is the same Hebrew word and is yet another nail in the coffin of evolution.

* Biblical creation starts with God creating and when He was done it was finished or perfect as nothing in creation took place after this.
* Evolution starts with nothing and then boldly proclaims that it evolved into complex systems of life.

The declaration of God’s work being finished is from two perspectives:

1. It was clearly done!
2. It was perfect or just as He intended it to be!

The second meaning of the word “*finished*” speaks to you and me about God’s work towards us. The work that God is doing in our life no matter how difficult it may seem right now is perfect, just as He intends it to be. I believe that God always use the easiest way to get us to where He wants us to be.

Vs. 2-3 We are told that He “*rested*” from all His work obviously when we realize that we have an all-powerful God this cannot mean that he was tired after His creative work. The word literally means “*cease or desist*” and when combined with the word work, which means “special task”, we get a much clearer picture of what this day of rest is all about. The “*day of rest*” is not about keeping a “*special day*” it is to be a time when we remember the “*ending of a special work*.” The Jewish Sabbath always carried with it a twofold idea:

1. Cessation from work
2. Satisfaction after work

The picture of this rest is to be a time when believers cease from our self-efforts, religious activity, self-righteous works and recognize that it’s not Jesus plus my anything instead it is as we are told by Jesus. It is not that we cease from activity, instead we just cease from activity that is in our own strength.

* Vs. 4-7 Mankind is to remember their frame “dust”.
* Vs. 8-14 Mankind is to remember how dependent they are upon God’s provision.
* Vs. 15-17 Mankind is to remember that it is God who gives them purpose and that this purpose is best found in obedience to His word.
* Vs. 18-25 Mankind is to remember that it is His grace that blesses us with each other.

Vs. 4 According to this verse we have what happened to Adam and then Eve as they came into being. Note mankind’s dual citizenship as being first heaven then earth! Next you see a new name used for God “Lord God” or in Hebrew “*Jehovah Elohim*” the combination of the everlasting, all-powerful, creator with the relational promise keeping God.

Vs. 5-6 Scientifically these verses again affirm a “mature creation” also we see that the hydrological (water) cycle was not atmospheric as it is today but rather subterranean the “*water vapor*” called mist here was a daily cycle of evaporation and condensation. *The uniqueness of mankind is to be seen not in what he is made of but rather in who created him*. People spend endless hours of self-absorption trying to make their dirt more special!

Vs. 7 Man was formed out of the elements of the earth, “carbon, hydrogen oxygen etc.” which are the same unity of composition of both plants and animals. What is interesting is that this was stated as such in Genesis long before science established this fact. The material used “*dust of the ground*” does not imply dry earth but rather a damp mass. The word “*formed*” is literally molded and is used to describe the activity of a potter. Thus in Isa. 64: 8 we read “*O LORD, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You our potter; and all we are the work of Your hand*.” Perhaps there really is something to that old saying, “*When they made you they broke the mold*!” Now as we remember back the animals they too have breath but mankind’s breath was given him directly from God. It takes the breath from the living God to turn us from lifeless lumps of clay into living beings. “*We continue to live by inhaling that which God exhales!*” If you will, “*What continues to keep us alive is God giving us mouth to mouth resuscitation by which His Spirit breaths His life into us*!”

III. Vs. 8-17 Self-centered or God-centered

Vs. 8 This verse is a summary of the next 6 verses, 9-14 and we are told God created Adam, brought him into consciousness and then planted a garden in Eden east of where Adam was created. God created Adam then allowed Adam to watch Him as he created this glorious place where he would dwell. That is always the way God works, *God just places us in the work that He has already planted*.

Vs. 9 Our attention is taken to the trees of the garden and two things are told us as far as their selection to the garden:

1. *Pleasant to the sight*: They were selected for their beauty, no ugly trees in the garden.
2. *Good for food*: Next we see that they were placed there based upon their usefulness to Adam.

God wanted to put mankind into a home that was both beautiful as well as useful. Specifically we are told of two of the trees both of which if eaten would produce lasting effects:

1. *The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden*:
2. This tree and its fruit was the most accessible of all the trees in that it was in the middle of the garden.
3. There was no prohibition on partaking of the fruit of this tree at all. Adam was given no restriction from eating the fruit of the tree of life until after he disobeyed the Lord and ate of the “*tree of the knowledge of good and evil*”. (3:22) The reason then is that it would have put mankind into an irreversible state, which shows us that had Adam taken of the fruit of tree of life it would have enabled him to live indefinitely thus suspending the effects of the metabolic aging process. Ponce Deleon should of being looking for the tree of life instead of the fountain of youth! In Rev. 22: 2 we read that it is located near the throne of God bears 12 fruits each month and its leaves heal the nations. Rev. 22:11 tells us that only those who obey the Word of God have the right to eat of it.
4. *The tree of the knowledge of good and evil*: We are not told this trees location but it is obvious that it was not as accessible as the tree of life. Today the world puts down a naiveté as being ignorant or inexperienced while a person who has tasted of this tree is called, “worldly”.

Vs. 10-14 “Eden” comes from the word that mean “*delight*”. Its location was eastwardly in a geographical area where 4 rivers heads came. The river that went out of the garden was to irrigate it and two of the four names are associated with the modern names Tigurs and the Euphrates. It is impossible to determine the actual location of this garden as the rivers here described were fed by underground wells not rainfall. Furthermore the river beds themselves would have been radically changed after the flood. Havilah, means “*sandy land*” and evidently there was lots of gold in this region. Other natural resources of this area was, “Bdellium” was a precious fragrant gum that was used, as well as onyx which was also seen as precious.

Vs. 15-17 Mankind’s purpose, provision and prohibition.

1. Vs. 15 PURPOSE: Man was to care for the home God had placed him in. Adam was removed from sin but his time was not to be spent idle but rather he was to be very active. He was placed in a perfect environment as well as a perfect circumstance yet he was not in a place of no-responsibility. Ezekiel says the sin of Sodom was in 16:49, “*this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy*.” God did not make mankind to be idol instead He made him to be satisfied doing what God has called him to do.
2. Vs. 16 PROVISION: This is the first recorded time in which God communicates with man and we see two things about God in His dealings with us:
3. “*Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat*”: God is not restrictive in nature. God says, “Of every tree you may eat freely!” The only things God prohibits are the things that would separate us from fellowship with Him; in other words things that would bring us harm!
4. Vs. 17 “*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*”: Life hangs upon obedience to His word. God’s word are to be the standards of life.
5. Vs. 17 PROHIBITION: Adam clearly knew the consequences of rejecting God’s word “death”. Literally it is “*dying you shall die*!” Thus Adam knew that disobedience would lead to spiritual death and that would set in motion the eventual physical decaying which will lead to our death.

 But just what was this “*tree of the knowledge of good and evil?*” Why would it be so bad to eat of this tree as even Hebrews 5:14 tells us that we ought to *“use their senses to discern both good and evil*.” We are given a partial understanding of this when we examine Satan’s words to Even in chapter 3:5 “*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*.” The part that is a lie is that in disobeying God’s word we would ever be like Him! The word used in 3:5 for “know” is literally “distinguish”. God knows good and evil not by experience, but by comparing it with His own holy and perfect nature. That which is consistent with His nature is that which is good. We too can determine what is good by comparing it to God’s character and nature. When God had created He declared that everything that He created came up to the standard of who He was. When Adam and Eve ate of this fruit they became their own standard of good and evil, they became self-centered and could then justify evil based upon how they saw things not how it relates to Who God is. All because we use ourselves as the standard and not God’s character and nature.

IV. Vs. 18-25 God’s gift to man

All the events recorded here in these verses take place on the 6th day after God had proclaimed everything very good.

Vs. 18-19 This is the first time we read in scripture that something was not good. Literally the word means incomplete, thus God is saying that before the creation of Eve man was incomplete. Two reasons are listed here by God to describe how Adam was incomplete and why Eve was to make him complete.

1. “*It is not good that man should be alone*”: Adam needed companionship, he was created to be social both to God and Adam needed to have someone to share his life with.
2. “*Helper comparable to him*”: She was not only to share his life with her he was to share his work with her as well. The word “helper” means to support or assist and the word “*comparable*” means a counterpart that complements. She was to assist Adam complementing or completing him.

Vs. 19-20 Look at how God reveals this truth to Adam. Two things that in naming these animals Adam would have discovered about himself:

1. He would have realized that all of these other creations had a mate that complemented them.
2. In Hebrew the word “name”: implies examining to discover its character or nature. In seeing what these animals were to each other he would discover what a gift Eve would to him. She was not just to be his beast of burden like the cattle were. Neither was she to be his pet to occupy his time when he was board. She was not just to be a baby factory either. Adam had mastery over the animals but none of them complemented him.

Vs. 21-23 God caused Adam to be at rest; I like that as most of the time our spouses cause us to be at ease. The word “rib” is actually “side” and according to Adams proclamation in verse 23 included bone and flesh.

1. The side protects our most delicate and vital organs. And women are very protective in nature.
2. The side also protectors the heart, which we often link to the center of our emotions. And women are much more in tune with their emotions.
3. The side of man that she might be his equal. “*Not from his feet that she would be his servant, nor from his head that she would be his master, but from his heart that she would be dear to him!*”

All other men have been born of woman, but Eve the first woman was made from man.

Vs. 23-25 Right after her creation God institutes marriage. A sacred home in which monogamy in relationship throughout life is what God had planned for His creation. Considering that Adam waited for her creation I love the words he uses here upon seeing her, “*This is now*” literally “*now at length!*” It felt like eternity until she was brought to him. There four principals of marriage here as well:

1. Vs. 23 UNITY: “*bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh*”. It is the most fundamental aspect of marriage.
2. Vs. 23 ORDER: “*She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.*” There is a biblical leadership in a marriage and man has been given that role. If you want to know what it looks like just treat your wife as Jesus treats His church. “*Lay down your life for her*!”
3. Vs. 24 PERMANENCE: “*a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife.*” The word “joined” is glued thus security is a principal of marriage. Henry Ford had it right when he quipped about the secrets of a successful marriage, “*The same as making a successful car: stick to one model*.”
4. Vs. 25 COMMUNICATION: *“they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.*” They were not ashamed not because a lack conscience but rather because they recognized that their physical differences were part of God’s creation. They had open communication & did not hide anything.

Genesis 3:1-24

“Lost in the Wilderness of Sin”

1. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-6 Has God indeed said

III. Vs. 7-13 Where are you

IV. Vs. 14-24 The way to the tree of life

I. Intro.

Adam and Eve are about to go from “*perfect in paradise*” to “*lost in the wilderness of sin*” without ever changing physical locations. This chapter is the only explanation that is supported by human experience and history as to what has happen to God’s creation.

* Evolutionists: Mankind is suffering because it is *diseased*. Thus they seek to cure man’s suffering through treatment.
* Humanist: Mankind is suffering because it is *dysfunctional*. Thus they seek to cure man’s suffering through education.
* Bible: Mankind is suffering because it has *disobeyed*. Thus we seek to point people to the cure Jesus Christ!

II. Vs. 1-6 Has God indeed said

Vs. 1 There are three main personalities in this chapter two of which we are already familiar with, Mankind (Adam and Eve) and the Lord God. The third is this mysterious person called the serpent.

1. The word “*serpent*” is a word that means “*to shine or the shining one*” which suggests that this temptation came through a creature that caused attention by way of his appearance, he is far more than a talking snake. Most likely he possessed a snake’s body for the purpose of deception. Here is what we know about him:
2. 2 Cor. 11:14 “*For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light*.”
3. Rev. 12:9 “*The great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan.*”
4. Ezek. 28:14-15 Highest of all God’s created angels known as Lucifer (*light-bearer*) his beauty and wisdom was unsurpassed in the angelic creation. This caused his heart to be lifted up as his pride causing him to think that he was equal with the Godhead and attempting to overthrow the One who created him (Isa. 14:12-15).
5. Rev. 12:4, 9 In this state of self-deceived wisdom he convinced a third of the angelic creation to follow him in rebellion against the Godhead (*most likely by convincing them that God was created as they were*).
6. Ezek, 28:17 He and the third that followed him were cast down to earth where he became Satan (*The adversary*). Instead of ministering spirits as the rest of the angelic world they became deceiving spirits spreading doctrines of demons deceiving the very ones they were called to serve.
7. The word cunning means to be “*subtle or crafty*” his character is explained as being clever. We can forget all those Halloween pictures of a guy in a red suit with horns as he would much rather appear as someone that would catch your attention in a positive way to draw you into his deception.
8. He spoke using the serpent’s throat to create sounds to deceive Eve in her innocence.

We are given four ways Satan attacked God in his deception of Eve: (verses 1, 4-5)

1. Vs. 1a “*Has God indeed said*,”: Attack upon the Word of God. The root of all sin is to be found in doubting God’s Word. Life hangs upon obedience to His word, His word is to be the standards of life. The lie is that by disobedience to God’s Word we will become more like Him. The way satan gets you to doubt it is always the same, by attacking God’s character and nature.
2. Vs. 1b “*You shall not eat of every tree of the garden*?”: Attack upon the grace of God. He gets Eve and us to doubt God’s “*goodness*” towards us. God had said that Adam and Eve could “*of every tree… eat freely*!” God is not restrictive in nature, God is not some sort of cosmic spoilsport waiting to take away all that is fun and enjoyable in life. So what’s under attack? It is God’s nature of grace towards us.
3. Vs. 4 “*You will not surely die*.”: Attack upon God’s righteousness. “*Those consequences will never happen!*” says Satan. We see this lie a lot don’t we? It is the lie that says that *there are no adverse effects to our actions*. We are so easily deceived into thinking that there are no consequences to our disobedience, “*No one will ever find out!*”
4. Vs. 5 “*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*.” Attack upon the holiness of God. Satan is declaring that God’s motives are impure, “*He is jealous of your “human potential*!” “*He is trying to keep you from being like Him. God’s just holding you back man*!”
5. “*Like God*”: The truth is when we question or change God’s Word we are making ourselves out to be God, but that is a far cry from being God. Just because someone dresses up as a pirate does not make him a pirate.
6. “*Knowing good and evil*.”: Adam and Eve would know good and evil but by personal experience instead of comparing everything to God’s character and nature. Their knowledge would not be because they were gods but exactly the opposite. They were already in the *image* of God (*Creativity, Communication, and Conscious choice*) as well as His *likeness* which means that they had been given everything necessary for them to function properly according to God’s character and nature. They were as close as they could get and disobedience would take them away from this ideal.

 Satan’s temptation caused Eve to do two things: (verses 2-3)

1. Vs. 2 Leave out God’s Word: Comparing Eve’s words to that of God’s in 2:16 you will discover that she left out the word “*freely*”. This is the word that expressed God’s love and grace towards them. Instead of seeing God’s glorious provision by His grace towards them she choose to see a restriction in which she leaves out His grace altogether.
2. Vs. 3 Add to God’s Word: God had said that they could “*freely*” eat of “*every*” tree and that only “*one*” tree was off limits because in would rip them off from fellowship with Him. Here she adds to the Word of God by adding two phrases:
3. “*in the midst of the garden*”: The tree that was in the midst of the garden according 2:9 was the tree of life and there was no prohibition against eating it. Eve is confused as she ignores God’s grace and instead sees God dangling a carrot and then slapping of her hand as she desires it. She concludes that this tree was too accessible and God is just teasing them.
4. “*nor shall you touch it*”: Not only that, God is way too restrictive and punitive. “*Why, God’s so strict that we are not even allowed to touch the thing and if we do that’s it fried!*” She is making God the author of sin and temptation. “*It’s His fault!” “If He did not want me to eat the fruit then he should have not placed it so near me that I could not help myself*!”

Vs. 6a In light of 1 John 2:16 Satan employs a threefold temptation to her:

1. BODY: (physical) “*saw that the tree was good for food*,” = “the lust of the flesh,” Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone”
2. SOUL: (emotional) “*that it was pleasant to the eyes*,” = “the lust of the eyes,” Jesus said, “You shall not live by sight, but by faith.”
3. SPIRIT: (intellectual) “*and a tree desirable to make one wise*,” = “and the pride of life;” Jesus said, “You shall worship the Lord God, & Him only shall you serve.”

Vs. 6b According to Romans 5:12 that “*through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.*” The fossils in the earth are not a record of evolution that leads up to the development of mankind, they are the record of death after his fall. Every corpse and graveyard owes its existence to this section of scripture before us.

III. Vs. 7-13 Where are you

Four results of the fall upon mankind: (verses 7-8, 10, 12-13)

1. Vs. 7a AWARENESS OF GUILT “*the eyes of both of them were opened*,”: They saw themselves in a new way as it related to God, prior to this all they ever knew was according to how God had intended things to function. Now they were self-conscious of the material flesh. They knew evil experientially but it was at the price of exclusively knowing the goodness of God. Now this is far from a bad thing as conviction would open the heart up for redemption.
2. Vs. 7b LOSS OF HOLINESS: “*they knew that they were naked*;”: Instead of God-centered they became self-centered, *they had never looked at themselves apart from first looking through what God saw*. They had always saw themselves and each other how God saw them (*true self-image*) but now they saw themselves apart from Him. This self-consciousness came about because they lost their identity in God. Think of this*, “When mankind lost its identity with God they no longer knew who they were!*” People are out trying to “*find themselves*” but in doing so apart from God they just become more lost!
3. Vs. 7c LOSS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS: This loss of being right effected both primary areas in which they had relationships, fellow man and God.
4. Vs. 7 Fellow man: “*they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings*.”: They were not right before each other. It was a *rough* (*pardon the pun*) attempt at concealing where they were truly at. They were told to be fruitful and multiply but now they sought to cover up the very organs they were to be used to create new life because they saw them as contaminated by sin and were embarrassed by their own reproductive parts.
5. Vs. 8b God: “*Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden*.” Sin not only seeks to conceal it’s self before our fellow man it seeks to hide its self from God. That is why most crime is done at night. They sought to hide amongst the trees which were “*Pleasant to the sight”* that is they were selected for their beauty and “*Good for food”* thus usefulness to Adam. Adam and Eve hid among that which God created specifically for them a home that was both beautiful as well as useful. They like us *were running from His grace yet were unaware that they were hiding in it*!

d. Vs. 10-13 LOSS OF TRUTH:

1. Vs. 10 In Adam’s partial confession we see only that he sated the consequences of his action but not the reason for it (disobedience to His Word). He was honest to the point that he admitted that he was afraid of being found out and that there had been a change in their relationship but dishonest that he did not admit that his disobedience was the cause for this fear and change. Confession in Adams looks a lot like confession today where we simply say that, “*We are helpless victims of bad circumstances*!” Instead of accepting responsibility for our choices and actions!

2. Vs. 12-13 If it’s not our fault whose is it? Adam blamed God through the women, Eve blamed God through the serpent, so it’s God’s fault! Adam like us, may have not had the choice of circumstances he found himself in but he did have a clear and easy choice as too how he would respond to them. Eve blamed temptation for her wrong choice but temptation does not excuse the way in which she responded. Adam likewise blamed Eve for his choice but she was only a channel to his willing disobedience.

Vs. 8-9, 11 While they hid in their sin, God:

1. Vs. 8 Did not changed His relationship towards them! God never stopped loving them, never stopped desiring to have fellowship with them. Isa. 59:2 tells us that, “*your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you.*” It is mankind that has separated fellowship and hidden its face.
2. Vs. 8 His love seeks us out. I believe that this is a theophany or if you will a visit from the “*Word of God*” Jesus Christ. Apparently this was a regular occurrence during which time the angelic rebellion had taken place and before Eve conceived, so perhaps several weeks each day Jesus (*the second Adam*) walked with the first Adam. But this day marked the first day that Jesus began to seek and save that which was lost. *Adam did not understand that the One that walked in the garden of God’s grace seeking him out would one day shed blood in the garden of grace to redeem him back*!
3. Vs. 9 “*LORD God called to Adam and said to him, “Where are you*?”: God is all knowing so clearly He knew right where they were hiding. Even though they had so quickly lost the knowledge of His love and desire for fellowship God was calling after them! Mankind was saying*, “I’ve lost God* and *I don’t know where He is*!” The truth is it is not God who was lost, but Adam! When we became a Christian we “*didn’t find God we finally allowed Him to find us!*”
4. Vs. 11 First God tells man of His desire to restore fellowship then He shares the reason why it is broken to begin with, so that man will make the first step towards restoration “*repentance*”. Adam needed to do more than just come up with excuses and shifting the blame to admitting responsibility.

IV. Vs. 14-24 The way to the tree of life

In each of these statements we see God’s plain for restoration of mankind. Also to each of the participants in rebellion God has two consequences to their action. But first notice back in verses 12-13 in the words “*I ate*” as God gets Adam and Eve to admit their sin. His questions have followed a familiar twofold pattern:

1. Vs. 10 Confession: Get them to realize that where they are is not where they ought to be.
2. Vs. 12-13 Repentance: Get them to accept full responsibility for their own actions.

Vs. 14-15 *The serpent*: The “Shinning one” this is obvious figurative language as snakes don’t eat dust.

1. Vs. 14 He will be the most despised: There is in this description of physical consequences a practical curse for Satan. He reached for personal worship for himself but he will now always be the most despised of all of God’s creation. Satan will always be humiliated, he will always fail.
2. Vs. 15 He will be the most defeated: This is the first time we see the gospel preached and it is right after the fall. Several things to note here:
3. The word “Seed” is singular and is said to be of the women. Biologically women do not produce a seed and Biblically the seed is always a reference to man. This is the only case where we find the “Seed” being that of a woman and the descendent being spoken from, coming from a women not a man. The implication is that of a virgin birth by which the redeemer would be born to crush the serpent’s head after being fatally wounded. This is further brought in the use of the male pronoun “He”.
4. Notice a division is humanity in the words “your seed” and “her seed”. The enmity between Eve and Satan will be passed on from generation to generation. There are two groups of people who are at war: Those who obey and follow God and Those who obey and follow the father of lies.

 Satan will be defeated two ways:

1. One, ultimately He was defeated at the cross by Jesus and will one day soon be cast in the lake of fire forever and ever.
2. Two, he will be defeated continually by the work of Christ in His saints (you and I) as we live obedient lives reach out in God’s power by His grace to those who have not yet know of God’s love.

Vs. 16 *The women*: Notice that God speaks differently to Eve then He did to Satan. To Satan He said, “*because you have done this*” to Eve God does not lay the charge of original responsibility yet there are two consequences to her choice to temptation:

1. Sorrow and pain in child birth: I do not think that this verse refer to the pain and danger of child birth but the emotional heart ache for her children which starts at conception and continues until she dies. The word “*Sorrow*” here is the same word used to describe Adams working conditions “*toil*” in this case it could be used as describing heartbreaking labor. Any mother will tell you that the labor pains don’t stop at birth but instead continue on the rest of their lives as their hearts are always bound up in their children.
2. Desire for her husband: The word here is “*run after*” which speaks not of passion but rather of *approval*. After the fall she would be conflicted in that she would seek her husband’s approval and yet struggle for control in the relationship. So she would be at war with herself over this.

The question is why does God do this?

* Women would experience the heartbreak of identity seeing their self-worth in their children who would struggle.
* Women will struggle in their security in their relationships with their husband’s wanting approval and control.

*But in both cases the only place women will find identity and security would be in the arms of Jesus*!

Vs. 17-18 *The man*: Adam is charged with the wrong because he listened to his wife instead of God. We see two things here as well:

1. Vs. 17-18 The ground was cursed: Nature became out of balance, the provision and fertility of the soil changed. Man’s work was now to be a struggle and a heartache instead of resting in what the Lord had provided. Work was to be a blessing but now it was to be a curse. His identity was now going to be in his work instead of in God. This hard work was to be a constant reminded of the seriousness of trusting anyone other than God. Thorns and thistles mutated from God’s original creation reminding him of the pain of disobedience.
2. Vs. 19 Life was to be a battle: Man would continue to struggle with security as well as all he would produce at times was perspiration. Man would never be able to find security and happiness in what he does.

The grace of God is that man could ultimately only find his identity and security in God and not what he does.

Vs. 20 I find it interesting that Adam now call his wife “*life*”. At first he called her “*taken out of man*” (2:23). It seems to point to the fact that he understood the gospel proclaimed by the Lord and trusted that it would be through a woman that God’s promised redeemer would come forth.

Vs. 21 This is further understood by the fact that God clothes them which is a symbol of being accepted. This clothing was done through the death of an innocent animal as its blood was shed to cover mankind’s sin, (*a proto-type of what Jesus would later do*). Not only did God kill the innocent animal, He made the tunics of its skin and dressed them. God has done this for us in Jesus in as much as He has clothed us in the righteousness of His Son Jesus.

Vs. 22-24 Blocking the way back to the garden was a way of keeping mankind from coming to God a wrong way. God did not want man to try to come to him any other way then the way in which Adam and Eve had just come the way of completely trusting in His provision.

Genesis 4:1-24

“The Causality of Community”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-8 It’s not too late!

III. Vs. 9-24 Where’s your brother?

I. Intro.

In chapter three the focus was upon the effects of sin upon the individual life and God’s grace that makes provision for it. In chapter four the focus is the effects of sin upon the *social life or community* and God’s provision of grace.

* This is obviously a condensed account as the years between Cain and Abel’s birth to Abel’s murder are not recorded.
* Next, just like chapter three a person’s perspective on this chapter will determine their worldview. The Biblical position based upon this chapter is that all of mankind’s sin can be traced not to: \*\*\*\*\*\*
* Environmental reasons
* Educational reasons

But instead to the improper worship of their creator!

II. Vs. 1-8 It’s not too late!

Vs. 1a This is the first act of intimacy recorded in the Bible, the word “*knew*” is used 940 times in the OT and here refers to a deep knowledge and understanding for God’s purpose of sexual relations. Furthermore this verse describes God’s design for sexual relations:

1. “*His wife*”: It does not say girl friend or acquaintance but wife! Adam was not to know anyone sexually but his wife, thus God’s plan for sexual relations was monogamy, “*one man one woman in a protective agreement between God and them called marriage*.”
2. “*And bore Cain*”: Clearly heterosexuality is what God had in mind, it was not Adam and Steve nor was it Eve and a Madam! Simple biology dictates this for there would be no birth of Cain.
3. The outcome of this sexual relationship was that Eve conceived and bore Cain. The word “*conceived*” is a Hebrew word that means to “be with child”. Cain was inside her womb not “*fetal tissue*” as the abortionist would have you believe.

So in this ½ of verse one, in only 12 words, we have gone against the modern tide of:

* Promiscuity
* Homosexuality
* Abortion

Vs. 1b As the baby lay in her arms she names him “*acquisition, acquired or gotten*”. Cain is where we get our English word “*begotten*” from. We are told the reason for the name as, “*I have acquired a man from the LORD*.” This translation is a little week as it means more than just receiving a child with help from the Lord, which is true with every birth. The word “*from*” is better translated “*even*” or as one translation puts it, *“I have gotten the man that the LORD promised.*” It seems that Adam and Eve believed the promise of 3:15 where God proclaimed he would “*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*.” So perhaps they thought that Cain was that promised “*seed*” who would deliver them out from under the curse of sin.

Vs. 2 We are not told how long it was before she conceived and bore another child. But judging on their choice of a name it was long enough for them to realize the effects of sin on human life and that Cain was not the “*seed of promise*” as they had hoped. Able, you will recall, is the root of the word used so often in Ecclesiastes “*vanity*” or nothingness. Life they had determined was a “vapor” of what it was meant to be prior to the fall.

 In the second ½ of this verse we are catapulted ahead into the lives of these two boys as they become men with occupations. Again we see that God’s design for man is not to be idol but to work. Notice the reverse order as Abele’s occupation is mentioned first, “*keeper of the sheep*” or if you will he was a shepherd or pastor. It is interesting that Abel chose a job that dealt with the animals God had sacrificed for clothing as a symbol of His righteousness. Whereas Cain follows in his father’s career as tiller of the ground or farmer.

Vs. 3-4 In these two verses there are three important aspects of how this first family, as well as us, approached God to worship Him. It seems obvious that this religious training had come from God and that it had been passed down from Adam and Eve to their descendants.

1. SPECIFIC TIME: “*In the process of time*”: Literally the words *are “at the end of days*”. Now we cannot be sure of what the amount of days were a week, month, season or year but there was a set designation of time that they were to regularly gather together to worship the Lord. This “*specific time*” was set aside so that the whole of that time would be for the worship and fellowship with God. Furthermore we are told that one of the key ingredients of that time was to, “*bring an offering*” or if you will a sacrifice. So what do we see in this about the way in which God would have us approach Him?
2. Habitual: Worship of God must be something that we do regularly, not just Christmas and Easter. One third of all evangelical believers’ say that they believe in God yet attend no Church.
3. Sacrificial: They were not only to offer their time but part of their lives as well. Worship of God at its core is “*giving out of what has been given to us*”. One author put it this way, “*Man is never more truly man than when he is worshiping God; for it is only then that he finds, realizes and expresses his true relationship of dependence*.” King David said this when he was offered the threshing floor of Araunah for free on Mount Moriah to build an altar, which was where the temple was later built, “*No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing*.”
4. SPECIFIC PLACE: “*brought*…*to the LORD*”: God had a specific place in which they were to meet Him. I find it most likely that this was the place where Jesus had killed the lamb and made clothes for them, which according to 3:24 was most likely at the entrance to the Garden of Eden. This speaks to me that God wanted the focus of their devotion not to be what they were doing but what He had done! This deals with the attitude in worship or going to Church doesn’t it?
5. SPECIFIC WAY: Now before you look at the last of these three aspects on how God would have us approach Him you need to realize something; this was not the first time this family had done this. In fact this was a part of their regular lives, something that had done perhaps weekly all their lives. Cain had come and worshiped God the right way hundreds of times. His failure was not out of ignorance but rather defiance or at best indifference! He was if you will the first one to sing the song, “*I did it my way*” for worship! The proper worship of God has not “*evolved*” instead we are told in Rom. 1:18-23 that mankind, like Cain, rejected the true knowledge and worship of God and instead turned to idolatry. We can see four things wrong with Cain’s worship of God and conversely four things about the right way to worship God:
6. NOT BY FAITH: Heb. 11:*4 “By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain*.” It is clear that the first thing wrong with Cain’s worship of God was that it was not offered in faith. “*What Cain offered was influenced by the way he offered it.*” He did not just chose the wrong offering but his heart being wrong led him to do so. In Mark 7:6 Jesus commented on the most religious Jews, the Pharisees and scribes, by quoting Isaiah when He said, “*This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me*.” “*The value of the offering depends upon the heart in which it was offered!*” Listen to Paul’s words in 1 Cor 13:1-3 “*If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.*”
7. NOT ACCORDING TO TRUTH: “*Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground*”. The fact that both Cain and Able brought an offering and that God “*respected Abel and his offering*” but did not “*did not respect Cain and his offering*” implies that they both knew to bring a lamb of the flock. Furthermore Cain had done so previously without ever hearing that God was not receiving him or what he brought. This shows us that, “*No matter how sincere a person is in approaching God if they do so not upon God’s Word then it is not acceptable before Him!*” Remember Jesus’ words to the women at the well? “*God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth*.”
8. NOT ACCORDING TO GRACE: “*an offering of the fruit of the ground*”: The Second thing we see, is that Cain chose to bring the fruit of his own work as being a tiller of the ground. Cain’s worship of God, (*even though previously he had come by way of grace*), became about self-effort and his works to obtain righteousness. The fruit that he produced was beautiful but it was not as beautiful as God’s sacrifice of an innocent lamb for their sin! Paul put it this way to the Ephesians “*by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*”
9. NOT A TOTAL SURRENDER: “*Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat*”: The word “*firstlings*” and the words “*of their fat*” tells us two important things about Abel’s offering.
10. He offered the best of what he had, that is the idea behind the word “*firstling*”. It is the same idea that Jesus used to Nicodemus when He said, “*God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son*.”
11. He offered all that he had, that is what is behind the words “*of their fat*”. The fat of the animal was a sweet smelling aroma it was the luxury, so Able offered even the fat of the animal. So often we offer almost all of what we have but keep back a portion for ourselves.

You do not read that Cain offered the best or all that he had to the Lord. Cain’s offering was not a total surrender it was only a partial surrender.

In contrast to the way Cain worship God we ought to worship Him:

* BY FAITH
* ACCORDING TO TRUTH
* ACCORDING TO GRACE
* TOTAL SURRENDER

Vs. 5, 8 The word “respect” reveals that this was tied to the heart in which the offering was given. Here in these verse we will see *four manifestations of the flesh* when Cain tried to worship God based upon his works. You will see a fallen progression in these as well:

1. Vs. 5 “*Cain was very angry*”: ANGER The moment God did not meet Cain’s expectations he became very angry. God’s way of approaching Him in worship went against Cain’s way which shows who it was at the center of Cain’s worship, Cain. The fact is no one has ever lost their temper when they got what they wanted, so Cain had a self-centered worship.
2. Vs. 5 “*his countenance fell*”: SELF-PITY Perhaps Cain was prideful of his offering and thought it to be superior to that of Abele’s but when his was not received self-pity filed the void that pride occupied.
3. 1 John 3:12 “*Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous*”: JEALOUSY Self-pity will quickly move to jealousy as in this case as Cain became jealous of Abel’s acceptance.
4. Vs. 8 “*Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him*”: MURDER Anger led to self-pity, which led to jealousy, which left unchecked, led to murder.

Vs. 6-7 Notice God’s amazing grace as He tries to get Cain to realize what going on in his own heart.

1. Vs. 6 “*Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen*?” God asks Cain what is behind his actions. The problem is not Abel, the problem is not God, its Cain. Folks that’s grace, before Cain went out and blew it God is getting him to see that it is his own fallen sinful nature that is causing these actions.
2. Vs. 7a “*If you do well, will you not be accepted*?” Literally these words are, *“If you do well, will there not be acceptance for you?*” In these words God is saying, “*It’s not too late, get your heart right and worship Me by faith, truth grace and total surrender and I will accept just as I always have*!”
3. Vs. 7b God also warns Cain telling Him that he is on a dangerous path as sin is crouching like a lion ready to pounce upon him if he does not get his heart right.
4. Vs. 8 Jesus calls Abel a prophet who like other prophets after him were murdered. The point being that when Cain came to seek out Abel he most likely spoke the truth of what God had just told Cain Himself and urged him to repent and worship God with a right heart.

You can see Satan striking at the heels of mankind and the seed of God. Corrupting the heart of Cain, which led to the killing of the righteous Abel.

III. Vs. 9-24 Where’s your brother?

Vs. 9-10 First notice the similarity between God’s questions to Adam and the His questions to Cain.

1. Adam: “*Where are you*?” Cain: “*Where is your brother*?” God obviously knows the answer, to get the sinner, (Adam and Cain) to recognize that they are not WHERE they ought to be.
2. Adam: “*Who told you that you were naked*?” Cain: “*What have you done*?” The key word in these two question is the words YOU! God is getting them both to except total responsibility for their condition.

Unfortunately Cain does not admit to being either a sinner or at fault. Instead his reaction to his sin is found in his four reactions which are the same we use today to hide from the reality that we are sinners and responsible for our actions. What’s interesting to me is that of the four three are things we hide from and the last is something that we use to hide in. Verses 9, 13, 14

1. Vs. 9 HIDE FROM GUILT “*I do not know*.” Cain lied as he is trying to hide from his guilt. That’s always the first way of trying to not accept responsibility. Cain is talking too God who knows all things! Cain is so full of himself that he assumes that his lie can conceal the truth from God who knows all things. Psychotherapists have insisted on telling us that what lies behind crime and violence in our society is “*low self-esteem*”. But consider this article originally published in the “*Psychological Review*” and republished in the “*San Jose Mercury*”. The researchers analyzed more than 150 studies in psychology and criminology and determined that; “*The societal pursuit of high self-esteem for everyone may end up in doing considerable harm.*” They found that aggressive people have unusual high self-esteem, which they defined as a “*favorable global evaluation of oneself*.” To these new findings the then State Assemblyman John Vasconcellos, who in 1987 sponsored legislation to promote self-esteem in our public school, had this to say. “*We didn’t claim to have proven it all, the science was not very far advanced*.” The co-author of the article (Laura Smart) concluded that; “*Trying to build self-esteem could be counterproductive. These people are often violent precisely because they already believe themselves to be superior beings, perhaps it would be better to try to instill modesty and humility*.” That is exactly what we see in Cain as he saw himself superior to Abel.
2. Vs. 9b HIDE FROM PERSONAL RESSIBILITY: “*Am I my brother's keeper?*” “*My brother, what do I have to do with my brother*?” Cain was only concerned with himself and his rights; he had no concern for his responsibilities.
3. Vs. 14 HIDE FROM THE NATURE OF GOD: “*I shall be hidden from Your face*.” Cain was blinded by his own sin and rebellion and thought that he was hidden from the nature of God.
4. Vs. 13 HIDE IN SELF-PITY: Cain shows that he is in grief over the consequences of his actions but has no repentance over the action its self. His self-pity shows its self four ways:
5. Vs. 14a VOCATIONALLY “*You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground*”: Cain has self-pity because he feel that he can no longer make a living.
6. Vs.14b SPIRITUALLY “*I shall be hidden from Your face*”: Cain had not wanted to worship God the right way but he did want all the benefits that this worship would provide him with.
7. Vs. 14c NO REST “*I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth*”: I’ll have no place to call home, no place to rest.
8. Vs. 14d NO PEACE “*it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me*”: Cain had removed himself from all of these things when he chose to worship himself instead of God.

Vs. 10-12, 15 In God’s reply we again marvel at his fourfold grace.

1. Vs. 10 “*What have you done*?” To Cain’s lie God responds with an opportunity for him to repent. Cain had believed himself superior to Able which eventually led him to act superior to God. But God shows Himself to Cain by revealing that He knew what Cain had done in secret. Heb. 12:24 tells us Jesus’ blood, “*speaks better things than that of Abel*”, Abel’s blood cried out for justice but Jesus’ blood cries out grace and mercy to all who will come to it even Cain.
2. Vs. 11-12 “*So now you are cursed from the earth … when you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you*.” God’s curse was on the earth Cain’s curse was from the earth. Obviously this would further effect Cain’s efforts to till the ground. Since Cain had taken pride in his tilling the ground, the ground which had been the source of his identity would yield nothing but frustration. Those who trust in their own works of righteousness will find it impossible to produce any fruit! I see a blessing in this, as this would lead Cain back into the arms of God’s grace. Cain needed to fail as failure brings humility, which is the bed for God’s grace!
3. Vs. 12 “*A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth*.” Cain would lose a set location as home and instead he would wonder the earth looking for a place of rest and security. His action had showed that he was not ready to live with his fellow man and the reason for it was that he was not ready to live in obedience with God. Cain had disregarded the sanctity of human life so perhaps absence would make the heart grow fonder. The blessing of this was that Cain would soon discover that “home or security” would only truly be found in obedience to the Lord.
4. Vs. 15 The word “*mark*” is better rendered “sign” but the question is just what the sign was? Well look at God’s words here, “*whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.*” This was no mark or sign of shame but rather one of mercy and grace. This is a promise of protection based upon God’s love as God is saying, “*Yes, your guilty Cain, you’re a convicted murder but you’re still my child and I love you*!” Wow, God promises to return sevenfold (seven is the number of perfection) upon anyone who treated Cain as he had treated his brother, that’s God’s grace.

Vs. 16 Cain departs from the altar where he and Abel brought the offerings, his Calvary, but God never left Cain. God follows Cain East from the place of blessings to a land named after his new life “*wandering*”. How great is our Lord who pursues us even when we have left Calvary and are wondering?

Vs. 17a Here we have one of the most asked questions by those who doubt the Bible’s truths, “*Where did Cain get his wife*?” The answer is really quite simple, in Gen. 5:4 we read that, “*the days of Adam were eight hundred years; and he had sons and daughters*.” Look again at verse 14 and it says that Cain said that, “*it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me.*” Who was going to find Cain if there were only three people on the planet and he was one of them? Clearly there were already many other brothers & sisters. The population by the time of Cain’s death would have been several hundred thousand so this could have been very easily a latter descendant.

Is this not forbidden in the Bible? Yes, but not until Leviticus and Deuteronomy which by that time the gene pool would no longer be pure enough that marrying your sister or close relative would cause harm to the offspring. The further the spring is from the source the more polluted it becomes!

Vs. 17b-24 Here we are given the ungodly line of Cain and based upon their names you will see an ungodly progression away from God.

Enoch: “Dedication or beginner”, the idea is that this child and the city named after him was a “new beginning”. Archaeologists have found this word used as the earliest word in language for the word city!

Irad: “*Witness or townsmen*”, you will recall that God had said that Cain was to be vagabond, but his descendants are named “city of witness” the idea being self-glory. Irad’s name is like saying to God, “*You can’t expel me*!”

Mehujael: “*Smitten of God*”, which suggests a rather defiant attitude. “*We may have been smitten by God but we made it anyway!*”

Methushael: “*Man of God or death of God*”, and it appears to me that he probably took the later.

Lamech: “*Strong or powerful*”, now this guy really rebels against God and it is thought by most that he get much worse after Adam dies.

1. Vs. 19 “*took for himself two wives*:” Rebel’s against God’s command of monogamous marriage and instead establishes polygamy. His wives names are:
2. Adah: “*Beauty*”
3. Zillah: “*Adornment*”

What this shows is the emphasis of his heart and in all cases of polygamy is lust.

Furthermore we are told that Mr. “Powerful” has three boys and a girl by these two women that he lusted after:

Jabal: “Traveler”

Jubal: “Trumpeter”

Tubal-Cain: “Metal-worker”

Naamah: “Pleasant”

What I see is that they named their kids after what they did, so their identity was in what they did not in the Lord.

Vs. 23-24 Lamech “Mr. Powerful” or his stage name “Super Man” becomes the first Rap artist as he sings this little didy where he boasts of murder and self-sufficiency. Jewish tradition says that one of the men killed by him was none other than Cain himself, which makes his boast blasphemous.

 Lamech’s vindictiveness contrasted against Jesus forgiveness as seen in Jesus’ words to Peter in Matt 18:21-22 serves to illustrate the difference between the seeds of Satan and the seeds of God. Peter asked, “*Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times? Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven*.”

Genesis 4:25-5:32

“Men called by the name of the Lord”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 25-26 The “Appointed hope”

III. Vs. 1-5 The days Adam lived

IV. Vs. 6-32 Truths about walking with God

I. Intro.

We now move from the ungodly line of Cain to the godly line of Seth and the contrast between the two. In 3:15 God spoke of two contrasting groups of people:

1. The seed of the woman
2. The seed of the serpent

Jesus spoke of these two opposing groups after the religious leaders said “*Abraham is our father*.” Jesus said, “*If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham*. (faith in Christ)” (The chief difference between these two groups is that of inward character and not physical distinctives). All of humanity falls into one of these two groups but we all of us start out in the ungodly line of Cain or the seed of the serpent and are “*reborn*” into the godly line of Seth, (John 3:16, Eph. 2:1-10).

II. Vs. 25-26 The “Appointed hope”

Before we look at this list of names (genealogy) allow me two points:

* The importance of genealogies, is not only to be found only in whom they record but that they do so along with recorded history. The names of ancestors alongside historical accounts lend credibility to what is recorded. Stories apart from this become myths.
* Nine times in chapter 5 we are told that the pre-flood patriarchs “*begot sons and daughters*”. The world population grew explosively and by some estimates that by the time Adam died at 930 years old (5:5) around the 46th year of Lamech he would have been able to see 5 million of his own family. That means that the list of names here is not necessarily their first born sons and obviously not their only children. They were chosen based upon being the spiritual leader of their people and this would be traced eventually to the Child promised by God, Jesus. That is what Paul tells us in Gal. 4:4-5 “*But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.*”

Vs. 25 Chapter 5:3 tells us that Adam was 130 years old when Seth was born. Evidently he was born the same year that Abel was murdered, however that does not mean that he was only their third child as we are told in 4:14 that Cain is worried about his siblings killing him. The remainder of this verse tells us the reason for his name, “*For God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed.*” Seth means “*appointed or substitute*” Eve recognizes two things based upon this statement:

1. “*God has appointed*”: Eve now fully understood that no matter how much she may want a person to be the redeemer, it was only to come about through God’s appointment.
2. “*another seed for me instead of Abel*”: Not Cain but Abel! Eve understood that the basis of God’s choice was to be faith in God’s righteousness, not upon man’s work and effort!

The mention of Adam here is the only time his name appears after the birth of his first two boys. Adam and eves folly had given sin and death entrance into the lives of their children thus the murder of Abel and the apostasy of Cain must of broke their hearts. They could see as Moses said the “*iniquity of the fathers upon the children*!”

Vs. 26 Again much time transpires as Seth himself becomes a parent and according 5:6 at 105 years of age has a son he names Enosh or “*mortal*” which implies the frailty of human life.

Like Seth a person first needs to be brought to the place where they realize their own frailty or depravity, then notice after this that we are told that “*begin to call on the name of the LORD*.” One translation says that “*at this time men first made use of the name of the Lord in worship*.” Whereas another translation says that they began “*preaching in the name of Jehovah*.” The words “*call on the name of the LORD*” is used elsewhere in Genesis to describe the building of an alter where by a sacrifice was to be brought for worship. This then is the first record of public worship service in scripture instead of private devotions. Seth’s lineage went from **primitive to civilized** with establishing public worship of God (Jehovah) and that this was relational as the name implies.

## III. Vs. 1-5 The days Adam lived

Vs. 1 The words “*the book of the genealogy*” appear only twice in the bible the other being Matt. 1:1 where the focus is the “*Second Adam*” Jesus. Here we see Adam up through 10 generations of the godly line ending at the flood. The concluding statement of Adam is the record of God’s special creation in his formation as they were carved out with certain qualities and characteristics that only their creator possessed. Furthermore they functioned just as God had intended, prior to the fall.

Vs. 2 Notice in this verse that God does three things for mankind:

1. He created them male and female
2. Blessed them
3. Called them Mankind in the day they were created.

Folk’s He has been doing this ever since, only now He **recreates** you, He **bless you in His Son** and **calls you to His service**!

Vs. 3 Seth is mentioned in light of his link spiritually to the “Appointed” seed of promise Jesus, for they clearly had other sons and daughters, verse 4. In Luke 3:38 Seth “*Appointed*” shows up in the Genealogy of Jesus.

 Next note the words “*begot a son in his own likeness, after his image*”, Seth was a duplicate of Adam in that he was a fallen man. Adam prior to the fall was created “*in the likeness of God*” now Seth is begotten in Adam’s likeness. Every child since Cain has been born in the likeness of Adam spiritually accept Jesus who we are told according to John 1:14 was, “*the only begotten of the Father*”. Thus to change our fallen state Jesus told Nicodemus that “*unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*.” And it was for this reason that “*He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life*.”

Vs. 4-5 This again answers the skeptics question as to where Cain got his wife. But of other interest is the longevity of their lives which averages 912 years of age. This is best explained by way of vastly improved environmental conditions, which lessened the harmful effects of radiation, which causes genetic mutations in all our physical systems. If you add up the years of this godly line you come up with 1656 years from Adam to the flood with no scriptural evidence that there were any gaps. Other historical records from ancient cultures have further supported these great ages.

What is interesting is that we are told in Isa. 65:20 that “*No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.*” The time in which Isaiah is speaking about is during the millennial reign of Jesus upon the earth as the earth & those who dwell on it will take on pre-flood conditions.

**IV. Vs. 6-32 Truths about walking with God**

### Looking out over these 10 generations of the godly line that end at the flood two things stand out compared to the ungodly line of Cain:

1. **In Cain’s lineage there is no mention of the length of life**. In fact there is no mention of the word “lived” at all. From the Bible’s perspective that they were never alive. Oh they had children, careers and so on but there was no life. Cain had no days of life as we read that all the days of Seth had. That’s true of your spiritual life! I had no true life until I met Jesus! The Apostle John says that, “*God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son*.”
2. **There is also no mention of the word “*died*” in Cain’s lineage and the conclusion is that they were already dead spiritually speaking**. Eight times were are told that these godly saints “died” in all but Enoch who along with Elijah never dies. To the believer in Jesus death is only a door by which we move into our new home in the presence of the Lord forever.

There is also an interesting message in the meaning of the names of these men that is a clear presentation of the gospel.

### Hebrew English

Adam Man

Seth Appointed

Enosh Mortal

Cainan Sorrow

Mahalaleel The blessed God

Jared Shall come down

Enoch Teaching

Methuselah His death shall bring

Lamech Despairing

Noah Rest

Or if you will to put it into normal sentence structure:

“Man *is* appointed mortal sorrow; *but* the blessed God shall come down teaching *that* His death shall bring *the* despairing rest!”

Vs. 19 This is the second time that we are told that a father out lived his son the first being Adam and Abel.

Vs. 20-24 Let’s turn our attention to this mysterious character Enoch whose name means “*teaching*”.

So based upon these verses we learn three things about him:

* A man of faith in whose life was characterized by pleasing God.
1. Vs. 21-22a His walk started after the birth of his son Methuselah when he was 65 years old and the next three hundred years of his life can be summed up by the phrase “*walked with God*”. Twice in this short account of his life we are told that he “*walked with God*”. Now by these words we know that Enoch had a very special relationship with the Lord. Heb. 11:5 tells us that “*By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God*.” The intimacy in this walk is clearly scene by the words “*by faith*”. His life was one that was centered on trusting the lord, which implies (obedience, prayer, and heart for God’s word and worship) all of which “*please the Lord*”.
* A prophet that spoke of impending judgment upon the pre-flood world. Such was the wickedness of the world that it continually consumed the every thought of their heart. God was grieved and sorry that He had placed mankind upon the earth. (Gen. 6:5-6)
1. Vs. 22 Apparently Enoch received a prophecy that judgment was coming and that it was going to happen after his son Methuselah died because he named his *son “His death shall bring*”. If you do your math you will find out that the flood did come in the year of Methuselah’s death in fact some say in the very week of it. So in Jude 24-25 we are told that for three hundred years Enoch “*prophesied about these men*” (his generation just before the judgment of the flood). Saying, “*Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him*.”
* A man who was suddenly taken to the presence of God.
1. Vs. 24 It does not say that he died as did the other godly ancestors but that suddenly he was no longer on the earth. Heb. 11:5 uses the word “*taken*” or as the KJ versions says, “*translated*”. The word appears 7 times in the NT where it is translated these ways, “*carried back, turning, and being changed*”. So what we have here is a rapture like occurrence which is spoken of in 1 Thess. 4:17 where we read that those, “*who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air*.” The word “*caught up*” is “*harpazo*” in the Greek, which is translated into Latin with the word “*rapture*”. Now what is interesting, in light of the NT, is that this proceeded God’s judgment upon the earth. Enoch’s being *carried back* did not occur at the mid-point of God’s judgment upon the earth. Neither was he preserved, as Noah and his family was, going through the judgment. No, he was caught up and carried back being changed instantly as he was brought into the presence of God, so he is a typology of the Church as Noah is of Israel.

**Enoch’s life ought to be what we see in the Church prior to God’s judgment upon the earth. That is we ought to have**:

* A walk that is pleasing to God
* Mouths that consistently speak the Word of God
* Lives that are ready to be instantly in the presence of God

### How are we to be this kind of Church? Well again look at Hebrews 11:5-6 as we see Enoch’s threefold testimony:

1. “*that he pleased God*”: Enoch had a heart that consistently desired above all else desired to please God. This speaks that he only did, as Jesus says of himself in John 8:29 “*those things that please Him.*” A life consistently lived in obedience to the word of God!
2. “*But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who*”: Enoch lived a life that trusted God and not his own insight. Enoch trusted God’s character to always do what was best.
3. “*diligently seek Him*”: Lastly we see that in both of the above his heart was one of diligence. Enoch’s master passion was to seeking the Lord, in other words the Lord was fixed upon the throne of his heart.

### Vs. 25 Both Lamech and his grandfather Enoch share names in common with their ungodly relatives, Cain’s descendants. Furthermore these are the only two who did not outlive their fathers and both had words from the Lord. The thought is that they were called to reach out to the Cainites!

Vs. 26-27 Methuselah has often been used as the answer to the trivia question, “*Who is the oldest man recorded in the Bible?*” His age and the fact that his death brought upon the earth God’s judgment speaks of God’s longsuffering in that He is “*not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*” (2 Peter 3:9)

Vs. 28-31 Noah’s name prophesied that he would bring rest and comfort upon the earth.

### Now remember something here, all of these pre-flood patriarch’s had sons and daughters that were part of the population that was judged by God. The wickedness in the next chapter impacted all of the world except the eight that boarded the Arch. Furthermore we are told that Noah was 500 years old when he had “Shem, Ham, and Japheth.” We are left with only two possibilities:

### Noah had no children until after he was 500.

### Those children he had prior to “Shem, Ham, and Japheth” choose to follow the wickedness upon the earth.

### Folk’s I leave you with this thought based upon those observations, “*We will either impact the world or the world will impact us!”* There is no middle ground!

Genesis 6:1-22

“The way off the Island of iniquity”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-7 Broken lives, broken heart

III. Vs. 8-22 The ship called Grace

I. Intro.

In chapter 5 we saw the godly line of Seth and how at that time they “*began to call on the name of the Lord.*” By the time of Noah these two groups of people began to commingle with the results of the ungodly impacting society at the expense of the godly line. The result was predictable “*moral decay*” upon society. We shall see what led up to this moral decay, how we can avoid it and what God does about it.

## II. Vs. 1-7 Broken lives, broken heart

Vs. 1-4 The first four verses give us five stages that make up the crumbling of a society which eventually leads to God’s judgment.

1. Vs. 1 **Multiplication of people**: “*when men began to multiply on the face of the earth*”: Given the fact that each couple lived hundreds of years in an ideal environment the earth was most likely “*filled*” with people long before the flood. If you start with Adam and Eve then increase the population by 2% a year, which is the annual growth rate today, and span that out over the 1,656 years from Adam to the flood you would have well over 10 trillion people on the planet at the time of the flood. Now factor into this the fact that like us they were all “*sons of Adam*” and not all created in the “*likeness and image of God*” and you can see where society’s problems started. As people multiplied who were 100% sinners by nature the potential for this sin to adversely affect society increased. God had warned Cain, “*sin lies at the door and its desire is for you.*” No matter what the social evil, at the root of it is a heart of sin whose only antidote is the blood of Jesus.
2. Vs. 2, 4 **Compromise**: “*sons of God saw the daughters of men; that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose*.” Whatever else may be said about this verse one thing is certain no matter what your interpretation, societies down fall came about through compromise, the godly with the ungodly. Now to understand just what is meant about that compromise we will need to determine **three things**:
* **Who are the sons of God?**
* **Who are the daughters of men?**
* **Who are their offspring the giants upon the earth”** (verse 4)
1. “**Sons of God**”: There are three views as to just who the “*sons of God*” are:
2. Sethites: Genesis makes it clear that this line began to call upon the name of the Lord, thus this view makes the assumption that ALL of this Seth’s decedents were godly while all of Cain’s were ungodly. So then the problem was that the godly line intermarried with the ungodly line. The problem with this view is that this would make all of Seth’s descendant’s boys while all of Cain’s descendants were girls, a biblical and mathematical impossibility. Remember that all of Adams descendants were in the image of man and not God so all were born sinners!
3. Children of rulers: Some seeing the difficulty in this passage have chosen to render the Hebrew word for “God” (elohim) in its plural form “gods” which can mean rulers. In their interpretation they say that these men were born into influential homes and took women from whomever they wanted thus their children were as verses 4 says*, “mighty men who were of old, men of renown.*” The trouble with this interpretation is that the Jewish scribes translated the word into Greek in the singular form. Furthermore in the three other places the phrase “sons of God” appears the meaning is ***never*** rulers as this interpretation supposes.
4. Demon possessed men: Again noting the Hebrew phrase the Jewish Scribes always rendered it as “angels of God”. The fact of this is further implied in the N.T. understanding of Gen. 6:2 by Jude where we read:
* Jude 1:6 “*And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.*”

Based upon this passage as well as 2 Peter 2:4-6 it appears that the fallen angels or demons left their own habitation of which they have no sexual reproduction and possessed ungodly men who in turn took women sexually, who were perhaps demon possessed themselves. The offspring of which was genetically altered into giants, mighty men of renown.

1. “**Daughters of men**”: Daughters have been born into families prior to this otherwise we would not have had such a great population. We get a further understanding of what is meant by the words, “*that they were beautiful*” which implies that these “sons of God” were looking at the daughters of men with an eye to the beautiful ones classifying the ones that were outwardly beautiful. So their eye was only towards the “babes or fox’s” and not looking at the inward character thus they married the ungodly women. The problem with these women being only from Cain is that it doesn’t make since. Both the daughters of Cain and the daughters of Seth were the daughters of “Adam” which is the word used for man. Finally even though marriage of godly to that of ungodly is wrong it does not produce genetically altered children or even ones that are more sinful.
2. “**Giants upon the earth**”: The word “Giants” is a word that has a double meaning in the Hebrew. First it literally means “*fallen ones*” which seems to point to the nature of their parents. Second it came to describe the physical stature of some of the people in the land of Canaan. The fact that there were people of extremely large stature is supported by archaeologists who have discovered “giant” cities in Bashan (an area of northern Israel bordering Jordan) where they have found beds and other items 10 to 15 feet in length. Apparently their stature made them very well known for their military superiority something that we see in the story of David and Goliath.

Vs. 3 It seems as though that at the time when women were chosen according to their outward beauty and not their inward heart by those that were demon possessed that God issues a message that His patience towards mankind’s rebellion and compromise is going to come to an end in 120 years which was to be the flood, whether that message was by way of Noah or Methuselah or both we can’t be sure. In Noah’s case, according to Genesis 7:11, the flood came in his 600th year while last week we saw that his three sons were born when he was 500 years old. 2 Peter 2:5 tells us that Noah was a “*a preacher of righteousness*” which would mean that he started preaching 20 years prior to his son’s birth and ended the day they went into the ark. Every board and nail he built in that ark was a plea to a fallen world of God's desire for grace as well as a warning of judgment of they don’t repent. **Back to the five stages that make up the crumbling of a society**:

1. Vs. 5a **Absence of the knowledge of God**: “*the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth.*” The word “great” means unusually intense and very wide spread. The idea is that the whole world was against God, wickedness is always begins with the absence of God in societies life. Moral wickedness is not the problem it is the symptom, the problem is the absence of the knowledge of God.
2. Vs. 5b **Evil imaginations**: “*every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*.” There was universal wickedness in mankind, which again suggests that demonic influence was present. The depraved heart of man was continually searching for a higher degree of stimulating experiences. The use of the word “heart” here is the first time it is used in the Bible and it is followed up by the word again being used to describe God’s grief in His heart.
3. Vs. 11 **Violence**: “*earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.*” That is always the progression in a world that is absent from the knowledge of God.

**Multiplication of people, Compromise, Absence of the knowledge of God, Evil imaginations and Violence!**

Vs. 6-7 **God responds to this escalating wickedness in three ways:**

1. Vs. 6a **Sorrow**: God knew that man would become this corrupt, so this passage speaks of the broken heartedness of our heavenly Father. He had not changed His mind towards mankind, He still loved them, but His purpose and intent of continual uninterrupted fellowship with mankind was effected by their habitual sin thus His judgment instead of His love in grace had to be exercised and this caused God sorrow. Society had reached a stage of wickedness that God in love had to destroy that which caused the corruption and this only left 8 people. Kind of like a severely frostbitten limb that left on the rest of the body will bring death to the rest of the body so it must be amputated.
2. Vs. 6b **Grief**: ***Grief is always the activity of love***. The word “Grief” means to fabricate or to carve out hurt in the heart of God. God’s grief demonstrates two things:
3. **The object of His love**: Mankind
4. **The purpose for those He loved**: That He desired a relationship with man.
5. Vs. 7 **Judgment**: God’s plan for mankind was to bless them to see them grow under His grace and love yet because of their sin they chose not to desire to fellowship with Him. The consistent state of rebellion made it a necessity to judge mankind so that those that survived would have the possibility to enjoy that fellowship without being spoiled by the continual sin.

## III. Vs. 8-22 The ship called Grace

Vs. 8 Though wickedness was great on the earth there was a man “Noah” who looked into the eyes of the Lord and not into the eyes of the world. *Notice that it says that he “found grace” and did not earn it*! ***The truth is that grace found Noah*** as it had been searching the earth to show it’s self, strong on behalf of one who’s heart was fixed upon the Lord! Notice the order here in Noah’s character:

1. Was found by grace, so he was justified.
2. Justified, so then he was just.
3. Mature (perfect) in God’s grace
4. Finally it says that Noah walked with God but because it was grace that had found Noah the truth is it was God who walked with Noah!

**There was nothing special about Noah other then he responded to God’s grace in the eyes of the Lord.** Because of this grace in the life of Noah we see **seven qualities**:

1. Vs. 8 **Position**: “*found grace*”. Noah’s position before God was upon unmerited favor and not of works.
2. Vs. 9 **Attitude**: “*just man*”. Because Noah was right with God he was right with the world and showed an attitude of this by being just.
3. Vs. 9 **Character**: “*perfect*”. The idea of this word is that of being whole. ***Noah was a whole man in a broken world***.
4. Vs. 9 **Witness**: “*in his generations*”. Noah’s life of grace could be clearly seen amongst those whom he lived with.
5. Vs. 9 **Fellowship**: “*walked with God*”. The idea here is that of friendship as well as fellowship. Noah’s best friend was God and that he walked with Him daily! Noah could not walk with anyone who did not want to walk the same direction God was going.
6. Vs. 22 **Conduct**: “*Noah did*”. Noah had habit of obeying God daily.
7. Vs. 22 **Standard**: “*according to all that God commanded him, so he did*”. Noah’s standard was the word of God, so that what God said Noah did! What would have happened to Noah and those on the ark if he had done everything God had told him except fill the hole in the bottom of the boat?

Vs. 10-12 Noah led his wife three sons and their wives to find grace as well. Think of this the same God in whom looked out in grace to find those to love the majority turned away from and found judgment instead. Four times in this account we are told that mankind was all corrupt and violent. That was the sum of the character of the world’s population during Noah’s day. It says here that “*God looked*” it did not matter what the whole of society thought of their behavior, it was not a question as to whether or not society saw the way some were living as a “*gay*” or acceptable alternative life style. What matter’s is how God saw it and although He looked out with eyes of grace those eyes were not rose colored glasses which filtered out sinful behavior. God was not “*Loving them where they were at to where He wanted them to be*”, instead their way was corrupted and was to be judged!

Vs. 13 Notice that it says, “God said to Noah”. Some may be quick to criticize God for destroying the earth but what amazes me more than God’s judgment upon a sinful world is that it did not extend to Noah and Ham who became drunk and Ham lusted after his own father. **I question God's love for Noah more then I question His judgment of the world**.

 **God tells Noah 4 things about His impending judgment**:

1. Vs. 13 **His plan to destroy the earth**: “*The end of all flesh has come before Me*”.
2. Vs. 13 **The reason why**: “*Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth*”: God’s judgment was not to destroy man from the earth but rather with the earth. Man’s home his security must be wiped out so that those eight people would see how everything must depend upon a relationship with God.
3. Vs. 14-16 **His plans to save Noah and his family**: The arch’s proportions have been scientifically proven to be perfect and are in fact what all naval constructions now follow. The dimensions are perfect for both stability as well as maxim capacity. A cubit is around 17 ½ inches and based upon this measurement would have made it 450 feet long 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. With three decks it would have been over 95,000 square feet capable of carrying 14,000 tons. Not putting this together it could have easily carried 125,000 sheep, which would have been the approximate average sized animal. Since there were no more than 25,000 species of land animals there would have been enough room in an arch ½ the size of the one built. The window was no doubt up so that they had to gaze towards the heavens to see light.
4. Vs. 17 **The means to destroy the earth**: “*I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth*”. The flood to destroy every living thing could only be accomplished by a worldwide flood and not just a local flood as some say.

In 1 Peter 3:20-21 we are told that “*the ark…is an antitype of that which now saves us…the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*” In other words the ark is a symbol or type of Jesus as there are **six similarities of Jesus with the ark**.

1. Vs. 14 “*ark of gopherwood…cover it inside and outside with pitch*.” The word gopher and the word pitch form the Hebrew word for atonement. So the idea was to cover the ark in redemptive wood which was able to withstand the storms of life and thus save from death those aboard. Just as Jesus safely carries us through God’s rightful judgment taking upon himself the storms of His wrath.
2. Vs. 14 “*make rooms in the ark*”. The word rooms is the word used for nest which suggests far more than just a place to ride out a storm but a place of rest and comfort. So too is our Jesus!
3. Vs. 15 One person noted that the exact proportions of the ark are the same as that of a full-grown man. So the ark was built while the world mocked and Jesus as well is our ark as the world watch’s and mocks faith in Him.
4. Vs. 16 “*make a window for the ark.. from above*”. This was a place not where Noah and His family could look out but rather look up. So it reminds us that Jesus is the window by which we look up and see the Father.
5. Vs. 16 “*set the door of the ark in its side*.” It does not say “a door” but “***the door***”. There was not “a door of Buddha, or Mohammed”. No just one door into a place of safety and rest and it did not matter who they were they and to come into the ark the same way.
6. Vs. 16 “*make it with lower, second, and third decks*.” This reminds me that Jesus humbled himself and became a man with three decks: “body, soul and spirit” so that He would be our ark.

Vs. 18-22 God established a covenant with Noah and his family and it was His promise that saved them and the means to that promise was an ark. That’s what Heb. 11:7 reminds as we read that, “*By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household.*” God saved, God called the animals to come, verse 20.

Genesis 7:1-24

“Come into the Ark”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-10 All aboard

III. Vs. 11-24 It’s raining, it’s pouring

I. Intro.

In the seventh chapter we are still looking at the history of Noah but it is the flood and God’s preservation of Noah and his family. One hundred twenty years passed from the time that God first spoke to Noah concerning the flood and the time in which they entered the ark. During those years he raised three sons saw them marry, built a massive ship on dry land and stored all the supplies that would necessary to care for the living cargo. Whenever I think of Noah I think of Heb. 11:7 where we read “*By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household.*” It’s that “*moving with godly fear, preparing an ark*” that amazes me. One hundred twenty years after that divine warning Noah stayed obedient and faithful to God’s calling and because he did not only did he secure his salvation but that of his households as well. We can never underestimate the importance of faithful obedience to God’s call in our lives.

## II. Vs. 1-10 All aboard

Vs. 1 In chapter 6:13-22 God’s commands to Noah were general direction for building the instrument which God would use to save them. Think of this a moment, God has for us general word’s that we ought to follow:

* Obey only His word
* Worship only Him
* Love your neighbor

In our exercising obedience to those general commands we will experience ridicule from our neighbor’s, as did Noah. Live those standards and you will be labeled as religious and people will ignore you and your message. Yet God has even more specific commands for us. Follow those commands and the world that you are called to reach will do more then make fun of you!

In looking at this chapter we will see “***Three keys to salvation***”! We are not told if this was the first time in 120 years that God spoke to Noah but we do know that according to verse 4 that God spoke to Noah one week before the flood. These Words from God were absolutely essential for Noah’s salvation. Noah could have wasted the last 120 years of his life had he and his family not responded to God’s words. I mention this because a lot of folks spend their entire life build a religious ark, which may very well be capable of saving them, but in the end never personally get on board themselves. They end up drowning outside the boat they built alongside those who never picked up a board, nail or hammer a day of their lives. “***It was not building the ark that saved Noah and his family it was getting on board****!*”

1. Vs. 1a **Invitation** “*Come into the ark*”: The basis on which Noah’s as well as our salvation rests is always a personal invitation. Seven distinct times Jesus uses the same words “*Come to Me*”, four of them in the gospel of John. In the parable of the marriage feast Jesus uses the word “*invite or invited*” four times then closes with the words, “*For many are called, but few are chosen*.” The word “*come*” implies something different then the word “go” doesn’t it? When Donna says, “*Honey, will you* ***GO*** *to the store for me*?” I know I’m going by myself. But when she says, “*Honey will you* ***COME*** *to the store*?” I know that we are going together. God said, “COME and not GO” thus he was telling Noah that He was going with him! The invitation by God to Noah, is not just to save us from judgment it is rather an invitation to be with God. Folk’s it’s being in a relationship with Jesus that saves us not just saying some words! There are a great many who want just to be saved from judgment but want nothing to do with a relationship with God!

Vs. 2-3 Noah is given further instructions of what God had told him concerning the animals he was to bring in 6:19. The word “*clean*” means pure so God brings into mankind the idea of things that are pure and things that are impure. The fact that Noah was told that there would be seven of the clean animals tells us that there were three pairs for breeding after the ark landed and one that was to be sacrificed as we shall see in 8:20. The reproduction of the “clean” animals would have reproduced six times faster than that of the unclean animals, six is the number of man! So comparing the seven of the clean animals with that of only 1 pair of the unclean reveals to us that God wanted mankind to be in constant reminder that the death of one innocent is the only way man is cleansed from his sin.

Vs. 3 Notice the words “*to keep the species alive on the face of all the earth*.” Noah was given the assurance of salvation, thus the purpose of the ark was to keep seed alive the assurance of life after destruction of the world and all that dwelled upon it.

Vs. 4 Noah is given seven days of final preparation before the rain was going to come down for 40 days and nights. It appears that God had already established a seven-day week, which was initiated during His creation and has continued even after the flood. A worldwide rain lasting 40 days and nights would be impossible in today’s meteorological conditions. The only explanation that is logical is found in chapter 1:6 a “space to separate *the waters above* from the waters below.” The lush tropical plant life was uprooted and re-deposited into coal and oil beds. The fossil records bear witness to a universal flood as we see in fossils mainly those non-mobile plants and animals trapped in the geological column.

Vs. 5-6 Noah’s defining quality is that of obedience, he did not just “do” he “***did all***”! Simply put the words “*did according to all that the LORD*” is the summation of Noah’s 120 years of doing what the Lord commanded. Now based upon Noah’s obedience he was the logical choice of being the new head of the human race. But even that habitual practice of obedience to God’s word did not eradicate the possibility of sin in his life, as we shall see in chapter 9:20-21. So we need continually as Paul said to the Romans 6:11, “*reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*”

1. Vs. 7 **Obedient response** “*So Noah, .. went into the ark*”: God’s invitation of salvation always requires an obedient response of the one invited. Just as there is no salvation in just knowing of the means or instrument of salvation neither is there salvation in just hearing the invitation. You may have the winning lottery ticket but without you obediently responding to how you claim your prize you do not receive your reward. Imagine how foolish Noah and his family looked as they obediently responded to God’s invitation to board the ark. What would have happened if peer pressure would have caused them to not respond? Perhaps Noah and his family were all wearing gold or silver “ark’s” around their necks and had “ark” bumper stickers faceted upon their carts, would that have been enough to save them? Folk’s grace only saves those who by faith respond! There is not one person ever born that can say they **CAN** NOT believe, instead all they can say is they **WILL** NOT believe.

 Vs. 8-10 Noah did not have to gather the animals into the ark as it says that “*two by two they went into the ark to Noah*”. No doubt these were all young animals, which had not yet reached the age where by they would reproduce. It is thought that this included many of the extinct species including that of the dinosaurs, many of which became extinct a few 1000 years after the flood. Also it is believed that prior to the flood the animals did not hibernate and that during the flood they perhaps went into hibernation based upon the change of climate. Now can you imagine what those around the ark thought as they saw these animals lining up two by two entering Noah’s land boat? Why even the animals were witnessing to the unbelieving world.

**III. Vs. 11-24 It’s raining, it’s pouring**

Vs. 11 The exact date of the beginning of the flood was known and recorded. Based upon the Jewish calendar it is a bit difficult to determine the exact month as they had two different ways of counting which was the first month. One way was to start in spring the other in fall. I personally like the fall date as it would coincide with the as yet unfulfilled Jewish feast of trumpets which I believe will be on our near when the church will be taken away ushering in the great tribulation the second great judgment of those upon the earth.

 Based upon verses 24 and 8:4 the ark floated for exactly 5 months and landed upon Mount Ararat. We are also given a twofold cause for the flood:

1. Vs. 11a “*day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up*”: You will recall that the pre-flood hydrological cycle was made up of sub terrain reservoirs that were all connected. So most likely God caused great volcanic underwater eruptions to occur which released molten rock as well as great amounts of ground water; this changed the landmass raising some while lowering others.
2. Vs. 11b “*the windows of heaven were opened*.”: The large amounts of volcanic eruptions would have placed large amounts of dust and gases into the earth atmosphere which would have impregnated the water canopy causing it to do what had not been done prior, rain.

The order of this verse makes sense as it would have produced more than enough water to cover the whole earth.

Vs. 13-16 The order of entrance into the ark is given us:

1. On the first of the week prior to any sign of impending danger Noah and his family enter.
2. Soon after God brought the animals two by two and this continued on throughout the week until we are told “*all flesh went in as God had commanded*”.
3. Vs. 16b **God’s seal of assurance** “*the LORD shut him in*”: The last key to our salvation is seen in God’s sealing Noah and his family in the ark. So Noah was **not only safe he was secure**. We are told in Eph. 1:13-14 that “*Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of his glory.*” Notice that this seal of assurance comes after the invitation and our obedient response.

Vs. 17 Based upon the estimate of the size and load of the ark as soon as the water rose to 270 feet the ark would have become buoyant and started to float. The same waters that destroyed all that was outside the ark carried Noah along in safety. In Colo. 3:3 says that “*you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God*.” To those who were drowning on the outside it looked as though Noah and those in the ark had died as well but they were just hidden in the ark of God as we are in Jesus.

Vs. 18-24 The word “*prevailed*” appears four times in these verses and means to “*overwhelm mightily*”. Earth and plant life was washed out of place, or as Peter says in 2 Peter 3:6 “*the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water*.” It covered the high hills of the earth by over 22 feet, which would include Mt. Ararat at 17,000 feet. Thus all flesh died (as many as 10 trillion of mankind) as well as all of the animal kingdom. This is supported by geological column, which shows the deposits of the flood in fossils not evolving as evolutionist’s claim, but completely scattered randomly. This continual flood last 5 months before it began to subside.

Genesis 8:1-22

“Resting in the ark of grace”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-12 The wind and a bird

III. Vs. 13-22 From the ark to the altar

I. Intro.

If you add up the genealogical records in the Bible you can estimate that the flood took place around 2500-3500 BC, or around 4,300 years ago. Now the evolutionist will balk at this because of the so-called scientific dating methods. There are three primary methods used for determining age:

1. *Carbon dating*: Which is based upon carbon that is found in all living things. There are two types of carbon one that occurs naturally C12 and one that forms in conjunction with the nitrogen in the atmosphere called C14. The amount of C12 stays the same after a living thing dies but the amount of C14 changes as it reverts back to nitrogen. So the theory goes that a really smart evolutionist would be able to measure the amount of C14 and C12 the specimen contains and based upon how much C14 is left they would be able to date it. There are several problems with this:
* How long does it take for there to be no more C14 left? (*Some estimate 50,000 years*). So how are they going to be able to test this seeing none lives that long?
* There are too many factors that can change how much C14 a specimen may have. Plants don’t take in as much C14 as other living things thus it would take less to revert back to nitrogen, making the plant look older than it actually was. The amounts of C12 in the atmosphere have not always been consistent.

There are two other ways of dating things:

1. *Radiometric*: Which attempts to measure the amount of radioactive minerals in rocks. Most fossils do not contain radioactive minerals so they simply take volcanic rocks around where the fossils are found. Again all this falls upon guessing how long it took elements to change without ever taking in consideration how the rock was formed to begin with.
2. *K-Ar*: Tests the amount of potassium-argon: Here again they have some problems because the *evolutionists has to assume three things*:
3. How much of the elements were in the rocks when they hardened.
4. At what rate did the decay of the elements take place and was it always at the same rate.
5. The amount of elements being measured never increased or decreased by any other way.

The problem is obvious the evolutionists were not there, nor have they tested every rock on the planet. But to their chagrin they did go to Mt. Saint Helen’s right after it erupted in the early 80’s to sample the rocks that were created by the eruption. The tests came back that the rocks that were formed in the 80’s were anywhere from 340,000 to 2.8 million years old and it seems as if it only happened 34 years ago!

 *There is one other way to date something*:

1. *Eyewitness account*: That’s where as person actually witnessed the time in which something happened and wrote it down. “*I’m telling you I watched Mt. Saint Helen’s erupt and that rock is only 34 years old!*” “*No, way man we’ve run our tests and it’s 2.8 million years old!*” So whom are you going to believe?

II. Vs. 1-12 The wind and a bird

Vs. 1a Before any change in Noah’s situation it says, “*God remembered Noah*”. This phrase does not mean that God turned on the water in the world and had forgot that He had left it running then suddenly remembered Noah was in the tub. The Hebrew phrase does not deal with the act of remembering but rather with the manor or way in which God remembers. And we are told in 6:8 that “*Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD*.” The important thing here is to see that God remembered Noah in grace. God deals with the inward heart before He ever deal with the outward surroundings.

Vs. 1b-2 We are given two ways in which God caused the waters to subside:

1. “*God made a wind to pass over the earth*.” It seems as though before the flood and while the ark was floating around that there were no big winds. Here God caused a warm drying wind to help in evaporation. The “*wind*” in scripture is used as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The first activity that was used in changing Noah’s condition was that of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit always changes the heart of a person before it ever changes the condition in which the heart finds it’s self in.
2. Vs. 2 The earth’s crust collapsed into the subterranean reservoir’s which now make up the present day ocean basins, some up to two miles in depth. Again the order of this is interesting in light of the activity of the wind or Holy Spirit. You can’t turn back the waters of our old nature prior to first having the Holy Spirit change our hearts.

Vs. 3 The effects of the two is that the “*waters receded continually*.” The earth was not flooded overnight neither would it again by dry in one day. It seems that the effects of the change were quite noticeable in about 5 months of consistent work of the wind. Change is always gradual it’s never all the sudden like.

Vs. 4-5 Some calculate that Noah most likely felt the ground some 40 days before they began to see it. This is true spiritually with us as well as we need to wait patiently to “see” with our eyes what our heart already tells us is true in Christ! The specific month and day of the arks resting is given us. Exactly five months after the flood began the ark stood fast in the mountains of Ararat, which is modern day Turkey in the Armenian Mountain range. Mount Ararat at 17,000 feet is most likely where it landed but it would be another 2 ½ month’s (verse 5) before the tops of the mountains were seen.

Notice what else took place on this same date in history: The 7th month of the Hebrew civil calendar was later, in Ex. 12:2, changed to the first month in the religious calendar in honor of the Passover. We know according to the gospels that Jesus and His disciples ate the Passover meal on the 14th and three days later on the 17th He rose from the dead. So Jesus would rise from the dead on the exact same day as the ark rested on Mt. Ararat, which by the way means “holy ground”. New life was about to begin for Noah and his family and the only way this new life was going to be accomplished was if it was resting upon the power of the resurrection.

Vs. 6 Noah waited forty days before he opens the window to see. Think of this he has been bobbing around for 5 months and stuck fast for 40 days, the world and all in it are gone yet there is no sign of curiosity. This is extreme obedience, as Noah knew the Lord was working but was willing to wait and see until the Lord guided him to do so.

Vs. 7-12 The raven is listed as one of the unclean birds unfit to eat by the Jewish people because it is a scavenger that eats primarily on dead things. Noah releases the raven first knowing that it would continue to fly back and forth feeding on the dead carcasses before there was dry land. The raven would give Noah an indication of how high the water level was, as it would land upon the dead floating things in the water.

The dove was a clean animal as far as the Jew’s were concerned, as it required plant life and a place to roost before it could survive. The dove could find no place to roost came back to the ark each day and Noah would take it in. After another seven days the dove goes out and this time with fresh picked olive branch in its beak. The olive tree is extremely hardy and can grow in the most barren of situations. The dove showed Noah that the earth was again beginning to produce vegetation and would soon be ready to support life. The seeds and cuttings were no doubt in sediments left by the flood and began to sprout as soon as the water subsided and sun light hit the soil. Experiments have shown that seeds will sprout even after months of submersion in salt water.

What a great picture we have here in the raven and the dove:

1. The raven: Represents the flesh as it finds its rest and sustenance on dead and decaying things of the former life in the world. There is no value on the things that it rests and feeds on neither will it find comfort in the ark of Christ.
2. The dove: Represents our new nature in Christ, which only finds its rest in Jesus. The fruit of this new life in Christ is always fresh peace (*olive branch*) on our lips as well as in our hearts.

III. Vs. 13-22 From the ark to the altar

Vs. 13 Noah spent his 600th year in the ark but at the beginning of his 601st year of life was a brand new start. The old life had perished under the water and the new life was going to have to be lived in complete dependence upon God.

Vs. 14-16 On the first day of the month Noah removed the covering of the ark and saw that the surface of the ground was dry but it was not until the 27th day of the 2nd month that God told Noah to leave the ark. God did not want Noah and his family to get stuck in the mud and mire of the former life, instead God wanted them to wait until there was a firm foundation that they could stand upon.

 Also it was the same word that told Noah to “*come*” into the ark that now tells him to go out of it. It is important that we not only follow God’s word when we seek to avoid His judgment but when we seek His blessing as well. Noah obeyed equally wanting to be right where God wanted him to be.

Vs. 16-19 Serves as Noah’s commissioning service, kind of like Jesus’ words to His disciples in Matt. 28:19 to go and make disciples. Noah was going to be like Abraham living alone in the land of promise 1 year and 10 days later God assured him that His grace was not just upon the ark but upon a cleaned earth. Thus the same blessed command to be fruitful and multiply and repopulate the earth. All the animals can be traced to that which at one time were in the ark.

Vs. 20-22 Noah sacrificed 1/7th of his flocks and herds in an act faith and praise to God. So that the first thing that Noah does outside the Ark is praise and thank God. Noah recognizes God’s governing hand that had guided him and his family safely to dry land. *They owed their lives not to good shipbuilding, favorable stars and the right alignment of the planets but rather to the proper worship of God.* Noah not only offered sacrificially but he also offered by faith, instead of waiting until he had built up his flocks to sufficient number he proves his trust in God by offering out of the gross and not the net! By offering of the clean animals he offers what is best as well as in obedience.

Vs. 21-22 God responds to Noah offering of:

* Sacrifice
* Faith
* Best
* Obedience

By smelling “*the savior of rest*” literally in the Hebrew, God accept Noah’s worship showing that life in the new world was to be based upon faith in an saving atonement pointing to the permanent atonement we would have in Jesus. God promises several things based upon Noah’s praise offering:

1. “*Never again curse the ground for man's sake*”: God had cursed the ground following Adam’s fall to bring man into greater dependence upon God yet man refused to trust in his creator. The garden curse was to still be in effect but no further cures upon the earth was to be tacked on. Because, “*although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth*”, God knows man is a sinner by nature and there is no amount of struggle or judgment that can change his wicked heart to a good heart, the only way man will change is by knowing God’s goodness and grace. Paul in Rom. 2:4 tells us that, “*the goodness of God leads you to repentance*”.
2. “*Nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done*”: God would never again bring a worldwide cataclysm upon the earth. God is showing us that not even in His revealing His power over the external world and all life can change a sinful heart. It is only when a sinful heart responds to a God whose eyes are full of grace and truth that they will have a changed heart.
* *Greater dependence upon God can make a man respond correctly for his own benefit but it has no power to change the heart*.
* *Outward judgments may terrify and even temporarily restrain the sinful heart but they cannot change it*.

There is nothing that God can do for a sinful heart but to love it in spite of it! It is only God’s love that can break a sinful heart! So the earth with man in it will remain in a state of probation sustaining life while revealing His love for sinful man. These words of verse 22 proclaim His consistent love and grace to a world that has a terminal heart condition 7 concludes with “*Shall not cease*.”

Genesis 9:1-29

“Living under the skies of grace”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-17 Eight provisions of God’s covenant

III. Vs. 18-29 Noah and son’s

I. Intro.

In the first 17 verses this chapter we have recorded the first of the major covenants mentioned in the OT. The four are Noah’s, Abraham’s, Israel’s, & David’s. All of them point in some way to yet another one. The final covenant is mentioned in the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31-34, which was fulfilled by Jesus at His death and is remembered in communion. Paul speaks of its superiority over the other covenants specifically the one God made with Israel. This final agreement is simply known as the “New Covenant.”

At the time Noah’s covenant was given it effected only eight people but as we shall see God in verse 12 its statues are intended to be for “*perpetual generations*” and it is even sealed with an “*everlasting sign*.” The word “covenant” means “*a coming together*” and in human terms implies one person giving conditions by which an agreement can be reached with another person. Supposedly both parties need to agree to the terms which are to be mutually beneficial to each other. When the other person is the Lord as in the case of the five I’ve just mentioned the words refers to God making a pledge without expectations of a return, in other words it is based upon His character and nature.

II. Vs. 1-17 Eight provisions of God’s covenant

Before we look at these eight provisions look at what God said to Noah in 8:21 “*although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth*”. Whatever we discover about these eight provisions it is obvious that the covenant was founded upon God’s grace. God establishes an agreement in grace because of what he has to work with, “you and I”. Paul writes to the Roman’s in 8:3 “*For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin:*” We are sinners distorted from what God had originally designed. So every provision of grace is designed to show us that we are sinners who are hopelessly lost, the only way back to God cannot be based upon self-effort but rather upon God’s abundant goodness.

1. 6:18 The first was established 121 years prior where the intent of God was to preserve mankind through Noah.
2. 8:21-22 The second is found in the principals of uniformity which say that the basic laws of nature after the flood continue in a cycle with only slight variations which allows for uniform function. All science is based upon the predictability of these laws of nature and it is understanding these laws that has made living in this world dependable.
3. Vs. 1 Blessing: The words “*God blessed Noah*” is the same word that when speaks of man “*getting down on his knees*”. God did well towards Noah and He grants Noah and his family two things:
4. “*Be fruitful and multiply*”: A great increase of family to enjoy. Noah was to be the head of a new race of men.
5. “*And fill the earth*”: God sets the whole world before Noah and tells him to enjoy it fill it up.
6. Vs. 2 Mankind’s rule over the animal kingdom by fear: Prior to the fall Adam had dominion over the rest of creation by love. What Adam ruled by love Noah and his descendants would rule by fear. God had caused the animals to come to Noah for protection but now they would flee Noah. Two reasons for this:
7. Safety: God assures Noah and his descendant’s safety among the new world by putting the fear of his and his family into creatures that were far more powerful then mankind.
8. Example: The animals would serve as a living example to Noah and his descendants that something has happened in creation. Even though mankind is still Lord of the jungle he is so by way of fear and not love.
9. Vs. 3 Sustenance: Most of the plant life had been destroyed in the flood along with the erosion of soil so God enlarges what mankind can eat. Mankind was originally vegetarians but because of the changes upon the earth God widens his food source to everything that lives and only that which dies of natural death is excluded. There are three reasons I can see for this change in diet:
10. Practically there was a greater need for protein because of the depletion of soils and plant life.
11. To show us that we are dependent creatures and not masters of our own fate.
12. To show us that we have no life of our own, it is borrowed from others who have sacrificed their life for ours. God designs this in order to remind us that our life comes at the expense of the death of another.
13. The inclusion of animals into the food source showed a large difference between the animal kingdom and mankind. Evolutionary as well as polytheistic cultures have blurred these lines and instead of having beef for dinner would invite a cow for supper.
14. Vs. 4 Sacredness of all life: As long as blood is flowing in an animal’s veins they could not eat it. God wanted mankind to know that all life is His property and not mans. Only God imparts life therefore man has no right to take life apart from God granting him that right. This is an established scientific fact as Lev. 17:11 says “*the life of the flesh is in the blood*”. Remember Jesus’ words in Matt. 10:29 concerning the sparrows that “*not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father.*”
15. Vs. 5 Sanctity of human life: The life of man is sacred to God and only He has the right to take it. Our lives and the lives of other belong to God, not man. All human life was off limits be that the unborn, suffering, or societies unwanted. It does not matter to God if the killing was done as murder, retribution, suicide, abortion, or euthanasia all of them usurp God’s sovereign right over His creation which He alone reins in justice and power. So based upon this we see:
16. Vs. 6 God instituting civil government: When societies fail to carry out God’s plan’s for humanity which includes capital punishment then violence permeates all of society as human life is devalued.
17. The establishment of capital punishment: Administered judicially by man, its establishment is not to deter crime but rather to remind all of society the value that God places on all life. That is not to say that mercy could not be applied in certain circumstances where sincere repentance and restitution was made. God’s point to all of mankind is that all human life is precious to Him and to emphasize that God warrants the taken of that which is the most precious to Him as well as man “*their own life*” if a person takes another’s life.
18. Vs. 7 Here we are given the growth of population or if you will “sanctity of human life” from a positive side “*be fruitful and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth*”. God wanted mankind to live in close relationship with one another. Mankind is prone to think of themselves in terms as basically good when they are isolated for other humans.

Vs. 8-11 We are told four things about this covenant:

1. Vs. 8 “*God spoke to Noah*”: God was the initiator of the agreement. What makes this stand out is that compared to all the other religions, God is the One who seeks to have a relationship with His creation instead of man who seeks to have a relationship with God.
2. Vs. 8-17 Seven times in these verses we are told that God will, establish, look on or set. This tells us who the author is. He did not say*, “Hey let’s make a deal, put something on paper and I’ll sign it!*”
3. Vs. 10 The scope of the agreement is universal as it is to include all lower forms of life as well as man.
4. Vs. 11 The purpose of the covenant is to insure that all life will never again be cut off by way of a flood. God is saying that He will not again judge by water because water is accumulative, it permits time for people to think and make decisions. But in the case of un-repentive man it also affords them the illusion of thinking that they are safe. So when God judges again He will do so by fire that will hit sudden and is obvious to all.
5. Vs. 12-17 The eighth and final provision of God’s covenant is seen in a sign given of assurance. The rainbow which is produced when small droplets of water are hit by rays of light. So we have a beautiful spectrum of color of God’s grace against the dark skies of human sin. God reminds us in the rainbow that His love breaks through even the darkest of mankind’s sin. Where ever there is rain there is always a rainbow you just have to be in the right spot to see it and from heaven you will always see a rainbow for He always remembers us in His glorious grace.

III. Vs. 18-29 Noah and son’s

If we could have just stopped in verse 17 all would have appeared to be well in the new world with Noah and sons. A “*new world*” a great agreement in God’s grace what could go wrong? This section puts to rest the foolish thought that in our hearts we are basically good.

* God has just judged and irradiated the open sin that lie in the human heart and started over in a man whom He poured out His grace upon.
* God has just blessed righteous Noah with an agreement, which provided everything.

If any man after the fall could have said, “*Thanks God I’ll take it from here!*” it would have been Noah. But instead what this section records is that right on the heels of God’s judgment and blessing Noah fails. As great as God’s work is it not did change the flesh of Noah. The old nature is incurable the only treatment listed for it is to “*reckon it to be dead*”. As God had spoken to Cain “*sin lies at the door*.”

Vs. 18-19 This is the third time these names of Noah and his sons appear and it seems as though Noah did not have any more children and that the worlds repopulating was through these six people. Their names mean:

1. Shem = Name or Renown
2. Ham = Warm or Hot
3. Japheth = Enlarge or beautiful posterity

We tend to categorize nationalities based upon certain physical features but *God looks not on what a person looks like on the outside but rather what they look like on the inside*! And based upon 4:16 and 4:26 there are only two nationalities:

* Those that “*went out from the presence of the LORD*”
* Those that “*began to call on the name of the LORD*”

Three points based upon these two verses:

1. All present people groups are descendants of Noah’s three sons and their wives. From the gene pool of these 6 individuals all the human variations have occurred. The worlds 5 billion population developed from these six. Do the math it would take only around 4000 years with an average growth rate of a ½ % or an average of only 2.5 children per family, which is ¼th the present rate, to achieve this!
2. The order given us in the names is Shem, Ham and Japheth, which is not according to the Hebrew order of listing the names chronologically. In fact if you look up the names throughout scripture when they appear together they appear no other way. Yet according to Gen. 10:21 Japheth was the oldest then Shem and finally Ham. This tells us that the order throughout all of scripture is always Prophetical.
3. In verse 18 we are told only Ham’s fourth and youngest son Canaan who was the father of the Canaanites. This is the Bible’s way of getting our attention as this was the family line that was inhabiting the land of Canaan when Israel came out of Egypt and it was because of their wickedness and perversion that God told Israel to wipe them out in order to preserve society. Ham’s perversion effected his son’s future.

 Vs. 20-24 We are given five pieces of information in these verses:

1. Vs. 20 Noah has a new job: For 120 years he was a ship builder now he becomes a farmer. God often calls us to new vocations in which we are to use are gifts to His glory. Perhaps part of Noah’s down fall was the failure to realize that just because he was no longer an “*evangelistic ship builder*” he was still to use God’s gifts in planting a new harvest.
2. Vs. 21 The drunkenness of Noah: This is the first mention of wine in scripture but it is certain that they had fermented drink prior to the flood. Fermentation has to do with the decay and death not with atmospheric conditions. In fact Jesus declared in Matt. 24:38 that the generation prior to the flood was eating and “*drinking*”. Noah who had remained sober in a drunken world was the first to get drunk in a sober world. The NT does not excuse Noah but there is no mention of his failure past this verse in the Bible. Ezek. 14:14, 20 puts him with Daniel, and Job as the pure of the pure of people. What do we learn from this?
3. Failure whether willful or not always has consequences.
4. Past victories do not insure present victories.
5. Personal failure does not limit God’s ability to love, forgive and restore.
6. Vs. 21 He became uncovered in his tent: The Hebrew word is the same word used by

Pagan nations to strip bare their captives to shame them. This would indicate that Noah’s nakedness was a deliberate act caused by his drunkenness. So these two sins have been linked throughout history as a person loses their natural inhibitions and conscious. The amazing thing to me is how God’s grace as far as the Bible is concerned cover Noah’s uncovered failure.

1. Vs. 22 The perversion of Ham: In Lev 18:6 as well as here the Jews interpret the phrase “*saw the nakedness*” to mean to “*look with pleasure and delight on his father's nakedness*” as meaning sexual perversion. One Jewish commentary on this passage says that he taught the public to live as man had done prior to the flood and he invited his brothers into the same sin.
2. Vs. 23-24 The respect shown by Shem and Japheth: Here we see that sin literally covers a multitude of sins. Restoration is always the aim of confronting ones sin. Noah had found grace in the eyes of the Lord awoke to find that he and his youngest son had sinned. Folk’s no matter how God may have used you in the past there is a daily need to put off the old man and to be renewed in the Spirit of our mind. (Eph. 4:22-24)

Vs. 25 Notice that the sin of Ham has its Prophetical implication not so much to Ham as it does to Ham’s youngest son Canaan. God gives Noah insight into how Ham’s tolerance for perversion would impact his youngest child. The phrase “*servant of servants*” is found nowhere else in the Bible and it does not mean slave of slaves but rather “steward”. The idea is that they would have a superiority over resources in the physical and material realm. The nations that came from Canaan include the empires of Samaria, Phoenicia, Egypt Ethiopia and many in the Asian nations. All of which have produced explorers, cultivators, builders, navigators and warriors.

Vs. 26 Shem is associated with the true worship of God and with this that God’s Son would be born into this race. From his descendants the Semitic nations have emerged Hebrews, Arabs, Assyrian’s, and Persian’s. All of these people groups became very religious and most of them were monotheistic.

Vs. 27 Japheth was not only enlarged geographically but also educationally as from him would come Greeks, Romans, Aryans, Europeans and Indians in which many of the thinkers of the world have come from. Most of the western half of the world come from Japheth. The phrase “*And may he dwell in the tents of Shem*” is quite prophetical as from Shem came Judaism and the proper worship of God yet through the birth of their Messiah Jesus we have come to dwell in their tents. What’s interesting to me is that the synoptic gospels are written with these three sons of Noah in mind:

* Matt. Is written with the Semitic people in mind
* Mark is written for the steward Ham as it is practical
* Luke is written for the gentile Japheth

Vs. 28-29 Noah lived 950 years, 20 more than Adam but 19 less then Methuselah and preached 350 years more to his descendants. He saw two worlds and according to Hebrews was an heir of yet another world that He saw by faith. We Christians are like Noah as well as we have seen two worlds and are according to Hebrews 11:10 “*waiting for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*”

Genesis 10:1-32

“Redeemed out of every tribe, tongue, people and nation”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-5 Japheth and sons

III. Vs. 6-14 Ham and sons

IV. Vs. 15-20 Canaan and sons

V. Vs. 21-32 Shem and sons

I. Intro.

What is given to us in this chapter has been commonly called the table of nations and has led one leading archaeologist to proclaim it as an “*astonishingly accurate document*”. It seems that Shem, the middle son of Noah, under took the task of listing the 70 nations that came from his two brothers and himself.

* Vs. 2-5 Fourteen from Japheth
* Vs. 6-20 Thirty from Ham (Vs. 15-20 *includes his youngest son’s Canaan’s children*)
* Vs. 21-31 Twenty six from Shem

Verse 20 tells us that the listing was “*according to their families, according to their languages, in their lands and in their nations*” which suggests that each family was given its own language as they were dispersed at the tower of Babel. The Bible does not categorize mankind into “*races*” instead where people are concerned God sees only “tribe, tongue, people and nation”. The concept of race comes from evolutionary thinking in which mankind is divided into sub-species, which are in a state of evolving into a new species. *Racism,* comes from evolutionary thinking something clearly seen in Hitler’s Germany.

II. Vs. 1-5 Japheth and sons

Vs. 1 This marks the end of the flood and the beginning of the repopulating of the earth written by those who were eyewitnesses of the events. This story appears in varying forms in some 300 other ancient cultures.

Vs. 2 This is the shortest of the genealogies yet it is the one that most of us belong to here in the U.S. Folks called ethnologists do the study of people groups and they look at people’s last names in an attempt to trace them back. The challenging thing for them is the spelling of the names as you probably are aware that endings and prefixes are often added or deleted. So they look instead for the names having the same basic root word to determine their origin.

 Japheth according to verse 21 was the eldest of Noah’s living descendants and had seven sons but only two of them are traced for us. These seven sons split off from each other some settling in Europe the other in India. Historically they both trace their heritage back to the same ancestor. The Greeks call him “Iaptos” pronounced Japetos and he is in many of the ancient legends of Greece. To the Aryan Indian people he was known as Iyapeti and they have one of those 300 flood accounts that quite similar to the Bible’s version. In their story the hero has three sons the oldest is Iyapeti the other two were named Sharma and C’harma (Shem and Ham) and C’harma was cursed when he laughed at his father when he got drunk.

1. Go’-mer: From this name over time the word Gaul, Gallic and Germany came from. Perhaps you will remember the letter of Paul titled Galatians it too comes from Gomer. The Irish or Celtic as well as those from Spain, France and Britain owe their ancestry to old Gomer. Which means a lot of us are part Gomer!
2. Maw-gogue: This people group is mentioned in Ezekiel 38:6 as the people of where Gog is the prince. In Revelation they are identified as people from the Four Corners of the earth. “The place of Gog” as the name means is most likely part of the former USSR specifically the area of Georgia but could of include any area above the Caspian Sea.
3. Maw-dah’-ee: From him came the empire known as the Medes, which is modern day Iran. It is from this area that the book of Esther takes place after the fall of Babylon as the Medes and the Persians became the world power.
4. Yaw-vawn: He is identified with Ionia, which is translated elsewhere as Greece.
5. Too-bal’: He is usually linked with Muskovi or modern Moscow and so I is thought they he settled in modern day Ukraine or somewhere in Eastern Europe.
6. Meh’-shech: He is the ancestor that I referred to above that settled into modern day Moscow.
7. Tee-reh-yaw’: He seems to have settled in the Aegean Sea area perhaps around ancient Troy in modern day Turkey.

Vs. 3 Gomer has three sons:

1. Ash-ken-az’: You might remember this name as being associated with German Jews, as the Jews called Germany by this name. In reality the name has more to do with those that settled the regions of Armenia, Scandinavia and Saxon.
2. Ree-fath: Some believe that the word Europe comes from his name at any rate they settled the area known as Pontus in central Europe.
3. To-gar-maw: This name is associated with the Turks and Armenian peoples. They eventually migrated further north into Germany, which owes its name to this ancestor.

Verses 4-5 give us Japheth’s fourth son Yaw-vawn and his four sons.

1. El-ee-shaw: from this fellow we get the word Hellenes, which is used to describe Greece. So this descendant went with his dad and settled this area.
2. Tar-sheesh’: Now you will recall this name, as it is associated with the area that Jonah fled too. It is usually used in connection with those people that traveled by sea such as the Phoenicians and their cites of Northern Africa who latter sailed and settled Spain.
3. Kit-tim: Is another name for Cyprus and is possibly preserved in the word Macedonia by the Adriatic Sea. So again you most likely have a case of further migration.
4. Do-daw-neem: This name is associated with Rhodes and the Dardanelles off the coast of Turkey and then perhaps migrated to France, as the ancient name for it was Rhodanus which is associated with this name.

Vs. 5 This verse give us a little insight as it tells us that the islands and coastlands form which the first Europeans came from were divided according to their ability to speak a common language. This tells us two things:

1. Shem who most likely wrote this did so after the dispersion at Babel as we are told in 11:2 where God confused the languages. Thus the languages were divided according to family lines.
2. The migration of families happened because of the inability to communicate with others. Thus the distinct physical characteristics common with different nationalities was set in order because of this.

III. Vs. 6-14 Ham and sons

The four sons of Ham are listed for us:

1. Koosh: Which is the same as Kish and is translated as Ethiopia and Southern Arabia, which almost meet at the tip of the Red Sea.
2. Mits-rah’-yim: This is the Hebrew word for Egypt and is known as the land of Ham.
3. Poot: This is commonly called the country of Libya, which is just west of Egypt in Northern Africa.
4. Canaan: He settled in the Land that God would give to Israel and from him came those dreaded Canaanites, which we will look at in verses 15-19.

Vs. 7-12 Here we are given the six sons of Koosh as well as a mention of two sons from his forth son Ra-maw’, Sheb-aw and Ded-awn. Finally inverse 8-12 the focus is going to be on Nim-rode’ the youngest son of Koosh.

Vs. 7 It seems that the first five sons of Koosh:

Seb-aw’, Hav-ee-law, Sab-taw’, Rah-maw, and Sab-tek-aw’ all settled in Arabia and then latter Seb-aw’ migrated into modern Sudan (underneath Egypt in Africa) as the ancient name is derived from his name. Rah-maw’s two sons Sheb-aw & Ded-awn were evidently well known Arabians in the days of Abraham as two of his grandsons after his second wife Keturah were named after them.

Vs. 8-12 Nim-rode’ was Koosh’s six son and his names means, “*let us rebel*” and appears to have fit his name well. The phrase “a mighty one on the earth” literally is “*a hunter of souls of men*”. His legend as at the first great emperor is preserved throughout many ancient sites in Iraq and it appears that after his death he was made into a god and worshiped as Marduk. His reputation was as a “mighty hunter” and its meaning is that of extreme wickedness, some think that his reputation grew from hunting dinosaurs which threatened the human population and that he did a good service but it went to his head. Thus he was worshipped based upon his works which is always what is behind false religion. He began his kingdom at Babel in Iraq but it stretched all the way to Sumeria. He built cities in Assyria (Iran) called Nineveh. People of Resen listed here later migrated to northern Italy.

Vs. 13-14 The names of the seven sons of Mits-rah’-yim are given us:

Loo-deem, An-an-meem, Leh-haw-beem, Naf-too-kheem, Path-roo-seem & Kas-loo-kheem, all made their home in different regions of Africa accept for Kas-loo-kheem who went to dwell on the coast of modern day Israel.

IV. Vs. 15-20 Canaan and sons

Vs. 15-18 Canaan was the fourth son of Ham had two sons mentioned by name then nine just by the tribes which came from them:

1. Tsee-done’: Who founded a city mentioned 35 times in scripture located between Tyre & Beirut (Sidon) on the coast of Phoenicia in modern day Lebanon.
2. Heth: Who was the father of the Hittites who ruled in Asia Minor for over 800 years and latter migrated eastward into China where they were known as Khittae or Cathay. The similarities of Hittites and Mongols have long been noted by archaeologists.

Vs. 16-18 The other nine tribes:

Yeb-oo-site’, Em-o-rite, Grir-gaw-shite’, Khiv-vite, Ar-kite, See-nite, Ar-vaw-dite, Tse-aw-rite and Kham-aw-thite inhabited the land that God would give to Israel and were generally know as Canaanites. The only exception is with the See-nite’s which like their brother Heth seem to have been part of populating China as the word comes from his name.

 It is interesting that the Canaanites are said have “dispersed” or literally “spread about”. Again the descendants of Canaan included the Mongol’s whom eventually through Asia and across the Bering Strait across a land bridge into North and then South America becoming the native peoples of our hemisphere. So much for the Mormon position which links the Indians with that of Shem and the lost tribes of Israel. Folk’s Christians have a faith that is founded upon fact, Mormons having feelings based upon fiction!

Vs. 19-20 The general regional boundaries of their habitations are given and with no surprise included Sodom and Gomorrah. Notice again the fact that the families were according to their languages before they were dispersed into different lands to become different nations.

V. Vs. 21-32 Shem and sons

Vs. 21 Shem’s is distinguished by his relationship to his third son’s grandchild Ay’-ber. It is from his name that we get the word Hebrew from. Abraham through whom all the families of the earth would be blessed (12:3) is six generations beyond Ay’-ber.

Vs. 22-24 Here we are given the five sons of Shem and we shall focus on the family from the third son, Ar-pak-shad.

1. Ay-lawm: He was the father of the Elamites who would later merge with the Medes to form the Medo-Persian Empire of Southern Mesopotamia.
2. Ash-shoor: This is where the name Assyria comes from. It was from this area that Nim-rode’ over took this area and conquered it and built cities there.
3. Ar-pak-shad: Who we will look at more fully in a moment.
4. Lood: He was the father of the Lydian’s.
5. Arawm: Was the father of the Aramaean’s or Syrians from which the Aramaic language came from. This was the language in which some parts including Daniel was written in.

Vs. 23 Arawm has four sons: Uwts, Khool, Gheh’-ther and Mash. Uwts was from an area that later on Job came from (Job 1:1)

Vs. 24 Ar-pak-shad has a son Sheh’-lakh and he was the father of Ay-ber from whom Jesus would one day come forth.

Vs. 25 Ay-ber, who was from the same generation as Nim-rode’, has two sons: Peh’leg and Yok-tawn.

During Peh’leg time we are told that the earth became divided. This is was the time when God confused the languages 11:7.

Vs. 26-32 Yok-tawn has 13 sons who settled where we are told that the boundaries were all within the Arabian Peninsula.

Genesis 11:1-32

“All in the family”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-9 Together in being apart

III. Vs. 10-32 From Shem to Abram

I. Intro.

The first 11 chapters of Genesis covers a span of over 2000 years and includes five important events:

* Creation
* The fall of mankind
* The flood
* The tower of Babel
* The birth of Abram

From chapter 12 to the end of the book (chapter 50) only 350 years are covered. So as you can see we have come to the last two of the five events *“the tower of Babel and the birth of Abram*”. Thus these final two events also serve as a bridge between the first half of the book and the second half.

II. Vs. 1-9 Together in being apart

Vs. 1 There are two words used here to describe the people’s ability to communicate with each other:

1. “*One language*”: Literally that is one “lip” which refers to the manner in which they spoke. In other words they all spoke the same dialect thus the words formed universally sounded the same.
2. “*One speech*”: This refers to the stock of words or if you will their vocabulary. Simply put the words meant the same thing.

The generation after the flood spoke words that sounded & meant the same things the results of which would have led to complete unity in technology and culture, as ideas were easily communicated and could build upon each other.

Vs. 2 Their ability to communicate led them to desire to be in a place of better opportunities, thus they migrated toward the west from the east ending up in the plain of Shinar. This is a fertile valley in modern day Iraq that lies between two rivers the Tigris and Euphrates. It appears as though this area reminded them the Garden of Eden as they name the rivers after the two that existed prior to the flood.

 We know that this area was inhabited by Ham’s descendants and by this time Nimrod was the leader of the population and sought a dictatorship establishing a one-world government, so Nimrod was the first globalist. Thus in defiance to the Lord’s command to fill the earth they decided to make their permanent home there. God’s design was multiple government’s independent of each other. Acts tells that “*men were to dwell on all the face of the earth, and that they were to have determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us*.” God recognized that the greater the population center the greater dependence upon man and the less dependent upon God.

Vs. 3 Their common speech led quickly to advancements in building materials as they baked the clay into bricks using the tar for mortar. Interestingly archeologists have found ancient temples called Ziggurats in this area that have a bottom layer of unbaked bricks while the upper layers are of baked bricks. This also shows us that the intent of the people was to have a permanent dwelling structure. Now these temples or Ziggurats (stepped towers) were the prototypes of others found throughout the world after the confusion of the language, such as the ones found in Egypt, Central and South America.

Vs. 4 The blessing of a common language for the ability to exchange ideas led not towards God but away from Him. Now with the blessing of a common language notice the use of first person pronouns in verse 4, five times in this one verse we see the use of the words, *let us, we and ourselves*. *Mankind could sound the same and words meant the same but all everyone wanted to do was talk about themselves*. Common language brought with it an increased self-centeredness. Two things are mentioned as being the motive for their building project:

1. “*Come, let us build ourselves a city*”: As today cities offer the population that lives within them an easier way of life that creates mutual dependence upon each other. Commerce, culture and comfort are in greater quantity and availability. Clearly the motive was personal ease and satisfaction, although not evil in its self, it would help move people away from a need for God, which seems to be inferred in the phrase “*lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.*”
2. “*a tower whose top is in the heavens*”: These towers were obvious centers of worship and based upon the signs of the Zodiac that have been found in some of them. It appears that the goal of these religious centers were expose man to heavens mysteries without a relationship to the God of grace. It was an attempt to approach the creator through the creation based upon self-effort. Like most religions, as well as people, we don’t want to eliminate God instead we just want to be able to approach Him based upon our works and not His grace. This is further brought out in the phrase, “*let us make a name for ourselves*”. Today we would call this statement a definition of secular humanism that sees mankind as the center of the universe and his effort is what is worshipped.

These thoughts have crept into evangelical Christianity and as seen in the individual controlling God and using Him for our glory rather than us being used for His glory. The word for “name” here is the Hebrew word “Shem” and seems to suggest that the population was saying, “*that they were wanting another way to God other than the way of Shem.*”

Vs. 5 Man attempts to go up to God apart from dealing with sin and so God comes down in judgment. How proud is mankind of their achievements? They build this great structure in an attempt to bypass God the one whose span of His hand stretches over all the heavens. Our works and self-effort may impress each other but compared to God it’s just kiln-dried mud and tar!

Vs. 6 How horrible is it to see God given talents and abilities wasted upon trying to glorify self instead of the giver of those talents and abilities? God saw three things about mankind:

1. “*Indeed the people are one and they all have one language*”: God saw their unity.
2. “*and this is what they begin to do*”: He saw their creativity.
3. “*now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them*”: He saw their purpose. God gave them language which created unity, He blessed them with creativity but their purpose was to glorify themselves.

Think what society could do if only they united their creativity to achieve God’s purposes instead of their own? Think of what His Church could do if they united with their God given creativity to further His kingdom and not their own!

Vs. 7 It appears that somehow God altered the brains ability to comprehend speech upon family lines creating distinct sound and word meanings yet He did so without changing what mankind was in thought or character. The signal came into the receiver scrambled different so that only like receivers heard the same sounds. Mankind obviously could in time learn each other’s sound and word meanings but this would take time and was not universal with all of mankind. Mankind wanted to reduce his need for God and become the center of his own universe so God confused the language so that he would again have to find his dependence upon God.

Vs. 8 The very thing mankind tried to avoid came to pass, as families, except that of Nimrod, departed from Babel. It is interesting that this story appears in varying forms from different cultures including a written account on a tablet excavated at Ur.

Vs. 9 What we are told is that all they understood was that to each other the language appeared to be mixed or confused “Babel”. As a result of this the family groups migrated to different regions and became distinct cultures and ethnicity’s which got refined and changed as each migrated into new areas developing unique speech and even written language. Depending upon the migration they would need to harness the raw materials found in each area this too no doubt led to unique cultures as well as physical characteristics.

 What is interesting is to compare the confusion of language here in Genesis with that of the Pentecost in Acts 2:6-11 and what language will be in heaven.

* Here language is confused because man refused to glorify God and instead glorified himself.
* In Acts 2:6-11 God grants language to man so that mankind could hear the praise to God from man who was indwelt by Him.
* Finally in Rev. 7:9 in heaven we will see people from every tribe and tongue crying out with a loud voice praising God saying “*salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.*”

III. Vs. 10-32 From Shem to Abram

Here were are given Abram’s ancestry and background and Terah Abram’s father (11:27) no doubt wrote this. This genealogy of Abram is important for two reasons:

1. The ages of Abram’s ancestors give us great assurance as to the reliability of the Bible. You see Adam lived to at least the time of Methuselah and Methuselah lived to the time of Shem. Shem lived to the time of Jacob’s 48th year. Noah lived to the time of Abram’s 50th year. This shows us how the original truth that was written down passed on from living generation to living generation.
2. He is mentioned in 16 books of the OT and 11 in the NT. In fact 14 chapters out of the 50 here in Genesis are devoted to telling his story. Abram is one of the central figures in all the Bible and as such as we understand God’s purpose and plan for his life we will be encouraged in our own growth.

Vs. 10-26 Abram’s ancestry enables us to trace God’s heart to save a fallen race. Out of the three sons of Noah God selects one to be the seed of the women. Then out of The’-rakh’s three sons again one is selected. Noah was the 10th from Adam Abram was the 10th from Shem.

Vs. 10-13 Shem, ham and Japheth were born 100 years before the flood. Then in chapter 10:22 we were told that Shem had two other sons born before Ar-pak-shad who was born two years after the flood, so they were born right after each other.

 Ar-pak-shad, is thought by some to be another name for an area northeast of Nineveh. It is obvious that based upon the ages of this genealogy that the longevity of mankind began to steadily decline. This was no doubt based upon the climate change as well as mutations caused by inbreeding and a more difficult life style. Eventually we are told in Ps. 90: 10 that mankind’s average life span was 70 years.

Vs. 14-26

Ay’-ber: Is thought to mean “the man from across” because he was from the other side of the Euphrates.

Peh’-leg: This is where we see that the human life span drops almost in ½ from what it had been the generation prior. It was at his time that the languages were divided. Shem lived 600 years, then after him only 3 lived to over 400 years. Four lived to over 200 years and one lived only to 148. Yet still in Abram’s time there would have been over 10 million upon the earth.

Reh-oo’: His name means friend or delight.

Ser-oog’: His name means “vine shoot” and the area he is from is thought to be Mesopotamia.

Naw-khore: His name means snorting or snorer and he shares the name with his grandson through The’rakh.

Vs. 27-32 Much is made of how a person is raised in life as to which path they will follow but with Abram this has nothing to do with any excuse not to follow God.

Vs. 27-28 Covers the early history of Abram.

The’rakh: In Josh. 24:2 we are told that the “*the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River in old times; and they served other gods*.” Only 400 years had passed since the flood and even the godly line of Shem has become idol worshipers. They lived 125 miles from Babylon and excavations in this region have uncovered a culture that worshipped the moon god Sin. After Haran dies it seems that The’rakh desires to leave the land as well as we shall see that Haran’s son Lot will follow them. Ur was a prosperous city and archaeologists have uncovered a vast library, which has thousands of clay tablets suggesting that the ancient world was quite literate.

Vs. 29-32 The phrase “to take a wife” means to get married and Abram marries his ½ sister whose name “Saw-rah’ee” means princess. Naw-khore marries his niece Haw-rawn’s first daughter Mil-caw’ who is the grandmother of Isaac’s wife Rebekah. Saw-rah’ee’s barrenness is mentioned here as it will play an important part in the story of latter chapters.

Naw-khore and Mil-caw’ stay behind in Ur but in chapter 24:10 they too will have moved. Abram and his father travel 600 miles and stop for a time where his father disobeys the Lord according to Acts 7:4 Stephen says that The’rakh dies before Abram leaves for Canaan yet 12:4 of Genesis says that Abram left when he was 75 which was 130 years before his father died. The answer is found in the truth that disobedience to the Lord left The’rakh dead spiritually so Abram left him and followed the Lord. So 267 years since the confusion of languages and already perhaps as many as 300 million were populating the earth and establishing their cultures.

Genesis 12:1-9

“I will bless you”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-9 A walk of life

I. Intro.

The focus, is upon Abram from this chapter through chapter 25. He is mentioned 260 times in the Bible and ten of those times his name is mentioned in connection with faith. Paul wrote to the Roman’s (4:13, 16) that “*the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.*” Then in verses 16 Paul continues by saying; “*that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all*” So Abram’s life of faith becomes an example of how we ought to live in Christ.

II. Vs. 1-9 A walk of life

Vs. 1 “*The LORD had said to Abram*:” 420 years had passed since we were told in chapter 9 that God spoke to Noah and now we see God again calling out to a mankind through a servant named Abram. Steven, in his message before the Sanhedrin said that, “*The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said to him, 'Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.' "Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell*.” Abram’s father Terah was 70 years old when Abram was born and Abram was 75 when he departed Haran to go to Canaan that makes Terah 145 when Abram left Haran. Based upon Steven’s words God’s call came to Abram “*before he dwelt in Haran*”, he then left with his father perhaps after Abram’s brother Haran died and moved up from Ur near the Persian gulf to the city of Haran, all of which is in Iraq. Steven says that Abram’s departure was after his father Terah died, yet 11:32 says that Terah dies at the age of 205. Which means Terah would not die until another 130 years. Terah’s name means “*delay*” and the city of Haran means “*parched and barren*”. We cannot be sure how long Abram stayed with his father in Haran but we can say that “*his delay left him parched and barren*!” We are not told if Abram had two calls or just the one that took time for Abram to fully surrender and leave his father who was hindering the work which God had for him.

Notice the threefold call to Abram

The words “*Get out*” are literally “*Go for yourself*” which implies that God’s call of separation was intended to benefit Abram. Too often we see God’s call separating us as a penalty upon our freedom instead a pathway to blessing! God’s way is the best way and coming away from the world is the surest way to be blessed. The way the author of Hebrews puts it in 12:1 “*let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us*.” There is a threefold progression of separation from the things of the world that God calls Abram from but you will also see threefold blessing to what God calls Abram too. The point for us is that God never calls away from something that He does not call us to something better.

1. “*Out of your country*” National: This was the place of Abram’s birth it was his national identity, yet God was calling Abram away from his national identity. Much of what we think of as Christian is our western cultural experience. Our call is not to be American Christians it is to be Christian Americans! Abram’s identity was to be found in his faith in the Lord not in what or how they worshipped their god or gods. Much of the church growth trends are from the secular business world and marketing tricks to attract consumers and not the word of God.
2. “*From your family*” Cultural: God’s call included being called away from the culture that made up the area in which Abram was from. There are a great many things that are cultural expressions from where we are from. Now not all of these are bad but not all fit within the confines of Christianity. Halloween is a cultural phenomenon in our society that is something that we ought not to carry over into Christianity. The same might go as well with what we read, watch and listen too.
3. “*And from your father's house*”: Family We are called ought of our families as well. This has to do with what is our chief affection. Jesus said in Luke 14:26 “*If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.*” Jesus uses the word “hate” to show a comparison of how much greater our love for Him ought to be compared with our love of our families.

Vs. 2-3 Notice the words, “*I will, make you, bless you, make your, you shall be*. ” These words too us that promises of this covenant were not going to be based upon what Abram may or may not be but rather upon God’s grace. Paul reminds Timothy in 2 Tim. 2:*13 “If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.*”

Threefold blessing to what God calls Abram

1. “*I will make you a great nation*” Nation: God calls him out of a nation but in so doing calls him into becoming a great nation. The nation Abram came out of was idolatrous but God was promising to make from Abram’s obedience a nation that would trust only the true God.
2. “*I will bless you*” Culture: The culture was a curse now it would be a cure. All that made up society that was sick would become that which would heal. James 2:23 comments about Abram by saying, “*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. And he was called the friend of God*.”
3. “*And make your name great*” Family: Abram had been part of a family now he was to be the head of a new family, the family of faith. Both Jew and gentile look to Abram as our father. He left his father’s name, Abram “*exalted father*”, and God will give him a new name Abraham “*father of a multitude*”.

Trusting God is a threefold blessing

1. “*And you shall be a blessing*” Nation: In Abram’s new nation he was not just to be the object of God’s blessing he was to be the instrument of it as well. Abram’s life was to be an example to us that those who are blessed will know it because they will bless others.
2. “*I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you*” Culture: Abram’s cause was going to be the Lord’s cause so however the world responded to Abram was either going to be a blessing to them or a woe.
3. “*And in you all the families of the earth shall be blesse*d” Family: Gal 3:9 says, “*So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham*.” We are now of the same family of faith as Abram was.

Vs. 4-7 Trusting in the Lord word as seen in this covenant can be seen in three specific changes within Abram.

1. Vs. 4 Confidence: Abram took God at His word without hesitation or questioning. Folks the reality is that obedience without confidence leads to hesitation and doubt. That is what the author of Hebrews tells us in 11:6 “*without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*”
2. Vs. 5-6 Consistency: Abram trusted the Lord even though the land of promise was still occupied by the Canaanites. The fact that he did not enter the land direct and that the land was not cleared of its occupants did not deter Abrams trust in God’s word. A lot of the time we will only move when the Lord has all the ducks in a row. Abram’s faith was not conditional upon his seeing the right circumstances or situations to determine his trust. Abram did not look at past blessing or struggles to guide his trust. What I like about this is that this place was known by landmarks, (*place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh*). You see though the right circumstances may not have been in place the land was still very real. This was not “*Gee I hope this will happen!*” Rather it is already mine! The place was in between Mount Gerizzim and Mount Ebel and would later become a place of refuge, it is here that Joshua would gather the nation to hear his farewell speech.
3. Vs. 7 Consecration: God supplies what Abram already believed was his by faith. You see the Lord allows Abram to see what his faith had to be tested by. What’s amazing is that as far as taking possession of the land the only piece of land that Abram would own was the burial plot for his wife, yet his future descendants would take possession of what Abram already believed was his. Abram builds an altar, to worship God. God reveals what our faith grasps without seeing we will have the same response as Abram, sacrifice, worship, communion.

Vs. 8 Abram pitched a tent and not built a house. Abram understood that his life was to be a pilgrimage. He was looking for what we are told in Heb. 11:10 was a “*city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God*.” A wise person once said, “*The true believer will never have his heaven in a bank; he will always have his bank in heaven.*” Abram was not willing to settle for anything less so he traveled never owning what was already his by faith. The fact is there are several stages in the life of many of us Christians. God starts out with a MAN, then this man has a vision which produces a MISSION, as the mission catches on it becomes a MOVEMENT, lastly as the movement continues there is always an attempt to erect a MONUMENT.

 Abram moved to “*Bethel* and *Ai*” which literally mean “*house of God* and *heap of stones*”. Abram dwelt between the house of God and a heap of stones, which I suggest, is exactly where all such people of faith live! We have admired Abram’s trust in obeying God’s call on his life and the blessings that were his because of it but how did he maintain his day to day walk with God by faith?

Vs. 8-9 Four things Abram did every time he moved with God.

1. “*He pitched his tent*”: Wherever the Lord brought Abram, he made it his home. The man bloomed where he was planted. All too often God’s children allow what they don’t know to keep us from what we do know. Even in his flexibility with the Lord when he stopped he still pitched his tent.
2. “*Built an altar to the LORD*”: Five times in scripture his name is associated with the word altar. No matter where God would take Abram he always brought with him communion with the Lord. Abram made sure that no matter where the Lord took him there was always a place where sacrifice, worship and communion what take place in his life on a regular basis.
3. “*Called on the name of the LORD*”: The word “called” is literally the word preached or proclaimed. Young’s literal translation puts it “*he preached in the name of Jehovah*”. Everywhere Abram was brought by the Lord he used it as an opportunity to proclaim the name of the Lord.
4. “*Journeyed going on*”: Literally he “pulled up stakes”. Abram was never so set that he could not be moved from where he pitched his tent. He had a tight hold on the Lord but a lose one upon his own life as he was just passing through.

Genesis 12:10-20

“Abram went down to Egypt”

I. Intro.

III. Vs. 10-20 A journey to the dark side

I. Intro.

Though ten times in the NT we read that Abram’s strength lie in his trust in God, it was not something that he always had or always exhibited. Faith is not a super natural inner conviction that only certain folks can muster it is the simple trust in a God who promises. These verses reveal the reason why we so often fail in this simple trust in a God who promises. Abram chooses to trust the outward circumstances above God’s word and character. He does this in spite of the fact that he had once trusted this same God of promises to take from Ur to a promised land to be blessed. But now in light of new circumstances he cannot trust God to accomplish what He promised.

III. Vs. 10-20 A journey to the dark side

This is the first recorded test for Abram after he followed God to the land of the promise. You see it’s easy to get all pumped up at a Bible study or a Church service about God’s promises, but a whole other things when we are in a place where what God told us would be a blessing don’t line up with our circumstances. What Abram does not yet realize is the famine in the land is not of the lack of food or water but rather the famine was the lack of his trust in the word of God. The danger Abram faced is the same one that we do; it is when we confuse the peace and calm of outward circumstances with the peace and calm of God’s presence. The test comes when all is going contrary to His promises. We will do one of two things:

* Pack up and leave
* Cling to Him

Vs. 10 “*Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine was severe in the land.*” There are five things about this decision to leave the land of promise and go to Egypt:

1. “*went down to Egypt*”: This was a logical choice, a natural conclusion to a difficult situation. Perhaps Abram had even ran into some travelers who indicated to him that there was food in Egypt. Abram could have reasoned that making this decision made better sense than staying did and in not going to Egypt he was jeopardizing God’s promises.
2. “*the famine was severe*”: Abram did not make a hasty decision, this was not Abram bailing out as soon as the first day of drought. This reveals that Abram clearly understood that God’s promises were true and that he tried to hang in there for as long as he felt he could.
3. “*to dwell there*”: The word “*dwell or sojourn*” means that Abram was only looking for a temporary stay and not a permanent home. Abram was not saying, “*Hey I’ve given this God promised-land a try but there’re better opportunities in Egypt so I’m out of here*.” Abram saw his move to Egypt as only a means to get back to where he knew God wanted him.
4. Vs. 12 reveals that Abram understood the possible consequences if he left where God had called him to be. He had thought about this decision enough to think of possible solutions to the challenges he might face.
5. As great as those factors are in making a good logical decision there is *one thing* that is absolutely necessary for Abram to have before he went. It was what he had clearly heard when he left Ur and Haran, *God’s word to go*! Yet that is the one thing that is missing in this story. Abram:
* Weighed his oppositions
* Waited on the circumstances
* Resolved to make his stay only temporary to meet his pressing need
* Yet, he did not hear from the Lord to go!

Egypt in scripture is always a typology of the world and it always represents compromise. No matter how difficult the situation and how logical the choice the place of faith is always better than the pathway to Egypt.

Abram went wrong at the same place we do, the lack of trusting in God to do what he promised always outweighs the difficulty of going to the world for help. We must never say to ourselves, “*I’ve got to do something on my own to get out of this situation even if it means turning to the world for help*!” Every event in life will do one of two things:

* Draw towards trust in God and His word
* Draw us away from trusting His word

The answer will not be found in weighing our options, choosing what is logical, figuring out what we need to do to survive. It is in asking ourselves, “*What is God telling me to do*?” We must stick to what He has called us to do no matter what, even if things get worse and trust God that He will bring food from ravens if necessary.

Vs. 11 It seems that Abram did not make this suggestion to Sarai until they got close to Egypt. Abram’s reasoning centers around his wife’s beauty. Among the scrolls that they found in the Dead Sea was one that contained this section of scripture and a commentary that confirmed that she was a very attractive woman.

Two things were changed the moment Abram chose not to trust the Lord:

1. Vs. 12 “*When the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me*”: Lost his sense of security in the Lord. *Abram had traveled from Ur to Haran and from Haran to Canaan with no mention of concern over his life*. Yet now he moves upon his own logical choice and he fears his life won’t be preserved. Abram left the land of promises to because he was afraid his life wasn’t going to be preserved and now Abram has to face the same fear that he was running from, “*God’s ability to sustain his life in spite of the circumstances*”. The only difference is the set of circumstances was now self-inflicted. God will still show that He is able to sustain his life without Abram’s wisdom or help.
2. Vs. 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*”: A change of faith. Abram is going to be later called the “*father of those who believe by faith*” He loses his sense of security in the Lord and it is replaced by his sense of security in himself. It has been suggested that Abram LOST his faith or had a LACK of faith but Abram did not lose his faith or exhibit a lack of faith; he simply CHANGED his faith! He still had trust and this trust was no less lacking, but the object of his trust was different. The object of his trust had been in God’s word now it was in his ability and ingenuity. Prior to this he placed his life in God’s control now he placed his life in his own control. In doing this he placed himself into a greater trial then had he just remained in the land of promise and trusted God to provide. God does not need our help to fulfill His promises to us! Who do you trust more yourself or God? The theologically correct answer is God but if you’re like me the practical truth is yourself!

Vs. 14-20 Five reasons not to change our faith from God to ourselves.

1. Vs. 14-15 The very thing that you fear might happen will: You can’t out maneuver the Lord’s will. Abram thought out his plan in a worst case scenario made provisions and trusted thoroughly in his plan as he went to Egypt didn’t he.
2. Vs. 16 The price of your self-trust is greater than you think: Perhaps in the afternoon when Abram’s plan began after Pharaoh saw Sarai he thought, “*Man this is working out better than I thought*!” Abram was not only not dead he was being blessed materially (*sheep, oxen, camels, male and female donkeys, male and female servants*). Abram has told a ½ truth (Sarai was his ½ sister) and through this compromise the outcome was material blessing. A lot of times we see an abundance of what we think is good that comes out of compromise and think that God blesses us because of our compromise but the truth is God blesses us in spite of us not because of us. That was in the afternoon but at night as Sarai went in to Pharaoh’s chambers, Abram bedded down alone. He could have slept with the sheep or the camels but he would not be sleeping with Sarai. Abram had all the stuff but the price was that his wife was not with him. *The truth is when we compromise with the world we may get what we wanted but the price is always greater then we can afford*. Abram received female servants and no doubt that included Hagar whom we are told in 16:1 was Sarai handmaiden from Egypt. The price is not only greater then you can afford you may have to continue to pace throughout generations.
3. Vs. 17 God will be faithful in spite of our faithlessness: Abram did not trust the Lord and instead chose to trust himself and the outcome is that God saves Abram from himself. The interesting thing is that this is the same faithfulness to His promise that he would have shown Abram in the land of promise that Abram thought he could not have trusted.
4. Vs. 18-19 The world is watching to see if you live what you say you believe: The wording here by Pharaoh is literally, “*What a way for you to treat me!*” The Lord will use the ungodly idolatrous king to rebuke his chosen servant. Pharaoh asked “Why?” This would force Abram to examine his change of trust from the God. Perhaps Abram could hear the voice of the Lord through Pharaoh as the Lord was asking Abram, “*Why did you not trust Me*?”
5. Vs. 20 You will end up right back where you should of stayed all along: The word “*sent*” is the word escorted. In 13:3-4 we read that “*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*.” What we sought to avoid by trusting in ourselves becomes known to all and we still have to go back and learn to trust in only the Lord! So Abram went back into the land of famine, escorted by Pharaoh to have to trust the Lord.

Genesis 13:1-18

“The tale of two men”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-4 The road to restoration

III. Vs. 5-18 Living in the land of vision and fellowship

I. Intro.

In the 13th chapter we see the tale of two men and what they learned in Egypt. One man went to Egypt (the world) and lost his taste for it, the other gained an appetite for it. In looking at Abram and his nephew Lot we see the same two choices we face when we are confronted by the things of the world.

II. Vs. 1-4 The road to restoration

Vs. 1 It says here that Abram “*went up*” from Egypt not only is the right term geographically it is the right term spiritually as well. Egypt is of a much lower elevation then the land of promise, Abram had thought of Egypt as a step up from a land of famine and instead found that it was a step down. But he returned a better man then the one he was when he left and all it cast him was humility. Abram, by his actions the hardest phrase to say in every human language “*I was wrong*!” We see that three things came out of Egypt and every one of them was effected by its experience with the world.

1. “*His wife*”: Lack of trust. Abram had almost lost her because of his choice to turn to the world for help. It appears that this effected Sarai in chapter 16:2 as she does not trust the Lord to fulfill His promise of a child and suggests Abram to “*go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her*.”
2. “*All that he had*”: Years of strife. In verse 7 we are told that Abram’s and Lot’s herdsmen had strife over that which was gained in Egypt, then latter on Hagar and Sarai have strife over Ishmael. Nothing gained in the world has any value and all it will eventually bring is strife!
3. “*And Lot with him*”: Tainted experience. Lot goes to show us that you can take a man out of Egypt (*the world*) but it is a far different story when it comes to getting the world out of him. Everything the world touches seems to become tainted by the experience.

Vs. 2 Even Abram seems to have difficulties because of his experience with the world. It says that Abram was “*very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold*.” The Hebrew is literally “*heavy with wealth*”. This is the first mention of personal wealth in the Bible yet we are told in verse 6-7 that it was because of this great personal wealth that they could not dwell together. There is no righteousness in riches, neither is there any piety in poverty. The fact remains that in dealing with what God has blessed or what we have gained through our encounter with the world we will be faced with only two decisions:

* We will possess our possessions: If this is the case then they will be used as a tool to further God’s kingdom.
* Or our possessions will possess us: If this is a case they will become a tomb which will hold us is death.

Vs. 3-4 “*And he went on his journey*”! The word “*journey*” literally means stages. Abram had walked off the path and ended up in the world (Egypt) but now he gets back on the right road and leads him to Bethel (*The house of God*), where he had pitched his tent to begin with. We are all prone to do that which Abram did, wonder off the path of grace, but the way back is easy you must go back to the house of God which is where we always where we left. In this picture of Abram returning with have a clear Biblical picture of restoration: The three “R’s” of restoration

1. Receive: Vs. 3 Abram “*journey from the South as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai*”. Abram had to go back to the place where had dwelt in the beginning which was in between *Bethel and Ai*. These two areas are very suggestive as Bethel is “*house of God*” and Ai means “*ruin*”! Abram needed to receive a fresh dose in the place where he could see his former place of “ruin” as well as his future home of hope. The first step in restoration is when we receive a new the place where we appreciate what God has done for us.
2. Return: Vs. 4 Abram returned “*to the place of the altar which he had made there at first.*” *Restoration not only is about receiving a new an appreciation for what God had done on our behalf it also involves two acts that we need to return too*:
3. Surrender:
4. Worship:

The altar always involves those two ingredients which are the same at the beginning of our relationship with the Lord as in our daily walk a continual “*return*” to the altar which we made at first.

1. Renew: Vs. 4 Abram renewed his trust in the Lord when he “*called on the name of the LORD*.” The third aspect of restoration is a renewed trust in God and dependence upon Him for our lives. This only follows receiving a fresh glimpse Who He is and what He has done and a return to surrender and worship.

III. Vs. 5-18 Living in the land of vision and fellowship

Vs. 5 In verse 2 we were told that Abram was “*very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold*”, but here we see that Lot too was blessed with flocks, herds and tents. In 2 Peter 2:7 we are told that “*Lot was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked*” Lot chose to be near enough to their filthy conduct as to be oppressed. The thing about Lot is that he looks an awful “lot” like us at times as he put the things of the world ahead of the things of God and escaped the judgment having everything that he thought as precious destroyed.

Vs. 6-7 These two verses point out two sad realities:

1. Vs. 6 “*Their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together*.” What separates fellowship between believers is nothing more than stuff! Jesus would say to His disciples in John 13:*25 “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*” All too often our love for our possessions is greater than our love for one another and we end up not being able to dwell together.
2. Vs. 7 “*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 love of possessions led to separation which effected their witness to the world. The truth is that many in the world will never listen to what we have to say on account of how we behave.

Vs. 8-9 It is Abram who initiates peace, not Lot. Abram being the older of the two had the right to choose yet he had learned that it was better to have what the Lord wanted to give him even if it was famine then all the riches of the world. This time Abram chooses to trust the Lord in the same situation that he had just trusted in himself, lesson learned. Abram gives Lot the choice even though first pick was his, why? Because Abram understood that you can never out give God! The separation from Abram’s point of view had nothing to do with stuff and everything to do with “*surrender, worship and trust*!” Abram had come back in the place where there was no strife thus he could say to Lot, “*You choose what you want and I will take what is left!*” Abram worried more about those things that would separate fellowship between the Lord and himself then the things of the world that would establish his position.

Vs. 10-11 It is said that the eyes of a person are the window to their soul, then this verse reveals what was in Lots soul. We read that he, “*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*.” The wealth of Egypt had polluted him to where all he wanted was worldly advantage. Folks, it’s the choices we make that reveals our hearts condition not the words we speak. Lots judgment of the plain of Jordan was based upon outward signs and not the character of the people who dwelt there. In Ezek 16:49-50 the prophet speaks of the character of the people saying; “*This was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me*.” Notice as well that Lot compares two separate things:

* Like the garden of the LORD
* Like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar

I propose to you that Lot confused the counterfeit blessings of the world with that of the true blessings of God’s grace. In so doing Lot moved away from the land of promise, with the altar, and moved east towards the world even to the very gate of Sodom.

Vs. 12-13 Here we are told of the differing fates of these two men:

* Abram dwells in the land of promise
* Lot moves further and further away from the Lord and closer and closer to the world and the sin of Sodom. By the 19th chapter Lot is sitting as a judge in the city gates and his family is living in sin city. In fact it appears that this is where Lot finds his wife. It must not of been too long before he began to see the true character of the people in which there were not 10 righteous (18:32). Yet with that said his hunger for prosperity over ran his conscious and one step further leads to another and another.

Vs 14-18 While Lot is moving further and further away from the Lord Abram is moving closer to the Lord and being blessed in so doing. Look at the difference between Lot and Abram:

1. “*Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan*”
2. “*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*.” In other words the Lord lifted Abrams eyes to see what was his by faith which he could only see by looking at the Lord.

If we make the Lord our vision He will lift up our eyes and give us His vision. If our eyes are on Him then all that He has for us will be ours and our descendants after ours. Which will include plans that that are so numerous they can’t be numbered.

In verse 17 as Abram is told to “*walk in the land through its length and its width*”. Abram is called to enjoy that which he will only possess by faith. This reminds me of Paul’s words to the Ephesians (1:3) “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ*”. “Has blessed us with every spiritual blessing” but they are in the heavenly places in Christ! So only in Christ do we get to walk around and enjoy them!

 In verse 18 the word “*Mamre*” means vision and the word “*Hebron*” means fellowship. Abram make his home, built an altar in a place where surrender and worship would take place regularly. He made his choice to live in the place of “VISION” and “FELLOWSHIP”. What could be greater than trusting the Lord in the place of where He grants us greater vision & fellowship?

Genesis 14:1-24

“War of the world’s”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-16 Lot’s liberation army

III. Vs. 17-24 More blessed to give

I. Intro.

In the 12th through the 14th chapters of Genesis we are given four distractions:

1. 12:10 Adverse circumstances
2. 13:6-7 Personal relationships
3. 14:2 World dilemmas
4. 14:21-13 Success

Though Abram did not do so well in “*adverse circumstances*” he does much better in the distraction of “*personal relationships*” as we saw last week in verse 20 he ends living in the place of vision and fellowship. In fact in verse 13 he is still living in the same location. This is not the case with Lot, these two men’s reaction to these distractions reveal a pattern that we can use to examine our own lives.

1. Lot: Compromise with the world will lead to further compromise, which will lead to captivity.
2. Abram: Consistent communion with the Lord will prepare him for any new distraction he may face daily.

II. Vs. 1-16 Lot’s liberation army

Vs. 1-4 Abram, who no doubt wrote this section with Moses adding editorial notes, took great care in listing the combatants and where they were from. Using our league of nations that was recorded for us in chapter 10 reveals some interesting things about these kings and their kingdoms.

1. Vs. 1 These kings all come from the region that was settled by the first world leader, Nimrod. They were all from the descendants of Ham, Shem and Japheth forming a powerful four-nation confederation led by Chedorlaomer (verse 4). The context appears to suggest that the five kings of verse 2 had some sort of agreement that left them subject to the four kings of verse 1 and after 12 years they want out of their agreement and decide to rebel.
2. Vs. 2 These five kings all settled in modern day Israel from the Dead Sea to Mount Hermon. It is interesting to note what the names of the King of Sodom and Gomorrah meant in Hebrew (Beh-rah’ means wickedness and Beer-shah’ means iniquity). Geographically it appears that perhaps the reason for the conflict was trade related as it would of been necessary for Chedorlaomer and his four nation confederation to pass through the five nations to trade with Egypt.

Vs. 3 The initial battle takes place in the valley of Sid-deem’ which means, “cultivated fields”. Evidently it was extremely fruitful as it was this area that Lot lifted up his eyes and saw as being well watered like the garden of the Lord (13:10). It appears that most of these kings with their kingdoms were supported by the fruitfulness of this area. Moses adds the editorial note concerning the change of this region by saying “that is the Salt Sea”. Those that study such things have determined that the Southern end of the Dead Sea is where these cites most likely were at.

Vs. 4-7 It took one year for the four kingdoms to come down and squelch the rebellion of the five kings according to these two verses. The start of the war was when Chedorlaomer lead his army against Raw-faw’-eem in the area of Ash-ter-oth’ Kar-nah’-yim. Geographically this would be the first areas that Chedorlaomer and his army would go through but what is of interest here is that the word Raw-faw’-eem is the word “*giants*” of which we saw prior to the flood in 6:1-4 and Zoo-zeem means “*powerful ones*”. Both of these tribes were from the central coastal regions of Israel. So it again appears as though these tribes were genetically altered through drug related demon possession all were related to what later on would be called the sons of Anak. The area of Ash-ter-oth’ Kar-nah’-yim where they were located is also of significance as it literally means “*the place of two horns*” which was associated with the moon goddess Astarte. The tribe of Ay-meem, which means “*terrors*”, is associated with the plain east of Jordan.

 From there they attacked the Kho-rites “*cave dwellers or troglodytes*” and they were known as a leading tribe of the ancient Middle East. They then turn back and come against Mish-pawt’ which means the “fountain of judgment” later called Kaw-dashe; again Moses edits what the area is now known as. This area was between the Dead Sea and Mount Hor, which lie on the boarder of the Southern tip of Judah and Edom. There Chedorlaomer and his army attacked the people of this are which again Moses inserts would be later inhabited by the Am-aw-lay-kites’ and the Em-o-rites’.

Vs. 8-11The five Kings mentioned here which all dwelt in and around the Dead Sea waited to the last minute to join the battle even though it was their rebellion that brought on the attack. Perhaps they had hoped that other would do there fighting for them? When the five kingdoms finally join the fight they are quickly over taken and some choose to jump into the asphalt pits while others fled to the mountains. This area prior to the judgment of God was called the Asphalt Sea. The rout was on and to the victor goes the spoils.

Vs. 12-16 So far the conflict does not seem to effect Abram and Lot in fact it seems as though the world has rid it’s self of the immoral Sodom and Gomorrah. We see three separate characters in this story:

* The world
* The carnal believer, Lot
* The person of faith, Abram

The world will war against its self continually and it will often drag into its fight the carnal believer who will become a captive. Yet the person of faith must battle both even while they fight each other. Abram doesn’t join the fight until Lot is held captive. Even though his captivity to the world happened long before he is taken as spoil, Abram is no obligated to join the fight but not for either side but only for the Lord's side.

 Lot chooses to live as close to the prosperity of the world as he could and his lust for more has caused him to become its captive laterally. There you have the main difference between the carnal believer and the person of faith:

* Abram chooses to be dwell separate from the world and separated to the Lord
* Lot chooses to dwell separate from the Lord and separated unto the world

Vs. 13-16 None of the world’s battles seems to find its way into the life of Abram until he hears of the news of the captivity of Lot. Yet Abram shows himself as no pacifist but rather a man of bravery. Several things to note:

1. Vs. 13 No matter what was going on in the world around him Abram stayed in consistent fellowship and vision with the Lord. He was actively waiting on the Lord for directions from Him and not moving out on emotions.
2. Vs. 14 The Lord had prepared him by blessing him with 318 men that were armed and ready.
3. Vs. 14 He was ready to go any distance (120 miles) he needed to help his captive brother.
4. Vs. 15 He had planned for the attack dividing his forces as to attack from in front as well as from behind. Abram is relentless in this as he chases them all the way to Damascus.
5. Vs. 16 Abram’s goal was that of restoration of his captive brother.

There is no mention of Lot thanking the Lord or of any repentance. Amazingly Lot seems to just go back to life in Sodom as it had always been. Here is what we see; the best place to prepare for battle is at the altar of the Lord as it is only there that you will have the fellowship and vision necessary to be victorious.

III. Vs. 17-24 More blessed to give

Vs. 17 Some object saying that the King of Sodom Beh-rah’ died in the asphalt pits in verse 10 but it does not say that he died specifically but rather that some died generally. At any rate the King of Sodom goes out to meet Abram in the area where the Ay-meem of verse 5 had dwelt describe for us a plane east of the Jordan called the kings valley. This becomes the toughest test of the character of Abram, “how will he handle the success and praise of men?

Vs. 18-20 We come now to one of the most mysterious individuals in the Bible “Mal-kee-tsch’-dek”, in fact it is better to list what we don’t know about him:

* We don’t know his ancestry
* We don’t know how he came to be in the land of promise
* We don’t know how he became a true worshiper of God in a land that worshipped Idols

He first enters the scene in the book of “beginnings” where all the above is always brought up. Thus his identity is somewhat hard to pin down. Usually when the text does not give you the information necessary to determine an interpretation you would go outside the immediate text to search other scriptures that may give us insight. This is one of the only cases I know of where in so doing the picture actually becomes cloudier.

1. Ps. 110:4 “*The LORD has sworn And will not relent, "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek*.” This is an obvious reference by King David about Jesus.
2. Heb. 5:6, 10, 6:20, 7:1-21
3. Heb. 5:6 “As He also says in another place: “*You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek*”.
4. Heb. 5:10 “*called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek*”
5. Heb. 6:20 “*where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek*.”

In these three references the author calls our attention to Psalm 110: 4 where David calls the Lord a priest forever after the priestly order of Melchizedek.

1. Heb. 7:1-21 Gives us several clues concerning this mystery man:
2. 7:2 “*king of righteousness*," *and then also king of Salem, meaning*, "*king of peace*”: So namely this man was a King of “*righteousness*” and the king of “*peace*”.
3. 7:3 “*without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually*.” Two interesting points about this verse:

FIRST: In the Levitical priesthood, selection was based entirely upon heredity and not personal qualifications. Simply put you had to be able to show that your ancestry went all the way back to Aaron. The priest was often more concerned with his ancestry then he was with personal holiness. So here when we are told that Melchizedek was “*without genealogy*” thus it speaks to that of parentage and origin as being irrelevant for the priesthood. The only clue given as too his identity is perhaps the reference to the fact that he was made like the Son of God in regards to his priesthood.

Second: 7:1 says that Melchizedek was “*priest of the Most High God*” then in verse 3 we were told that he “*remained a priest continually*”. Yet in 7:2 we were told that he was a “*king of righteousness* and *the king of peace*”. This was forbidden by the Jews for a man to be both King and priest. In fact there are only two people that fit this template, Melchizedek and Jesus! In 1 Peter 2:9 based upon Jesus’ work believers “*are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light*”.

The ancestry of the priest meant that the priesthood could not last it was temporal (based upon ancestry) further more because it was based upon heredity it was an obligation not a calling! *So Melchizedek and Jesus’ kingdom and priesthood, according to Hebrews, is everlasting and based upon the character of the individual*. The fact that Jesus’ kingdom and priesthood is likened to Melchizedek’s reveals something else; that it is universal and not just national because it proceed the Levitical priesthood. This is illustrated by two facts seen in Gen. 14:

1. The fact that Melchizedek blessed Abram (the greater always blesses the lessor).
2. The father of the Hebrews willingly offers a tenth of all he had to Melchizedek. Only the priesthood was allowed to receive an offering.

This leaves only two possibilities as to his identity:

1. He is a type of Jesus; that is to say he is an example placed in scripture show the Jew’s what Messiah would be like at His first coming.
2. He is theophany (pre-incarnate appearance) of Jesus to Abram.

The evidence could suggest either or both! All we know from this passage is that he was a priest of the “Most High God” “El Elyon” or Supreme Being. In other words not a “*higher power*” but rather the “Highest Power”.

Melchizedek offers Abram the two elements of communion, perhaps he offered them in a way that looked forward to Jesus sacrifice.

* BREAD: According to John 6:50 is the symbol of life which immediately reminds us that Jesus is the *king of righteousness*. Life is always the fruit of righteousness.
* WINE: According to Psalm 104:15 is the symbol of joy, which reminds us of the fact that Jesus is also the *king of peace*. Joy is the fruit of peace.

Communion with the Lord is because of His giving us His Holy body, (bread) and the pouring out of His blood, (the wine) through which we now live in fullness of joy in Him.

Vs. 19-20 Melchizedek does two things here that are always associated with the priesthood:

1. Vs. 19 “*Blessed be Abram*”: Access to God for man. This is what we are told in 1 Peter 2:5b “*a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ*.”
2. Vs. 20 “*Blessed be God Most High*”: Proclaim the Praises of God to man. Again we are told that is what we are to do in 1 Peter 2:9 “*a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light*.”

Abram is told that his blessings come from “*Possessor of heaven and earth*”, the blessings from God are far greater than anything that could ever come from the world. Based upon the Lord’s blessing Abram he now tithes back to the Lord. So we see three principals in giving:

1. Worship not work ship! Our giving is in recognition of the fact that God first given us everything. Our giving is an act of worship!
2. A privilege not an obligation! Our giving is based upon grace and not the law. Abram’s tenth is prior to the law, in other words the concept of giving was formed in grace before it was ever seen in the law. Abram gave because he wanted too and not because he was supposed to!
3. Assets not abundance! Abram gave out of “all he had” thus his giving was sacrificial and universal in nature. That would include the three “T’s” TIME, TALENTS and TREASURES!

Vs. 21-24 There is an ancient document that was written called the code of Hammurabi that even the movies (The Mummy) has mentioned. In it mentions that the spoil becomes the right of the victor after the war, which includes people as well as goods. Thus old Bera King of Sodom tries to trick Abram wanting his subjects back so he could still be King. In the worlds eyes all that he had gained was his and Bera is trying to make some sort of allegiance with the world. Yet we see that based upon Abrams words he understood four things:

1. Vs. 22 Position: “*I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High*.” Abram had made a covenant with the Lord thus he was not his own and what he had was not his. Instead he and all he had were possessed by the Possessor of heaven and earth. Martyred missionary Jim Eliot put it this way; “*He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he can never lose!*”
2. Vs. 23a Provocation: “*I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap*.” Abram realized that the testing came in laying down what the world said was rightfully his. Success is often the avenue to our greatest temptation but Paul would say in 2 Cor. 6:10 that we ought to live as “*having nothing, and yet possessing all things.*”
3. Vs. 23b Principals: “*I will not take anything that is yours*.” Abram understood what compromise with the world would get him. He wanted the entire world to see that the blessings he had were because of the Lord and not the King of Sodom. Abram sought and received only approval from the Lord and not that, which comes from the world.
4. Vs. 23c Prize: “*Lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich*.” Abram did not take this bounty from the King of Sodom yet clearly he saw himself as rich. As far as Abram saw himself he was rich not based upon what he had but rather on Whom he knew. As James 2:23 tells us that he was “*called the friend of God*.” I mean Abram was a friend of the “*Possessor of heaven and earth*” what could any mere king give him that his friend did not already possess?

Vs. 24 The only exception Abram made was for the 318 men who were with him, he left the decision for the spoil up to them. Interesting how Abram acknowledged dependence upon the King of peace and independence from the King of the world. We see humility with the King of peace but dignity with the King of the world.

Genesis 15:1-21

“Exceeding great reward”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-6 Faith’s reward

III. Vs. 7-21 An agreement of assurance

I. Intro.

This chapter introduces a lot of firsts in scripture:

* Vs. 1 first use of the “word” in scripture
* Vs. 1 first use of the words “vision”, “fear not”, “shield” “reward” and “I am”
* Vs. 6 first mention of belief or faith
* It is also the first time that we are introduced to one of the most important doctrines in all of scripture, “justification by faith”. This doctrines, as well as this section of scripture answers the questions:
1. How can a person be declared right before a Holy God?
2. Is there a difference between how this was done in the OT and the NT?

II. Vs. 1-6 Faith’s reward

Vs. 1 This verse reveals four things to us:

1. The timing: “*After these things*”. The reference is to what had just taken place, victory, blessing and self-denial. It is easy for us to understand the need to start fresh with God after our failure but here we are given the truth that we are often in greater danger after our success then we are our defeats. When you look in the gospels at the recorded incidences of Jesus’ all night prayer sessions you will find them strangely mentioned *after* great success in Jesus’ ministry instead of before.
2. How God reveals: “*the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision*”. This is the 4th time God has come to Abram, but it is the 1st time we are told that He did so by the “Word of the Lord”. We have the method by which the Lord refreshed Abram “the Word of the Lord” in a “vision”. This word vision appears only four times and every time it appears it implies divine revelation. The Word of the Lord has come in the Bible to people in many different ways; personal appearance, audible voice, dreams, visions, angels, Holy Spirit working upon the heart making the service of the teacher or prophets words come alive. However Heb. 1:1-2a tells us that “*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son.*” When we are in need we can be refreshed by the word of the Lord.
3. Common fears: “*Do not be afraid, Abram*”. The fact that God says to Abram “Do not be afraid” indicates that he was afraid. This phrase appears in scripture 84 times. Based upon the Lord’s two assurances we have clues as what caused Abram to fear, they are the same two fears that we all have:
4. “*Shield*”: The presence of something outside our control. You have a shield to protect you from something being shot or throne at you from the outside. We all have a fear of something or someone doing something to us outside of our control. Evidently Abram feared retribution being taken upon him for his action against the four kings or perhaps in regards to not making an alliance with the King of Sodom. And God says, “*I’ve got your back!* “?
5. “*Reward*”: The absence of something good. Here the fear is not getting something that others have or not getting our fair share. To this fear God will say that He is our exceedingly great reward. The Lord handles our two fears by giving us more of Himself then we will not be paralyzed by fear instead we will be freed up to minister to others.
6. Our reward: “*I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward*”. The antidote to our fears is God Himself. We are told two ways in which He alone is our reward. Notice first he use of the phrase “*I am*” it is the first time that we have seen it in scripture but it won’t be the last. In John 8:56, 58 Jesus said, “*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad. Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.*” This is perhaps the incident that Jesus is referring too. The Lord tells Abram that He is the self-existing One who alone is perfectly able to shield us from all harm and evil. Isa. 54:17 says, “*No weapon formed against you shall prosper*”, 2 Cor. 10:4 says that, “*the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds*”. God never tells us not to be afraid that He does not give Himself as the reason not to be.

Vs. 2-3 Abram address the Lord as “*Adhonay Yahweh*” or Lord of all Supreme God which shows us that Abram is not doubting God’s power to perform that which He promised but rather his understanding of how this would be accomplished. “*What will you give me*” ought to be rendered as in one translation “*LORD All-Powerful, you have given me everything I could ask for, except children*”. God had already promised Abram twice before (12:2 and 13:16) descendants yet 10 years had passed and still there was no sound of little feet running around. By now he and Sarai were well past the age of child baring. In fact this is reflected in his words to the Lord as “*I go childless*” is literally “stripped” of children. The one that would be the heir of his entire house was Eliezer (*God is my help*). Abram questions not God’s ability but rather the way in which it’s going to be accomplished. God knows what we think and feel so it does no good to keep, those doubt to yourself tell it to Him so that He can minister to us.

Vs. 4-6 Abram speaks to God about his inability to understand how God is going to accomplish that which He promised and God answers his with a further promise not a rebuke. Even though he has told Abram three times that He will give him an heir he does so again in a fourfold manor.

1. Vs. 4 “*This one shall not be your heir*”: God tells Abram that He has not forgotten His promise
2. Vs. 4“*But one who will come*”: He reminds Abram of His original promise in 12:2, 13:15-16.
3. Vs. 4“*From your own body shall be your heir*”: He gives Abram further specific understanding of His promise so that Abram would not misunderstand what God was going to do.
4. Vs. 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*”: Finally God confirms it with an illustration showing Abram His power to perform the impossible. The God who made the heavens out of nothing but His word in power with be able to bring forth descendants from a barren womb in deed one would even be the “*bright morning star*”.

Vs. 6 The root of the word “believe” in Hebrew is where we get the word amen “believe” means, “*it is so*”. The idea here is when you believe you are saying “*it is so*” “believe” not “*may it be so*”! Simply put when we believe we are confirming our belief by a constant continual trust based upon Who he is therefore we are going to alter how we think feel and act! Faith takes God at His WORD and responds to His Word before He even performs it. The object of Abrams faith was, “in the LORD”. Because Abram said “it is so” to the Word of the Lord his saying and acting upon this was accounted to him as righteousness. This tells us that Abram had no righteousness of his own! The Bible speaks of two types of righteousness “free from sin or the act of being and doing right”.

III. Vs. 7-21 An agreement of assurance

Vs. 7-11 Right after Abram stated his complete trust in God, God now establishes an agreement with him. This agreement or covenant is not on equal terms, as Abram like us could never keep his end of the deal. So we see that it is God who:

* Promises
* Gives
* Assures

Abram did nothing to earn his rightness before God and he will do nothing in keeping the agreement instead the agreement is based completely upon God’s character. God wants Abram to understand three things about His agreement with us in verse 7:

1. “*I am the LORD*”: The agreement comes from the unchangeable God which is based upon His nature. God wants us to view His promises towards us from the perspective of Who He is in His character and nature not from the perspective of our present circumstances or situation. So He simply says, “*I am the Lord*!”
2. “*Who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans*”: Here God reminds Abram of what He had already accomplished in his life. The point is dealing with God’s faithfulness in spite of Abram’s faithlessness. “*You were a nobody living no where, going no place* and *I brought you out because of My love*!” Everything that Abram had experienced was because God had kept His promises even when Abram had not. God is the promise keeper we are the promise breakers!
3. “*To give you this land to inherit it*”: He wants Abram to know that He has a purpose and a plan for he and his descendants. It would still be another 15 years before Isaac would be born and yet He wants Abram to know that even in this long wait there is a purpose and a plan.

Vs. 8 Abram had no deed to the land in fact he had nothing to show anyone that what God said was true. All he had was God’s Word on it which was good enough for him but he desires some sort of visible pledge or guarantee. Abram did not want a sign in order to believe he wanted a sign confirming that he had believed.

Vs. 9-10 This reads more like a grocery list then it does as an answer to Abram’s request. Even though God’s promise was free to Abram based upon his faith it was very expensive to God. There were five kinds of clean animals that were accepted for sacrifice and each one of the five is to be brought here. These animals were to die and then be cut in half so that the two parties would both walk between the two halves of the sacrificed animals. The reason for the two halves was that there were two parties which were participating in the agreement. Abram had wanted a “contract” so God stoops down to earth’s level and gives Abram a contract. This conveys four things about this contract:

1. Perfect sacrifice “*Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, female goat, ram*”: These animals were to be fully mature in their sacrifice. In other words they were to be perfect.
2. Right offering: As I already said they were all considered “clean” animals. In other words the covenant had to be done with the right offering. Abram could not just bring any old animal no matter how perfect it might have been to him.
3. Within reach of all: “*a turtledove, and a young pigeon*.” Later on we will see that these offerings were seen as acceptable by the Lord on behalf of those who could not afford the others. In fact according to Luke 2:24 this is what was offered at the birth of Jesus.
4. Provided by the shedding of innocent blood: The only means of acceptance before the Lord is the shedding of innocent blood. In verse 18 it literally reads that the Lord “cut a covenant” with Abram.

Now looking over this again and you see this points to Jesus upon the cross for us!

Vs. 11-12 Birds in scripture are always a sign of opposition of the enemy. The Lord is showing Abram that as we wait for the Lord to ratify is agreement of grace we need to see that:

1. It will take time for us to see what our hearts already possess by faith
2. There will always be opposition to an agreement founded upon grace. It says “*when*” not if the vultures come down. Satan has always been opposed to the covenant of grace; he has always sought to devour God’s free offering to us. But we are to ward off the enemy, by drawing nearer the sacrifice.

There are three things on our part that will enable us to enjoy the benefits of God’s agreement of grace”

1. Faithful obedience to do exactly what God said to ratify the agreement.
2. Patiently watchful as he waited upon the Lord to fulfill His covenant.
3. Separate from the cares of the world. God caused a deep sleep to come upon him so that he would not be distracted by the things around him.

 Vs. 13-16 In verse 8 Abram had asked, “how shall I know” here God answers “know certainly”. The 400 years is most likely a rounded off number of the 430 years told us in Exodus 12:40. God tells Abram that his descendants will inherit the land some 400 years or 4 generations later. There are four parts to this prophecy:

1. Vs. 13 His descendants will go through, exile, bondage and affliction. They will have no easy time just because of the agreement of grace made with Abram. Abram could tell Isaac and Isaac could tell Jacob and Jacob would tell his 12 sons and they would tell their children, that the tribulation would not cause them to think that God was not faithful to execute His promise.
2. Vs. 14 Abram’s people will be a witness to God’s power and blessing. The nation that afflicted them will be judged, so that Abram’s people would not equate their circumstances with victory and defeat.
3. Vs. 15 Though Abram would not live to see the personal fulfillment of God’s promise he would experience it Positionally.
4. Vs. 16 God reveals to Abram the bigger picture in which he shows him that He will judge the nations that now occupy the land of promise. This shows us that God is patient and long suffering not wishing any to parish.

Vs. 17-18a God ratifying the covenant of grace with two distinct representations of Himself:

1. “*Smoking oven*”: The Hebrew word here suggests a common portable clay oven that was about two feet high looking like an inverted bowl with a hole on top. In Ex. 19:18 this represents the presence of God. Interestingly the oven was used by goldsmiths for the purpose of refining gold. It seems as though the idea here is that the purpose of God’s plans and covenant are to refine us into His image and reflection.
2. “*Burning torch*”: This reminds of Ex. 14:19-20 where we are told about the pillar of fire. It was this fire that consumed the sacrifice showing that God was satisfied with the offering.

Only God that passed through the two halves, that means that only God signed the contract, Abram never did thus the certainty of the contract was based only upon God. This speaks to the fact that it can never fail because God can never fail. One commentator put it this way “*A divine covenant is not a mutual agreement on equal terms between to parities, it is instead a Divine promise assured!*”

Vs. 18b-21 Finally God gives Abram the boundaries of the land of promise which is from the Nile to the Euphrates. The land was only for a short time realized during Solomon’s reign but it will be theirs in the future. The 10 nations listed here have all gone without a mention in the world apart from the word of God yet God will be faithful to fulfill every one of His promises to us!

Genesis 16:1-16

“Castles from mud pies”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-6 Trying to obtain promises through the flesh

III. Vs. 7-16 Drinking from the well of the One who Lives & Sees

I. Intro.

God had assured Abram that He could handle his fears and Abram said “it is so” and God furthered blessed him. In chapter 16 we again see Abram in a crises of faith. The story unfolds with the list of characters being:

* Abram
* Sarai
* Hagar
* Angel of the Lord

II. Vs. 1-6 Trying to obtain promises through the flesh

Vs. 1 There are two circumstances which will lead Sarai and Abram to make the choice that they did:

1. Adverse circumstances: “*Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children*.” Three times God had spoken to Abram concerning having a family. The first two times they were general the third time was specific as God said that the child would come from his own body (15:4). The promise made to Abram was also made to Sari as the two were one flesh. Verse 3 tells us that they had been in the land of promise 10 years thus she had been barren for some 20 years.
2. Appropriate opportunity: “*She had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar*.” Hagar was obtained 10 years earlier while they fled to Egypt instead of staying in the land of promise. Women of high standing, like Sarai, had their own personal maids that were their property and not their husbands.

Vs. 2 “*Adverse circumstances*” combined with “*appropriate opportunity*” led to six reasons why they came up with this plan:

1. “*See now, the LORD has restrained me from bearing children*.” Sari recognized that the Lord had power over their lives, so she deduces that the problem in fulfilling the promise made them was her and not Abram’s not the Lord’s fault.
2. “*Has restrained me from bearing children.”* The situation was hopeless by human means, so she was the problem and she could not be fixed.
3. “*Please, go in to my maid*.” Her motives appear to be pure as she believed God’s promises but God never said that the Child would come from her womb only that he would come from Abram’s body.
4. “*Please*”: She was believed there was still a way to accomplish God’s promises by justifiable and spiritual means.
5. “*Go in to*”. Her request involved two good traits:
6. Self-denial: She had to deny herself her own desire of being the instrument of God fulfilling his promise of a child.
7. Self-sacrifice: Though she would still be Abram’s wife she would be promoting Hagar to be his second wife and not just her maid.
8. “*My maid*”. To Sari, Hagar was the opportunity to accomplish what God had promised but she was unable to produce.

Vs. 3-4a This was not some bazaar request but a common practice of their day for a wealthy barren woman to give her handmaid to her husband for the purpose of obtaining children. Today we would call it “*surrogate motherhood*”. The child born from this union was to be considered Abram’s and Sarai’s and not Hagar’s. The act did NOT involve romance it was only about conception, as the handmaid would actually sit on her master’s lap (Sarai) as Abram inseminated her.

* Motive was pure
* Accepted practice
* Successful results

Their motive may have been pure but the method was still wrong. The ends does not justify the means. *This shows us is at what links the flesh will go to obtain the promises of God! The flesh will do anything except die to obtain the promises of God*. You can never accomplish anything by doing it in your own strength; you will only prolong the time until God accomplishes what He said He would do as it would *still be another 13 years before Isaac would be born*. People say, “*God helps those who help themselves*” but the truth is God only helps those who can’t help themselves. This is NOT an isolated instance in scripture consider:

* *Jacob would live 25 years in exile because he tried to help his father Isaac to make the right choice.*
* *Moses tended sheep 40 years in the wilderness because he tried to help God out by delivering Israel out of bondage*.

Vs. 4b The worst thing is the plan succeeded as Hagar conceives. Barnhouse wrote; “*Christian work that is done through the zeal of human effort without counting the body as dead, may produce great revival campaigns but with few genuine saved, it may produce large numbers in the Church but with many tares in the wheat!”*

The text records for us six consequences from trying to obtain the promises of God through the work of the flesh:

1. Pride: “*When she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes*.” Hagar became prideful of her ability to conceive and Sarai’s inability. Pride did not come from Sarai or Abram but rather the instrument chosen in the flesh. The plans and people we use to get what God has promised us will be what cause us to stumble.
2. Pity: “*Then Sarai said to Abram, "My wrong be upon you*!” Sarai shifts the blame to Abram even though the idea came from her, thus we see self-pity. Yes, Abram should have trusted in the Word of the Lord and not listened to his wife but she could not blame him for her actions. Ministry in the flesh will always attempt to look for an escape goat if the outcome is not what was expected.
3. Jealousy: “*I gave my maid into your embrace*;” The next logical consequence is jealousy. Ministry preformed in the energy of the flesh is prone to jealousy when others receive what we think belongs to us after our self-effort. Hagar received what had only been Sarai’s alone the embrace of her husband.
4. Envy: “*and when she saw that she had conceived*,” Sarai also envied Hagar’s success. Ministry produced in the energy of the flesh will always be looking at results and numbers and because of this it will become envious of others when we don’t get the same results.
5. Strife: “*I became despised in her eyes*.” For 10 years Sari and Hagar had been together perhaps even friends (*why else* *would she have given Hagar to Abram*)? Ministry produced in the flesh will cause strife against others in ministry, which will lead to separation.
6. Injustice: “*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.*” Abram was in a tuff place as Hagar was not his property. The final outcome of trying to obtain the promises of God in the energy of the flesh, injustice. Sarai treated Hagar poorly even though she was the cause of her own frustration.

The progression of ministry produced in the flesh is: *Wounded pride leads to envy, which leads to jealousy, which is at the center of cruelty and injustice*.

III. Vs. 7-16 Drinking from the well of the One who Lives & Sees

Vs. 7 We know where this incident occurred and we know which way Hagar was running when she was fleeing Sarai, back to Egypt, a typology of the world. Based upon Hagar’s response towards the Lord in verse 13 she had begun to trust in the God of Abram and Sarai. But *as a result of Sarai and Abram trying to obtain the promises of God in the energy of the flesh, a young believer is running back to the world she had left*! She is an example of a wounded sheep fleeing fleshly ministry. People leave a church wounded by servants who were trying to help God out in their own strength.

 What great comfort this verse is to me, “*the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness*”. Man blunders along, causing some to turn back towards the world but God intervenes with His love and grace. God had not over looked the situation and will bring about the best possible result even after His children have sinned. As Hagar attempted to flee we see based upon this two things we can never escape from:

1. *We can never elude or out run our real problem*. Because our greatest problem is us and no matter how far you go when you stop you are still there.
2. *We can never out run the Lord*. He is there every step of the way.

Vs. 8 The “Angel of the Lord” is a “*christophany*” or pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus. He begins to question Hagar to show her that she is he own problem. He reminds her that she is Sarai’s maid this is what she was called to. He also asks her “*where have you come from, and where are you going?*” *These are always the right questions to be asked when we are fleeing difficult situations*. She needs to realize that she is not where He wants her to be and that she is responsible for that.

Vs. 9 The Lord also tells her to do the opposite of what she thought was right, “return” and “submit”. *If we seek to change our circumstances by a change of climate we will only worsen our situation*. *What we need is a change of heart not a change of environment.* You see the flesh wants to run away but God wants to demonstrate His power right where we have known the greatest failures. *Life’s disappointments become His appointments.* It is always humbling to return to the place of failure but it is only there that we will discover triumph in His power.

Vs. 10-12 Three things are revealed to Hagar:

1. Vs. 10 That He will bless her offspring, even though her offspring and child will not be the child of promise.
2. Vs. 11 That He will rule over the fleshly attempt of man to obtain the His promises but He has done so in love. Every time she would call her son’s name it would remind her of the fact the God hears.
3. Vs. 12 That her son will live in contention and thus will live independent from other.

Vs. 13-16 Hagar knew that this was not just some angel as she declares this area to be where “*God sees*”. She had met the One that alone is acquainted with all our grief’s and sorrows. He alone is the One that who looks upon them and does something about them. She has a memorial service and names the well as the “*One who lives and sees*”. She returns with a broken and submissive heart and tells Sarai and Abram what happened to her as they name the boy Ishmael.

**Genesis 17:1-27**

**“More of You and less of me”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 1-14 Outward sign of an inward reality**

**III. Vs. 15-27 True holy laughter**

**I. Intro.**

In the 16th chapter Sarai and Abram tried to obtain the promises of God through the energy of the flesh with tragic consequences but God who intervenes by His grace and runs ahead of Hagar who would have fled back to the world. **The keys to understanding the 17th chapter falls upon three words repeat numerous times**:

* Covenant = 13 times
* Circumcised = 11 times
* I “will, have etc” = 15 times

We see an agreement based upon God’s promises and the evidence that they were recipients of God’s grace was the cutting away of the flesh.

**II. Vs. 1-14 Outward sign of an inward reality**

Vs. 1 We are told that Abram’s age is 99 before we are told the events that are about to take place. Abram wants us to realize that 13 years gone by since the end of chapter 16 as we were told in 16:16 that he was 86. For 13 years no special revelation of God came to Abram, Sarai or Hagar. Much of our life will be spent waiting on God to accomplish what He said He would, very little of our experience before God is a “new encounter” most of it is learning to appreciate Who He is moment by moment.

The words “*I am Almighty God*” come after we are told that 13 years have elapsed thus it took that long for them to realize the significance of this “new revelation” of God’s character. There are several possibilities as far as the interpretation of this glorious name of God:

1. Shaddai comes from a root word that means to display power, so the idea is that of the God who displays His power and ability.
2. Jewish tradition saw it, as **El** the (*God*) **Sa** (*Who*), **Dai** is (*sufficient*). Thus the idea is the Eternal God is irresistible and unchangeable.
3. The Septuagint (*Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures*) gives us perhaps what is the best translation, “***The One who has His hand on everything***!”

With this new revelation of the character of comes a further understanding of our responsibility in light of it.

1. “***Walk***”: Abram was to live and move with an awareness of always being in the presence of God. Abram’s relationship with the Lord is described in terms that relates to a continual moment by moment journey instead of a momentary emotional experience! **It’s a walk with Him and not a sighting of Him**!
2. “***Before Me***”: Not behind as if trying to hide something but up front in full view. God desired Abram to be genuine, real and not phony. **A God who not only knows all of our secrets but desires for us to be able to comes to Him with all of our secrets**.
3. “***And be blameless***”: The word “*blameless*” comes from a root word that means “*entirely*”, thus in means whole or completely. God is saying, “*I’ve given you all of Myself so naturally I want all of you*.” He is not asking for moral perfection, the idea is that **God asks Abram to “completely” give all of himself to the Him so that Abram would be able to receive all of Him**. The Lord through the prophet Micah put it this way (6:8) “*He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God*?”

Vs. 2 In the 15th chapter God established His covenant with Abram it has now come time for Him to cause those things that were promised to come in to fruition. God had spoken to Abram in terms that of ultimate outcomes as thought they had already taken place because in eternity they had already taken place. The problem is that those precious promises to be immediately materialized. God reminds Abram of His promises because He wants Abram and Sarai to be reassured that He has not forgotten His promises even though 25 years had lapsed. Five times in Abram’s life God described His abilities to fulfill His promises as “***exceedingly***”, the word is actually repeated twice in the Hebrew. We sing, “*He is able, more than able*” which suggests what the Lord is saying here to Abram.

Vs. 3 Abram’s response to God’s promises is that he, “*fell on his face*” which is the humblest form of reverence and worship. We see a pattern in walking with God: “*He saves us, we thank Him, He blesses us, we thank Him more by bowing before Him, He blesses us exceedingly, and we fall on our faces*.”

Vs. 4-8 God restates His promises:

1. Vs. 4 The promised “seed” of 15:4 is now explained to include many nations. In chapter 12:2 Abram was told that from him would come a “great nation” now it is many nations. This was told to a man who at 99 years of age had only one child and that child was not the one promised.
2. Vs. 5 He is given a new name which in the Hebrew adds only one letter. What is interesting is that exhaling forms this one letter, which is equivalent to our letter “H” sound. It is this letter in which the word “Spirit” is translated meaning breath. God changed Abram’s name to Abraham from “father of many” to “father of a multitude” by adding the “H” that is Him!
3. Vs. 6 He is not only the father of many nations but also a father of many Kings. In other words these nations will accomplish the will of God.
4. Vs. 7 God promises Abraham that through his seed will come an everlasting covenant that will never be broken thus establishing fellowship between God and man forever. Abraham may not have been able to grasp the “how” of it God assures him of the “purposes” of it “*I will be their God.*”
5. Vs. 8 God promises two things that will never end:
6. “*All the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession*”: The land will always be theirs as long as they have Him as their God.
7. “*And I will be their God*”: He promises that He will never stop being their God. The break of fellowship which would mean the loss of the land would be their doing not His.

***The Giver is always greater than the gift He gives. When the gift becomes greater than the One Who gave it, we shall not enjoy either. But when God is greater that His gifts than we shall have all of Him and all of what He has for us*.**

Vs. 9-10 God will require from Abraham what He had already told him in verse 1. In 15:8 Abram had asked, “*How shall I know that I will inherit it*?” The literal Hebrew translation of this verse is “*This is My covenant sign which you shall keep*”, circumcision was already known was going to carry a fourfold spiritual significance.

1. **Separation unto God** Vs. 10-11 “*Every male child among you shall be …circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins*”. It would serve as a reminder to Abram and his descendants of the need to “*cut away the flesh*”. It would forever serve as a reminder to not trust in the energy of the flesh. In light of the last chapter they could not have been any more appropriate appendage to cut away then the organ used for procreation. They had tried to obtain the promises of God in the energy of the flesh thus the flesh needed to be cut away.
2. **Belonged to God** Vs. 11 “*It shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you*.” Circumcision is only a badge and not the covenant it’s self. Abraham and his descendants were to do this because they already had a covenant with God, not in order to get one. The thing that put them under the covenant was not circumcision, circumcision was just an outward sign that they were under it.
3. **Purity for God** Vs. 10, 12 “*Every male child… who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised*”. This is the first time that we see children as being part of God’s covenant of grace. Parents are given the responsibility to train up their children in the way they should go. It was to be done the 8th day and medical science has shown something very interesting about this as it takes eight days for a baby’s immune system to be at its optimum level. A newborn’s blood clotting agent or vitamin K production is not at its normal levels until the 8th day of life. The parents were given the responsibility to raise their children in purity and holiness staring at birth.
4. **Possession by God**: Vs. 13-14 Circumcision was to include all those joined to Abraham whether they were born into his house or brought into his house. The sign was all-inclusive, all who like Abraham believed by faith could become a part of God’s family. The sign, like the covenant, is of grace not national or ethnic all are one in Christ; to show that they were in fellowship with God and separate from the world. Thus those who did not want to die to their flesh and live for God were too not to be a part of fellowship.

Dr. Mc Millen in his book called “*None of these Diseases*” studied various universities that the rate for cervical cancer among Jewish women is far lower than the rate of women where their husbands are not circumcised, it appears that were medical benefits to this procedure as well.

**III. Vs. 15-27 True holy laughter**

Vs. 15 Sarai is taken into the covenant as she is specifically mentioned as being the mother of the child of promise. Thirteen years and all that she did in the energy of the flesh to inherit what was hers already by faith. Why do we find it so difficult to simply trust the One who spoke and the worlds leaped into existence?

Vs. 16 There is a mystery in this verse that is uncovered only when the read the NT. We are told that God said to Abraham, “*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*.” The mystery is that Sarah had only one child and from Isaac came only one nation, Israel. Yet clearly God prophetically proclaims that Sarah was to “*be a mother of nations*”, how is that possible?

1. Matt. 1:1 We read, “*The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham*:” Abram looked to his son Isaac to be the fulfillment of the promise of God, from him there would come a nation which would be the instrument of blessing to all nations (12:3). Yet the truth is Isaac was not this child, he was week through the flesh, and the nation that sprang from him never has fulfilled becoming a blessing to all other nations. In Isa. 49:6 the Lord says, “*It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give* ***You*** *as a light to the Gentiles, That* ***You*** *should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.*” The nation thought that this was to be fulfilled when they would put all the nations under their feet, yet Isaiah wrote of this light being singular not the nation. The Psalmist declared in 8:4-6 “*What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? For You have made* ***him*** *a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned* ***him*** *with glory and honor. You have made* ***him*** *to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet.*” In Heb. 2:9 the person the psalmist spoke about is revealed as we are told, “*But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone*.”
2. In Eph. 1:20-22 we read, “*He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church*”. Then in Gal. 4:30-31 we are told that “*the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.*”

The mystery of this verse is understood only in light of the incarnation of the only Son of God the divine son of Abraham and Sarah. That means you and I are mentioned right here in the Bible! Paul said in Gal. 3:7-9 “*Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed. So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham*.”

Vs. 17 Abraham’s response is to laugh, not of unbelief, but rather of joy. What God had just told him was so incredible all he could do was respond with joyous laughter. He was so overwhelmed at God’s goodness towards him that he worship Him with joyous laughter. While Abraham is still on his face before the Lord he begins to ponder the truth that God has just revealed and tries to comprehend with his mind what his heart had already rejoiced in. We will never be able in this body to comprehend the “HOW’S” of God’s grace!

Vs. 18 Abraham asks that Ishmael might also live in God’s favor. This is not a plea for a substitute for what God has just spoken but rather a plea of a father that loves his son. He recognized that God’s promise bypassed Ishmael and desires that God would direct him into a life of communion as well.

Vs. 19 The response rendered “NO” is actually “most assuredly” by which the Lord goes on to confirm the fact that they will give birth to the child of promise, as verse 20 confirms. Four things are mentioned in this verse that confirms Isaac as the child to whom the godly line will come:

1. “*Sarah your wife shall bear you a son*”: The child would be of faith and not the energy of the flesh.
2. “*You shall call his name Isaac*”: His name will be “he laughs or laughter” which is what is always produced in the hearts of those who enter into by faith the covenant of grace. It’s what is behind the words of Jesus in Matt. 5:2-12 “oh how happy”, laughter!
3. “*I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant*”: The fact that the covenant with him was to be everlasting meant that as to Abraham and Sarah that their son would be the heir of the promise.
4. “*With his descendants after him*”: The use of these words “descendants” is connected to God’s promises to Abraham over 10 times starting in chapter 12. Abram was assured that the blessing of this child was the same blessing spoken to him 25 years earlier.

Vs. 20 God heard a father’s heart for a son who would not inherit the promises intended by faith. God’s fourfold blessing upon Ishmael won’t be because he deserves it or earns it. No it bestowed based upon grace and only by receiving it this way will it be enjoyed.

1. God affirms that He will make him fruitful.
2. The results of his fruitfulness will that his descendants will become exceedingly numerous.
3. God also predicts what we will see fulfilled in 25:12-16 that there will be 12 princes from him.
4. Finally together they will become a great nation.

Vs. 21-22 Even though the above blessings upon Ishmael are true they will have no effect upon the truth that Isaac is the child of promise who will be born in a year. Ishmael was the offspring of their attempt to inherit the promises of God by the work of the flesh but Isaac was to be received and brought forth in trusting God’s grace. Abram has no words as the conversation has ended just a smile upon his face as God has once again overwhelmed him.

Vs. 23-27 Abraham’s response to God’s word, obedience. Abraham was 99 years old when he was circumcised, spiritually he was 29, and he was ready to allow God to rule over his life as he knew that nothing produced in the energy of the flesh could ever replace that which is given by grace. Ishmael was 13 as he too was circumcised which tells us that even though he was not the child of promise he was not excluded from being a part of the covenant of grace by faith. Even though Ishmael was not the one in whom the promise was to be carried out he could none the less share in the blessings from the one in whom God would use.

 **We learn three things about faith’s response to grace**:

1. Vs. 23, 27 Abraham’s obedience was **complete**, as it included not only he and his son Ishmael but also all in his house.
2. Vs. 23, 26 Abraham’s obedience was **prompt** as he acted immediately upon the word of the Lord. The commandment was a painful one, it meant cutting of the flesh in a very tender area yet there was no hesitation.
3. Vs. 26, 27 Abraham’s faithful obedience was **daring** as it left all of the men in his house incapacitated. His obedience risked what others would not have done.

 Genesis 18:1-33

“Abraham in the school of prayer”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-15 Changing the heart about God

III. Vs. 16-33 Changing the heart about others

I. Intro.

The 18th chapter of Genesis is divided between two seemingly disconnected events that both happen on the same day. At first glance the only similarity is that they are both connected to the same heavenly visitation.

* Verses 1-15, “*deal with the heavenly visitation as connected with Sarah*”
* Verses 16-33, “*deals with Abraham’s intercession for Sodom*”

They reveal to us the key to prayer! Prayer is first and foremost is to change who are praying and not about changing the circumstances we are facing. There are always two areas that God seeks to change in my prayer life found here in these two divisions of chapter 18:

* Vs. 1-15 The Lord is constantly getting me to change my heart about Him.
* Vs. 16-33 The Lord is constantly changing my heart about others.

II. Vs. 1-15 Changing the heart about God

Vs. 1 This visitation happens within three months after chapter 17. We know this because:

1. 17:21 We are told that a year from that day that Sarah would have a child.
2. 18:10 Sarah had not yet conceived, in fact based upon her comments of verse 12 they were not even intimate.
3. This visitation took place after the Word of the Lord to Abram in chapter 17. Based upon Sarah’s word’s she had either not been told by Abram the Word of the Lord or had refused to believe it.
* In chapter 15:1 the Lord spoke to Abram in a vision.
* In chapter 17:1 He speaks to him by way of a message in his heart.
* In chapter 18 He appears to Abraham bodily (verse 2 says that he saw three men, in verse 22 the two angels go towards Sodom as Abram still stays to speak with the Lord.)

In light of the incarnation; Paul wrote to Timothy (6:16) “*no man has seen or can see*”, then in John 1:18 we are told that “*No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him*.” The only conclusion is that this is a Theophany or Christophany (pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus).

Vs. 2-3 The word “*behold*” tells us that what took place was something out of the ordinary. Abraham was relaxing by his tent and the “three men” appeared in front of him. Though the text calls them three men based upon his reaction he knew that one of them was the Lord. Three things Abraham’s hospitality reveals:

1. “*When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them*”: The way he reacts so quickly suggest genuine warmth and humility. Abraham is 99 years old and a wealthy successful world leader. Yet he initiates the action prior to any words being spoken.
2. “*Bowed himself to the ground*”: This is the same word in the Hebrew used for worship. Humility and hospitality go hand in hand, too often the leaders in Church’s are the ones wanting to be waited on instead wanting to wait on others!
3. “*My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant*”: In verse one the word for Lord is Jehovah, in verse 3 it is Adonai which speaks of God’s supreme authority. Abraham looks at his service as a privilege an act of worship. It is almost as we get a picture of a heart that by its actions begs, “*Oh let me wait on You!*”

Vs. 4-5 The first offering of hospitality was that of washing the feet and allowing them to rest. The next offer is to bring food as Abraham is so blessed to be in the Lord’s presence. Prayer is all about, adoration and communion, as Abraham only wanted to be a blessing to the Lord and to show his appreciation towards Him. There is no grocery list of things he desired, no complaint list of things, no not even a suggestion or question box. He only comes before the Lord and by his actions says he wants is to spend time with Him.

 *The Lord and the two angels did not need to eat or rest yet they did as the Lord looks at the heart and not what is offered as an act of worship*!

Vs. 6-8 In verse 5 Abraham said he was going to prepare a “morsel of bread” which in Hebrew means a “bit” yet his instructions to Sarah was for 6 ½ bushels of the finest flour. In Exodus 16:16 we are told that one measure was sufficient for one person for the whole day. He told Sarah to make cakes, not bread which were fried in butter or fat. *Abraham offered to the Lord was far less then what he actually provided*. Too often we offer the Lord is what is left over all the while we are proclaiming we are given Him our best. Abraham is there supervising every little step and stands by them as their personal waiter. All of this was obviously a love offering because Abraham felt so loved by the Lord.

Vs. 9-10 The Lord has come to Abraham and Sarah, to prepare her heart about how she saw the Lord. *The Lord asks where she is at while already knowing her name is a way of getting her attention as women were not to come out into the presence men so they instead would stay by the tent door to listen*. Thirteen years earlier God had told Abraham this but now He wishes for Sarah to hear it. He has repeated it twice within three months but it appears as though Abraham never told Sarah.

Vs. 11 Moses interjects to explain the impossibility of procreation apart from the Lord’s intervention. The words “*Sarah had passed the age of childbearing*” literally mean “*the manor of a woman had ceased to be with Sarah*” which means that she was no longer menstruating and ovulating and could not possibly be able to have children. Sarah’s case was irreversible, as she had already gone through the change of life.

Vs. 12 As she listens to the Word of the Lord she laughs within herself as to the impossibility of the prospect of her having a child. To show how impossible the thought is in her head she says, “*After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?*” This suggests two things:

1. She still loves Abraham as she reverences him calling him lord.
2. She has lost her desire to be intimate.

As far as Sarah was concerned her problem with the word from the Lord was physical and emotional but in reality her real problem was spiritual. Here is the truth of the matter, “*What Sarah wanted the most in life (the child of promise) she could only believe could be produced in the energy of the flesh but doubted it could ever take place in the energy of the Spirit*!” Most of our failures occur when we find it easier to believe we can obtain the promises of God through the energy of the flesh instead of trusting God to be able to do what only He alone has promised.

Vs. 13-14 Sarah is taught four lessons about the Lord that she need to have in her prayer life:

1. She was taught that the Lord is all knowing: Sarah saw her limitations, but the God revealed that He was aware of them as well and that those limitations were nothing compared to her lack of trusting Him to do what He said He would.
2. Vs. 14a She was taught He was all-powerful: She viewed herself as being beyond nature, yet what she did not grasp was what He has promised He alone is able to perform.
3. Vs. 14b-15a She was taught that God is a God of grace: He had promised, she had doubted, He had revealed more, she again doubted, He confronts her doubting she denies it. Yet a year later He still brought forth the child that He promised.
4. Vs. 15b She was taught of His holiness: She had lied in her heart yet God clearly knew that she had lied and confronted her with the truth.

III. Vs. 16-33 Changing the heart about others

Vs. 16 Sarah needed to have a changed heart in her view of God the Lord turns to dealing with Abraham’s heart towards a sinful world. Abraham tells us that he sees the heavenly group look towards sinful Sodom and walks with them several miles. Tradition has it that they stopped at place called Beni Naim which is where you can look down and see the Dead Sea which at this point of time was lush and fertile.

Vs. 17 The Lord draws Abraham into a place where he will look at his own heart. The Lord gives us insight into situations about others in order for us to have a change of heart! God is not gossiping about the sins of Sodom, neither is just trying to satisfy Abraham’s curiosity. The Lord wants to do something in Abraham’s heart through that which only He knows!

Vs. 18-19 There are two reasons the Lord gives for including Abraham into what He is about to do in Sodom and neither of them have to do with Lot!

1. Vs. 18 “*Since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him*”: He will have a great influence over multitudes of people through future generations, therefore it was necessary for him to know the reason why God would destroy two cites. Abraham through this chapter would tell future generations the truth about Sodom and Gomorrah and God’s judgment against them.
2. Vs. 19 “*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*”: Abraham would serve as an example to those of faith and trust in the Lord. God did not want His character to be misrepresented to the children of faith.

Vs. 20 God tells Abraham that the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great because their sin was grievous. The sins of Sodom and Gomorrah that led to such a wicked lifestyle are given us in Ezek 16:49-50, “*Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit*.”

Vs. 21 God knew the situation of the two cities as their sins cried out to heaven, His responses reveal several things:

1. He never judges in a hurry, as He desires mercy not judgment. 2 Peter 3:9 tells us that He is “*not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance*.”
2. He is always about justice so win sins cry out they are calling out for His justice to intervene.
3. The investigation is for Abraham’s benefit to get him to intercede and have a compassionate heart towards those trapped into a life style of sin.

Sending two angels to investigate reveals that God does nothing without full possession of all the facts. This was all put down for our benefit as God always does that which right concerning the affairs of men. People may proclaim their innocence, justify their actions but their judge knows the beginning from the end.

Vs. 22-26 Two angels move towards Sodom, and Abraham is left with the Lord to make intercession. This intercession reveals that Abraham reduces the number of righteous six times, three times he reduces the number by 5 three times he reduces the number by ten, until he reached the number of righteous number of ten. Why ten? Abraham thought that he knew of ten righteous people in Sodom: Lot and his wife, two unmarried sons, two unmarried daughters, two married daughters & their husbands. *Abraham would soon learn was that it was harder to get Sodom out of Lot then to get “Lot” out of Sodom*.

There are eight qualities in the heart of Abram during his intercession.

1. Vs. 22b. “*But Abraham still stood before the LORD*.” The right position of the heart of an intercessor, “in the presence of the Lord.” E.M. Bounds wrote that, “*It is a great thing to be willing to go to men for God but a greater thing still to be willing to go to God for men*!”
2. Vs. 23a “*And Abraham came near*”: The heart of an intercessor first desires to draw near and become more intimate with the Lord.
3. Vs. 23b “*Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked*?” The first words out of Abraham’s mouth are concerned not with the outcome but rather with how the Lord will look. Effective prayer always prays in line with the character of God.
4. Vs. 24 “*Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city*”: Nowhere is Lot and his family mentioned; Abraham’s heart was one of compassion for the city lost in sin. How about it do we pray for the salvation of our enemies, the ungodly that rub us the wrong way?
5. Vs. 25 “*Far be it from You to do such a thing as*”: Abraham takes all of this difficulties to the Lord and allows Him to sort it out. Here then is a key element in effective intercession, “*Start with what you know is true about God’s character and nature and let him sort out what you don’t understand about the situation*.”
6. Vs. 25 “*to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You*!” Abraham makes an urgent plea and uses prayer as the scratch paid of the heart. We can always be quick to pray, slow to speak and slow to anger.
7. Vs. 25 “*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right*?” There is a confidence in Abraham not in the situation turning out the way he wants but rather in that the Lord will do what is right.
8. Vs. 26 “*If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes*.” With specific prayer there is a specific response that can only be received by faith.

Vs. 27-33 This dealt with the heart of Abraham and not with the elements of prayer. There are four essential elements intercessory prayer:

1. Vs. 27 “*Indeed now, I who am but dust and ashes …to speak to the Lord*:” His prayer was based upon humility! He approached the Lord with two important things:
2. A knowledge of how unworthy He was.
3. A knowledge of great and Holy God is.
4. Vs. 27 “*have taken it upon myself*”: His prayer was with understanding! Not of the situation but of who God is. He approached God based upon His greatness and grace, in total dependence and absolute surrender.
5. Vs. 28-29 Abraham was specific in his prayer! There was no, “Save Sodom”! Instead there was a specific plea to save Sodom if there were 50, 45 etc. righteous. As the number decreased Abraham grew bolder based upon the Lords response as he saw the Lord’s desire to save he asked for more.
6. Vs. 30-33 Abraham was persistent in prayer! The more he interceded the more his heart was drawn into the heart of God for the lost. Effective evangelism begins and ends with a heart that is persistent in prayer broken with compassion over the thought of even one perishing apart from knowing God love.
7. It was Abraham who stopped asking not God who stopped answering!
8. Abraham did not receive the answer to his prayers the way he perhaps thought he would. *God did not save the city for the sake of the righteous instead the four righteous were saved from the city*. We may not see our prayers answered the way we thought but we shall always see them answered the way they ought!

In chapter 19: 27-29 we are told that “*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. 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*.” Abraham knew not the outcome but he knew that the Lord would do right. He watched overlooking the Dead Sea as God spared the four righteous.

Genesis 19:1-38

“The destruction of Sin”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-11 What’s the world coming too?

III. Vs. 12-38 Getting the World out of us

I. Intro.

You are hard pressed to find a more depressing chapter in the Bible then the 19th chapter of Genesis; *homosexuality, attempted rape, prostitution, incest and the love of a city in which the practice of such things* *was thought of as normal* are all a part of this chapter. One wonders why such a chapter is included in scripture. Several things need to be mentioned up front:

* Because the Bible reports such sins is in no way suggestive that God is in favor of them.
* When the Bible reports events like these it does so to show us two things:
1. What sins lie in the flesh of un-repentive man, Paul write as much in 1 Cor. 10:13 “*No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man*”.
2. Second, the Bible mentions them in full view of what the outcome of such behaviors are both practically as well as spiritually! God has seen fit to record these event in order that we might see in others the ugliness of sin, the eventual outcome of sin, death and judgment.

In the world these behaviors are glorified and even encouraged without any thought given to the repercussions of their continual practice. In the Bible, we see how morally degrading people become who live life without any restraints. The world does not need reform; it does not need education on how to perform practices in ways that does not cause personal harm. It needs to be changed, turned from behaviors!

**II. Vs. 1-10 What’s the world coming too?**

Vs. 1 These are the two angels that we were in 18:22 that turned and went toward Sodom. Upon arriving in Sodom they quickly find Lot, “*sitting in the gate*” which was the place where the leaders of the city would come and handle the complaints of the city; today we would call it “city hall”. Finding Lot at “city hall” reveals the steady progression of compromise in Lots life.

1. 13:10 Lot was looking toward Sodom.
2. 13:12 Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom.
3. 14:12 Lot is living in Sodom.
4. 19:1 Lot is a civic leader in Sodom.

All of this had taken place within a span of 30 years which shows that a people fall happens through a series of compromises, not all at once. **Lot’s testimony for the Lord towards the world was destroyed by his compromise with it!**

Vs. 2-3 Lot offered the same hospitality to the two angels as did Abraham yet the urgency in which he offers it is vastly different.

* Abraham offered hospitality with urgency for the sake wanting to spend time with the Lord.
* The words “insisted strongly” caries the idea that “***Lot wouldn’t take NO for an answer!***” Lot offered hospitality with urgency to keep them safely away from the world in which he had compromised with.

Just because someone is aware of sin and even grieved by it does not indicate that they are an influence for righteousness around it! Based upon the words of verse 9 telling us that Lot “*kept acting as a judge*” we know that he was vocal against the behavior of Sodom yet while he was compromising with it he was not demonstrating his conviction with the way in which he lived among them. Lots house was no doubt a pleasant place to stay at. It may have had some bible verses on the fridge, some religious art work on the walls, yet the truth of Lots conviction needed to be more than just inside the walls of his home it needed to be visible in every corner of his life! ***We can’t proclaim the truth of the gospel to the lost if we ourselves are living outwardly just like them***!

Vs. 4-5 One of the sins in which this city is connected is here mentioned for the first time in the Bible. Several things need to be mentioned in light of this based upon the text:

1. We are told that this sin included **ALL** the men of the city such as they were.
2. They were totally consumed with the practice of it, as they wasted no time in arriving at Lots door.
3. The practice of this sin had crossed all social lines of society as we are told that “*old and young, as well as those from every quarter of the city*” came to Lots house.
4. There can be no question as to the sin as we are told that it was so that they could “*know them carnally*”. That is they wished to have sexual intercourse with them.

Today this sin is either treated as the worst of all sins or it is treated as something a person is born with like the color of their hair; it is neither. Here is what the Bible has to say about it:

1. Lev. 18:22 “*You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination*.”
2. Rom. 1:26-28 “*For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting*;”
3. 1 Cor 6:9 “*Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites*”.

There is nothing “***gay***”, happy or carefree about this CHOOSEN lifestyle which has these statistics:

* Homosexual advocates promote their lifestyle as being exactly like everyone else except that they are attracted to people of the same sex. Yet their conduct does not bear witness of their statement.
* 43% of homosexuals say they have had 500 or more sexual partners in their life time compared to only 1% of heterosexuals who have said they have had four and under sexual partners in their life time. The Department of Health and Human Services surveyed Homosexuals where 77% said that they regularly had sex in a public park, 62% said they regularly engaged in sex at homosexual bars, 61% said they did so regularly in a movie theater & 31% said they did so in a public bathroom. Only 28% of homosexuals when asked said they had known their sexual partners for at least a week before participating in sex.
* Homosexual advocates proclaim that over 10% of the population is homosexual but the most reliable statistics show that only 2.3% of men in their 20’s & 30’s ever report to having had a homosexual experience & only 1.1 % say that they are exclusively homosexual.
* Romans 1:28 again says that because man “*did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting.*” Thus it is no surprise that some 2% of our society is practicing the sin of Homosexuality as it no longer retains the knowledge of God. Perhaps one finds this sin more among men than women because males wish to pursue uninhibited sex without rejection and sex with other men offers an easier path to this?

Now the good news is that the sin of homosexuality like any other sin is one in which a person can repent of and be changed, washed, sanctified and justified in the name of Jesus by the Spirit of God.

Vs. 6-8 The response of Lot to the sinful actions and suggestions of the men of the city reveals several things about Lot.

1. As he goes out to face a mob and shuts the door behind him show courage as well as care for the guests he had.
2. Yet with calling this homosexual mob “*my brethren*” it shows that perhaps Lot had adopted a “*live and let live*” attitude towards their behavior.
3. Vs. 8 The fact that he suggests the willingness to sacrifice his virgin daughters could be understood on several levels:
4. He had obviously maintained some order in the home, as they were still virgins.
5. It reveals how they viewed hospitality as being of greater importance then family relations.
6. It shows the low state that women occupied in that society.
7. Lot understood that these men had a bent towards homosexuality and would not want his daughters, so he was just buying time.
8. It also reveals that through compromise Lot had become confused on how to handle a sinful world so he suggests a wrong to correct a wrong.
9. Finally it could be that Lot understood who his guests were and was hoping that they would intervene.

Vs. 9-11 The words of the homosexual mob “*stand back*” in the Hebrew can mean “*you just come near*” which shows the little effect Lot had had upon the citizens of Sodom. He had been little more than the “censor” of Sodom to which they had tolerated for some time probably because of his relationship to Abraham who had saved their city. So they made him a leader in the city and even give room for his rhetoric but now unless Lot gives over his angelic guests to be raped they will have their way on him. Compromise had not changed or even impacted the city. The striking of the physical blindness led them to obvious mental confusion to which they became weary in finding the door to Lots house. How appropriate is this that physical blindness matched moral and spiritual condition?

**III. Vs. 12-38 Getting the World out of us**

Vs. 12 The angels now enquire as to Lots family so they may be spared judgment because of their relationship with Lot. It is interesting that not only those that were related to him but those that belonged to him were included. Remember back in chapter 13:6-7 that Lot had herdsmen yet none of these men leave with him.

Vs. 13 The angels announce in plain terms the plan for Sodom:

1. The Lord is the one that sent them to destroy Sodom and its surrounding towns.
2. The reason for the destruction was that the “*outcry against them had grown great*” in other words they had increased in wickedness.

Vs. 14 Lot shows at once that he believed the testimony of these two angels and goes to rescue his two sons in law. The Bible forbids mixed marriages and being unequally yoked to unbelievers. As Lot moved his family closer to Sodom his daughters married Sodomite husbands, to go along with his Sodomite wife. The lesson for us is simple if we compromise with the world in order to reach the world then it is not the believer that is impacting the society in which they live it is the society impacting the believer. Peter tells us in 2 Peter 2:7-8 that “*Lot was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds*)”. Yet with that said his life was a wasted life having accomplished nothing. He had been in politics yet that had not reformed the habits of the city all of this had left him corrupted even to his family and friends.

Vs. 15 It seems as though Lot had until daybreak to convince the rest of his family and friends yet none came. In the morning it is Lot that has to be urged to leave which reveals that though he was grieved by the condition of Sodom his heart was also in its ways. The truth is we often hate the sins of the world at the same time we support its influences. Lot serves as a vivid picture of a man who God had a hold of but did not hold on God.

Vs. 16 Lot is in the worst of positions: “***Too much of the Lord to be happy in the world & too much of world to be happy in the Lord!***” Lot does what we all do when we know what we ought to do but for the love of the flesh don’t do it, PROCRASTINATE. We cannot be sure but from the beginning we have seen Lot want material things, (*he chose the fertile plain of Sodom and moved closer and closer to its economic lure*). How could Lot have such affection upon a place where the men were the night before were going to rape him to satisfy their lust? But just as the men of the city were blinded by their lust so too is Lot and his family as they are led out by grasping their hands. This shows what incredible pull the flesh has against the Spirit. God’s word through Jeremiah in Lam. 3:22-23 ring true, “*Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness*.”

Vs. 17 The angels give four instructions to Lot and his family as they are fleeing “sin city”. These are good instructions for anyone that has to deal with the temptation of compromise with the flesh & the world:

1. “*Escape for your life*”: The only thing to do with temptation is to flee for your life! Hesitation will often mean personal destruction so we need to recognize that to linger will cost us.
2. “*Do not look behind you*”: The word “*look*” means to “*look with longing*”. “**Don’t play with temptation**”, far too many times we see how close the fire can burn down upon the match before we feel the heat of the flame!
3. “*Nor stay anywhere in the plain*”: This deals with where we go after we have “*escaped with our lives*”; “***don’t look to live in a place you have just escaped from***”. Amazing how accurate this is in my own life as I end up with ***depraved déjà vu*** repeating my same mistakes again and again.
4. “*Escape to the mountains*”: If we shouldn’t “*stay in the plain*” where should we go? God will have the answer which the Psalmist put so gloriously in 61:2 “*When my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I*.”

Vs. 18-22 What a pathetic picture of a compromised life pleading to be able to still have a little of the world he was forced to leave behind. Lot fails to realize the same thing that we often do that a “little” of the world is a very dangerous thing. In comparing Lots prayer with Abraham’s in the previous chapter we see that Abraham made his appeal by seeing himself as “dust and ashes”; Lot appeals in verse 19 upon what he has done. Lot obviously sees his “*soul living*” only through compromise with the world yet the truth is that even a little of the world is far too much for our soul to live! The Lord destroyed a city, which had not 10 righteous and yet saves this city of Zoar (small or little), with none righteous because of Abraham who had intercede on its behalf. None of this will take place until Lot & his family has been removed.

Vs. 23-25 We are told four things in these verses:

1. “*The sun was risen upon the earth*”: The time of destruction was when Lot was safe in a “little world”.
2. “*The LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah*”: The extent of judgment to which Deut. 29: 23 adds, “*the whole land including the cites of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim*”.
3. “*Brimstone and fire*”: Here we are told the method of judgment upon the area.
4. Vs. 25 “*He overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground*.” God’s judgment of these sites and area were complete and permanent.

Vs. 26 We come now to the strange story of Lots wife. Literally it reads “*she looked back from behind*” which speaks to the fact that she either lagged behind or turned back. Thus she was caught in the destruction as she may have been on the way out of Sodom physically but spiritually she was very much at home in the world. Jesus used this very situation as a warning in Luke 17:32-33 when He said, “*Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.*”

Vs, 27-29 God answered the prayer of Abraham even if it was not the way in which he had thought, saving four and one of them chose the world. Before you feel sorry for the people of Sodom remember that they had been the beneficiaries of God’s faithfulness towards their land, they had their city delivered from destruction and captivity by Abraham, finally they had even heard of the testimony of Melchizedek and Lot yet still they did not repent.

Vs. 30-38 This is such a disgusting section I will only point out four things:

1. Vs. 30-31 Lot does not want to go to the mountain when the Lord told too but in his own strength he goes. This just shows you Lots problem all along rebellion and disobedience to the Word of God.
2. Vs. 32 Lot had lost everything and yet still managed to take wine out of Sodom. Of all the things to try and keep from world, “*If you got to leave the world might as well take a little of it with ya*!”
3. Vs. 33-36 The very thing that Lot was going to allow the Sodomites to do his daughters he himself does by compromising with the world. Though this case of incest is not specifically condemned because of the Mosaic laws against incest had not been given makes it no less disgusting. They knew that their father would not consent to this so they got him drunk to get descendants instead of trusting in God.
4. Vs. 37-38 The offspring from this incest became the Moabites and the Ammonites who were continual thorns in the side of Israel.

Lots life ended in ruin not only for him but also for his prosperity. Lot is not mentioned again in the OT, and the time and place of his death are unknown. Such is the outcome of a person who is carnal in their faith.

Genesis 20:1-18

“Abraham, what were you thinking?”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-7 A half truth is a whole lie

III. Vs. 8-18 A lack of the fear of God

I. Intro.

Having just left the ruined life of Lot it is good to be back looking again at the man of faith but we see he repeats the same mistake he did 24 years earlier in Egypt of not trusting God’s promises to fulfill His promises. This shows us is that as far as our flesh is concerned it will in this body never arrive at a state of perfection. God uses situations and circumstances so that we will again turn and trust only upon His Word. Nothing disproves evolution more than our own personal failure because if we were truly evolving we would fail less.

**II. Vs. 1-7 A half-truth is a whole lie**

Vs. 1 Abraham leaves Hebron the place of vision and blessing to go south towards an area the Cannaities lived that would later be inhabited by the Philistines. It may have been prompted by the judgment of Sodom or just because he was looking for better trading possibilities. The exact the words that give us the location where Abraham and Sarah went we find some interesting points:

* The word “South” is really Negev which means “dry”
* The word Kadesh means holiness
* And the word Shur means wall
* The word Gerar means, “*rolling country*”, as the terrain was foot hills.

Abraham had been dwelling in a place where the study presence of the Lord was and left it for a dry place that was between holiness and a wall leaving him living in a “*roller coaster*” experience.

Vs. 2 Here we see the same lie as 12:13 only now Sarah is 90 and 24 years have passed. At first I must say that this would seem to be quite faltering for Abraham to say about his wife Sarah, a “*cover girl*” at the age of 90. The estimations as to why she was so attractive at her age goes along the lines that since she had already quit ovulating and now had begun again perhaps she regressed in her appearance looking much younger than her age. I have no doubt that Sarah was an attractive gal I think the explanation would most likely be in part that Abraham was a powerful leader and a marriage to his “*sister*” would an allegiance making them allies.

 A lie is never justifiable even to save a life, which in this case was his own. Love is always ready to lay down our life for the sake of others; here Sarah was the one that was asked to lay down her life. The fact that Abraham falls at the same place he did 24 years earlier points out that there is a common link to our failures. The temptations may be different and the sin may not be the same but we always fall at the same point, “***Our lack of trusting God and His Word***!” Abraham trusted himself and Sarah but not God and His Word. Jude closes his letter by saying, “*Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy*”. It is only the Lord who can keep us from falling on our faces!

Vs. 3 God again shows Himself as a God who is gracious towards Abraham. Had not God intervened all would wonder to this day who the father of the child of promise was Abraham or Abimelech. God reveals himself to Abimelech “Elohim” the all-powerful Creator, all of which He does so in a dream. The Lord tells Abimelech that he is a “*dead man*” even though he did not knowingly sin by taking another man’s wife. As far as God is concerned “*it does not matter whether or not you meant too sin*”, we are still accountable.

Vs. 4-5 To Abimelech’s credit he had not “came near her” so his defense is that he had not yet done anything wrong. Abimelech associates his nation with himself and intercedes with the Lord to not hold slay the nation for his inadvertent error. What a contrast this is compared to Abraham who’s blunder was to save his own skin. Again Abimelech’s defense is based upon the fact that Abraham had lied and Sarah had supported the lie by agreeing with her husband. It is a sad thing when the people of the world behave more like believers and followers of God then do the people of faith. Abraham’s lie could have led to death and eternal separation for the unbelieving Abimelech all because he failed to again trust God. There is no such thing as a sin that does not affect others!

Vs. 6 God recognizes the innocence of Abimelech but at the same time reveals to him that it was He who had kept Abimelech from sinning and not Abimelech. Perhaps it was some sickness in verse 18 that had prevented him from consummating his marriage? Abimelech’s sin would have been against, not Abraham or Sarah but rather against the Lord. David would write in Psalm 51:4 “*Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight*”.

Vs. 7 In order to live Abimelech has to do two things:

1. “*Restore the man's wife*”: It was not enough to be sorry or even admit his mistake Abimelech had to make restitution for his sin. Whenever possible we need to show or repentance by restoring what we have taken.
2. “*He will pray for you and you shall live*”: Prayer, confession and intercession are all a part of being restored. Of course as Christians we do this before Jesus.

Even though Abraham had blown it he was still God’s spokesman who was called to speak the truth of God. So we see that just because a person is used by God does not make them immune to failure nor does it mean that they always practice the truth they proclaim. A lot of times people use the failure of the instrument to discredit the truth they were proclaiming. *Hey, just because a string breaks on a guitar doesn’t make the note that it was suppose to play wrong! The failure is in the instrument not the note*!

**III. Vs. 8-18 A lack of the fear of God**

Vs. 8 Several things stand out here:

1. “*Abimelech rose early in the morning*”: Abimelech’s prompt obedience in response to repentance and restoration.
2. “*Called all his servants, and told all these things in their hearing*”: Second his humility in telling his servants of his error.
3. “*The men were very much afraid*”: Lastly, the seriousness in which they understood their own failure. When compared to the son’s in-law of Lot whose warnings seemed to be a joke these men very afraid by Abimelech’s failure.

Vs. 9 Abimelech lays the blame at Abraham’s door, “*What were you thinking*?” “*What have we ever done to deserve being treated like this?*” “*You could have killed us*!” would be how we would have responded today. Abraham’s failure to tell the truth led to a public rebuke from a worldly King. Abimelech was right on the money as Abraham had made this same error 24 years earlier.

Vs. 10 No doubt there was a pause by Abimelech as he waited for Abraham to respond and one wonders if Abraham was like a child with his head down kicking at the dirt. Having no reply Abimelech asks again “*What did you see that caused you to do this*?” It is clear that Abimelech is looking for some reason for Abraham’s behavior in which it almost cost him his life both in this life and the one to come. Of course it is good to say that we are seeing Abimelech at his best and Abraham at his worst, so we should not judge a man by one situation in their life. However we need to say that the failure of a believer is the worst of all failures except for not trusting in Christ at all. All we can do when we fail like this is be broken and humbly admit or mistake without any excuses.

Vs. 11-13 Instead of doing this Abraham offers up five lame reasons for his lie:

1. Vs. 11 “*Because I thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place*”: Let me get this strait, “*You could trust the Lord with everything except your security?*” All this does is bring up the question, “*If you didn’t think God could protect you then why did you go to a place where you knew they didn’t know God?*” The real problem does not lie in the fact that there was no fear of God in the place it was that there was no fear of God in Abraham!
2. Vs. 11b “*And they will kill me on account of my wife*”: This excuse points out that Abraham had a greater fear in man then he did in God, which can be seen in his selfishness and cowardliness.
3. Vs. 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*”: Oh Abraham when in doubt “shut up”! A half-truth said with intent to deceive is a whole lie!
4. Vs. 13a “*And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house*”: The word “wonder” is used some 50 times and each case it refers to a person going astray from the Lord. Abraham’s excuse is that 30 years ago the Lord called him to leave his father’s country. “*It’s God’s fault man if he had not called me away to bless me & give me all I have this would have never have happened!*” When in doubt blame God!
5. Vs. 13b “*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*”: “*You see Sarah & I have this little tradition that we’ve been doing for 30 years and I had to honor it for her sake you know?*”

Hey lame are these excuses for not trusting the Lord? But we use some pretty dumb ones as well don’t we? Lets roll the tape back and see what Abraham should have said:

 “*I’m so sorry, Abimelech for dishonoring My God as well as you! My self-centeredness led to cowardliness and I denied the very God whom I believe by fearing you more than fearing Him. You see Abimelech my God is not like your gods He really is able to take care of me, as He is the living and true God who created the heaven and earth. Abimelech my God even told me that He was alone able to protect me and reward me but I did not act as if I believed Him. I know of no man that has had more of God’s love and blessings then I have yet I have sinned against His very grace and in so doing sinned against you, please forgive me*!”

Vs. 14-16 Instead of that prayer Abraham offers lame excuses and Abimelech heaps coals upon an already humbled head by blessing them with material blessings and clearing their reputations. Look at the sarcasm of Abimelech as tells Sarah of the material blessing given to her “brother”.

Vs. 17-18 God’s grace is clearly upon Abraham as God restores him to be used as an instrument of blessing upon Abimelech as he should have been all along. What a great God we serve who uses us in spite of us.

Genesis 21:1-34

“The God who keeps His promises”

I.) Intro.

II. Vs. 1-14 Laughter and sorrow

III. Vs. 15-21 A lesson in trust

IV.) Vs. 22-34 Water in a foreign land

I.) Intro.

This chapter records three seemingly separate events recorded for us:

* 1-14 The birth of Isaac
* 15-21 The provision of Ishmael and Hagar
* 22-34 The payment for a well in the land of promise

There is a common thread that deals not with the persons involved or the event but rather God who keeps His promises.

1. In chapter 18 God promised Sarah and Abraham that they would have a son.
2. In chapter 16 God promised that Ishmael would live to become a mighty nation.
3. In chapter 13 God promised Abraham that the land that they were living in was to be his and his descendants after him.

In the 21st chapter all three of these promise are fulfilled. Abraham wrote in this chapter revealing how God is always faithful to keep His promises towards us, amazing how we forget this!

**II. Vs. 1-14 Laughter and sorrow**

Vs. 1 “*And the LORD visited Sarah* ***as He had said****, and the LORD did for Sarah* ***as He had spoken****.*” What a glorious truth this verse holds for us, that God keeps His promises towards us based upon His faithfulness. In Num. 23:19 we read, “*God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?*” If God promised based upon any other way, Isaac would not have been born. There are times that God chooses to promise based upon our faithfulness but most of the time God reveals to us that our faithfulness to obtain righteousness is worth less, as we are reminded in Isa 64:6 “*all our righteousness’s are like filthy rags*”.

Vs. 2 The first word we are told about Sarah back in 11:30 was that she was barren. In chapter 18:12 when she first heard that it was through her womb that the child of promise was to be born she laughed in unbelief and from a human standpoint at 90 years of age we would laugh as well. Yet the Lord asked her even though she was hidden inside the tent, “*Is there anything too hard for the Lord*?” The issue all boils down to Who you are depending upon to keep His word, (God or us). In Rom. 4:19 we read in the (ASV) that Abraham “*considered his own body now as good as dead*” which reveals that Abraham considered the impossibility of conception based upon his age and choose to disregard the circumstance and trust in God word, the opposite of what Sarah had done.

 Thirty years have gone by since Abraham and Sarah had left Ur in chapter 12, they are now 100 and 90 respectively. Look at those words “*at the set time*”; and the “set time” was the time it took for Abraham and Sarah to both realize that you could not obtain God’s promises by the work and energy of the flesh. ***It 30 years for them to die to self, to learn to trust God and His Word and not themselves.*** In Romans 7:18 we read that, “.. *I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.*”

Vs. 3-5 Isaac’s name was originally link to Sarah’s failure to trust God’s Word, yet in the end it becomes linked to joy in God fulfilling His Word in spite of our lack of trust. Paul wrote of this in 2 Tim 2:13 “***If we are faithless, He remains faithful***”. Sarah and Abraham could forever look at this child and when they would say his name (Isaac) they would be reminded that “***when I am weak, then I am strong***.” (2 Cor 12:10)

 By circumcising Isaac at eight days as he was told to do in 17:12, 23 they show that Isaac belongs to the Lord and not them. This will be further tested as Abraham is asked to place the child of promise upon the altar of sacrifice.

Vs. 6-7 Sarah’s doubt has turned to joy as God has placed what the psalmist calls in 40:3 “*a new song in my mouth; Praise to our God; Many will see it and fear, And will trust in the LORD*.” Sarah experienced something that she had lost hope of ever enjoying “motherhood”. And in a way to show her that God is a God of grace as He has done this marvelous work in spite of her failure to trust Him. Can you imagine the ladies at the well as Sarah came strolling up carrying Isaac?

 It is not our list of do’s and don’ts or our great victories in Christ that causes the world to want to know the God that we worship. It’s when they see missed up people who still fall on their faces and God loves them anyway. ***It is not our love for God that blows the mind of unbelievers rather it is His love for us!*** Sarah is blown out as Isaac suckles at her breasts, “*Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne him a son in his old age*.” We know for certain who wouldn’t have said it, SARAH! Yet now because of God’s faithfulness all proclaim His glory!

Vs. 8 Three years have passed since the birth of Isaac as that was the customary time that a child would be weaned. This event is another great reason to have a celebration. Christians celebrate reality because we know Him whose presence is brighter than the sun, whose love can find the most insignificant life and make them feel as if they are the most important person that has ever lived. What do you say Christian, “***let’s party***”!

Vs. 9 Thirteen years between the two brothers and it appears as though the change in Ishmael’s status with in the family was revealed by his actions towards Isaac. You will not read of their names together after this chapter until the 25 chapter as they together bury their father Abraham. The Hebrew puts it this way, “*And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham*, **always** *scoffing*.” In Gal 4:29 we read that “*he who was born according to the flesh then* ***persecuted*** *him who was born according to the Spirit*”. The word “*persecuted*” in the Greek comes from the root word that means to “*pursue aggressively*” or to “*aggressively cause another to suffer*”. This was not name-calling but a continual physical pursuit that was becoming increasingly serious. Paul’s words in Galatians indicate that what was behind this action was works verses grace, that Ishmael’s position of have earned his status was against Isaac’s which was by grace. The world has no problem with religion in fact humanism is the world’s largest religion with man as its object of worship. What the world hates is faith that is based upon a relationship with God. Christianity is simply people who have trusted in God’s work on our behalf and not any work!

Vs. 10 Sarah makes it clear what she wants done and the reason for it, “*Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac.*” This bound woman would not have had a son had it not been her suggestion (16:12). For 17 years Sarah was reminded of her attempt to obtain the promises of God in the energy of the flesh. She finally sees what God had tried to reveal to her all along that only the offspring born by way of grace can be heir of God’s promises there is no room for the work of the flesh! We are prone think of salvation through grace alone but sanctification through a combination of grace and the work of the flesh. Paul makes it clear in Rom. 4:4 “*Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt*”, folks God will be a debtor to no man!

Vs. 11 Abraham loved Ishmael for 13 years he was the only son he had, the thought of ridding himself of the son of his self-effort meant that he had to trust God to take care of the son by way of grace. This is true in the spiritual realm as well as we have become accustom to maintaining our relationship with the Lord in the energy of the flesh. Even though there may be no real fruit and living in Christ has become harsh and cold we have been doing things this way for so long we have so much time infested. No matter how many years we have tried to live our Christian life in the energy of the flesh it will never be pleasing to the Lord, just as Cain’s work was not an acceptable sacrifice.

Vs. 12 God’s solution is that which Sarah suggested, “*Get rid of the fruit of the flesh*!” There will never be a peaceful coexistence between the old nature and a heart of grace. **Works will always seek to earn the blessings that only grace can give**! Notice God’s affirmation of this in the words, “*in Isaac your seed shall be called*.” The word “seed” is singular thus it speaks of Jesus and Isaac becomes a type of Jesus by way of which man will be saved. Salvation and sanctification is through the “*Seed*” of grace, not through the “*seeds*” of works and grace.

Vs. 13 Here we see the mercy of God towards Ishmael based upon Abraham’s relationship with God through faith. Even though Ishmael was through the flesh of human effort God vows to bless him because of he is Abraham’s son. This points out the reality that much of God’s blessings upon our service is Him blessing not our

self-effort but rather blessing our relationship by faith to Him.

Vs. 14 Abraham loved Ishmael more than life but he shows He loves the Lord greater still. “What do you love more than life?” What old fleshly habit do you keep holding on too? Are you waiting for it to leave on its own accord? ***The flesh with its habits won’t desire to die, instead you will need to get up early and send it away***.

 At first glance it appears as though Abraham is being very tender as he sends them away until you realize that he was a very wealthy man and sends then away with only enough provisions to last a few days. Why did he not give them camels to ride upon and loads of donkeys to carry supplies? The answer is in God’s promise of verse 13, Abraham trusted what God said but knew that Hagar and Ishmael did not know this. ***To teach them to be dependent upon man instead of God would be far more crewel.*** The lesson they would learn is that they must not trust in self-effort or that which man supplies but only in the Lord can they put their trust.

**III. Vs. 15-21 A lesson in trust**

Vs. 15-16 Verse 14 described Hagar’s and Ishmael’s journey as “*wandering*” which suggests that it did not take long for them to use up their provisions. Abraham was used to teach them the way to go to the One in who all blessings flow. Ishmael was 17 years old when Hagar in her anguish threw him down by the shrub to die. She could not bear to be with him upon his death but as a mother could not be far from his cries either. She had gotten the end of herself with no hope in herself of resolving her despair, blinded by the situation, overwhelmed to the point of pity by her love for her son. Yet back in chapter 16:10 she heard the angel of the Lord say, “*I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude*.” God’s promise to her and her son 17 years ago and all she needed to do was recall upon God to remember His promise. But the flesh and works she represents can’t see it being done unless it is through their effort. ***An attitude of works can never comprehend anything being done by trusting God to do what He said He would, so when things go wrong there is only fear and despair***. What a difference there is between Hagar and Abraham:

* Hagar looked at her living son and saw death because she would not look at the living God.
* Abraham, looked at the living God through the deadness of his and Sarah’s bodies and saw life!

Vs. 17 “*God heard the voice of the lad*.” ***The Lord calls out from heaven in response to Ishmael’s cries not Hagar’s doubt.*** God always hears the cry of a heart that wanders in the wilderness no matter whether their wandering is by their own doing or someone else’s. The words, “*What ails you, Hagar*?” is literally “*What is this to you, Hagar*?” is to open her heart to God’s love. Hagar loved her son to the point that it had blinded her to God’s love for her son. She is reassured that God sees her son in his present condition and that she is not to fear.

Vs. 18 God gives a threefold action plain to lift her spirits:

1. “***Arise***”: She had seated herself in despair and she need to change her mental position from doubt to trust.
2. “***Lift up the lad and hold him with your hand***”: Hagar needed to move towards that which she feared (the death of her son) as it was this that brought doubt.
3. “***For I will make him a great nation***”: Finally in the Lord’s affirmation of what he told her in chapter 16:10 she needed to see why she was in despair to begin with failure to trust His Word.

Notice that her situation did not change until she responded in obedience.

Vs. 19 The spiritual truth is that the eyes of the heart must always be opened before we will see His provision for us. The Lord is always our only source of refreshment as we travel through the wilderness of this life. Is it not amazing to be so close to times of refreshment when we are dying of renewal and yet be blinded to it?

Vs. 20 “*So God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness*” the promises made to Hagar and Ishmael were fulfilled on the same basis as Sarah’s God’s faithfulness to keep His word and not their faithfulness to trust Him. In chapter 16 we read that Ishmael would “*be a wild man; His hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him*.” Yet the Lord was with him as he appears to have chosen to live in the wilderness and became an accomplished hunter.

Vs. 21 Finally we are told that he made his home “Paran” which is the eastern part of the great wilderness of the Sinai Peninsula next to Egypt. It is in Egypt that Hagar finds a bride for her son thus the Ishmaelite are both the root and branch of the Egyptians not of the Arabs. Egypt is a picture of the world in scripture and thus Ishmaelite’s would take after their mother and not their father. What a contrast as faith moves steadily closer to God and the flesh moves away from grace and steadily closer to the world.

**IV.) Vs. 22-34 Water in a foreign land**

Vs. 22 Chronologically it appears as though this took place before the time of Hagar and Ishmael’s departure, somewhere after Isaac’s birth. Abimelech is a title meaning ruler, not a person’s name. He is accompanied by Phicol, which means mouth of all and was most likely a title of a person that commanded Abimelech’s army (Gen. 26:26). They come to make a treaty with Abraham based upon the observation that “*God is with you in all that you do*” as seen in the Lord’s work through the birth of Isaac. This statement suggests that their observation was made based upon seeing the Lord work in behalf of Abraham in everyday life. This statement was not based upon Abraham always being faithful and deserving God’s blessings yet God still poured out His blessings upon Abraham. It was God that was with Abraham and not Abraham that was always with God that inspired them to make a treaty.

Vs. 23-26 The reason for this was that Abraham had not always treated Abimelech with honesty. The doors have been opened by Abimelech to mention a situation dealing with a well of water. It may have even been the well the Lord had showed Hagar. In a land with almost no rainfall wells were extremely valuable and ownership went to the one that dug it, thus it would have been Abraham’s. Abimelech seems to know nothing about the seizing of the well.

Vs. 27-34 An oath is made and ratified by the giving of seven lambs for a well that Abraham already owned. These well have been found 12 hours southwest of Hebron and back up what we see here. Here again we see the Lord fulfilling His promise as this is the first land that Abraham owned in the Land of promise the second will be in chapter 23 where he purchases a plot of land to bury Sarah. Abraham plants a “tamarisk” tree that is an evergreen, as a memorial of the peace the Lord had brought him based upon his relationship with Him. Here he calls upon the Everlasting God as he praises the God who does not change even when we are not faithful towards Him.

Genesis 22:1-10

“A test of Love (part a)”

I.) Intro.

II. Vs. 1-10 A journey of sacrifice

I.) Intro.

The 22nd chapter of Genesis is one of the most interesting chapters in the entire Bible. Interesting for several reasons:

* **Theological**: Does God ever ask us to do something that is contrary to His own character and nature?
* **Practical**: How would you respond if you were asked to kill your own child?
* **Spiritual**: What spiritual implications does this story have as seen in the NT?

The answers to these questions ought to challenge us to take a journey of sacrifice.

**II. Vs. 1-10 A journey of sacrifice**

Vs. 1 “*Now it came to pass after these things*”, sets the stage as to the timing of the event that Abraham is about to share with us. The phrases purpose us to get us to ask the question, “*After what things*?” The answer is after the events of chapter 21, which you will recall all centered around God keeping His promises. These three seemingly unconnected events each dealt with God keeping His promise. So we could write above verse 1 of chapter 22, “***After God showed that He always keeps His promises He tested Abraham!***” Without this context you would never be able to understand the events of this chapter. Allow me to sight two stories that reveal this:

1. L.A. Times columnist Jack Smith in his column said that if God told him to do this he would have told God to mind His own business. This seems to always be the response of people who don’t understand God’s Word.
2. Worse yet is the story of Andrew Cate who was sentenced to 60 years in prison after he was convicted of fatally shooting his two-year-old daughter. The reason for his action, he told the courtroom, was he expected the Lord to do a miracle and just like the Biblical story of Abraham and Isaac stop him at the last moment so he could win his brother to Jesus. ***The purpose was not so that God would do a miracle in order for someone else might be saved***.

The context is that of God “*always keeping His promises*” which leads me to the next thing that needs to be pointed out, **the test was for Abraham’s benefit not the Lords**. I’m aware that the angel of the Lord says in verse 12 “*for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me*.” But look at the words, “*God tested Abraham*”, God knew what was in Abraham’s heart it was Abraham that did not yet know.

But how does this square with James 1:13 “*Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone*.” Some versions even use the word “*tempted*” in this verse instead of “*tested*”. The key to understanding this is to be found in the word “*tested*” which is “*assayed or proved*”. In other words ***God knew what Abraham was in character but it he still had to be proved or tested so that all including Abraham would see***. The difference between what God does here and what satan does it that God's tests are to bring out what is good and satan’s tests are to solicit us to do evil. **God’s tests are designed for us to pass, satan’s are aimed at us failing.** This “test” was not a test that would produce faith rather it was one that **revealed faith**. It is this fact that James speaks of as he uses this story in chapter 2:21-23 “*Was not Abraham our father justified by works “****when****” he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God*.” The word “***when***” in James 2:21 would better be rendered “***in that***”, thus it would read “*Was not Abraham our father justified by works “****in that****” he offered Isaac his son on the altar?”* We know that the words “***In that***” is the right translation based upon what James goes on to say, “*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*” Abraham was not “*justified by works*” (saved) when he offered Isaac rather you will recall that this had happened in chapter 15:6 when He believed God about the promise of having a child approximately 40 years earlier. **James is saying that the “*proof or test*” of Abraham having been justified or saved is to be seen in an obedient life**. The greatest example is 40 years after he had given his complete trust to God he proved it by laying that which he loved the most upon God’s altar. All that this test or proof did was show that Abraham only had one person on the throne of his heart and it was not Isaac! Abraham’s response is an immediate, “*Here am I*” which he will repeat two more times in this chapter.

 “*The most difficult love to let go of is the one that you are most certain is a gift of God*”. Yet with that said **to place the promise above the promiser is the hardest form of idolatry to overcome**.

Vs. 2 There are four things to note here in verse 2:

1. “*Take now your son, your only son Isaac*”: As far as the child of promise was concerned God declares to Abraham that he only had one son. What this points out is what is brought to our attention in the story of Cain & Able, God never recognizes the offering of anything produced in the energy of our flesh.
2. “*Whom you love*”: This is the first mention of the word love in the Bible and it is in reference of a father’s love for his son. Abraham is being asked to give the dearest love on earth he has to God. ***In so doing he will learn of the difference of loving God more than even His blessings!*** In each of the synoptic gospels the first time we read of love is God the Father calling down from heaven and saying, “*This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*.” Then in John’s gospel the word “love”, which occurs more than any other book of the Bible, mentions the word for the first time in the very familiar third chapter verse 16. “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not parish but receive everlasting life!*” It seems that “love” in the Bible is continually being defined as a “fathers” love for his only son.
3. “*Go to the land of Moriah, …on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you*”: Moriah means “*chosen by God*”, this mountain range will one day the be the sight of the temple built by Solomon and rebuilt by Herod. The temple would be located where there was a threshing floor according to 1 Chron. 21:18-26. Which means there had by prevailing winds which would be able to separate the wheat from the chaff. Geographically the temple mount is the lowest of the hills followed by the Mount of Olives and the highest peak would be Calvary where tradition says that Abraham took Isaac.
4. “*And offer him there as a burnt offering*”: The word’s “offer and burnt offering” come from the root word that means “*to ascend or be high*” and though slaying a sacrifice was implied God did not actually tell Abraham to slay His son. In the Mosaic Law this type of offering was known as a “*sin offering*” and signified a complete surrender to God. The animal was first slain by having its throat slit, then it would be cut up and quartered to be place upon the fire so that the smoke would ascend up towards heaven.

So was God demanding a “human sacrifice”? The answer is simple by looking at what scripture says, you see you always interpret the difficult passages in light of the ones that are plain. In Deut. 12:31 we read “*You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods*.” ***God wanted Abraham to give spiritually what the sacrifice meant outwardly***. God spoke in terms physically that Abraham would comprehend the kind of surrender of the greatest earthly love to the greatest love. It also must be understood that God knew that Abraham would not fully comprehend this thus he had already provided a ram. ***What God wanted was not Isaac’s life but rather Abraham’s heart***. In obeying the Lord, Abraham showed to himself that Isaac “*the promise*” was not an idol in the way of God “*the promiser*”. “***We must not ever trust in the promise above the Promiser***”.

Vs. 3 There is not the slightest bit of hesitation on Abraham’s part, he seeks no other opinions, there is no argument from him towards God, no fleece or compromise. Know what else is missing in this text? We are not told how he felt about this. Because obedience is not based upon how we feel. So what is it based upon? Well, Heb. 11:17-19 tells us; “*By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense*.” Abraham’s obedience was based upon a five-letter word **TRUST**! He did not know how God was going to do it but He knew that God was going to do it and if need be God would raise his only son from the dead. The HOW and the WHY were not Abraham’s problem they were God’s. “*We must never doubt in the dark what God has told us in the light!*” So Abraham saddles up the donkey, split the wood by himself. Abraham does not ask his servants to do what God had asked him.

Vs. 4 Moriah was about 30 miles from where Abraham lived and took three days for them to arrive. What a great picture we have of the resurrection as Isaac was dead to him from the moment God had told him to offer his only beloved son now three days have passed.

Vs. 5 Two things of note here:

1. The words “*young men and lad*” are the same in the Hebrew and refer not to a small boy but rather to a young adult. We know that in 23:1 that Sarah lived to be 127 and that she was 90 when Isaac was born which tells us that 37 years had passed from Isaac’s birth to Sarah’s death. I’m of the opinion that ***Isaac is 33 years old*** which would make him the same age as was our Lord at the time that He traveled this same hill.
2. Abraham tells two young servants stay while he and Isaac go up on Calvary to worship. Then Abraham says something very interesting, “*And* ***WE*** *will come back to you*”. No one had ever came back from the dead but Abraham believes that God is able. They are going to worship the Lord after the third day of Isaac who is 33 being dead to his father upon a hill called Calvary and Abraham says, “Both of us are coming down the hill!” The only thing **impossible** in Abraham’s eyes was that of God breaking his promise of 21:12, “*In Isaac your seed shall be called*!”

Vs. 6 Did Abraham somehow know that this was a test, that God would not require this of him? This verse answers this question with NO! If Abraham knew that this was a test why the wood upon the back of Isaac? Why the knife in one hand and the fire in the other? Spurgeon said, “*Abraham took the knife up that hill, he did not forget it. As he took that knife it was cutting into his own heart with every step they took yet he kept walking. Unbelief would have forgotten the knife or dropped it along the way but faith takes it and hangs on to it even though it is cutting your own heart deeper with each step*!”

 Notice also the phrase, “*and the two of them went together*”, Isaac was 33 he could have easily over powered his father. Literally the phrase in Hebrew means “***the two of them went in agreement***.” In Heb. 10:5-7 we read speaking of Jesus “*When He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come; In the volume of the book it is written of Me; To do Your will, O God.*”

Vs. 7-8 Isaac asks a very good question “*Where’s the lamb*?” In the 13th verse we are told that a ram is caught in the thicket by its horns but a ram is not a lamb. Isaac understood that innocent blood must be shed for sinners to be able to approach God thus he asks about the provision for the sacrifice. Literally this phrase in Hebrew is “***God will see the lamb for Himself***”. Hundreds of years later a prophet named John the Baptist looked out across the Jordan River where he was baptizing and on the bank of the river answered Isaac’s question, “*Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*!” (John 1:29) You see there was another father’s son who would walk up that same hill at the same age with wood upon His back only there would be no ram caught in a thicket as God would provide Himself a Lamb.

Vs. 9-10 It was not the twine that held Isaac as it would not be the nails that would hold the Son of God. No it was the love of his father that placed him on the altar atop the wood. So a Son lay on top of the wood ready to be sacrificed and a father with a knife in his hand was ready to take his son but God will provide a sacrifice. “*Abraham displayed his heart towards God by willing laying his son upon the altar, but God also displays His love towards a sinful world by placing His son upon the altar of the cross*.” As God spoke to Abraham in verse 12 “*now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me*.” We too can say to Him, “***Now I know that you love me, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me***.”

Genesis 22:11-24

“A test of Love (part b)”

I.) Intro.

II. Vs. 11-24 God will provide Himself

I.) Intro.

The story of Abraham’s offering of Isaac provides such an opportunity for us to appreciate the “Gift” of the incarnation of Christ in a way in which we can experience the its true value. Last week we left off with Abraham walking up the hill of Calvary with his son Isaac in total agreement. Abraham builds an altar arranges the wood in order, binds his son and places him atop the altar. The binding of Isaac was not to keep him from getting away any more then it was the nails that kept our Lord on the cross. If Isaac wanted not to be placed upon the altar he would have never allowed his father to tie him up to begin with. What was it that kept Isaac on the altar was the love for his father!

II. Vs. 11-24 God will provide Himself

Vs. 11 Abraham was completely willing to act upon the Word of the Lord, why else did the angel of the Lord have to stop him? The point is, “*God takes the heart before He takes the action*”, and He takes the “*will for the deed*”. When God sees that we are truly willing to obey no matter what the consequences He will often not require the sacrifice. *A lot of folks want to know the will of God before they act. It is interesting to me that God looks at it from the opposite way, as He wants to see if we will act before He will let us know in which way we are to do so*! The knife never needed to go into Isaac as God saw that it had already been plunged deep into the heart of Abraham.

 Notice who it is that stops Abraham, The angel of the Lord! Several chapters back in Genesis that the “*angel of the Lord*” came before Abraham and in each case this was a theophany or christophany which is a pre-incarnate manifestation of Jesus. So it is none other than Jesus. Abraham is taking his beloved son up to Calvary with wood upon his back to be a sin offering in obedience to the Lord and Jesus says, “*Abraham, Abraham, don’t touch your son for I know what lies upon the throne of your heart! And one day the world will know what lies on the throne of My Fathers and My heart*!” Abraham had said to Isaac that “*God will see the lamb for Himself*” and there was a ram in the thicket but there was also a Lamb there who would take away the sins of not just Abraham and Isaac but the whole world!

Vs. 12 Abraham’s offering of Isaac in obedience to God’s word was not because he thought if he didn’t God would punish him, instead it showed that Abraham understood God’s character of faithful, unchangeable, merciful and full of loving kindness. In Hebrews 11:19 we read that Abraham “*concluded that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead*”. It doesn’t say that Abraham concluded that if he didn’t do as God had said he would squash him like a bug!

 When God asked Abraham for the greatest demonstration of love and commitment, He asked Abraham for his only son. Why not ask for Sarah his wife, I mean his sister? Why not ask for all the possessions he owned? In Hebrews 11:9 we are told that “*he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country dwelling in tents*”. Because his possessions were not what was nearest his heart, what was nearest his heart was the child of promise. When you stop and think about it there is only one thing that could ever be placed upon the altar and that is the promise God has made towards us. Back in Genesis 3:15 God spoke to Adam and Eve concerning a child of promise that would restore fellowship between God and man. God was placing Isaac and through Isaac, Jesus upon the altar showing all what one day He would do for all of mankind. We can look at the baby in a manger and say to the Father as Jesus said to Abraham, “*for now I know that you love me, since you have not withheld your Son, your only Son, from me*.”

Vs. 13 Notice that God still required a sacrifice. He did not say, “*Hey Abraham you are a real good person and you have proved that to Me so that’s enough*!” Instead there was still a sacrifice only the Lord provided this one. Now in this substitute Abraham looked up and saw a ram instead of a man. Yet as Jesus was there Abraham could well of looked into the future redemption of all of mankind and saw a Man instead of a lamb! That is what Paul proclaims in 2 Cor. 5:21 “*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*.”

Think of the emotions that Abraham must have went through when he lifted his eyes and looked behind him and saw the ram caught by its horns in a thicket. Isaac was dead to him, thus the hopelessness of this moment was no doubt heavy upon his heart, he had believed according to the NT that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead and figuratively this is what God did in providing a substitute sacrifice. We are told that the ram was caught by its horns and in Scripture the horns are always a symbol of strength and power. As this relates to Jesus we see that Jesus was held by His strength and power upon the cross and this same strength and power that would raise him from the dead.

Vs. 14 One would think that Abraham would have named this hill later to be called Calvary, trial hill or agony hill but that is not what he calls it. No instead he aptly names it “*The Lord will provide*” mount, or as the Hebrew renders it *“Jehovah Jireh*”. Thus it bears the name that testifies of God’s intervention speaking to the truth of God’s presence and provision in providing the Lamb of God in His only begotten Son. Moses interjects by saying that during his day it was known as God’s provision Mountain. As people would go by that place they would say, “*That’s the place where God provided Himself a sacrifice*” not knowing that it would the same place that God would provide His only Son as our sacrifice for our sin.

 According to verse 4 all of this has taken place after the 3rd day and in 1 Cor. 15 3-4 Paul writing to the Corinthians concerning the importance of the resurrection says, “*I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures*”. The key phrase is “*that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures*”. You can search the scriptures in the OT to find a reference to the resurrection happening on the 3rd day and you won’t find one except for this one picture in Isaac. Isaac was reckoned dead the moment God gave the command to take him to Calvary and thus he was made alive “raised” after the third day.

Vs. 15-16 We are told that the Lord swears or takes an oath to Himself. It is this incident that the author of Hebrews in chapter 6 refers to saying, “*when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,*

*Saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you*.” The point in doing this is to give assurance to Abraham and us. When God who is truth and cannot lie promises to Himself to do what He has said it is like saying “*I guarantee it*!”

Vs. 17-18 Look at the phrase “in blessing I will bless you”, in other words I’m going to bless you in the same way as I have said before but I’m going to do so in a way that will exceed what you could ever ask or imagine! In these two verses the Lord gives three promises to Abraham:

1. “*I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore*”: In chapter 15:5 God promised Abraham descendants that would be as the stars in heaven, now God says that they will be as the sand on the seashore. Some bored mathematician calculated this both as 10 to the 25th power. Now this speaks of you and me as we are grafted into this by faith.
2. “*Your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies*”: The gate of a city was the key to controlling the whole city, thus the idea is that those who have the Lord on the throne of their heart will never have to be concerned about being helpless as God is our help!
3. “*In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice*”: The idea here is that all who trust the Lord as Abraham proved will be blessed. This is rewarded to us on the bases of God’s grace.

Vs. 19-24 The final section in this chapter speaks of Rebekah’s descendants. Rebekah you will recall is going to be Isaac’s wife. Now what makes this interesting to me is verse 19 as it says, “*So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba*.” We know that Abraham sacrificed a ram instead of Isaac but there is no mention of Isaac coming down the hill only Abraham. I’m not suggesting that He didn’t because we are told 24th chapter that Abraham sends his servant “Eliezer” to find a bride from among the people mentioned in the final five verses of chapter 22. Why doesn’t Abraham mention Isaac coming down the hill which he by faith believed would and clearly does in chapter 24?

 I suggest to you that this is a picture of what happened after Jesus rose from the dead. He ascended to the Father where we are told that he is preparing a place for us His bride and one day soon He is going to come and get us so that we will be with Him forever. Here’s what we see in this passage Isaac is not mentioned as leaving from Calvary and instead Abraham speaks to us about Isaac’s bride’s family. Then in chapter 24 Abraham (Isaac’s father) sends his servant “Eliezer” to bring the bride back to his son. “Eliezer” name means comforter! Wow! This passage is placed here as a picture of what we as the bride of Christ are waiting for, the Son to send the comforter to come and get us to be with Him. It reminds me of something I read the other day. A parent had a child that was in a 2nd grade school play. Amazingly the public school had allowed some of the Christmas songs to be sung. The played centered upon the words Christmas Love and the students sang a little song describing things that illustrated Christmas Love. Obviously what they left out was Jesus. So as they sang the song each letter stood for what they felt was indicative of Christmas love. All was going well until the little girl that was holding the “M” in Christmas started fidgeting she got the letter turned upside down so that it was a “W”. All the students, teachers and parents were trying to get here to turn it back to an “M” but she just thought that they were enjoying the play. The final part of the play came when all the letters were put together to spell out the words “Christmas Love” but instead spelled out “*Christ was Love*”!

Genesis 23:1-20

“Shalom for Sarah”

I.) Intro.

II. Vs. 1-9 A resting place for Sarah

III. Vs. 10-20 Possessing a promise

I.) Intro.

The next two chapters of Genesis we will look at two events that draw families together, a funeral and a wedding. A whole chapter is given to the burial of Sarah and like most of Abraham’s life he does so with trust in the Lord. There are few things that bring more emotion and confusion into a life then the death of a loved one so it is appropriate to look at how a person of faith handles grief.

**II. Vs. 1-9 A resting place for Sarah**

Vs.1 Literally this reads “*And the life of Sarah was 127 years, the years of the life of Sarah.*” She is the only women in scripture whose age and death are recorded in scripture. She lived some 37 years after the birth of Isaac and 60 years with Abraham in the land of promise. Although there are many godly examples of women in the Bible Sarah shines above them all including Mary the mother of our Lord who we call blessed. Sarah is the only woman in who women are admonished to follow as an example.

1. Isa 51:1-2 “*Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness, You who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were hewn, And to the hole of the pit from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father, And to Sarah who bore you; For I called him alone, And blessed him and increased him*.”
2. 1 Peter 3:3 NLT “*Don't be concerned about the outward beauty that depends on fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. You should be known for the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God. That is the way the holy women of old made themselves beautiful. They trusted God and accepted the authority of their husbands. For instance, Sarah obeyed her husband, Abraham, when she called him her master. You are her daughters when you do what is right without fear of what your husbands might do*.”

In Eccl 7:1 we are told that “*A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of one's birth*”. Solomon’s point is that there are two times that your name will be mentioned at your birth and at your death and what is thought of you concerning your name at death is the way it will be remembered. Sarah’s named in scripture is remembered well!

 In light of the fact that most woman don’t like to mention their age with Sarah it appears to be an honor. What was significant about Sarah was not her outward beauty (*though we are told she was quite attractive*) but rather her inward beauty. We live in a beauty obsessed society in which young girls seek to emulate their movie, music and model stars. In my opinion we teach young women far too much about outward beauty and not enough about the beauty that does not fade. Too much time and money is spent on packaging while what is inside is ugly! We need to encourage our daughters to become like Sarah and our sons to marry Sarah’s! Recent insurance actuary tables indicate that pastors, their wives and employees live longer than the rest of the work place. In other words spend time on the inner beauty of the heart and not only will you look and feel better you will live longer.

Vs. 2 Sarah died in the city of Arba better known as Hebron the “city of treaty”. They had been absent from this location for some 40 years, although some believe they lived in two locations the other being Beersheba (22:19). This is the first time we are told in scripture that a man wept. He was not afraid to show the loss he felt for a loved one. Every time we weep over the loss of a believer we show three things:

1. That love is a gift and a privilege we have had in sharing it with another
2. That death is an enemy which will one day lose its sting
3. That the reason we are temporarily separated is because of sin

With that sad our weeping is not as the world which weeps with at hope but rather as only a temporary loss awaiting a greater reunion. Paul wrote to the Thess. 4:13-14 “*I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus*.”

Vs. 3-4 Though we are told that Abraham wept his sorrow did not go beyond his understanding as he takes care in finding a place where her body can be placed. He tells the sons of Heth that he is a foreigner and a sojourner among them. That is he lived as a person with no fixed habitation, living on land that which in the worlds eyes belonged to someone else. Yet in requesting a burial place he is indicating that this is the home for his descendant’s. This becomes the second piece of land in which Abraham purchased, (*the first being the well in chapter 21*). Scripture indicates that 6 people would be buried their including the bones of Joseph that he requested the nation to take with him when they left 400 years after coming to Egypt. Yet prior to Joshua coming back with the nation the only people who lived on owned land were those that had died. What a great picture this is for us who like Abraham are “*waiting for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*” We two may be laid to rest in a plot of ground, which is not our final destination. Jesus told us as much in John 14:1-3 “*Let not your heart be troubled; you 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 to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*”

Vs. 5-9 The sons of Heth first offer the land for free, which was a normal way of bargaining. This was rejected then an inflated price was then offered to which the bargaining began. Yet notice that Abraham does not bargain and offers to pay full price. The Christian ought to do business the way in which Abraham did so:

1. Vs. 7 **Politely** “*bowed himself to the people of the land*”: Remember that Abraham was a wealthy and powerful man yet he dealt with the world in a manner of humility. Manners cannot be underestimated in our dealings with the world as they are watching us all the time. Having spent many years in the Jewelry business I can tell you that by far and away the worst customers I dealt with as far as rudeness were always church goers.
2. Vs. 8 **Prudently** “*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*”. Abraham was not wishy washy his yes meant yes, he was man that honored his word. Again I need to say that this was not my experience with many of those that said they were believers.
3. Vs. 9 **Properly** “*Let him give it to me at the full price, as property for a burial place among you*.” Finally Abraham was willing to pay full price. I just hear Christians say to fellow believers “*Hey brother since I go to Church why not give me a deal?*” My response was always; “*Since you go to Church I go to Church why don’t you may pay me double?*”

One of the greatest witnesses to the fact that we live in a fallen world is seen in that people have title deeds to cemetery plots. People own a patch of dirt in which to receive our dust. Grace has something far greater then a place to place our bones. Abraham purchases land not just to house Sarah’s remains but for a future for his descendant’s. The cool thing for a believer is that all we end purchasing is an empty whole in the ground.

**III. Vs. 10-20 Possessing a promise**

Vs. 10-13 The sons of Heth continue to try to bargain even though Abraham has already offered full price. He again bows himself before them in an act of humility taking the low road instead of the haughty one. His way of doing business is not the way of the world but rather in the way of faith. We ought not to ask to pay less then what something is worth.

Vs. 14-16 Ephron does not ask to be paid the price but rather states the amount that the land is worth and says not to worry about it. Still Abraham believes that you can’t out give the Lord and when you think about it 50,000 for the nation of Israel was a small amount to pay. I can only imagine the amazement of the sons of Heth as Abraham only weighs out the amount. Notice that it as in the currency of the merchants, which was a higher standard then what other would pay.

Vs. 17-18 The completion of the sale has happened and Abraham now owns by title what by faith was already his. This was not for him but for those who would live after him. I love this because we are told in Eph. 1:13-14 that we too “*were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory*.”

 We are told the details of what was included in the land that it was insight of Mamare the place of “vision”. So Abraham would look out his tent door to where Sarah’s body rested and by faith he knew that this was not where she was.

Vs. 19-20 Abraham lived 60 years in the land of promise as a nomad, but before he dies he gives a gift to all who would follow him as a sign the he possessed the land already by faith that one day God would bring it to fruition. We read of Joseph in the 2nd to last verse of Genesis speaking to the children of Israel concerning his burial, “*God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here*.” And sure enough in Exodus 13:19 we are told that “Moses took the bones of Joseph with him”. Finally in Joshua 24:32 we are told that “*The bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel had brought up out of Egypt, they buried at Shechem, in the plot of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of silver, and which had become an inheritance of the children of Joseph*.” It would take hundreds of years for all of this. We too wait for our Joshua to take our bones to the land of promise, the land of our inheritance. All we can say is what the apostle John said in Revelation 22:20 “*Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!*”

Genesis 24:1-27

“A bride for the only begotten Son”

I.) Intro.

II. Vs. 1-13 A servants search for the bride

III. Vs. 14-27 Seven characteristics of the bride

I.) Intro.

# God enjoys a “*good love story*”, there is Adam and Eve, Joseph and Mary just to name of two. Jesus’ first miracle was performed at a wedding and He has been performing miracles every time He has been invited to a wedding sense. Out of the 50 chapters in Genesis, chapters where we read about creation and mankind’s fall, the largest chapter (67 verses) is here and dedicated to finding of a bride for Abraham’s son Isaac. At the time of this chapter Abraham is 140 years old and Sarah has been dead three years. This chapter also serves as a bridge from Abraham to Isaac his son who will occupy our attention from chapter 24-26. In looking at Isaac’s life he has three major events which parallel Jesus’ life:

# His birth = Jesus’ incarnation

1. His offering as a sacrifice = Jesus’ death and resurrection
2. His marriage = Jesus’ wedding with His bride

# These 67 verses can be examined from three different perspectives each have value merit:

# Prophetic: Isaac is the child of promise to which one day Jesus would be born, so the mirage of Isaac is important as it shows God’s redemptive plan moving through generations as well as the care in which God takes in selecting a bride for the lineage of the Messiah.

* Picturesque: The marriage of Isaac is a typology of what God the Father does in getting a bride (the Church) for His Son. In fact in revelation 21:9 we are even called the bride of Christ. In Romans 7:4 Paul reminds the Church that we have “*be married to another; to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God*.”
* Practical: The marriage of Isaac is important as it reveals to us how important marriage is to God. God is keenly interested in us becoming and finding the right person to be united together. Great marriages don’t just happen they are made. They are not the consequences of marrying the right person they are the result of working hard to become the right person.

### II. Vs. 1-14 A servants search for the bride

Vs. 1-3a The words “*well advanced in age*” suggests that the aging process in Abraham

Was becoming more visible. It is also interesting to note the commentary put in here *“and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things*.” God had promised Abraham many things and had fulfilled all but one, “*the becoming a great nation*”. Yes, he had been blessed with a son of promise but Isaac had not yet married even though he is around 40 years of age. Based upon God’s past faithfulness Abraham is confident of the Lords ability to keep this promise.

 The oldest servant in Abraham’s house based upon 15:2 would have been Eliezer who had served Abraham some 60 years. In chapter 22 Eliezer’s name means “*comforter*” and he is an obvious parallel to the Holy Spirit. We can easily think of the typology of the Father desiring a bride for His only begotten Son who though having died has been raised to life. The work of the comforter is an interesting one as it is He who selects the bride following the word of the Father and magnifies the Son in her sight. It is Eliezer who makes sure that the bride has the right characteristics to be brought to the Son. It is Eliezer who showers her with gifts in preparation to be wed.

 The placing of the servant’s hand on the thigh of Abraham was a symbolic gesture that reveals how important to Abraham that Isaac’s bride is not from the world. ***Heaven is not where “good people” go after they die, it is where redeemed sinners go to be married to their groom***! God places two important things on marriage:

1. First we see God places importance upon the bride in becoming the right person for marriage.
2. Secondly He places importance upon marrying the right person, that is to say not marrying a nonbeliever.

Vs. 3b-6 Abraham does not want Isaac to take for himself a Canaanite women to be his wife. Here then is the point, “*Whose family do you belong too?”* If we are from the family of God then we ought not to be looking to be married to a Canaanite but rather one from the family of God. There have been far too many believers who have practiced missionary dating and marriages with the idea that they will be able to transform the person of Canaan. Abraham did not want a bride form those, “among whom I dwell”. In other words Abraham was ***IN*** the world but not ***OF*** the world and he did not want his son to be married to someone ***OF*** the world.

 Look at verse 4, notice that even though Isaac is forty years old he is not to leave the land of promise. ***We who have been called out of the world must not return to it***. Eliezer asks a natural question, “*What if I can’t find a woman who will go with me, can I take Isaac to the woman*?” We learn two things based upon their conversation as it relates to finding a spouse:

1. It is most importance that we choose a spouse who is in total spiritual agreement with our self.
2. Second, make sure that this spouse has the same heart towards a relationship with God. This is seen in her having to separate from her family and world, thus leaving her old life behind.

There are three principals found in this chapter that show how best to prepare for marriage be that to our spouse or as the bride of Christ.

## Three Principals to Prepare for Marriage

1. Vs. 1 **Maturity in the Lord**: Remember here that Isaac is around 40 years old his mother Sarah has been dead three years and his father Abraham is around 140. Yet it is not Isaac who goes out to find his bride it is his father Abraham who leads the way. Abraham who had learned to trust God instead of himself. The best way a person can prepare for marriage is growing in their personal relationship with God.
2. Vs. 2a **Led by the Spirit**: Abraham seeks out his “oldest servant” for the task of going to find a bride. According to chapter 15:2 that would have been *Eliezer* “*comforter* “who had served Abraham 60 years. In John 14:16-17 Jesus prays to the Father that He would give them another “Comforter”, that He may be with them forever, even the Spirit of truth. Here we see that he had complete authority over Abraham’s entire house. If you want a glorious marriage it will be very important to allow the “Comforter” (Holy Spirit) to have complete control over your entire house. In verses 2b-3 we see the importance of the being mature and being led by the Spirit in the oath that Abraham had Eliezer make to not choose a woman form among the Canaanites. Isaac’s choice for a bride ought to be from a woman that loved God and not from one that loved the world.
3. Vs. 4-9 **Trust and obeys the Lord**: In verse four Abraham tells Eliezer to go and get a wife for Isaac. And Eliezer naturally asks the question, “*What if I find a woman but she won’t go with me can I take Isaac?*” Behind this question is: “*If the woman won’t come to Isaac can Isaac go to the woman?*” Abraham’s answer is very definite NO. This tells us that preparing for marriage involves simple trust in God. Eliezer wanted to see if he could bend the rules a little, to which Abraham replies, “*No way*!” Learning to trust and obey God no matter what is absolutely essential in marriage.

**We too ought to seek to grow in these three things in marriage or the preparation for it**:

* **Maturity**
* **Led by the Spirit**
* **Trust and obeying the Lord**

Vs. 10-20 From verse 9 on to the end of this chapter the word “master” appears 22 times, which is a picture of the Holy Spirit who according to Jesus’ words in John 16:13-14 “*will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.*” It is always the work of the Holy Spirit to bring the bride to the Son by glorifying the Father and the Son.

Eliezer packs 10 camels with his master’s goods and travels a long journey to find a bride. Eliezer, took with him gifts to give the bride as a deposit guaranteeing the brides inheritance. Sound familiar? It is what we are told in Eph. 1:14 “*the Holy Spirit of promise, is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory*.”

Vs. 11-13 Eliezer arrives outside the city gate with 10 thirsty camels and no plan to determine how to spot the right qualities in a bride for Isaac. So he prays and God gives five qualities to look for to see if she is a woman that is mature in the Lord, led by the Spirit and will trust and obey God. These five qualities are all found in verse 14 with the corresponding answers found in verse 15-20: “*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*.” Eliezer asked for signs that would be remarkable but not impossible for a woman to fulfill.

**III. Vs. 14-27 Seven characteristics of the bride**

God has prepared this before Eliezer is done asking! Rebekah comes upon the scene and she is the 2nd generation from Abraham’s brother, will Isaac’s 2nd cousin. She has her pitcher upon her shoulder.

1. **Unselfish**: Vs. 14, 17-19 Camels drank up to 20 gallons each, which meant that this was well over an hour’s worth of work. No small act of kindness! We are called to be the bride of Christ and will live a life of service towards others an unselfish life, one dedicated to serving the Groom by way of the Holy Spirit.
2. **Courteous**: Vs. 18 tells us that when Eliezer saw her and made his request she responded with the words, “*drink my lord*”. There was a softness and a brokenness in the way she replies to Eliezer. It is one thing to do the act and another to do it with a right heart. Rebekah demonstrated that she had not only wanted to serve she did so with a right heart.
3. **Ready to serve**: Vs. 15, 19, 22 tells us that her pitcher was on her shoulder and she did just as Eliezer had hoped as she offered to serve him in watering the camels as well. She was willing to start the task but even more important she would finish it. A good many Christians will have a right heart to start the task but the greater question is will they complete it when there are five more smelly camels to go?
4. **Cheerful**: Vs. 18, 20 If Rebekah gave water she would have to draw water which in saying she would do so reveals two things concerning her cheerfulness:
5. **Word**: She was not the type to say, “*Get it yourself or* *how much are you going to pay me*?” Her service reveals that she was cheerful in that she was willing to share herself with others.
6. **Deed**: Second, she reveals a cheerful heart in that she waited until all had finished drinking. In other words her cheerfulness was not lip service it was in her heart as she did noting ½ way.
7. **Good shape**: Do the math up to 20 gallons of water per camel 10 camels is 200 gallons which means that she was drawing and carrying a lot of water. Just assume for a moment that she carried the water in a 5-gallon container that would mean that she carried 40 pounds 4 times per camel or 40 times which would add up 1,600 pounds. What this speaks to me is that a heart of a bride desires always to be in good shape for the groom. This is a great picture of staying in good physical shape but it speaks to me as the bride of Christ that we ought to make it our aim to stay in great spiritual shape with the Lord. Our “service” with a right heart keeps us in great shape!
8. **Very beautiful**: Vs. 16a She was attractive both on the outside but most importantly on the inside. When you saw her she caught your eye but when you met her you found that her beauty was not just skin deep. This makes me think of the fact that we will be presented as the bride of Christ without a spot or a blemish. Saint’s God has never made anything ugly that includes you and me.
9. **Virgin**: Vs. 16b She had lived a life separated to God and thus she was pure in her life. A set apart heart is always seen in a set apart life style. By the way guys this verse is for us as well. If we are ready to be with the Groom then we will demonstrate as much by keeping ourselves pure in Him.

Vs. 22-27 Look at what Eliezer has to say after he has found the women who has prepared herself for marriage. “*Praise be to the LORD, the God of my master, Abraham. The LORD has been so kind and faithful to Abraham, for he has led me straight to my master's relatives.”* He recognized that the work of guiding and preparing the heart for marriage was all the Lord’s work. He shows this by placing a ring upon her nose that weighed ¼ ounce and bracelets all fit for the bride. All this spoke to her that her groom was very wealthy something that she had no idea to start with. Eliezer asks ***two more questions which she must answer to be the right person***:

1. “*Whose daughter are you*?” Now obviously these question are designed to find out her origin and belief. Here is what I see in this, “Do you love the Lord?” Whose daughter are you? Are you in love with the world or with the Lord? Such a great question is it not? You cannot be the bride if you are not His child.
2. “*Tell me, please, is there room in your father's house for us to lodge*?” This question has to do with whether Rebekah has room for Eliezer to stay with her. Remember that Eliezer name means “*comforter*” and he is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. So then the Holy Spirit is asking if there is room for Him in her heart. Not buying it? Well then ask yourself who is the “Us” that he speaks of? I believe that he is speaking of himself and Isaac.

There is only one thing left for them to do, worship the Lord for His faithfulness in finding a bride for the Son of promise. May we too be prepared for the groom!

Genesis 24:28-67

“Leaving an old life for new laughter”

I.) Intro.

II. Vs. 28-49 An offer she could not refuse

III. Vs. 50-67 Leaving the world to be untied with the son

I.) Intro.

We began our study through the 24th chapter of Genesis by observing the many different ways in which this chapter can speak to our hearts:

* **Prophetically**: As it shows God’s redemptive plan moving through generations as well as the care in which God takes in selecting a bride for the lineage of the Messiah.
* **Picturesque**: Of what God the Father does in getting a bride (the Church) for His Son.
* **Practical**: The marriage of Isaac is important as it reveals to us just how important marriage is to God.

One author put it this way “*Rebekah is the perfect typology of the Church consider this: She was thought of before she knew it and chosen before she knew she was to be married to the groom. Her future husband had a miraculous birth and was the only Son. He passed through sacrifice and was raised from the dead all before she knew him. The father sent a helper to seek out a bride for his son and he wooded her not for himself but for the son bring gifts as a pledge of future inheritance. She obeyed the call to be wed to a son she had never seen separating herself from the world and traveling with the helper to the son that had loved her before she loved him*.” How great is our God?

**II. Vs. 28-49 An offer she could not refuse**

Vs. 28-29 I love this, as Rebekah wastes no time in running home to tell them the exciting news. In verse 27 Eliezer the servant of Abraham says something interesting concerning being guided by the Lord, “*being on the way, the LORD led me*”. Do you see that? A lot of times we want to be led by the Lord but we try to do so without moving. Eliezer had no idea what and how God was going to accomplish finding a bride for Isaac but he knew that he had to be moving for the Lord to lead. **It is always easier to steer a moving vehicle then it is a parked car**! So let’s all get going so the Lord can lead us!

 Here is the first time we are introduced to this character Laban, Rebekah’s brother. We shall see only a hint of his character here but in chapter 31:30 we will see that he worships idols.

Vs. 30 What impressed Laban was the nose ring and bracelets on his sister thus his motive for hospitality had dollar signs. There are a lot of folks like Laban who are attracted not to the wealth in Christ but rather the wealth of the world as seen in possible business contacts that lie in the Church. So they join a Church (usually the largest in town) in order to fleece the flock of God.

 Notice the words of Rebekah, “*Thus the man spoke to me," that he went to the man. And there he stood by the camels at the well*.” The Helper pursues us with the Father and the Son’s love but He will only come into dwell with those that invite Him in. Eliezer did not come and break down the door, neither will the Lord kick down the door of our hearts. Jesus said in Rev. 3:20 “*Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone* ***hears My voice and opens the door****, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.*”

Vs. 31 Laban uses the right terminology in saying, “*Come in, O blessed of the LORD*!” The word Lord here is Yahweh the covenant name for God but with Laban if Eliezer had been Chinese he would have said, “*Come in, O blessed of Buddha!*” Just because someone uses Christian jargon and words does not mean that they follow God. Laban is a type of person in the world who will pay homage to the God of Christians and even claim they are part of the body of Christ. They do so not because they want the God we proclaim, no they want the blessings we have because of our relationship with Him.

Vs. 32-33 What a contrast Eliezer (helper or comforter) is to Laban. Eliezer comes into their home and only wants to speak of another. The servant has come to take the things of his master and make them known to others? He will not eat or rest until he has done so! He has a singular focus to get a bride for his master and nothing will interfere with his calling not even personal needs and comforts. Not only is that the work of the Holy Spirit according to John 16:13-15 it is also the primary work of all God’s servants. ***We are not here to correct the moral decay of the world, to straighten out the social evils but rather we are to speak to the world the Person and purpose of the Son.*** Paul told the Corinthians this in the 15th chapter saying, “*I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved*”.

Vs. 34-49 Here we see Eliezer retell the story, to Rebekah and her household. As we read his retelling of this event notice the three things that he speaks of:

1. Vs. 34-35 He speaks of Abraham and his many blessings. Essentially he declares that Abraham is, great, wealthy and powerful. We too ought to speak of the Father and His many blessings. Eliezer does not speak of himself but of another the father and of his house. He shares who the father is how wealthy and powerful he is. This is the first words from Eliezer and the bride will never want to leave there perceived wealth until they are convinced of the riches in Christ!
2. Vs. 36-37 Second Eliezer proclaims the uniqueness of **the son of promise** Isaac. At his birth he was miraculously born and is the sole heir of promise. He also speaks of Isaac’s separation from the world in as much as the bride has to be separate from the world.
3. Vs. 38-49 Finally, Eliezer speaks of **his mission the gathering of a bride for his master’s son**. The servant has taken his master cause and made it his own and the Lord guided him right to where he needed to be thus the mission was a complete success.

Eliezer speaks the gospel to Rebekah and her household! I’m afraid that we Christians have forgotten what we are to speak of to the world perhaps this passage of scripture will help us get back on track.

**III. Vs. 50-67 Leaving the world to be untied with the son**

Vs. 50-51 Laban seems to be in agreement here saying, “*This seems to be of the Lord as far as I’m concerned go ahead and take Rebekah.*” What is interesting to me is that the work and word of the Lord is undeniable even to those of the world. People do not fail to believe because of the lack of evidence in the message no they refuse to believe because there IS evidence in the message.

V. 52-53 Eliezer worships God for his success in finding a bride for Isaac and Laban’s acceptance of the offer. She is given a deposit as a guarantee of a future inheritance because she is the chosen bride of the son of promise. Her family is blessed because of its association with her even though they are not going with her. When an agreement of marriage had been made it was customary for the bridegroom (or their representative) to give the family a dowry of gifts to demonstrate the groom’s financial ability to provide for the bride. Often times we see this in our families as well, as those who are not believers are blessed by God’s riches because of their relationship to us. His blessings and riches of His grace are not intended to indicate that they have a relationship but rather that His goodness is leading them into repentance! If Laban would have just said those words and Rebekah would have left with Eliezer we would have no reason to doubt his sincerity. But with the words, “*He also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother*” we have a truer picture as to why there was the acceptance by Laban to allow Rebekah to become Isaac’s bride.

Vs. 54-55 Notice that this is not solely a call of separation from the world but rather a call of separation to the groom. The picture is that we are never called to give something up that we do not receive so much more than our former life ever gave us. Amazingly we see Rebekah totally willing to leave all to be with a groom she had never met and only just heard about. This makes her words of verse 58 “*I will go*” words of faith!

 We also see the words of Laban as words that the enemy and the god of this world will tell Christians, “*Let the young woman stay with us a few days, at least ten; after that she may go*.” We are reminded of the words of Jesus to a person that wanted to follow Him in Luke 9:61-62 “*Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house. But Jesus said to him, No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God*.” ***If the world can’t keep the person from becoming a believer it will attempt to delay their departure.*** The enemy will do everything possible to keep a person from being separate from the old life as it loves a compromised Christians so it can say, “*See, there is nothing to this Christianity they are all just hypocrites*!” One author put it this way, *“Procrastination is not only the thief of time, it’s the thief of eternities reward*!”

Vs. 56 Eliezer’s response to this is seen in his words of “*Do not hinder me, since the LORD has prospered my way; send me away so that I may go to my master*.” In other words delaying will only make the departure harder and since God was clearly in this (*even Laban agreed with this*) then why wait?

Vs. 57-60 Rebekah is called in to make a decision on her own. Can you imagine the pressure upon her to make a decision to delay her departure? All she ever known, her mother, family and friends, to leave with a servant that she barely knew for a man she had never met. But still there is no hesitation, no conditions only the words, “*I will go!*” This is the same words the Holy Spirit uses today to every person He invites to become Christ’s bride and we too must not hesitate or make conditions. The only response the world can say is bless her and send her on her way. You want to witness to those in the world? Well here is the clearest way to do so respond to the invitation to be separate from the old life by saying; “*I will go*!”

Vs. 61-63 We are not told much of their trip together but we know that camels only travel 3 miles an hour and they went across the desert. It is my opinion that Rebekah would have wanted to know all she could about her groom and would have passed the time by asking all sorts of questions, which the servant would have gladly told her. The other thing I wonder is if during this long, hot, boring trip if she would have had any doubt creep into her heart. You know what I mean the kind of warfare that says, “*What have I gone and done leaving all I have ever know, my family and friends to marry a man I have only heard of from a servant I just met*!” It would not surprise me to find out that this was the case. Then I remembered that she was given those gold bracelets to put on her wrist, which as they bounced around on those camels would jingle reminding her of the inheritance that awaited her. So with every step closer she was thinking of what it would be like to be joined with him.

Vs. 64-67 I enjoy the romance and beauty of this passage. This is the first time Isaac has been mentioned since he was left on top of Mount Moriah (Calvary). So to with us as we await to meet our Groom whom we have not seen and only heard of since His resurrection. Look now as we see Isaac prepared to take his bride as he comes from the well of oath and went out to the field to pray in the evening and lifted up His eyes to see the caravan coming. Rebekah prepares to meet her groom by dismounting and covering her face, both are signs of humility and submission. Eliezer, tells Isaac of all that the Lord had done on his behalf to find a bride for him. Finally we are told that Isaac takes Rebekah into his mother’s tent to become his wife and he loved her. We too will one day be brought into our Father’s house to be one with our Lord and we will be comforted as we lift our eyes and see Him who will proclaim to us His love towards us.

Genesis 25:1-34

“The passing of the torch of faith”

I.) Intro.

II. Vs. 1-18 Abraham’s other life

III. Vs. 19-28 One birth two nations

IV. Vs. 29-34 Boy’s will be boy’s

I.) Intro.

This chapter serves as the passing of the torch of faith from Abraham, to Isaac and finally to Jacob. Isaac married Rebekah when he was 40 years old (*verse 20*) and according to verse 26 they were barren for 20 years until the twins were born. We know that Abraham was 100 years old at the birth of Isaac that would make him 140 when Isaac married and he lived according to verse 7 to the age of 175. That means that he saw his grandchildren for the first 15 years of their lives. As we leave Abraham’s story behind it is important to recognize that only Moses is mentioned more often in the N.T. than Abraham. Through the Bible we can see what is commonly referred to as the scarlet thread as it is through certain men that we trace the lineage of the Messiah too. What amazes me is to see just whom God chooses to be ancestors of Jesus.

**II. Vs. 1-18 Abraham’s other life**

Vs. 1 We are told here that Abraham remarried most likely around the same time that Isaac married Rebekah. Keturah, according to 1 Chron. 1:32, was a concubine as was Hagar. Apparently when God rejuvenated Abraham’s body so that he and Sarah could conceive it remained so. Her name means “*perfumed*” and after Sarah had passed away and Isaac wed Rebekah Abraham raised her to the level of a wife.

Vs. 2-4 Abraham and Keturah had six sons most likely born early in their 35-year marriage. In this genealogy are the names of six sons and then their 2nd son’s “Yok-shawn’s” two sons “Sheba and Dedan”, from there we see Dedan’s three son’s.

 In verse 4 we have Abraham and Keturah’s 4th son Midian and his 5 sons, it is this 4th son that is of interest to us as Bible students. Moses fled from the Egyptians after killing the Egyptian to the land of Midian and sat down by a well as seven daughters of Jethro a priest of the Midianites came to water their flocks. The other shepherds would not let these seven gals water their flocks but Moses stood up for them. A grateful Jethro gave Zipporah to be his wife and their Moses would live for some 40 years.

 As for the rest of these descendants they are mixed with the descendants of Ishmael, Lot, Esau and others to form the Arabic peoples.

Vs. 5-6 Notice that Abraham makes sure that Isaac is his sole heir of the son of promise and it will be through him that all the nations of the earth will be blessed. Because of this while he was still alive he gave gifts to these six sons and sent them east away from Isaac. Abraham did not want any worldly influence upon the descendants of Isaac and he makes sure of it while he is able to do so. The application for us: “*We too are called to be separate to the Lord and one day we will be for eternity but the choices for eternity are made while we are still alive and as such we need to make choices for eternity now*!”

Vs. 7-11 At the death of Abraham we are told five things about him:

1. Vs. 7 **The amount of years of his earthly life**: 175 years is a fulfillment of God’s Word to him in Gen.15:15 where we read, “*you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age.*”
2. Vs. 8a **The quality of his life of faith**: The phrase that is used, “*full of years*”, is an interesting one as is describes a person at a great banquet who has had plenty to eat, drink and laugh but has decided to call it a night without any regrets. Though that is a nice secular picture we have somewhat of a different picture as believers. Jesus spoke to the Pharisees and said that “*Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.*” In other words “*Abraham left this life with a hope full of immortality, which the world knows nothing about because He saw the day of Christ, and was glad.*” The person of faith has a quality of life that goes far beyond having fulfilled their hearts desire during their earthly existence too that of seeing that their ship for an even greater life is about to set sail, thus the words of 15:15 “*in peace*” carry much more importance!
3. Vs. 8b **Life was not ending it was just beginning**: There is an interesting phrase here, “*was gathered to his people*.” The question is, “*What people are they speaking of*?” In God’s word to him back in 12:2 the promise was made that he would become a great nation but he has only one son of promise and Sarah is the only one that has proceeded him in death. This cannot be speaking of his past ancestors because God had told him that he was a new nation and it can’t be speaking of those buried in the same locations because there is only one person buried there, Sarah. That means that “*His people*” are the people of faith and that they are not dead but alive. Jesus answered a question on the resurrection by saying, “*God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.*” Life was just about to begin for Abraham as he would be joined with “*his people*” who preceded him in faith, three of which we are told of in Hebrews 11 “*Able, Enoch, and Noah*”.
4. Vs. 9 **The impact of his death**: We last heard of Ishmael with Isaac when he was 17 years of age. Now we are told in chapter 16:16 that Abraham was 86 when Ishmael was born and we know that Abraham died at 175 which means that Ishmael is 89 and has been apart from Isaac for 72 years. Several things come to mind:
5. Though Ishmael’s departure was a hard thing he still looked upon Abraham with love why else would he have come to pay his final respects?
6. It seems as though Abraham’s life and now death has brought reconciliation for these two sons.

The person of faith’s ministry does not end at their death it just continues to touch hearts and lives.

1. Vs.10-11 **A ministry that brings life and death**: They bury their father in a field that he purchased for his descendants of faith. This cave was a title deed to the land of promise but it would only mean something to the sons of promise. Today we have a dispute over this land because of the blessings that God has granted to it through the sons of promise. The fact remains the Muslims did not care about it 100 years ago when it was nothing more than a rock pile! Isaac make his home at the “*Well of the living One*” Ishmael make his home in the world at a place that means “*he that suffers pain*”. Havilah was known for its gold but it was the pursuit of those worldly riches that cause those that chase after it to “*suffer pain*”. Abraham’s life of faith spoke “*life unto life and death unto death*” it led one to live refreshed be the well of the living One and the other suffering pain in the world.

Vs. 12-16 Here in the genealogy of Ishmael we have the fulfillment promised to Abraham in 17:20 “*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*.” Most likely this was a record kept by Ishmael and given to Isaac at their reunion of their father’s death. As I said he would have been 89 years old when these 12 sons were reining as princes of their tribes.

Vs. 17-18 Ishmael was 137 years old when he died 58 years before Isaac would die. It is interesting that it says here that he was “*gathered to his people*” this is a phrase that is seen only seven times in scripture and in each case it speaks of a person of faith. That leads to the speculation that perhaps Ishmael became a follower of the God of Abraham and not the gods of Egypt. This is the only reference of this phrase being used and we aren’t sure of whether or not they were believers but in every other case we are certain then it would tend to tip the scales in favor of Ishmael’s trust in the Lord God of Abraham.

**III. Vs. 19-28 One birth two nations**

Vs. 19-20 Here is the start of the genealogy of Isaac which is very brief even though he will outlive all the other patriarch’s at 180 years. While Ishmael had 12 sons Isaac and Rebekah remained barren for 20 years (*verse 26*). Interesting that both couples had to wait a long time for the children of promise to be born. What this suggests to us is that God seems to always test us in the area of learning to wait upon him and not trusting in our own efforts. The cool thing is here unlike his mother and father they did not try to produce what was there’s by faith in the energy of the flesh, instead waited for God’s grace to produce what was promised. It seems as though they had learned a valuable lesson from their parents, “*God’s delays are not denials*!”

Vs. 21-24 Instead of trying to produce the promises of God in the energy of the flesh they seek God through prayer:

1. This is the only intercession of a husband for his wife recorded in scripture and I can’t help think that this represents why so many marriages are not doing well. Isaac understood the importance of the Messianic line coming through him. I love the fact that he places his trust upon the Lord being able to accomplish what He has promised and calls out to God based upon this and is rewarded in his trust by Rebekah’s conception.
2. We see Rebekah turn to trust the Lord during a difficult time in her pregnancy. You see she knew that her conception was an answer to prayer so when she experienced something that seemed to contradict this she took her thoughts and feelings before the Lord for an answer. God answers comes back four ways:
3. “*Two nations are in your womb*”: She is going to the mother of twins which we be the fathers of two nations. For 20 years she had prayed for “A” child of promise and now she finds out that God is able to do exceedingly abundantly more then we can ask or imagine.
4. “*Two peoples shall be separated from your body*”: Literally these two boys will father two nations that will have nothing in common and be apart from each other forever.
5. “*One people shall be stronger than the other*”: One of them will be the father of a strong nation the other will be the father of a week nation.
6. “*And the older shall serve the younger*”: The second born shall be ahead of the older thus the normal pre-eminence was to be reversed.

It seems logical that Rebekah told Isaac as well as her two sons what the Lord had spoken, yet there was obvious bias any way. Why? Because Isaac did not like God’s choice. Paul uses this story to illustrate divine election being based upon grace and not merit. Rom. 9:10-11 “*when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls*)” In other words says Paul, the choice of Jacob over Esau had nothing to do with future works as the choice was made in the womb. God’s choice was not based upon His foreknowledge but rather his will as it says “not of works” present or future. This means that God’s choice was based upon His character and not ours. He does not choose me because He looks down the halls of time and says, “*That Dale is going to turn out all right so I think I will save him*.” God has made salvation available to all in fact we are told so in 2 Peter 3:9 that He is “*not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*” Time always proves that God’s choice was the right one.

**Follow me on this**: If God’s choice is based upon grace and not works and He is not willing that any should perish then that means that “God does not choose some for hell but rather that men who reject Him choose it for themselves, even though He knows there choice.” This is Jesus point in John 3:19 “*And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil*.”

Vs. 24-26 The birth of these two boys was the beginning of the fulfillment of God’s prophecy about them while still in Rebekah’s womb.

1. Vs. 25, 27a **Esau**: Came out first with reddish-brown hair all over so they named him “Hairy” and later he would get the nick name “Red” for the selling of his birth right for a bowl of red stew. We are told that he was a “*skillful hunter*” these phrase is always used in an evil sense and only appears one other time where it refers to Nimrod. The phrase “*man of the field*” does not mean that he pursued agricultural pursuits but rather that he disdained them, as he was a man of the open country. Hebrews 12:6 calls him a “*profane person*” which literally means “*outside the temple*” and refers to the plot of ground just in front of the temple in other words common ground outside the sacred place. Esau was outside in the world and wanted to remain that way.
2. Vs. 26, 27b **Jacob**: Would come out next grabbing the heel of Esau so he was given the name “*Heeler or heel grabber*”. The name came to mean a “*con-artist or a scoundrel*” and was not a compliment. Yet with that said Hosea the prophet in 12:3 says that, “*He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and in his strength he struggled with God*.” It seems that the problem with Jacob was that he trusted far too much in his strength. The use of the word “but” in verse 27 to describe Jacob sets him in contrast or opposite view of Esau. The word “mild” is used 13 times in the Bible, (9 times = perfect, 2 = undefiled, upright = 1, mild =1). Perhaps a better rendering of the word would be “mature” as Jacob worked at home and took God’s promises seriously while Esau played and thought of God’s promises as no big deal.

Vs. 28 Each parent loved the boy who displayed qualities opposite their own and there was obvious partiality even though God had already made known His choice.

1. Isaac loved Esau, because literally “*game was in his mouth*”. This strikes a chord with many fathers as they favor the child because of the games they play. Isaac loved Esau because he tickled his taste buds.
2. Rebekah loved Jacob as she saw his character and qualities that would make him a great leader which confirmed in her heart the word she had heard from the Lord.

This verse serves as a rebuke to both parents: To Isaac for favoring a son that had carnality in his heart instead of God just because he liked the meant he brought to the table. To Rebekah, because God had already showed her His plan and she needed only to trust that God would work it all out.

This verse alongside Malachi 1:2-3 has drawn God into a debate over favoritism for years. “*Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" Says the LORD. "Yet Jacob I have loved; But Esau I have hated*”. We need to understand these terms “*love and hate*” in context. God speaks of having His purpose of choosing Jacob to be the heir of the covenant of Abraham and a descendant in whom the Messiah would be born. The idea is that God chose or accepted Jacob and didn’t choose or accept for His purpose Esau. His choose of Jacob was not based upon merit neither was it some type “*eeny-meny-miny-moe*”. It was based upon His sovereign Holy character even though from man’s perspective appears to be unfair. We think it unfair because Esau, we conclude is a good fellow and deserved not to be rejected! Yes, but neither did Jacob deserve to be accepted! Both were undeserving of acceptance yet God in His grace chose Jacob and time bore out the truth of that decision.

**IV. Vs. 29-34 Boy’s will be boys**

Vs. 29-30 This story here becomes the turning point in the lives of these two. To understand this we need to look at two things:

1. What was the significance of the birthright?
2. To whom did the birthright normally go?

**First,** the birthright customarily involved a double portion of the inheritance but also involved the leadership or headship of the family. Thus the birthright carried with it a twofold blessing “***physical blessings***” with “***spiritual responsibility***”. In this case the “*birthright*” determined who would inherit the covenant that God made with Abraham, which involved a future nation, all the land and eventually the lineage of the Messiah. Esau very much wanted the “*physical blessing*” but without the “*spiritual responsibilities*”. To me this describes a lot of people I know that want the “*birthright*” of a relationship with God for the “*physical blessings*” of going to heaven when they die but they are not interested in “*spiritual responsibilities”* to die to self and live for God!

**Second**, normally the “*birthright*” went to the eldest son accept in case where the father would transfer it to a more deserving son. In this case we have several factors that should have indicated to Isaac that the “*birthright*” should have been Jacob’s and not Esau’s:

1. They were twins age was not a determining factor in this case. Normally age would indicate maturity but they were only minutes apart not years.
2. Jacob was much more spiritually and emotionally mature then was Esau. Esau wanted to play and not work; he had no heart for the things of God as Jacob did. Observation made this choice an easy one to make.
3. Most importantly God had told them while they were yet unborn which one He had chosen to receive the birthright.

Vs. 31-34 The indication that all of the above is true is illustrated by this story. This story was chosen by Jacob to show the truth that the birthright should have been his but it is not the sole reason why it was his! There probably were hundreds of such occurrences in the lives of these two boys that should that Esau had no heart for the “*spiritual responsibilities*” as future head of the family. Jacob was cooking a stew of lentils and Esau came in from playing in the field “*weary*” which means faint with hunger. His response to Jacob is “*let me gulp down some of that red stuff*” it is here that he received his nickname “Red”. Some really go after Jacob here as being deceptive or taken advantage of a starving Esau however the fact that this story serves as a nickname for Esau appears to me as though this may have been said as a joke. Esau’s response to this was “*I’m going to die one day anyway so what use is the birthright to me.*” Esau saw that the birthright gained him only temporal advantages and would be lost upon death, not so with Jacob. To think about this how long would it have taken Esau to fix something for himself? What this shows is an inward character that was both lazy and living only for the here and now. Esau wanted only personal self-gratification something that he could enjoy now and had no concern for the future and God’s blessing for a nation.

 From Jacob we can admire his hunger for the things of God and that he wanted the “spiritual responsibility” of the head of the family. We cannot embrace his method to obtain what God had already promised was his. God did not need his help and this shows that Jacob has some growing up in faith to do as well. Jacob bargained for what was already his by grace! It is interesting to note that in 27:29 many years later as Jacob comes back into the land he attempts to give back all of the “***physical blessings”*** to Esau that he gained by obtaining the birthright by trickery.

 We close with Esau despising his birthright for a bowl of red stew I can’t help but think of the many times we Christian’s have been willing to sell the joy of the Lord for the pleasure of sin for a season. How we have traded the illusion of time for the reality of eternity, busying our lives with trash finding that we have no time for God and His word. In recent polls it has been discovered that men and women will spend more time shaving and applying makeup then they do reading His word and prayer. Seems to me that we are still selling our NEW birthright for a mess of soup that will never satisfy!

Genesis 26:1-33

“In the footsteps of his father”

I.) Intro.

II. Vs. 1-11 Like father, like son

III. Vs. 12-33 From blessed in the world to blessed of the Lord

I.) Intro.

This is the only chapter devoted exclusively to Isaac the events of his life are summed up in this chapter. His life looks a lot like that of his father who had been dead for some time. There is something interesting in observing these three patriarch’s, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as it relates to our lives. Their lives seem to be centered around three distinct activities that each is known for: “*Building altars, digging wells and pitching tents*”!

* Abraham: *Builds altars*, four times we are told that he does so. Altars were places of worship, so Abraham’s life seems to have centered on the worship of God. Yet it is recorded that he only dug 1 well and pitched 2 tents, (*accept for 26:15 where it is obvious that he dug many wells*)!
* Isaac: “*Digs wells*”, five times we are told that he dug wells and each time he seems to re-dig the ones that his father had dug. Wells of water in scripture seem to always point to God’s provisions for a healthy spiritual life. In John 4:1-4 Jesus told the women, “*Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst!*” Then you have that phrase in Ephesians where Paul says that Jesus cleansed us by the “*washing of the water of the word*”! Isaac is a man that emulates the spiritual life of faith of his father. Yet we are told that Isaac builds only one altar and only pitches his tent twice.
* Jacob: “*pitched tents*”, 4 times we are told that he pitched his tent. Tents are always used to symbolize a person’s abode during their spiritual journey. Jacob goes down as a guy who no matter where he was at made his home in the Lord. Yet, as far as the other three activities of his forefathers, he built only one altar and dug no wells.

We too ought to be “*altar builders, well diggers and tent pitchers*” in our lives. We need to always be folks who:

* Long to sit at the feet of the Lord to worship Him.
* Come and dig deep in His word to be refreshed by Him.
* And find that wherever He has placed us, *(as long as we are in constant fellowship with Him*) we are at home.

II. Vs. 1-11 Like father, like son

Vs. 1 Unfortunately Isaac fathered in his father’s footsteps in sin as well proving that human nature does not evolve from generation to generation, there is no such this as the “*generation gap*” when it comes to sin and failure! Isaac, like us, will spend far too much time in “boarder land” in between the land of promise and the world but God will lead him back to a place of His presence.

Vs. 2-3a A 100 years have passed from the time when Abraham experienced a famine in the land. The use of the name Abimelech here shows that this was a title not a name. This is the 1st time in over 50 years that we are told that God appeared to Isaac, the last time we are told so was the time on Calvary where God confirmed the covenant He made with Abraham. The surprising thing is that Isaac ends up going to Gerar, which is located 10 miles from Gaza which is on the border with Egypt. It seems to me that we Christians will react one of two ways when we are facing a spiritual drought or famine:

1. We will head towards the world seeking comfort or support
2. We will draw closer to God in order to experience more of His provision and love.

Egypt is always a typology of the world and Isaac like us so many times are tempted to employ worldly means to sustain our needs. God is always warning us not to “*go down to Egypt*” but rather “*stay in the land*”. *Isaac was to go where God directed and not where the situation dictated*! The only way Isaac would know where to dwell was to be nearer the Lord!

Vs. 3b-5 To reassure Isaac of His ability to sustain him in the land God reaffirms the covenant that He made with his father. So that Isaac would know that God had chosen him as well as his father. The promise has three blessings attached to it:

1. Lands: “*for to you and your descendants I give all these lands*”
2. Nation: “*And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven*”
3. Blessing: “*in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed*”

The bases of these promises we are told is twofold:

1. God’s grace: “*I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father*”.
2. Abraham’s faith: “*because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws*.”

“*The promises were based upon God’s faithfulness to Abraham and Abraham’s reaction to this seen in four areas of obeying God’s voice*.”

1. “*My charge*”: Is an observance, that all that Abraham saw and heard was important to God Abraham did.
2. “*My commandments*”: Here were things that God specifically told him to do or not to do. This would be like God’s commandment to leave his former home of Ur.
3. “*My statutes*”: The idea here is that of immutability or unchangeableness in nature. This would be like God’s statue of circumcision.
4. “*My laws*”: This involved instruction, like God instructed Abraham to sacrifice Isaac.

Isaac had been brought up with this but this is the first time it directly involved him. In God laying all of this out for Isaac He is reminding him that we are not saved based upon our obedience rather our obedience is the first sign of our new life.

Vs. 6 As I said Gerar is a border town in between the land of promise and Egypt, it is a far cry from “*Beer-sheba*” or the well of oath where God will move him by verse 23. Isaac at first moves towards where he thought the situation dictated he goes and not where the Lord was directing him. There are far too many of us Christians living in “*borderland*”, like Isaac, we see how close we can live to the world without actually being there. With all the places Isaac could have chosen to live in the land of promise he chose the closest place to where God told him he could not go. Is it any wonder that he repeats the same sin of lying about his wife as did his father? Later on though we will see that the closer he came to the “*well of oath*”, the more blessed he becomes and the world will come take notice of that. Saints, “*Let’s live on cutting edge with Christ which is on the other side of the world*!”

Vs. 7-11 This is the third time we have seen the same sin which is an inability to trust God! Isaac like his father before him was willing to risk his wife’s purity for the price of personal protection. They had been married 35 years and like his mother she is a beautiful woman. It is not long after being in the land that Abimelech looks at his window to see Isaac and Rebekah acting like husband and wife, not brother and sister. One wonders what the explanations were about Esau and Jacob. Like the leaders before him Abimelech is summoned to rebuke Isaac for his unbelief. To this worldly rulers credit he establishes rules to keep any harm from coming to Isaac, Rebekah and their family.

**III. Vs. 12-33 From blessed in the world to blessed of the Lord**

Vs. 12-14 It is the “*goodness*” of God that leads to repentance so we are told and this is made very clear to us here as God blesses Isaac to move him where He wants him. Even though Isaac experiences blessing while living on the border we should not fall into the thinking this was a sign saying that his dwelling there was blessed. Simply put God blesses people not places there is no such thing as “*God’s country nor God forsaken*”. This is the first mention of “*seed sowing*” in the Bible which has its parallel in Christians sowing the seed of the word of God into the field of the world. Sixty fold in a few years would have been thought of as extraordinary but 100 fold the first year was a sign of God’s abundant profession. So the outcome of God’s blessing was twofold:

1. “*He became very prosperous*”: Although he had already been given the inheritance of his father he now was added even more.
2. “*The Philistines envied him*”: Along with the blessings of God often comes spiritual warfare in a greater magnitude.

Vs. 15-17 Envy led to spite as they stopped the wells that Abraham had dug and Isaac was using. In ancient cultures the digging of a well represented a claim of possession upon the land in which they were dug, which they obviously resented. All that Isaac saw was that these wells enabled him to prosper in “borderland” and it is this success that Abimelech blames as the reason for his countryman’s actions. Isaac chooses to be a man of peace, not a man of war as he leaves only a little ways away.

Vs. 18-22 His intent was to make each place he moved a place to set down his roots but each time a dispute arises which forces him to move. Isaac did not realize it but God was leading him home one well at a time. Notice that he re-digs the wells that his father dug naming them the same thing that his father had named them. In so doing he is following the faith steps of the father of faith. I find it interesting that the world stopped up the wells so that those could not drink freely of them. “*Have you found your spiritual life becoming dry? Have you had a hard time finding refreshment in the Lord? Hey, why not go back and uncover the wells where you have drank freely from in the past*?” The truth is when you find yourself thirsty go back and dig out a past well! D.L. Moody once said, “*This book will keep you from sin and sin will keep you from this book!*” **We need to guard the Word with our life so the word will guard our life!**

 As Isaac dug out new wells that his father did not dig he named them:

* Vs. 20 “*contention*”
* Vs. 21 “*opposition*”
* Vs. 22 “*roominess*”

The first two were good wells but they were in the wrong land. God does not want His children to dwell in the land of “*contention*” and “*opposition”*, but when they come into where God wants them to be they will dig wells and call them “*roominess”.* Let’s make sure that we aren’t digging the right wells in the wrong place, move away from the border and back to the promises of God. God uses Isaac’s wrong opinions, “*abundant water and lack of hostilities*” to lead him to a place of commitment.

Vs. 23-25 The greatest change upon Isaac’s travels happens when he realizes that it ought not to be circumstances that leads him but rather the Lord. It is upon digging the well of “roominess” that he sees that the further he is from the world the more freedom he has. Upon further looking at this we find that this well of “roominess” was the first place he and his father went to upon leaving the mountain of sacrifice in chapter 22:19. Isaac finally has come to see with his heart where his feet had already been taking him to the land of promise and sweet fellowship with the Lord. As he surrendered to the Lord’s guidance in his life he found true freedom without any “*contention*” and “*opposition”*.

 Verse 25 Records the order in which he does things as:

* Built an altar
* Called on the name of the Lord
* Pitched his tent
* Dug a well

Before, in his life, he had always sought to be refreshed before he had worshiped now he knows that refreshment comes as we sit at the altar. No matter what the circumstance the best place to make our home is at the altar, it there that we will find His provision of grace in times of need, thus he finally dug a well.

Vs. 26-33 One last thing to see here is with all of the blessings while living in “borderland” it is only when Isaac is back in the freedom of the Lord that Abimelech says, “*You are now blessed of the Lord*”. While he had material blessings in the world now he had so much more that the world comes to want the peace that he has.

Genesis 26:34-27:46

“The pathway of pragmatism”

I.) Intro.

II. Vs. 34-17 A tangled web

III. Vs. 18-48 That’s my boy?

I.) Intro.

Isaac was a man who re-dug his father’s wells and went the direction away from the border with the world. In the 25th verse we saw that the Lord led him back to the place of “roominess”. There he built an altar, pitched a tent and dug a well. There is a truth that all I ever needed I experienced when I first met the Lord and the rest of my Christian experience has been about me coming back to when I first met Him. In this chapter we discover that there is no magic in a physical location, only in the location of the Lord in our heart!

 In the story before us of God’s chosen family there is not a one of them that acts as an altar builder, well digger or tent pitcher. How could such a dysfunctional family be dwelling in “roominess”? A one-word answer is all we need the “FLESH”. I remind all of us, our flesh, our old nature will never improve! ***In this body our flesh will not get any better no matter how many Bible verses you memorize or times you come up for prayer***. Only in a crucified life in which we die daily to ourselves can we come out smelling like Him!

**II. Vs. 34-17 A tangled web**

Vs. 34-35 Here we see further evidence of what God knew before the womb of Rebekah that Esau was not to be in the lineage of the Messiah. Hebrews 12:6 calls him a “profane” person, “a person just outside the temple”. Esau had no regard for the things of God as that is the meaning of the word today. His choice of brides reveals this in two ways:

1. He left the practice of monogamy, which is what God had said in the garden and practiced by his forefathers.
2. He marries TWO Hittite women whose culture was extremely wicked and idolatrous. The name “Hittite” comes from their ancestor Heth who was the wicked son of Canaan.

This is no doubt the cause of the grief of Isaac and Rebekah who had been chosen to his bride because she was not among the Canaanites.

Vs.1-4 Reading these first two verses it would seem as though Isaac decided to bless Esau because of a since of urgency as he thought he was about to die but upon careful reading that was not the case.

1. Yes Isaac was 137 years of age, which was the same age as his ½ brother Ishmael but we know that he would yet live another 40 plus years. The urgency was not his years but rather his flesh as he was trying to circumvent God’s choice of Jacob.
2. Secondly you notice who was not present when Isaac made this declaration? Where is Rebekah, where is Jacob? Normally blessings were transferred in the presence of all the family such as we shall see in chapter 49 when Jacob will bless each son in the presence of all. Why the secrecy? The prophecy given to Rebekah while the two were tossing in the womb. Amazingly in spite of the prophecy and the obvious dissatisfaction over Esau’s choice of brides and the earlier selling of his birth right for red stew Isaac still favors Esau.

Isaac is trying to bake an apple pie using rotten apples, so he does it in secret. If what we are doing is right why do we do it in secret? Esau is not innocent of this “*secret plan*” of his father’s as he goes along with it perhaps thinking he will finally get one over on his younger brother.

 It appears at first that Isaac was governed by his appetite but looking at verse 9 and verse 30 it appears that Dad couldn’t taste the difference between goat and wild game. What this shows is that what governed his choice was not his palate but rather the activity of Esau. As I was studying this verse I realized that I’ve done this countless times as God has revealed something in my heart yet I want the opposite so I devise a plan and ask God to bless MY plan even though it is the opposite of His will!

Vs. 5 Jacob and Esau were most likely around 75 by this time and Isaac had a good plan if it had not been for the fact that Rebekah had a habit of listening in. According to the Hebrew she made it a pattern to keep an eye on Isaac and Esau which suggests that she was suspicious of a plot to overturn God’s revealed will.

Vs. 6-8 Esau barley leaves the tent when she runs to tell Jacob the plot and put her own plan in action. The first sign that something is wrong with the parents thinking is in the words of verse 1 and 6 “*my son, her son*”! They were prone to think of the two boy’s as Esau being Isaac’s boy and Jacob being Rebekah’s boy. The truth of the matter is that they were neither. In verse 7 Rebekah mentions to Jacob that this blessing was going to be “*in presence of the Lord*” something that Isaac did not mention to a spiritually indifferent Esau.

Vs. 8-10 We are left with only two possibilities concerning Rebekah’s plan:

1. This was a spur of the moment thing and these things just came into her head. For us to believe this is quite difficult as all the details she gives with the supplies of Esau’s clothing and goat skin gloves would have to have been readily available.
2. The more likely possibility is that this was premeditative, as she would have had more time to gather the things necessary to pull of her plan. She had weighed out the possible objections that Isaac would have had of Jacob pretending to be Esau and came up with answers. Just the fact that she had Esau’s clothes suggests this to me, as Esau was now married and no longer living with them.

There is no way we can justify Rebekah’s actions. We can understand them in light of the fact that Isaac is circumventing God’s will but it is still wrong. She is an example of a person who takes it upon themselves to carry out the plan of God because they see God as unable to carry out His own purposes. Instead of trusting God to fulfill what He had promised she matches wits with her husband in a case of dueling boy’s. Note this Christian, “***Good intentions do not justify wrong actions***!”

 There is a name for this kind of behavior it’s called “*pragmatism*” or “*situational ethics*”. Whenever we are willing to abandon the question of whether something is right or wrong, or fail to ask if Jesus would approve we are voiding out His will for ours. At times I think we Christians are interested more in what “works” then what is right! “*Hey, if it produces the results that we want then let’s do it*!” The Lord reminded Israel through the prophet Isaiah saying, (NLT) “*Listen! The LORD is not too weak to save you, and he is not becoming deaf. He can hear you when you call*.”

 There is something else we need to see in Rebekah’s words of verse 10, “*Take the food to your father; then he can eat it and bless you instead of Esau before he dies*.” Both Rebekah and Isaac seem to see his blessing as a “*Midas touch*” that God has to bend to. It is as if they both felt, as this was some way to manipulate God’s plan to their will. Esau could have had the birthright and 1,000 blessings and it would not have changed the fact that God honors whom He has called not who we name!

Vs. 11-12 Jacob should have said, “*Mom, this is wrong and it’s against God if He wants me to have the blessings and birthright then He will make it happen*!” Instead he lists two complaints:

1. Vs. 11 Look Mom this plan will never work. That’s the reason he did not want to behave in a wrong manor? The plan has too many complications to work. In situational ethics, such as these, it all boils down to the premise that an emergency over rules the matter of something being right or wrong. How much better is it for us when faced with things like this to say, “*It is wrong, justify it any way you want but I want no part of it!*”
2. Vs. 12 His second objection deals with how he will look if it doesn’t go as planned. The word deceiver is actually the work that means “mocker” and it seems to suggest that Jacob was afraid that if it got caught that it would appear as if he was mocking his father age with it sight, taste and smell limitations. Jacob is more concerned with it not working then it being right or wrong! The consequences of failure outweighed proceeds of success. This is a horrible deterrent to sin as again it puts the decision upon being able to be convinced that the crime is worth the risk. Godly men don’t make decisions based upon practicality but rather upon principal. The truth of the matter is crime does pay it’s getting caught that doesn’t.

Vs. 13 Rebekah answers Jacobs two concerns of complications and risk of failure with one sentence: “*Let the curse fall on me, dear son, said Rebekah. Just do what I tell you. Go out and get the goats*.” “*I’ll take the blame for you and I’ve thought of every detail*”, was her answer to his weak objections. There are four things that we ought to do when faced with these situational ethics:

1. Rom. 12:21 “*Don't let evil get the best of you, but conquer evil by doing good*.” Two wrongs never make a right!
2. She could have gone to her husband and reminded him of what the Lord had spoken. Thus speaking the truth in love. The best place to start would have been confessing the sin of favoring Jacob over Esau in her own heart.
3. She should have reminded herself and Jacob of the consequences of trying to obtain the promises of God in the energy of the flesh, (Ishmael)!
4. Finally she should of simple trusted the Lord and left the matter in His capable hands. Since He is the God He claims to be then He can act on His own behalf!

Vs. 14-17 Instead of saying NO, Jacob does what his mother told him to do and Rebekah prepared the food while he dressed in his brothers smelly clothes, put on goat gloves and scarf so to appear hairy.

**III. Vs. 18-48 That’s my boy?**

Vs. 18-24 This story shows us that even if our goal is biblical, our motivation pure yet the means we employ is wrong then we taint both our goal and motivation and cause others to question the God we proclaim.

 There were two parts of this plan that seem to not be accounted for that Isaac notices right away.

1. The quickness of the preparation of the “wild game”.
2. The sound of Esau’s voice.

Isaac was old but he still could think and hear well! Jacob had to divorce himself of all doubt if he was to go forward with his mother’s plan so as he approached his father dressed and ready to go and was hoping his dad would not ask him any questions but that was not the case. Now the moment that happened Jacob had a decision to make, turn and run or lie! The decision was too verbally lie but wait where was the lightening? How come he did not fall down dead like Ananias and Sapphira? I every time we lied we got zapped or died then there wouldn’t be any of us around and what few were wouldn’t be saying a word.

 Isaac was deceived even though he tested Jacob using his five senses: Sight, sound, touch, taste and smell. We often think that if we can touch, see, hear, smell or taste something then it must be as it appears. Empirical evidence is great but it does not always guarantee that we won’t get deceived that is why illusionists are so good at what they do. The problem was not in Isaac’s ability to weigh the evidence rather it was in his heart that wanted it to be so!

 Notice how lying got easier for Jacob after he told the first one.

1. Vs. 19a “*I am Esau your firstborn*.”
2. Vs.19b “*I have done as you have told me*.”
3. Vs. 19c “*eat of my game*.”
4. Vs. 20 then in response to Isaac’s direct question of how he got the game so quickly, “*the Lord your God brought it to me*.”
5. Vs. 24 Finally Isaac ask he directly, “*Are you really me son Esau?*” to which he replies “*I am* ”

The worst of these lies is where he claims that God is leading him to deceive. Yet still in spite of his doubt Isaac still is lead down the path of deception because of his own hearts wish!

Vs. 25-27 With the convincing lie Isaac is now ready to bless whom he believes is Esau. The use of the words “*My son*” in verse 26 in Hebrew means my “*favorite*” son, which means finally someone told the truth of what was really in their heart. Jacob could now justify all of his deception because of what his father just said and say, “*It may not be right but it works, that’ll show them!*” “*I’m taking a stand for what God wants and even though it took lying to achieve it the ends justify my means*.” Jacob looks and acts more like Esau then he thought, a man unconcerned with the things of God, more into getting what he wants. This is the first time a kiss will be a sign of betrayal but it won’t be the last. In 2nd Samuel 20:9 Joab kissed Amasa and then stuck him through with a sword. And of course Judas betrayed Jesus in the garden with a kiss.

Vs. 28-29 It is not the utterance of these words over a son that would make him blessed, it will be God honoring His word spoken while both were in the womb. Isaac’s blessing of who he thought was Esau is twofold:

1. Vs. 29 First that Esau would be master over Jacob. By saying these words Isaac evidently thinks he can annul God’s will and validate his own. Yet in doing so he unwittingly validates what God wanted all along.
2. Secondly, notice in using this blessing it is the same as the one bestowed upon Abraham in chapter 12:3 with one exception the words “*And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed*.” Why is that not here? Well that is the Messianic element of the blessing, which is stating that through this person the Messiah will be born. Isaac’s own words betrayed what he knew in his heart, Esau had no heart for the things of God. Interestingly after the veil of deception has lifted Isaac bestows these words upon Jacob, (28:4).

Vs. 30-33 The words, “then it happened” indicate that Jacob had just walked out and changed his clothes when his brother comes in. I can just see Jacob looking around this whole time watching for his brother. No doubt at this time though he is rejoicing with the thought of victory. Esau, on the other hand, must have been thinking the same thing until his dad said the words of verse 32 “*Who are you*?” Esau must have thought, “*Man, dad is slipping fast*!” The irony of this is that in trying to give all to Esau he left nothing for Esau.

 His trembling was most likely for two reasons:

1. He realized that he had been out done by his wife and Jacob so that the blessings he sought to give to Esau were by his own words Jacob’s.
2. He realized that that he was trying to circumvent God’s will by what he wanted, thus what he thought was done in secret without God knowing was now very obviously known by God.

Now to Isaac’s credit here when Esau pleaded to him to reverse or also bless him he says, “*I have blessed him; and indeed he shall be blessed*.” It is this verse here that the author of Hebrews in chapter 11:20 refers to when he says, “*By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come*.” Is not God great who can take a man who attempts to thwart His will and use him by faith to do what he was supposed to do all along? I’ve got to tell you that I marvel more at the miracle of sanctification then I do redemption!

Vs. 34-39 What Esau despised in chapter 25:34 he now wants the material benefits of the birthright without the spiritual responsibilities. Both Isaac and Esau are quick to place all the blame upon Jacob yet where was there responsibility for disobeying the Lord to start with? Our sin truly always looks worse on someone else! The truth of the matter is that the birthright could not be sold, taken or obtained by deception, no it could only be obtain by faith through the way of grace.

 Hebrews 12:16-17 comments upon Esau’s tearful repentance in verses 34, 38 by saying, “*Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears*.” It sounds as if God did not allow Esau to repent but that is not what is being said. The word “repentance” means a change of heart and mind, thus what is meant here is that there was no possibility of undoing what had been done God’s mind was made up even though Esau shed tears it was not enough to give him the birthright. The truth of the matter is that Esau did not like what he have sowed and what he wanted was to change the outcome of his actions. There are great many times that I have been tearfully sorry for the outcome of my actions but would still do what I did if it turned out the way I wanted. **Maturity comes when we are not sorry for the outcome of our actions but rather the heart that produced them and that is what we weep over**!

 There comes a point in every life where there is a point of no return, that no matter how much regret over past decisions we cannot bring about a reversal of the situations we face of our own doing. **Forgiveness of our sins is not the issue rather the receipt of what we have purchased by them is**!

Vs. 39-46 Esau will struggle both physically and relationally. His descendants the Edomite’s will remain an independent nation until Saul lead Israel to a victory over them In 1 Sam. 14:47. In the year 129 B.C. John Hyrcanus compelled them to be circumcised thus they broke the yoke of bondage and even had a brief period where they were Israel’s leaders as we read of the Herod’s in the NT.

 Isaac does bless Esau with a blessing of being desert dwellers and that he will serve Jacob but not forever as I said above. In Esau’s anger Rebekah makes plans for Jacob’s escape but the few days will be more than 20 years and he will never see his mother again. What price was paid to get what God had already promised?

Genesis 27:41-28:22

“Running to be at rest”

I.) Intro.

II. Vs. 27:41-28:9 The dividends of deception

III. Vs. 10-22 Sweet dreams on the rock

I.) Intro.

As we trace these men of God in the lineage of Jesus we come to a new focus, “*Jacob*”. His is a story of a man who has a heart for the things of God but has a hard time keeping his hands off of them. Jacob will now take receipt of that which was already his by faith but he wanted to pay for it with a lie. Esau will pass from the scene until the 33 chapter with still no clue as to the things of God. Isaac won’t be mentioned again until Jacob meets up with him again some 40 years later in 35:27. Rebekah, Jacob’s co-conspirator, is not mentioned again and it is believed that she dies while Jacob is in exile. “*Oh what a tangle web we weave when we practice only to deceive*!” It is impossible to obtain the promises of God in the energy of the flesh and when we attempt to do so the price is always greater then we could have imagined. “***Why do I want to purchase what is already mine in Christ with what I can never pay for***?”

**II. Vs. 27:41-28:9 The dividends of deception**

Vs. 41 **Sin and deceit never pays for the dividends it promises**! Esau changes his attitude and wants what he has lost because he had no heart for the things of God. In his mind it is not his fault, “*It never is, is it*?” The only thing that restrains Esau from killing his brother is that he does not wish to grieve his father. It is this very thing that has caused Esau so much pain in his life as he has always sought his father’s approval above God’s. He has based his activity upon making his father happy instead of making his heavenly Father happy. Like Esau, we are often on the tread mill of trying to gain acceptance by what we do rather than what God has done for us. Oh that we might learn the truth that we are in the “*Beloved*” secure in His love which has been shed abroad in our hearts. 1 John 3:1 reminds us, (NIV) “*How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!*”

Vs. 42-46 Rebekah believes Jacob’s departure will be only for a “*few days*” yet she will never see her beloved Jacob again. This was the price she paid for loving her son more than the Lord, being separated from him until she would see him in heaven. **Sin can never cash the checks it writes**! There is no sin that does not “*hurt*” someone else. The author of Hebrews writes concerning Moses that he choose “*rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin*”. Rebekah knew Esau would be angry but she believed that his anger would diminish after a few days, if you considered over 14,600 days a few then she was right. She has not learned much as she lies again to Isaac in order to secure his departure. Griffith Thomas said, “*Most human catastrophes have come about when men and women of God consider themselves* ***agents instead of instruments*** *thinking they can manipulate the situation by their shrewdness*.” Jacob doesn’t yet realize it but he too will face the results of his actions. Immediately he will be further distant from his father, his only brother now has a contract out for his life and he has to leave his beloved mother. All for what? He gained what was already his by simply trusting the Lord’s Word, now he cannot enjoy it for 40 years!

Vs. 1-2 The way of escape for Jacob was secured based upon Isaac’s feelings upon mixed marriages. What is curious to me is that these two boys are 75 years of age and this is the first time that we are told that they ought not to take wives from among the Canaanites. Abraham, Isaac’s father, made sure of this and secured a bride from his countrymen but Isaac and Rebekah had failed to do this for their boys. Prov. 22:6 says, “*Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it*.” Where is the instruction? Esau was around 40 when he married the two Hittite women and Jacob won’t marry until he is 84, it is a bit late to instruct on not being unequally yoked with non-believers.

Vs. 3-9 Here Isaac offers up the true transferal of blessings, only this time it was not based upon deceit. Jacob is promised the same things that Abraham and Isaac were, “*land, nation and blessings*” yet he is not worthy of these things; he has shown himself as much.

Thirty-seven years later Esau figures out that his wives were not what his parents had hoped for. Yet his concern is still not based upon what God wants or even what his mother thought but rather what Isaac thought. Still seeking the approval of his father Esau sought a wife from among the Ishmaelite’s. Is that not interesting? Esau would seek the approval of his father by operating in the flesh choosing a wife form a descendant of Ishmael, the ultimate example of trying to inherit the blessings of God by means of the energy of the flesh! So he marries Mahalath (*sickness*) proving the very thing that God had already condemned striving to achieve the approval of God by the work of the flesh. Ishmael had already been dead for 13 years but Esau seems to be oblivious to the fact that God passed over Ishmael for his father Isaac. All too often we see folks who like Esau have no interest in giving up a worldly life style instead they just want to add religion to it to appear a certain way to others.

**III. Vs. 10-22 Sweet dreams on the rock**

Vs. 10-11 Jacob is on his way to Laban in Paddan Aram (tableland) with what we are told in 32:10 only his staff, thoughts and feelings. He stops for the night in a place called Luz (verse 19) that will later be called “Bethel” or house of God which is 12 miles north of Jerusalem and he had left an area that was 25 miles South of Jerusalem which means that he traveled 40 miles the first day. This tells us two things:

1. He was in a big hurry to escape the wrath of Esau and he wanted to put some distance between them.
2. When he stopped he would have been very tired.

This is the first time we see that he has ever left home and it comes on the heels of him having just experienced the height of success and the agony of defeat. All of his scheming and self-effort had gained him exile and he is alone with only his thoughts. Apparently he got there late so he stayed outside the city where the shepherds would stay and found a rock for a pillow.

Vs. 12-13a This is the first of eight theophany’s (visible manifestation of God) that Jacob will experience. In chapter 32 we read of two more then in chapter 35 two more, then finally in chapter 46 he will have his last.

 The most important features of this dream are the ladder and that it is the bridge between heaven and earth. The angels of God are ascending and descending on it and the Lord stood above it. There are four things that will help to understand this dream:

1. The words of God to Jacob
2. The words spoken by Jacob immediately afterward
3. The words of Jacob spoken later on this
4. The words of Jesus about Jacob’s dream
5. **The words of God to Jacob**: Vs. 13b-15 The words in this verse can be summed up by saying that they are God’s words confirming Abraham’s covenant upon Jacob. God reassures Jacob that what he had sought through the energy of the flesh was his based upon grace and not merit! Jacob is at the end of himself and he finds out that being at rest on the “rock” he has what was promised him. I can relate to this in my own experience as I fall down out of human exhaustion and fleshly fatigue striving to make something happen only to see it not happen. Coming back to rest upon the Rock of our salvation I am awakened to the reality that what I sought so hard for in my own effort is now mine because I have stopped striving and started resting on the Rock! The specifics of this promise are “*land, descendants, as well as saying that in his seed the Messiah will be born*”.
6. **The words spoken by Jacob immediately afterward**: Vs. 16-17, 19-22 Here we see Jacob’s impressions of the dream. Jacob understood that God had uniquely met with him and communicated with him, as He had never done before. Prior to this it seems as though his knowledge of God was by way of his family now it is personal and experiential. He sees God as nearer even though he is on his own away from his home. He sees that God who reaches out to man and not man to God and it is this that enables him to worship the Lord.
7. **The words of Jacob spoken later on this**: 31:13, 32:11-12 These words are recorded for us 20 years after this night as he comes back to this place of revelation.
8. 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.*” These are the words of God to Jacob reminding him of the encounter and the need for Jacob to fulfill what he promised 20 years earlier.
9. 32:12 “*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*.” These are Jacob’s words reminding God of His promise just before he wrestles with the Lord all night.

Together they tell us that the day that God reached down to a lonely desperate man and revealed Himself and promised that He would never leave him was a day that Jacob needed to recall and remember both as the foundation of grace as well as the reason for obedience.

1. **The words of Jesus about Jacob’s dream**: In John 1:51 Jesus said, “*Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man*.” These words were spoken in response to Nathanael’s objection to the Messiah coming from Nazareth and Jesus’ reply in which he knew what Nathanael thought while he was under a fig tree. Nathanael responded by faith in Jesus and Jesus said, “*Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these*.” It here that Jesus speaks of Jacob’s ladder saying that the “*Ladder*” is none other than Himself. The ladder represents Jesus and the uninterrupted communication between heaven and earth through Him. Jacob learns that there is a great gulf between God and himself and that this ladder is the only bridge by which that gap is crossed.

The problem is that Jacob thought that it was the physical place that was important, “the house of God” and not the identification of the ladder (Jesus) in his heart. It is Jesus that has given us uninterrupted fellowship with the Father.

Vs. 16-22 Jacob wakes up and knows that the Lord has spoken to him but is not sure what it all means. There is some insight here on what the “House of God” ought to be for those who seek its refuge: ***It ought to be a place where every runaway sinner can collapse upon the Rock of Christ and find rest. A place where God’s children can come and be face to face with their “Ladder” Jesus and worship Him for truly He is in every place that has room for Him in their heart!***

 Jacob makes a pillar and takes a vow, which in 20 years as he comes back the Lord will remove all the “ifs”. But at least he see the fact that apart from the Lord’s hand he will not see what God has promised him. Jacob promises to give freely a 10th of all that the Lord gives him and in so doing Jacob is saying that his heart, home and treasure are all God’s. Notice the difference of God’s promise to that of Jacob’s vow:

God’s promise:

* I am the LORD God
* I will give to you and your descendants
* I am with you and will keep you wherever you go
* I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you

Jacob’s vow:

* 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

Even though some version render the word “If” to “since” still there is a big difference between God’s promise and our vows. He is faithful even when we are not!

Genesis 29:1-35

“A pilgrims process”

I.) Intro.

II. Vs. 1-20 Romantic comedy

III. Vs. 21-35 One for the price of two

I.) Intro.

Over the next three chapters 40 years of the life of Jacob will be looked at what we will see is a “*pilgrims process*” as the Lord works on his heart, the tool God uses is a man like himself, Laban. What interests me is the timing in which this chapter happens. Last week we saw that Jacob had a personal encounter with the Lord this encounter with the Lord is so powerful upon his death bed in chapter 48:3 he refers to it saying, “*God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me*”. Then we come to this chapter and we see that it is the beginning of God taking Jacob to school.

II. Vs. 1-20 Romantic comedy

Vs. 1-2 The words “*Jacob went on his journey*” speak to the fact that the course of life is our Journey in which we shall find more of the Lord and less of us. Disobedience will not thwart God’s plan for your life but it will greatly affect how you will much you will enjoy it! These words can also be rendered “*lifted up his feet*” which suggests a lightness in a person’s step. Jacob had spent the night upon the rock and now he has a new direction and hope. He was no longer walking alone he had a constant companion who had just told him that “*I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you*.” (28:15) The 450 mile 15 day journey made for a light step because he had a light heart. The well here was not a “*living well*” with fresh water but rather a cistern from which only livestock drank.

Vs. 3-6 There were no road signs saying “325 miles to Laban’s house” so Jacob has to ask if he is in the right place. It seems as though this well was for restricted use only and only used when all other livestock were present so as none could get the upper hand and over water their herds.

 Now wouldn’t you like to hear the way these shepherds answered Jacob’s question of “*Do you know Laban the son of Nahor*?” “*We know him*!” Soon enough Jacob would know him as well. Jacob’s interest was in order to find a bride from among his own relatives.

Vs. 7-8 Jacob is 77 years old and Rachael is most likely quite a bit younger. It appears that Jacob sought to get rid of these other shepherds so he could spend some time with Rachael. The logic for Jacob is that it didn’t make much since for these guys to sit around doing nothing when the flock could be out feeding. The only response is that what they were doing was not based upon logic but custom.

Vs. 9-12 As Rachel arrives he could care less about custom and wants to show her his kindness and strength by removing the stone over the well. A few days earlier Jacob had received the greatest gift any person can receive intimate knowledge of the living God now he seeks a companion. There are far too many that have this in reverse order and only find misery.

 Now we know where the term “*kissing cousins*” came from! The order in which this takes places seems a bit odd as you would think that he would first introduce himself to her then kiss her and finally water the herd. Based upon her reaction you might say that Jacob “swept her off her feet”.

Vs. 13-15 Here we are told that Laban “heard the report about Jacob” and it appears that he does a very good job of sizing up his nephew based upon what he heard. Laban’s idea is for Jacob to stay there a month to further size him up. The results of this month were twofold:

1. It revealed Jacob’s heart towards Rachel and gave him every reason to stay and no reason to leave.
2. It showed what kind of worker Jacob was to Laban.

The outcome was that both men saw the mutual advantage of staying together, so Laban seeks to formalize this. The words, “*Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what should your wages be*?” Laban lets Jacob know that if he hangs around there will be not freeloading he will be an employee. The truth is this is all part of God’s plan for Jacob to make him a servant. You will never know what type of servant you are until you are treated like one, so God is going to show Jacob what kind of servant he really is!

Vs. 16-17 The commentary here on Laban’s older daughter Leah has left many to think that she was a homely thing. Several things have played into this perception:

1. Her name “*Leah*” means wild cow, which describes a person that is thin and tired. Now it is interesting that thinness is relative a modern perception of health and beauty. You only need go back a few 100 years and see pictures of what constituted health and beauty was plumpness. So perhaps Leah would today be on magazine covers and Rachael in “*before*” photographs.
2. Secondly we are told that her eyes were “*delicate*” or week so we get this picture of this woman with Coke bottle glasses that hurts your eyes to look at her. But when you do a study of the word in Hebrew it appears 17 times and of those 17 times only three of them is the word translated “*week or delicate*” the other times it is rendered “*tender, great, inexperienced, gentle, soft, and sensitive or faint*”. My point is that based upon this phrase it is obvious only that Jacob was attracted to his perception of beauty and not that Leah was some ugly cow. It is my opinion that Leah had soft, tender or gentle eyes which conveys that she was not of a fiery personality as was Rachael. Leah was a tender woman whereas Rachel was an aggressive lady and Jacob was more attracted to the outgoing personality of Rachael and not the laid back personality of Leah.

Now that I have defended the honor of Leah it matters not in as much that Jacob considered Rachael not hard to look at. What a contrast she was to that of his mother who though was beautiful she is described more in her inward beauty then her outward appearance. As far as Jacob was concerned Rachael was a babe and who cares about her personality.

Vs. 18-20 Jacob is willing to work for seven years for the dowry to have Rachael as his wife. Now as romantic and faltering, as this is I again remind you that Jacob is making this choice based upon outward attraction only. It is a foolish thing to be willing to spend the rest of your life with someone based upon something that will not last as you see it now! We are told in 1 Peter 3:3-4 that “*Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight*.”

 Jacob’s offer comes from his heart and not his head as he cares not to know the customs of the land or the cost of the dowry being far more than normal. He is not after a bargain he wants Rachael. All of this does not go unnoticed by Uncle Laban. Let me paint a different portrait of romance then what is normal by looking at this picture. We would all think that Jacob is acting very romantically but think of this another way and you will see that he is acting impulsively and showing that he is governed by what he sees without any thought of the consequences. As wonderful as this is when Rachael is the object of actions ask yourself if you want that same behavior later on when it comes to running a household? Before I get myself into trouble let me say that all of us guys have said that “*serving seven years for our wives seemed but a few days because of the love we have for them*.” By the way make sure that you don’t reverse this phrase and say the a few days seemed like seven years! As seven years was a bargain for Jacob if that meant that he would have Rachael as his wife so too is serving the Lord for the rest of my life a bargain when I consider having eternity with Him.

 There were strict guidelines that kept unmarried men and women apart from each other and even from seeing each other. Which speaks of the truth that “true love” waits! Jacob was willing to wait seven years before he would be intimate with her and he considered it worth the wait! Sex is something that God has given us to say “*I love YOU and not something that we say I love everyone or I love you and you and you*!”

III. Vs. 21-35 One for the price of two

Vs. 21 In one verse the seven years are up and Jacob wants his Rachael now! Jacob is now 84 years old and still appears to be more guided by his hormones then his head. There is no mention of his praying over this instead all that is said is that she was a hottie. Far too much of Jacob’s responses are based upon what they had nothing to do with but were rather created by God to look like. Prov. 31:30 says, “*Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.*” What is romantic is not what is always that which is best. It is Jacob’s romance that enables Laban to switch gals at his wedding night! Though seven years may have seemed as only a few days old Jacob was counting them none the less! As soon as they were up he goes to Laban and says, “*Give me my wife*!”

Vs. 22-24 This answers how this could possible happen as three factors played into this:

1. Vs. 22 The wedding was a big production. It is what those who use “slight-of-hand” count on “distraction”. Seven days of celebration was what was customary and with everyone around he was not expecting anything.
2. Vs. 23 It was at night and she would have been veiled with dim light he would not of know unless they spoke which it seems that there was no talking in the tent that night.
3. Vs. 24 Leah must have loved Jacob as well as being subjection to her father Laban. She is given Zilpah as a maid whose name means “nearness or intimacy” how fitting is this, as she would desire intimacy with Jacob and never receive it. Jacob too would desire intimacy with Rachael but instead in the morning find Leah.

Do you notice something familiar about this story? Is this not the same sort of thing that Jacob has done to his father? He pretended to be the older when he was in fact the younger, now he wants the younger and he gets the older. It was Isaac’s appetite that led to his being deceived and now it is Jacob’s appetite that is causing him to be blind to which sister he is sleeping with. For seven years he had dreamed of this night and he has in one week become over whelmed by his own passions and is unaware that Leah is not Rachael.

Vs. 25 The bridal night is over and the sun not quite up perhaps as Jacob lay next to this woman whom he had waited seven years to marry thinking no doubt it was all worth it and what a glorious future they would have together as they could now move back home to his mother. The sun pears in the room and he leans over to give her a good morning kiss and BAM! Now again in the Irony of the moment look at the words, “*What is this you have done to me*?” Jacob blames Laban for everything and use the same words that Pharaoh and Abimelech had said to Abraham. He had served in good faith expecting what they agreed to but Laban had never said that he would do what Jacob had requested only that “*It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to another man*.” Laban must have been a lawyer, as he never said “*when*” Rachael could be his only that she “*would*” be his.

Vs. 26-27 Strange that Laban forgot to tell Jacob of this custom until now! Laban proposes another plan to “help” Jacob get Rachael as his wife. “*Tell you what I’m going to do, seven more years and she yours.*” “*Why you can even have her on credit*!” According to the custom one week was Leah’s as Jacob would be her man for only a week but it was a week more than Rachael would ever get. Jacob would receive two when all he want was one, one for the price of two! Funny thing here no mention of the next seven years seeming as only a few days!

Vs. 28-30 We must not assume that God was for this even though it is mentioned in the Bible. God’s plan was from the beginning “*one man, one woman for life*!” Now in most of our country we don’t practice “*mass marriage*” better known as “*polygamy*” instead people today practice “*serial marriage*” which is marrying more than one person only doing so one person at a time.

 Rachael is given Bilhah as her maid; her name means “*terror*” again how fitting it is that this fits Jacob’s feelings at the discovery of Laban’s deception. The phrase “*he also loved Rachel more than Leah*” speaks to the fact that like his mother and father he too had a favorite. The words literally means “*loved less*” so it means that he loved her but not as much as Rachael.

Vs. 31-35 What a great God who looks upon the hearts of people and gives special grace to those rejected. Those picked upon and unloved He gives special love towards. She may have been neglected as far as her husband’s love was concerned but not God’s love as He opens her womb and closes Rachael’s. Interesting for a guy who does not love her very much he sure doesn’t have a hard time going into her bedroom. The only affection Leah will receive is in giving children! As Leah names her sons you can see the move of her heart:

1. Ruben: “*See a son*” which suggests that she hoped that the birth of a boy would bring Jacob to love her. But it is never a son that can mend a heart only the Son of God can do that.
2. Simeon: Which means, “*He hears*”. In her explanation for the name she uses the covenant name for God which tells us that she recognizes that God hears her even if her husband doesn’t.
3. Levi: “*Attachment*” which tells us that she is no longer seeking love from Jacob just attachment or security.
4. Judah: “*Praise*” Leah has sought love from her husband to no avail now she has found love from the Lord and she praises Him for it. Being loved by God was far better than even being loved by a man.

Move forward 1,000’s of years to two kings, which come from these two sisters.

1. 1 Sam. 9:1-2 says, “*There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power. And he had a choice and handsome son whose name was Saul. There was not a more handsome person than he among the children of Israel. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people*.” Saul a handsome tall man, a mighty man of power, he was like his great great grandmother Rachael outwardly the perfect choice.

**1 Sam. 16:12 says of David, “*Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is the one*!” So? Well David came from Leah through Judah. Thus that Lord told Samuel “*Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart*.” (1 Sam 16:7)**

Genesis 30:1-24

“Battle of the brides”

I.) Intro.

II. Vs. 1-13 Baby boxing

III. Vs. 14-24 Where’s the baby?

I.) Intro.

This story before us is a continuation of chapter 29:31-35. Now as you read this story it appears as though we have flipped your T.V. set on to one of those stupid trash T.V. shows. “*Sisters who marry the same man, today of Jerry Springer*!” There are several reasons why God has seen fit to put this story in the Bible.

1. To show us what the outcome of polygamy is. Though the Bible records many that disobeyed the teaching of monogamy you will not find one of them in all of scripture that has a happy ending.
2. Israel took great pride in its “roots” yet upon reading this story there is nothing to be proud of when considering their heritage. This was a fact that Moses would point out some 450 years later in Deut. 7:7-8 saying, “*The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you*.”
3. This section serves as a very practical guide for us today showing what sex outside of God’s plan looks like. We live in a culture that not only sees nothing wrong with sex outside of marriage it promotes it. Leah will learn that no amount of sex would ever earn her the love of her man. Love is not manufactured through sex, sex will produce children but it will never produce love. To some love without sex is frustrating but sex without Biblical love is a tragedy!

II. Vs. 1-13 Baby boxing

Vs. 1-2 Rachael’s beauty lead to the romantic notion that Jacob was willing to work 14 years to have her, yet reading these verses shows that this did not satisfy her. Can you imagine how she would strut around Haran for years believing that she was the most beautiful woman around because a man was willing to work to have her for 14 years? In the last chapter three times we are told that Jacob loved Rachael more than Leah, yet with the knowledge of her husband’s love and his romantic actions towards her did not produce assurance or security. “*Loved based upon sex or physical attraction will never satisfy and bring security, instead they will destroy them*!” Everywhere girls go in this world they are being told that all they need is a guy’s affection and care, which is based upon how they look. Rachael had the “*look*” to capture her man but what did it gain her? The planet is full of girls who have given up their bodies to get love only to find themselves discarded as the guy goes after another conquest. Oh, how romantic Jacob’s love must have felt for Rachael but in the end she is just as disillusioned as Leah, she feels just as unloved as her sister did. Guy’s view women as conquests the more they have the more man they are but this too is empty as they may have their conquests but at the price of companionship!

 Leah probably would say to herself, “*If only I had Rachel’s looks and Rachel would say, If only I had Leah’s sons.*” We all have this same problem don’t we looking at how God has blessed others instead of just setting our eyes on Him. Women in this era valued themselves based upon how many children they could produce for their husbands as we see in verse 13 based upon Leah’s words, “*I am happy, for the daughters will call me blessed*.” Look at how fragile Rachel’s pride is when her beauty and love of Jacob turns into nagging envy and jealousy. She blames Jacob for her condition and remember the barrenness of Rebekah and Isaac as they prayed to God to open the womb.

Vs. 3-5 Long before Moses wrote down God’s heart towards marriage a King named Hammurabi wrote down a code of laws to govern people. Under these laws a wife could give her maid to her husband and claim the offspring from such a union as her own. The maid reclined upon the wives lap while her husband impregnated her and when it came time to give birth she would again recline upon her the wife’s lap hence the words “*she will bear a child on my knees*”. As weird as this practice seems to us think of it as we do today “sex outside of marriage”.

 With the deed done the desired outcome is achieved it is thought of as “successful” which is called “situational ethics”. The sole criteria of evaluating what was right is based upon if it worked, “*Did it achieve the desired results*?” Look how far this reasoning has taken Rachel as she has sunk to the low of use a baby to hit her sister over the head with.

Vs. 6-8 Rachel is quick to attribute the works of her flesh to God, again she does so because it achieved the results she desired not because they were form following God’s word. Nowhere are we told that God opened the womb of Bilhah, yet still she name him “*Judged by God*”. Bilhah conceives a second time and she names this son “*Wrestling*” yet interprets struggling against her sister as a victory. Now by my figures the box score still reads 4 to 2 with Leah ahead. The wild thing is that Rachel appears more interested in winning the battle of the babies then what her actions say about her own character. God is not mentioned or praised, she is preoccupied with self and getting something over on her sister.

Vs. 9-13 The last we saw of Leah in this was her growing in love with the Lord as she named her children names that recognized how much greater was God’s love for her then any mans could ever be. Here she has a setback as she goes back into insecurity with head to head competition in the battle of the birthing maids. What has happened to Leah who had seen that it was the Lord who had opened her womb is the same God who has now seen fit to close it. Strikingly missing in Leah’s words is any mention of this work of the flesh of child production as coming from the hand of God. What this suggests is that we who have grown in our understanding of the Lord’s hand in our lives are not immune to slipping back into the flesh and being more concerned with what works instead of what is right.

 Now her first four children she viewed as gifts from God now through the work of the flesh and Zilpah she sees them as:

1. “*Good fortune*” Gad
2. “*How happy am I*” Asher

Her greatest concern is what others will think of her and call her instead of what God thinks of her.

III. Vs. 14-24 Where’s the baby?

Vs. 14-15 Ruben was most likely around five when he goes out to the field to pick his mother some flowers yellow flowers with matching berries. The word actually means “love apples” and there was a superstition that said eating these berries was an aphrodisiac as well as a fertility drug. Leah’s comments her reveals how she saw herself compared with her younger sister. She was Jacob’s legitimate wife and Rachel was his mere romantic boy toy. Rachel’s suggestion appears to be based upon Leah’s perception and is nothing more than prostitution. The two sister want what each other has:

* Leah wants the romance that Rachel has.
* Rachael wants the offspring the Leah has.

Rachel is so far from trusting God to open her womb that she is seeking “*berry juice*” therapy rather than trusting in the God who created the berries.

Vs. 16-21 Based upon verse 17 it appears as though Leah prays to God to bless what she has paid for, God blesses her in spite of how she behaved. She thinks this is because she gave her maid to Jacob. Again it amazes me how quick they are to give credit to God for what their own flesh produced and to take credit from God when it was entirely from Him!

 She names her fifth son “Reward” but it was the reward of her flesh not the reward of faith. Her sixth and last son is named “Dwelling” as it is the hope of her heart that one day will want to dwell with her as his wife. How foolish is it to seek after someone’s acceptance by means of giving your body for their pleasure. Leah had been satisfied with God’s love for her but now she traded it all away for the hope of the love from a man. According to 37:35 and 46:7, 15 Dinah is not their only daughter but she is mentioned here for what will happen to her in chapter 34.

Vs. 22-24 After all of Rachel’s plans have been exhausted God grants her heart’s desire and open’s her womb. Based upon her words here in verse 23 it appears He did so based upon prayer. All too often we have an attitude that says, “*When all else fails pray*!” Instead it ought to be when prayer fails pray again. She names her first son of faith “*may he add*” which means to take away by adding. Far too many people fail to see the wisdom of marriage and staying away from sex outside of the protection of marriage. Even in the Church many folks have taken the used car approach of taking it out for a test drive and see no reason not to live together. For Christians the question is not whether or not two people can live together apart from being married because of coarse they can. The question is whether or not living this way apart from obedience to the word of God they can so live in all the fullness of joy, which is in Christ. The answer is they cannot!

Genesis 30:25-31:16

“Can I go home now?”

I.) Intro.

II. Vs. 25-43 Voodoo economics

III. Vs. 1-16 We can’t all just get along

I.) Intro.

Twenty years have passed since Jacob moved to Haran, which makes him 96 years old. Thought the first seven years may have seemed but a few years but we can be sure based upon this section the remaining 13 more than made up for the first seven. Laban had no sons now according 31:1 he has “sons”. So Jacob had went from being sole heir to a threat. I find an interesting principal in the life of faith, “*God moves us when we become complacent and comfortable*”. That move may not always be a physical location but it is always a move of the heart. Now from our perspective we do everything possible not to be moved, yet God will make it so that we are moved and the change is always glorious!

II. Vs. 25-43 Voodoo economics

Vs. 25-16 This must have taken place sometime after Joseph was born and after his 14 years of service was up. Just as Jacob had to remind Laban to give him his wife he now has to remind him that his debt has been paid.

 What is interesting is that 20 years have gone since he left his home but still he calls the promised-land home. Jacob’s heart had not lost its longing and there were three things that no doubt contributed to this:

1. His feelings and dealings with the world and those in the world (Laban)
2. His desire to be with those who are like-minded and understand that which he understands.
3. The remembrance of that which God had told him upon his leaving the land of promise in chapter 28:15 that He will be with him and bring back again.

Jacob, like us, is on a spiritual journey where God is bring a longing in his heart through outside and inside circumstances to desire to be home. Christian this is exactly what God allows to happen in our life where the brightness of the world grows dim and the brightness of His presence is all we want!

Vs. 27-28 Laban is in no hurry to see his “gravy train” leave the depot and wants to renegotiate his contract. Laban’s words “*I have learned by experience*” in literally “*I have learned by enchantments*”. Laban had mixed the belief in one God with pagan mysticism, which we shall see in chapter 31:19, 30 which had influenced Rachel as she swiped his household gods. Laban wanted to keep Jacob on the Job and tells him, “*Name your price!*” Now had Jacob not already had some bad dealings with Laban he may have been taken in by this but instead Jacob has learned to turn Laban against himself.

Vs. 29-34 Here is how he did it:

1. Vs. 29-30 Jacob uses Laban’s own job evaluation against him. “*Blessed you? Buddy when I started with you, you had nothing and now through me God has made you a wealthy man*!”
2. Vs. 30 The second part of this is what I call the hardship case. “*Yeh, you’re rich when you had nothing but I still have nothing, where’s the profit sharing*?”
3. Vs. 31-33 Jacob plays the, “*I’m a hard worker but a bad businessman role*.” It is quite obvious that Jacob had planned this deal out for some time. The crux of the deal as Laban would have seen it.
4. No immediate compensation or pay raises. All Laban had to do was agree to the terms as laid out. So Laban would have seen the immediate benefit of winning if he accepted the terms.
5. The future was that Jacob was to receive instead of payment all rare breads of sheep and goats. Most of the herd was of solid color and not mixed. Furthermore Jacob was to remove the spotted away from the solid so as to not further his income.
6. Jacob agrees to continue to care for Laban’s flock for a relatively small amount of sheep.
7. Finally Jacobs says that he wants to separate 60 miles from Laban’s herd so to ensure that Jacob would not cheat be allowing his herd to bread with Laban’s thus increasing his odds of producing spotted sheep.

Vs. 34-36 I picture Laban with the voice of “*Billy Crystal*” saying “*Such a deal*!” Laban, the con-artiest, had just been trapped by that which was his master passion “greed”! May this serve as a warning to us not to have any other passion then those things, which our Master has as His passion. Because if we do we will become possessed by that which possess us!

 Although Jacob does not necessarily employ these principals of success they are none the less true:

1. Vs. 25-26 Don’t make becoming wealthy your goal
2. Vs. 27 Make it your aim to prosper others before you prosper yourself.
3. Vs. 29-30 Make it your aim to be the best at what you do even if someone else benefits from your effort.
4. Vs. 31-33 Trust God to give you the increase and meet your needs.

Vs. 37-42 Here we see that Jacob new what he was doing when he made this offer to Uncle Laban.

1. Vs. 37-39 Jacob peels limbs from green popular, almond and chestnut trees. Apparently he place these peeled limbs all around even in the drinking water. What on earth do we make of this? Two possibilities exist:
2. First, that Jacob had bought into some sort weird superstition that the visual impression had some sort of influence upon genetics as the sheep reproduced. And when he began to see the results it confirmed it, but all along it was God supernaturally causing the sheep to give birth to spotted sheep.
3. Second, some see this practice not in influencing genetics but rather as some sort of stimulus that encouraged the animals to mate more frequently, (*a fact that is borne out by the word conceived, which mean to be in heat*). Sheep mate typically twice a year once in the fall and once in the spring. The use of these peeled limps perhaps encouraged the sheep to mate more often this producing a larger herd quicker than normal and thus increasing his odds. Remember Jacob had 70 years of shepherding experience.
4. Vs. 40-42 Again there are two possibilities as to what Jacob was doing with having his spotted sheep face the solid color sheep of Laban:
5. Jacob is employ a psychological technique of “*sheep per-pressure*” so that the solid color sheep would produce spotted offspring.
6. The other possibility is that Jacob employed animal husbandry techniques of selective breeding. By removing the lambs of the spotted sheep and keeping the herds apart he would effectively slowed the breeding stimulus of Laban’s flocks. Furthermore Jacob made sure that the genetically healthier sheep were the ones that he wanted to breed more often. So that the outcome was the spotted sheep produced stronger sheep more often and the weaker solid color sheep produced much slower.

Vs. 43 Ill regardless of the process the outcome was that Jacob prospered much more then did Laban. I suppose we could argue that Laban had it coming and that he was getting what he deserved based upon his own greed, but if that is our justification for doing unto others then does that not leave us open to the same? Christian two wrongs never make a right, the God who created the sheep can prosper us if He so chooses!

III. Vs. 1-16 We can’t all just get along

Vs. 1-3 The outcome of Jacob’s manipulation is predictable and all too familiar to him as it is the same thing that happened 20 years earlier with his brother Esau. I suppose we all wonder at times if we will ever learn not to turn and trust in the energy of the flesh.

 Jacob’s success caused Laban’s envy as Laban’s greed had finally caused him to be taken advantage of. Twenty years ago Jacob had heard from the Lord now he is told to go back home and there are three things that God used to move Jacob closer to Him.

1. 30:25 God gave him the desire to go.
2. 31:1-2 The present circumstances made it unbearable to stay.
3. 31:3 The Lord gave him personal direction.

Vs. 4-13 Jacob now has to convince his two wives of God’s direction and here is how he does it:

1. Vs. 5-9 Jacob speaks on how their father was a dirty crook.
2. Vs. 5-6 Laban ripped him off even still God had blessed
3. Vs. 7 Laban had continued to lie and could therefore not be a man who could be trusted.
4. Vs. 8- 9 Jacob knows that he is not honest dealer so he just makes sure that the one he is compared too is worse than he is.
5. Vs. 10-13 Jacob shares that it is God who has been directing him back to the land of promise. And as far as he is concerned God has further revealed this to him by allowing him to get the upper hand and such a crook.

Vs. 14-16 This is the first time these two sisters have agreed upon anything since Ruben flowers were traded for a night of passion for Leah. And what do they agree upon? Well that dad is a bum! They apparently recognize that polygamy has not worked out for either of them and it was all of dads doing. So it is easy for them to conclude that dad deserved to get taken as he certainly had not cared much for them to begin with!

 Hey may we see that in all of lives journey it is nothing if we do not simply walk with Him and following Him wherever He may lead us!

Genesis 31:17-55

“Going the right way the wrong way”

I.) Intro.

II. Vs. 17-21 Running to God with your tail between your legs

III. Vs. 22-35 Who stole my sticks?

IV. Vs. 36-55 Don’t mess with Mizpah

I.) Intro.

We come to the end of Laban in this chapter and we shall not see him again. He passes from the seen as a man who wanted the blessings of God apart from practicing the truth of God’s word. A man who sought religion for his own personal gain but was really only worshipping himself. Yet God has used Laban to teach Jacob who is very much like Laban.

 Jacob’s life has so far been seen as a man whom God desired to bless but Jacob wanted to obtain the promises of God in the energy of the flesh. He left home because he had refused to submit to God over the issue of his birth right. Instead he ends up having to submit to his crooked uncle Laban. He came to seek a wife but found instead they he had to become a servant for the wrong woman because he did not want to submit to the rights of the first born. He deceived his father and was deceived by his father in law. He deceivingly sought the rights of the older while he was the younger, he then was deceived given the rights of the older why he wanted the younger. Jacob’s problem? “Submission” to God and because he refused to submit to God he had to rely upon deception. This chapter is all about ethics which is best understood by saying that it is doing what ought to do not just what we have to do. In other words it is treating others, as you would want to be treated not just how they deserve to be treated.

 There was a pastor who went to visit an elderly lady one afternoon. As they were having fellowship the pastor eyed a bowl of peanuts and asked if he may have some. She said to help himself. As the afternoon wore on he continued to munch on the bowl of nuts until they were finished. Embarrassed, he offered to buy her some more, she replied “*Oh Pastor don’t be concerned about eating all the peanuts you see since I lost my teeth I can’t eat them all I do is suck the chocolate off them and spit the nuts back in the bowl*!” You see she was perfectly ok in doing what she did with her peanuts but ethically she should have told him she sucked the Chocolate off them first.

II. Vs. 17-21 Running to God with your tail between your legs

Vs. 17-18 Three things that moved Jacob from Haron where he had lived 20 years back to the land of promise.

1. 30:25 A desire to go
2. 31:1-2 Circumstances that made it impossible to stay
3. 31:3 God Commanded him to go

All three of these combined together to make it clear to him that he should go. This seems always to be the way God guides in our lives: “*The conviction of the Spirit of God within our hearts. The Word of God agreeing with the conviction and finally the outward circumstances making it possible to go.*” Now the first two together will tell us that the way is right but without the third the time is not now. Yet if all we have is the circumstances apart from the conviction of the Spirit and the Word of God agreeing with the conviction then we cannot be certain that the way is right. It is also interesting to me just on a practical basis Jacob did not move until he got the support from his wives I think that is Biblical wisdom as God has often used my wife to guide my heart to where it ought to be.

Vs. 19-21 It is obvious that Jacob is leaving in the will of God but in doing so he is not going about it the right way. He is not treating Laban the way in which he would like to be treated. According Jacob words if verse 31 his action is not based upon faith but rather fear. He sneaks away, while Laban is our shearing sheep. When you look at the geography in these words you see that Jacob waited until Laban was 70 miles away from Haron while he was three days journey in the opposite direction from Haron. Get the picture? Jacob waited until he had the most opportune time to leave instead of announcing his departure, trusted the Lord and left in victory. The way in which he leaves demonstrates that he was not trusting even though he was going the way in which he was supposed to. God is going to force Jacob to stop and take a stand and deal with the issue. The words, “*headed towards Gilead*” are literally “*set his face toward Gilead*” in other words he left with all he had and did so with complete resolve. Gilead means “perpetual fountain” and in a land of little rain speaks of a place of great blessing from God. Jacob was obviously guided by God to go, he was under heavy conviction that he needed to go right away and set all he had into going. The place he was going was a total blessing yet with all that said he still went about this the wrong way! The *way in which he went made where he was going clouded*! This explains a lot about how our convictions become polluted by our actions. Let me say this that I have discovered in my own life that it is much easier to change what I think then it is how I act! The first requires honest inquiry the second can only come about upon dying to self.

 Now concerning Laban’s household idols swiped by Rachael. These carved sticks had a twofold importance to those that owned them:

1. They signified ownership of property or possessions. Kind of like keys do today.
2. They were thought of as “good luck charms”.

What interests me is that these “*household gods*” could be stolen in the first place. It was considered a capital offence to steal them, a risk that Rachael was willing to take. Why did she do so? Well only three possibilities exist.

1. She was trying to keep her father from idol worship
2. She was trying take away his “mojo” and get even for the way in which he treated her
3. Or she realized that these tokens represented the inheritance that was supposed to be her sisters and hers (verse 15) that he had spent on himself. This is my guess as in the end Laban sets up a pillar so that just in case Jacob and his clan try to come back and claim what the household idols represented they were doing so at the risk of death.

With that said it would be good for us to ask ourselves if anyone right now could steel our god’s? Is what we hold onto as being the most precious things in our lives theft proof? When it all comes down to it everything except Jesus can be taken from us. We need to be careful what we place on the throne of our hearts not only for our sakes but also for our children’s as well, seeing that Rachael realized that Laban’s gods were something that she wanted as well.

 Now we can see right off the bat two things wrong with Jacob’s departure:

1. They left without telling Laban, choosing to do so when Laban would be unable to catch them so they thought.
2. Rachael stole her father’s gods, which were the right to claim a portion of his inheritance.

What this shows us is that Jacob was going the right way the wrong way!

III. Vs. 22-35 Who stole my sticks?

Vs. 22-25 Three days pass before Laban finds out that they have left and he is not a happy camper. Based upon verse 30 he must have been somewhat suspicious as he searches his home to see if the house hold gods are still there. In verse 24 God speaks to Laban and warns him to be careful how he speaks to Jacob, which shows us that Laban did not have good intentions concerning Jacob, most likely believing that Jacob was going to try to further rip him off. The sad thing in this story to me is that in comparing Laban the nonbeliever with Jacob the believer there is not any difference in their behavior. The only thing that is different is that God had promised to Jacob’s grandfather Abraham and He always keeps His promises.

Vs. 26-30 Laban has heard the word of the Lord to watch what he says to Jacob and tries diplomacy, (Webster’s dictionary defines this as the “*skill in handling affairs without arousing hostility*”). To read these words of Laban towards Jacob it would appear as if he is trying to make Jacob feel guilty for depriving him the opportunity to say good-by to his daughters and grandchildren with a big party, (verse 27). In fact the words “*stolen away*” in verse 26 actually mean in the Hebrew to “*steal ones heart away*”. The trouble with Laban’s words is that they did not match his actions. His life had been characterized by selfishness even selling his daughters to Jacob and spending the dowry upon himself. All the “right words” apart from “right actions” have no meaning. We cannot speak of love and affection to folks if we have not demonstrated such. One commentator put it this way, “*It is what we do for those that we profess love for while they are amongst us and not what we say of them after they are gone that is the real measure of our love*!”

 It seems as though Laban realized that guilt was not going to cause the desired effects from Jacob so in verse 29-30 he tries to be a bully by saying that he had the power to harm him but God intervened. Now Laban represents a lot of folks as he:

1. 30:27 Acknowledges the blessings of the Lord
2. 31:29 The power and sovereignty of the Lord, even heeding the warning.
3. 31:30 Yet he has never entered into a relationship with God as he is chasing Jacob around the countryside to retrieve some sticks he worships because they had been ripped off.

Laban knows of the Lord but has never gone the next step and trusted in Him choosing rather to worship that which can be taken from him.

Vs. 31-35 Jacob’s response is not much better as he confess that his actions were based upon fear and not faith. Jacob professes to believe in the God who spoke and the worlds came into being right but he is running from a man who worships sticks. God had told Jacob in 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*.” Nowhere in these words spoken to him do we read, “*Except in the case of a man who worships sticks then all bets are off*!”

 Rachael has learned the art of deception and lying from her father and husband. No doubt Jacob would never had made this pledge if he thought Rachael had stolen the sticks. It seems as though they get away with this but if we look ahead to 35:2-4 we shall see that these household idols are buried at Bethel as the family dies to a divided heart. Perhaps it is time for us to recognize the death of all that we worship that can be taken from us and bury in the presence of God at the Bethel “house of God”. Looking at this it is difficult to see how God could bless Jacob and I suppose if it was based upon human merit there could be no blessing instead His blessing is based upon pure grace lavished upon us in spite of us and not because of us.

IV. Vs. 36-55 Don’t mess with Mizpah

Vs. 36-42 The years of friction now boil over as Jacob uses no diplomacy and speaks his mind towards Laban. Jacob asks, “*What’s the real reason you came after me*?” Then he suggests that the real reason is not to say good-by but because he thought Jacob had ripped him off. Jacob does not realize that Rachael had indeed ripped of Laban’s gods so he says, “*Put up or shut up and since you can’t put up shut up*!”

 Jacob then retraces 20 years of Laban’s infractions that had not gone unnoticed even if they had gone un-dealt with!

* Laban had not suffered neglect even though he had missed treated Jacob
* Laban had never suffered loss even if it was not Jacob’s fault he still paid
* Jacob had never taken a vacation, sick leave or any other benefit that he himself did not pay for.
* Finally Jacob says in verse 42 God is on my side something that Laban had already said by admitting that God spoke to him to watch what he said to Jacob.

With all of these as arguments in his favor look closely at his words 42 and you will discover something very interesting. “*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*.” What’s missing in this statement? Well we see that God is the God of Abraham and he is the God of his father Isaac but nowhere does he say that He is his God! This is further born out in the fact as great as a speech to Laban as this verse is his actions had shown to all that Jacob did not yet understand that God was his God as well! He was not convinced with the truth that he spoke of instead he sees his blessings as coming from his own hands (verse 42) and he acted as such! Jacob’s prosperity had nothing to do with his piety nor his productivity it was pure grace!

Vs. 43-55 Laban says that all that Jacob has was once his but this is not so all that Jacob has is God’s and will always be so. They set up a tower of stones as a border between them as a witness and they cannot even agree on what they name it. But they do agree in that they both need to keep their distance from each other. It is interesting that today you will see people ware coins that say the word “Mizpah” on it as folks think this is some sort of a good look charm but really it means “God is watching”. Many organizations have this as a motto. But clearly in the context this statement is not a blessing of future fellowship but rather an armistice and warning. The effect of this pillar between Jacob and Laban was, “*If you come on my side of this line all deals are off and I’m going to kill you*!” In reality this word ought to be associated with a D.M.Z with the only hope of survival being the Lord’s protection.

Genesis 32:1-32

 “Life’s struggle”

I.) Intro.

II. Vs. 1-12 Ready to surrender

III. Vs. 13-32 Pinning your “self” down

I.) Intro.

There is perhaps no greater chapter in all the Bible that illustrates the death of the old nature then the one before us. Three times in scripture Paul uses the phrase “old man” in reference to our flesh:

1. Rom. 6:5-6 “*For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin*.”
2. Eph 4:21-24 “*you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness*.”
3. Col. 3:8-10 “*But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,*”

Jacob in this story is a representation of the “*old man*” and that has nothing to do with his age being 90. It has everything to do with his fighting against the Lord, in this chapter he is going to lose the battle and in so doing he will win the war against himself! God is going to allow Jacob to wrestle, putting every effort imaginable to win. Yet God is going to cripple him so that Jacob would gain victory over himself and rule with God.

II. Vs. 1-12 Ready to surrender

Vs. 1-2 When Jacob was 70 he left home for the first time as a self-reliant man that had been defeat by his own schemes. Twenty years later he is returning as a wealthy man who has met the Lord twenty years earlier but he is still a self-reliant man. This is the third time that Jacob will encounter angels:

1. 28:12 Twenty years when he first met the Lord at Bethel.
2. 31:11 When the Lord spoke to him about going back to the land of promise.
3. 32:1 Here Jacob comes back into the land he sees them again.

The common denominator in each of these three encounters is that each time God sends His angels to meet him and confirm the direction, God has him going. In a time of great uncertainty this was a needed thing.

 It seems as though these angels just show up but what changed is not the angels but Jacob’s eyes being opened to them being there. Man what a great encouragement this must have been.

Vs. 3-6 It is interesting to see Jacob send out his messengers right after God had sent him His. It seems as though Jacob wants to make right the wrong he did 20 years earlier. Several things point to this:

1. “*Thus your servant Jacob says*”: Servant? My lord Esau? Twenty years earlier Esau had sworn to kill him and now Jacob humbles himself before his brother. Perhaps Jacob had gained insight from being a victim of Laban’s deceptions and now wanted to make it right.
2. “*I have dwelt with Laban and stayed there until now. I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants*”: In other words I’ve done my time and I am not coming back to claim what I stole from you, even though their father had given it to him.

Verse six tells us that the messengers come back with news that Esau is coming to meet him with 400 men. It is not difficult to see these words from Jacob’s eyes, Esau was a man of the sword and he has gathered 400 men of like mind to settle the score. Jacob had wanted to know if he had “*found favor in Esau’s eyes*” and the thought of 400 men coming with a man that swore to kill him seems to have answered the question. Mom had told him twenty years earlier in 27:45 that she would send word when Esau cooled down and she had never contacted him.

 Now let’s put this back into the context of the angels encamped around him and the assurance of chapter 28:15 where the Lord had promised to never leave him and bring him back into the land of promise. We have two things that seem to be mutually exclusive and opposite.

* God’s word and promise, which were just reinforced with angels, encamped around him
* And the haunts of past failures seen in circumstances that look bad.

So which one do you believe God’s Word or the situation? Is it not amazing how we can be so assured of God and His Word one moment and completely overwhelmed in a situation the next?

Vs. 7-12 The word “*distressed*” here means to be tightly pressed. The squeeze was on the sleaze Jacob and he was buckling under it. So he decides on a twofold course of action:

1. Vs. 7-8 *He divides his camp*: He splits in half the people and animals. His reasoning is worldly sound: If Esau attacks one camp then the other will have time to escape. The word for “two” in the Hebrew is the same word used to describe the angels in circling him. Perhaps he thought this was the point of the angels? It was not wrong to divide the camp but the motivation was fear and not faith, well did Shakespeare say, “*Conscience does make cowards of us all*!” How many of us are crippled by our past? We won’t believe that Jesus has really settled all our accounts?
2. Vs. 9-12 *He prays*: When all else fails pray seems to be his motto. Instead it should have been “Pray, no matter what fails”. He has four parts to his prayer that ought to serve as a model:
3. Vs. 9 He remembers God’s Word: Back in chapters 28:13-15 and 31:3 God had spoken these promises to him and now Jacob recites them back to God holding onto them. Much of our prayer ought to be scripture as we appropriate what God has already promised towards us. It is because we fail to do this that we are often in a panic over what is already our in Christ.
4. Vs. 10 He is thankful: In chapter 31:42 Jacob had thought that he was blessed based upon his own effort now he sees himself as not worthy. Literally this reads, “*I have always been too little and I still am*”. It took something greater then himself for him to realize that he had always been little. Now Jacob is thankful for what God has done instead of thinking it was because of him it was now in spite of him. Jacob is approaching God not on his faithfulness but rather upon God’s faithfulness.
5. Vs. 11 He is honest: Jacob’s prayer is spoken in honesty as he asks God to deliver him because he is afraid, there is no con, no sugar coating his words just honesty and confession. Hey, why not try telling God the truth when we pray, it’s not as if He doesn’t know the truth anyway!
6. Vs. 12 He rests upon God’s Word: The bulkhead, the rock in which Jacob makes his stand is the promises God has made to him and his grandfather Abraham. By faith Jacob now appropriated them to himself. George Mueller was once asked what the most important part of prayer was, he answered, “*The 15 minutes after I have said Amen*!” *No matter how great the prayer was, how much you spoke from your heart, no matter how much you believed it when the words were on your lips, the truth of what you believe is what you will do with what when you have stopped praying.* Prayer always changes things and the first thing it ought to change is us!

III. Vs. 13-32 Pinning your “self” down

Vs. 13-20 At first glance this is a cleaver strategy as sending gifts in waves (verses 13-16) to Esau which no doubt was to send a message that he was a changed man. He was now a guy that would rather give then receive, serve rather than rule. All he wanted was to be a blessing and not to come and get blessed.

 Yet as true as that is we can also see a lack of trust in the Lord. First off we have his own words in verse 20, “*I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me*.” Jacob’s concern is not with Esau accepting him rather it is in the fear that he won’t. If Jacob trusted the Lord as he had prayed where in this procession do you suppose he would have been, at the head of it or at the end of it? There is that wonderful old hymn “*I surrender all*” perhaps if Jacob wrote it one of the stances would have went, “*I surrender all the goats, and if that is not enough I surrender all the sheep and if that is not enough I’ll surrender the camels as well!*” That which needed to be surrendered was not what Jacob owned but rather the ownership of his heart!

Vs. 21-23 Jacob sends the presents over in waves then at night sends his wives and children over the river Jabbok which means “wrestler” which was taken from the event about to take place. The river is about 25 miles from where they camped and was only 30 feet wide and waste deep. Jacob is left all-alone with only himself and his fears.

Vs. 24-25 Notice the wording here carefully, who was it that wrestled with whom? It was a Man that wrestled with Jacob and not the other way around. So who was this man? Well we are told:

1. Vs. 30 “*I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved*.” Clearly Jacob believes that the Man who wrestled with him was God.
2. Hosea 12:3-5 “*He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and in his strength he struggled with God. Yes, he struggled with the Angel and prevailed; He wept, and sought favor from Him. He found Him in Bethel, and there He spoke to us; that is, the LORD God of hosts. The LORD is His memorable name*.”

The only conclusion we can make is that the Man in whom Jacob wrestled was none other than a pre-incarnate manifestation of Jesus. One of the great tragedies in modern Christianity is all the effort we do in the energy of the flesh. We use techniques that our old nature is inclined to use. Far too often the Church does not pray and trust God to change hearts instead it tries to outmaneuver our opposition. The Prophet Zechariah spoke saying, “*Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts*.” In verses 25-26 I see three ways to obtain spiritual victory:

1. Vs. 25 Recognize our own inadequacy: From Jacob’s perspective he and the Lord were pretty evenly matched but that was in appearance only. Amazingly we wonder how Jacob was able to keep up his strength until day break but when we consider ourselves many of us have been wrestling with the Lord over areas of our lives for years. When the Lord just touched Jacob’s hip he was completely defeated and helpless. Notice that it says that the Lord “*did not prevail*” and not that He “*could not prevail*”. That means that God wanted to take the “fight” out of Jacob and get him to quit trying to do things in his own strength. The scene reminds me of wrestling with a three year old. Now they may think they are winning but the truth is at a second they are defeated. We obtain spiritual victory the moment we are at the end of ourselves, when we see the futility of using our own strength to obtain what can only be ours when we trust Him. Why was it Jacob's hip? When the hip is out of place a person cannot stand. Paul would say in 1 Cor 10:12 “*Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall*.”
2. Vs. 26 Trust only in what God has promised: Jacob only asked what the Lord had promised which was to bless him. It was God’s word that Jacob wanted to claim.
3. Vs. 26 Held onto to God: Jacob had come to the end of himself and was hopeless and helpless. So he did what we all must cling to the Lord. He was finally totally dependent upon the Lord and it only took 90 years to get there. It is of the greatest importance that we come to the place where we are conquered and broken by the Lord. Jacob now knew practically what he knew intellectually God was mightier than he. Hosea 12:4 tells us that Jacob sought God’s blessing as “*He wept*” he was defeated but because he had lost he won!

Vs. 27-32 God asks Jacob his name which forces he to deal with his own failures. “*I’m a con-man, a sneak and a manipulator that’s who I am Lord*.” For the first time in his life Jacob saw who his real enemy was, it was not his father or Esau nor was it Laban, it was the person who stared back at him in the mirror every day. Upon that confession God changes his name to Israel. In Hebrew this is the combining of two words “rule” and “God”, some versions make God the object of the verb “rule” instead of the subject but in the Hebrew it is not so. For instance Daniel is the combining of Judge and God but you would not interpret this Judges God rather God judges. So too here it ought not to be “*rules with God*” or as some have it “*prince with God*” instead it ought to be “God rules”! God changed Jacob’s name from *Jacob rule* to *God rules*! This is how Jacob “prevailed” he endured through the struggle until he was thoroughly whipped and in losing he won. We must never give up until we have lost! Jacob has two memorials one spiritual the other practical:

1. The river where he was baptized into his own death and it was this death that caused him to know that he had seen the face of God
2. Jacob was given a continual limp so that every step he would take the rest of his life would remind him that he needed to do so in God’s strength and not his own!

Genesis 33:1-20

 “One step forward, three back”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-16 A divided man

III. Vs. 17-20 A compromised man

I. Intro.

In the last chapter Jacob has an encounter with the Lord that left him changed. He had been brought down to only being able to cling to the Lord in his wrestling. Two things happened as a result of the Lord wrestling with Jacob:

1. He would forever walk with a limp.
2. His name would be changed from (Con man) to (God rules).

Of these two manifestations that accompanied Jacob’s encounter with the Lord one was far more lasting then the other. His physical limp followed him the rest of his life and no doubt served as a reminder of the dangers of trying to stand in one’s own strength. The change of name was far less permanent. Doing a word search throughout the rest of Genesis on the names “*Jacob*” and his new name “*Israel*” after this encounter at Peniel is reveals that he is called Israel 23 times while being known as Jacob 45 times, almost double the amount. By way of comparison looking at his grandfather Abraham he is never again revered to by his old name Abram. The sad truth is that we relate far more with Jacob then we do Abraham our battle is one that is far more difficult than physically walking with a limp it is walking with a new name!

II. Vs. 1-16 A divided man

Vs. 1-3 It seems as though these verses happen immediately after Jacob’s encounter with the Lord and the interesting point is the very next morning which had driven Jacob to wrestle with the Lord has not been removed. Often times we assume that staying up all night seeking the Lord and even hearing from the Lord will change our circumstances but what has changes is not the circumstances but the means of overcoming them. God does not always remove the obstacles from our path but He will always give us the power in Him to overcome them. The greater concern is not in seeing a change in our circumstances but rather in not seeing a change in our reaction to them. Jacob so arranges his family to represent his love towards them, (*the greatest love of his heart being at the end of the parade*). He may be hoping for the best but he is still preparing for the worst, the only change we see in what Jacob loved the most is that he is no longer the number one, instead is in last place!

 As Jacob rode up with 400 men there is Jacob bowing to him seven times. In that culture bowing was a sign of submission, a way of saying that he wanted no social power over Esau. 20 years earlier if Jacob would have just allowed the Lord to work all of this would not have been necessary as Isaac promised in 27:29 “*Let peoples serve you, And nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, and let your mother's son’s bow down to you*.”

Vs. 4-7 If we stop the words of verse 4 with “*Esau ran to meet him*” one wonders what expression was upon the face of Jacob and how it must have changed when we are told in the rest of verse 4 that Esau “*embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him*”. We probably know why Esau wept but the reason Jacob wept may have been for several reasons:

* Surprise
* Relief
* Grief, over past as well as doubting the Lord!

How great the Lord works in situations apart from us! God can and does so much through a broken humbled heart. The greatest distance known to man is not to measure in miles or light years instead it is measured in the inches from the head to the heart! There is no mention of the past by either of them, God has worked it out and there is no to dredge it all up instead Jacob introduces his family that God has given him.

Vs. 8-11 Perhaps Jacob was seeking to pay some sort of restitution towards Esau but I think more likely that the gifts had more to do with the future then they did the past. What is known is that in this culture one would never accept a gift from an enemy, only from a person you would consider your friend. That makes Jacob’s insistence of Esau accepting the gifts like trying to buy his brothers friendship. Both claim that they “*have enough*” but the words are two different ones. Esau’s word means “*much*” and Jacob’s means “everything”. Based upon Genesis 36 where we are given the history of Esau it is most likely that Esau had far more possessions then did Jacob yet Jacob describes what he has in terms of everything and not much. So what’s the reason for this? Well Jacob tells us here in verse 11 “*God has dealt graciously with me*”. The difference is that what Esau has is from the world as he had defeated the Horites and conquered the land of Seir to obtain it. That which is gained from the world may amount to “*much*” but it will never add up to “*everything*” apart from the Lord dealing graciously with us!

 In the last chapter verse 28 Jacob’s named had been changed from “*con man*” to “*ruled by God*” but now he is already beginning to look more like the old con man then the new ruled by God. I find it always easier to trust God in the moment where He has revealed His truth to my heart and still another thing to trust Him each and every moment afterwards. The outcome is that it is easier to take Jacob out of the world than it is to take the world out of Jacob. Though we can still see some victory, Jacob had once swindled Esau’s birth right for a bowl of stew now he insists upon giving up flocks and herd’s for nothing.

Vs. 12-16 Esau is the one in this section that behaves more in line with that of a believer as he offers to travel with Jacob and after that is turned down he offers to leave his men as an escort. The obstacle in Jacob’s life in inheriting all of the promises of God was not his father favoring Esau; it was not Esau being the oldest. No it was himself, as he refused to submit to God. As I look at this it could not be any clearer than this: “*The one you feared offers to escort you back to the land that God had promised was yours*!” But instead of trusting God and seeing this has clearly coming from His hand Jacob chooses diplomacy. Someone was once asked to give an illustration of what the word meant and they said; “*It is the art of saying nice doggie to draw the dog close enough so you can pick up a rock to hit it with*!” That is what Jacob does here in these verses as he offers to join Esau in Seir all the while he is planning to do the opposite. If you take a look at a map of this area you will find that Seir is south east of Peniel and Succoth is northwest of Peniel. That means as soon as Esau takes off and puts some time and distance between them Jacob heads off in the opposite direction. Yes chapter 36:7 does tell us that the land where they were at together could not support them together but it never indicate that the deception given here by Jacob was the answer to the problem. You wonder how long Esau waited for Jacob to show up until he realized that Jacob had conned him again. After all of Jacob’s talk of “*having everything*” and God’s grace his actions revealed that these things weren’t true even though they were! The truth is that Spiritual profession without holy conduct is a reason so many refuse to believe the truth’s we have told then concerning God!

III. Vs. 17-20 A compromised man

Vs. 17 Here is yet another sign that Jacob’s name has still remained the same he first chooses to move to a place named “booths” (Succoth). He had lived without a permanent home but now he seeks a place to put down roots. That would not be so bad except for the fact that it was not in the land of promise. He built a house, which suggests that he lived there for a while. At Bethel his home was the House of God and he has traded it in for a “booth.” In chapter 34 Jacob is going to learn that he should have not stayed. The area was green and lush perfect for a time of ease and prosperity, away from the rockiness of living in the house of the Lord but with comfort in the world comes trials.

Vs.18 Next he moves safely to “safety” as Shechem means “*in peace or safe and sound*”, so this is a play on words as it says that Jacob came in peace to a place of peace. In pitching his tent before the city it reveals that his intent was to join the city. Oddly enough we are told that he is moving back closer to where he came rather than where God had called him.

Vs. 19-20 He buys some land from a family that is going to cause him much grief in the next chapter and it will be this grief that will get him to finally get back to Bethel in the 35th chapter. In all of this Jacob finally pays money for something that God said was his already. Erects an altar calling it God the God of Israel even though he had not acted as though this was true. We often think that we can counter act our behavior by giving God a bone every now and then. He does not want our occasional sacrifice; he wants our whole hearts! He may which to worship God but he cannot do so in a place where God does not want him to be. Even though this was the same place that his grandfather had built an altar it was still not where God had told him to be. Great name historical place but still the wrong place! The conclusions?

1. We are never safer then when we are uncomfortable: Are trouble is that we try to make our lives far too comfortable. We spend far too much energy trying to find ways in which we can make our experience with God a matter of convenience and not one of necessity! Simply put we make our God to safe choosing the green plains where life is simple to the rocks in the House of God.
2. We are never more in danger when we think we are secure in the things of the world: For it is during these times that we are least inclined to trust and obey the Lord. Instead of seeing the Lord as our only hope He doesn’t make our top ten list. A life of complacency supplants a life on the cutting edge and peace is preferred to purity, prosperity to piety and safety to spirituality.

Thank God it is not a place where He will allow us a permanent address!

Genesis 34:1-31

 “The rape of righteousness”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-12 A deal for Dinah

III. Vs. 13-31 From a relationship to religion

I. Intro.

Last week we left Jacob moving to Shechem from Succoth yet God had called him back to Bethel. Dinah is most likely in her teens and her brothers Ruben, Simeon, Levi and Judah are in there 20’s. This means that by the time the 34th chapter starts they have lived in Shechem and Succoth for ten years. Those ten years of life in a land that is not where God had called them is going to catch up to them in this chapter. It does not matter how small the disobedience in our lives may be we will always suffer loss. The loss may be a lack of spiritual power, a poor testimony, anxious heart or troubled life but there will always be a loss for a life not submitted to the Lord. As we read through this chapter it contains yet another black eye upon God’s chosen people. One wonders about the truth that from this group of people God would chose to bring forth His only begotten Son. Most likely Jacob is the original author of this section and Moses the editor. In light of this fact Jacob holds no punches when sharing with the nation his family’s failures. My point is twofold:

* Clearly this is an inspirited book as no biographer chooses to right of there down falls.
* God’s choice of this group of people to be the object of His love is not based upon their worthiness. This is born out in His words through Moses is Deut. 7:6-8 “*the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples.*”

II. Vs. 1-12 A deal for Dinah

Vs. 1 Jacob had lied to Esau and brought his family to a place where God had not directed him. In chapter 31:13 as well as 35:1 God clearly indicates to him where he wanted him to be. Yet Jacob chose the place to settle based upon what would be easiest and comfortable. *All too often we fall into this same trap of wanting to be close enough to the world to enjoy it’s benefits while trying to balance a life that is separate to God*.

 We are not certain whether or not Dinah was familiar with the customs of the Canaanites but girls did not go out unattended, as they were considered easy. To go out without an escort was saying that they wanted to get with a guy. Perhaps she went out without the permission of her parents but there is always an inherent danger when parents live to close to the world as our children won’t know the dangers of the customs! To Dinah she just wanted to go and hang out with her friends “the daughters of the land”. But she did not understand that no girl went out on her own. The standards and morals of society was so low that no where do we see Shechem or his father Hamor ever apologize for the rape of Dinah.

Vs. 2 The word “*violated*” is the same word rendered “*desecrated*” in regards to a temple. Simply put the desecration of a temple and the dishonor of sex outside of marriage is regarded with the same passion from the Lord. Personal purity and spiritual purity are forever linked, as you cannot have one without the other. Promiscuity was not only common it was encouraged as it was part of the religious system and the fact that Shechem was a prince made it all more his right. Far too many today want to take the “S” out of SIN and make it just IN but that is not the way God spells it. In fact you will notice what the middle letter is in sin, “I”! The reason for this is we are always in the middle of sin!

 There is no doubt in my mind that Dinah well understood the reason why she should not go out in the land unattended after her rape. Neither is there any doubt in my mind that Jacob understood that he had failed his daughter by living so close to the world and by not being her covering as her father. Parents face this same choice today with their daughters, “*Dad can I go out with my friends to So and So.’s house*?” “*Will there be any boy’s there?*” Listen carefully girl’s your dads know that boys play by a different set of rules then you do!

Vs. 3-4 The words “*was strongly attached*” is literally saying that Shechem “*clung*” onto her. There is no doubt that Shechem was attracted to her but that does not mean that he was in love with her. For if he had truly cared for her he would not have violated her. We get a true since of his feelings for her in his words to his father Hamor “*Get me this young woman*”. What he wanted was the pleasure she gave him as he had sex with her. He wanted her for what she could give him not what he could give her. Shechem’s love was the “*get me*” kind not the “*give me*” kind! I want you to notice something here ladies as it relates to men as it says concerning Shechem that he “*he loved the young woman and spoke kindly to the young woman*.” The words “*he loved*” suggest something very different then biblical love. Other translations interpret this as:

* “But Shechem was attracted to Dinah, so he told her how much he loved her.” (CEV)
* “But he found the young woman so attractive that he fell in love with her and tried to win her affection.” (GNB)
* **“Since he was strongly attracted to Dinah, daughter of Jacob, indeed was really in love with the girl, he endeavored to win her affection.”** (NAB)

What’s my point**? His attraction is what fueled his actions; his motivation in his behavior was to “*get this young woman*”!** It is possible for a man to be “*very attracted*” to a lady and show her kindness and romance to win her affection in order to “***get her***” for his pleasure. Women forget this all too often. Here is a saying that should not be forgotten “*Men give love to get sex, women give sex to get love!*” Men say, “*If you love me you will let me have sex with you!*” Women ought to respond with, “*If you love me you will respect me enough to wait until we are married*!” How kindly was Shechem acting if he was willing to rob her of her honor and then only when he did not get consent to have sex with her again offer to marry her. What kind of husband would Shechem be if before he was married to Dinah he was unable to control his own passions? What kind of husband or boyfriend is a guy going to be if he cannot bridle his passions towards you? What makes you think he can bridle his passions towards another woman later if he can’t bridle his passion towards you now?

 A 1960 Stanford research study called the “***marshmallow test***” sought to do research to see if delaying “*self-gratification*” had any effect upon other social behaviors. They took four-year-olds and gave them a choice of one marshmallow now or two if they waited 5 minutes. Then over the next 12 years they monitored those same children in the two categories. What they found was startling, those that grabbed the 1 marshmallow opting for immediate *self-gratification* tended to be more troubled teenagers, they averaged 210 points lower on their SAT scores as well. The study proved that teaching our children to delay *self-gratification* made for a better group of young adults. The problem is that as young adults we all think that we are alone able to decide what is best for us as far as liberty and freedoms are concerned. In fact we are very upset when we don’t get to do what others get to do, (*Dinah wanted to go out and see the daughters of the land, Shechem wanted to have sex with Dinah outside of marriage*). However it is later in life that we learn the consequences of our miss guided freedoms. **The fruit of freedom without the maturity to handle it is always spoiled and rotten it is also something that we pay for the rest of our lives for picking prematurely**.

Vs. 5-7 It seems that according to verse 26 that Dinah remained at Shechem’s house after the date rape and thus Jacob must have learned of this some other way. Yet with that said he remains silent on the whole scene choosing rather to wait for her brothers to take charge. Several things seem to have happened even if we don’t know the reason why.

1. Jacob does not appear to be outraged; neither does he take any responsibility being her parent for living so in an area that was opposed to biblical principles.
2. His abdicating his position of head ship in his family created a void which his two younger sons, without God’s experience and wisdom, were very eager to fill the void he left.

All too often our response or shall I say lack of response in dealing with conflicts furthers the crisis that has already begun. Far too many people see any conflict as a negative to be avoided at any cost and do just what Jacob does “*hold his peace*”. As a leader Jacob should not have held his peace instead he should have accepted his responsibility for being in the wrong place, then he should of got his daughter from Shechem and demanded justice be done for her harm! Instead he says nothing and waits until her brothers come home. Some say that it was the brother’s responsibility to protect their sister and that he was waiting until they got back to deal with it

 Finally the two families are going to come together to deal with the situation and they have two very different responses to the situation:

1. Vs. 7 Jacob’s sons were grieved and angry: They were hurt and it burned exceedingly hot in them and this left unchecked caused them to commit an even greater sin.
2. Vs. 8-12 Hamor and Shechem offer four things to resolve the matter:
3. Vs. 8 He explains the away the matter by saying what is common today, “*If you love someone it’s ok to take advantage of them!*” There is no apology only a justification for the rape.
4. Vs. 9 Such a union isn’t such a bad thing, as it will create an opportunity for everyone else. You may be familiar with this excuse as it goes like this, “*Everyone else is doing it*!”
5. Vs. 10 Next he says something that again we are all very familiar with, “*Hey if you do it you will be part of the popular group*!” You will be able to hang out with all the right people and have all of the stuff they have.
6. Vs. 11-12 Finally, Shechem opens his mouth and says, “*How much do you want for her!*” Now that’s love isn’t it gals? Effectively he is making Jacob and her brothers Diana’s pimps! “*Hey, now that we have had sex do you want to go out some more?”*

### III. Vs. 13-31 From a relationship to religion

Vs. 13-17 Here then is the counter offer by Simeon and Levi: All the men of the city need to be circumcised.

They were right to refuse the marriage proposal based upon two reasons:

1. They were not to inter marry with non-believers. Christians listen carefully don’t go out with those who do not share your passion for Jesus Christ.
2. The way that Shechem had treated their sister was also a great reason for them to refuse the proposal. There was nothing in the way Shechem had treated Dinah before or after the incident that demonstrated that he was a man of character.

Yet with that said they certainly didn’t handle this situation biblically. They used their profession of faith as a basis of deception, worse yet the symbol of the cutting away of the old nature and the covenant made with God was used to deceive them. They appeared to be holy and concerned about their relationship with God while planning to kill them. Talk about your mixed messages. There is an interesting point here though as many a professing Christian goes to Church yet sleeps around! They were angry at Shechem raping their sister so they rape their relationship with God and prostitute its outward sign for the purpose of murder. Notice that this conversation is attributed to Jacob’s sons and not Dinah’s brothers as they certainly looked like their father. Why would they go along with this? Well it was the promise of gain and the fact that circumcision was not unheard of in that culture and seeing the Shechem was a prince if he was willing to go through with it then it must be a cool thing to do. Again you will notice the absence of any word from Jacob as he has left the headship of the family to two 20 something’s!

Vs. 18-24 The deception based upon lust and greed played right into the hands of Jacob’s two son’s revenge. Society held Shechem in such high regards that they went along with it. It is amazing what men will do to get with women a point that many women will exploit. The whole of society works on this as women bare their bodies in hope to attract men thus exploit men’s natural lusts them men in turn use and exploit women as just objects to feed their fantasies.

Vs. 25-29 They then killed all of the men of the city in total disregard to God’s covenant. Yes they rescued their sister but in their behavior they further raped her by treating her as an object and a possession. Notice they waited until the third day, as the healing process would have been the most painful at that time. They justify the murder of the entire city and the morals of the community by saying that Shechem had disgraced their sister but how did the punishment fit the crime? They plunder the city and make the inhabitants their slaves what a great witness for God!

Vs. 30-31 Jacob’s concern is not for his God, even for his raped daughter but how the incident makes him look in the community that God had not called him to. Talk about being self-absorbed! Jacob will not deal with this until his death bed when he prays over Simeon and Levi saying, “*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*.” It is interesting how this prophecy was fulfilled so differently between the two tribes:

1. Simeon continued to be unfaithful towards the Lord and was absorbed into the tribe of Judah.
2. Levi was scattered but not because he was unfaithful but rather because of faithfulness, at the golden calf incident they alone stood for the Lord. Yes they were scattered amongst all the tribes but to be a blessing to the whole nation.

Here’s the point perhaps you have blown it, you’ve compromised your faith with the Lord what becomes of you is up to you. Remain unfaithful towards Him and your life will be scattered and will amount to nothing. But repent and remain faithful turning away from the idols of this world and your life will be a blessing upon every place you are at!

Genesis 35:1-4

 “Returning to your first love”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-4 Five steps in submission

I. Intro.

By the time we get to this chapter, thirty years have elapsed between when Jacob had first vowed to God to return to Bethel in chapter 28:20; ten of those years had happened since his leaving Laban on his way to the promised land as he made his home in the Shechem. None of this would mean much to us if we did not look at a map, you see Bethel is only 30 miles from Shechem. Jacob and his family spent ***10 years and 30 miles from where God had called him to be all along***. **By all practical purposes they were only a days walk from obedience and surrender.**

 we often gage our submission and obedience to the Lord on how close we are to where he wants us to be. “*Hey, I’m not where God wants me to be but I’m only a days walk away!*” The truer measure of our heart is not how close we are but rather how long it takes us to get there! Ten years to move 30 miles and it took the negative influence that the world had upon his family in chapter 34 to get him leave. During those 10 years he had built an altar to the Lord naming it “*God, the God of Israel*” and from all outward appearances one would think of Jacob as having a walk with the Lord. But no amount of naming what we do and where we are moves us any closer to where God want’s us to be. You can name where you’re at any spiritual name you want but God is not impressed with what we name the areas of our lives; His desire is that we live our lives submitted to Him. **I can’t help but wonder how many years I’ve lived only a short distance from what God has for me content to call where I’m at Christian**? Here is the sad truth; it is only living at the House of the Lord that we find true blessing and joy. Jacob settled in Shechem “*safety*” in the world when he could have experienced blessings and joy at the “*House of the Lord*” (Bethel).

**II. Vs. 1-4 Five steps in submission**

Vs. 1 There are two things that stand out in this verse that need to be answered:

1. The first causes me to ask a question, “*Great God, why did you wait ten years and allow Jacob to go through trials before you tell him to travel a day’s journey to where you want him*?” It seems based upon this verse that God didn’t tell him he needed to leave. Now I can’t be sure but if my own life is any indicator then it was not that God wasn’t telling him to leave rather it was that Jacob hadn’t been open to listening! *Ten years prior Jacob had wrestled with the Lord and was a broken man but he appears to* ***have no since of urgency*** *to move further in obedience. It isn’t until the trials of living in a place where God had not called him make him* ***obnoxious*** *to the world in which he has chosen to live (34:30) that he is open to hear from the Lord*. ***Simply put it took 10 years for the events of living in the world apart from where God had called him to cause him to want to be separate from it***. Then and only then did the “***only cure for his worldliness become to separate from it****!*” It often takes some tragic event in our lives to drive us to where God in His love and grace has called us to dwell to begin with. How much needless heartache and sorrow Jacob might have avoided if he left Laban and went right to Bethel as God had commanded? The easy way is always to submit to God in the areas of our lives and not wait for the tragic consequences of disobedience to drive us there.
2. Second, notice that God instructs Jacob to make an altar at Bethel. Why did God tell him to make another altar at Bethel when he had made one at Shechem? Listen carefully, “*The altar made to the Lord in his name while we are in disobedience will only serve as a justification to remain where He has not called us.*” **Our religious practices made without a submitted heart are of no use to the Lord in fact they are an offence to Him.** This truth is bore out time and again in scripture as we read in Isaiah 1:11-17 “*To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?" Says the LORD. I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, Or of lambs or goats. When you come to appear before Me, who has required this from your hand, to trample My courts? Bring no more futile sacrifices; Incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies; I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow*.”

Vs. 2 In the next two verses Jacob instructs his family to **do five things in order to submit their relationship back to the Lord**:

1. **SEPARATION** “*Put away the foreign gods that are among you*”: **Put away that which is wrong! There will never be any renewal or growth in our lives apart from separating from the things that are keeping us from the Lord**. The question we often have in looking at Jacob’s life and then at ours is, “*Where had these idols come from*?” How can we who acknowledge God have anything other then him as an object of our worship? Perhaps in finding where they came from in Jacob’s life we will discover where they have come from in our lives.
2. **First**, back in chapter 31:19 we are told that Rachel had taken her fathers idols and hadn’t told Jacob of this. These Idols were mostly used as “*good luck charms*” and for good reason as they represented ownership of property and possessions. When Jacob did find out about these idols he apparently did nothing about them. These house hold idols had slipped into his life through his wives. They had been apart of their upbringing and had came into the family’s life through marriage. Here’s my point: **A lot of where we get our idols comes from our upbringing in the world**. We learn from our fathers that the way we show love to our family is by providing for them. That is not evil but it is not the way that we are to show our love towards our family. Instead we are to treat them as Jesus treats us teaching and being the pastors of our homes. The other way produces men who demonstrate that their jobs and careers are their gods.
3. **Second**, they had lived in “Safety” (Shechem) for ten years and they no doubt worshipped those same idols. Here’s my point **when we live to close to the world we often take on what they worship instead of Who we ought to worship**. The world worships entertainment and sports. Often we men can get caught up into the worship of these things as well can’t we?
4. **Finally**, after Simeon and Levi slaughter all the men of Shechem they plunder the city and take captive the women and children to be their slaves. In so doing they invited the Canaanite culture to join them. This **suggests that we think that we can control the world’s influence in our lives while having them to join us**.

Thus the world’s idols come into our lives because it has:

* **Always been apart of it**
* **We’ve lived so close to it for so long that we begin to worship what it worships**
* **We join with it thinking that we are its masters only to become mastered by it**
1. **PURIFICATION** “*Purify yourselves*”: **There will be no renewal unless we are willing to submit to the Lord to become holy and pure before Him**. Sin must again become sin and we need to hate it in our own lives as much as we do in others! Jacob’s words to his family were a call to rid they hearts and lives from the influence of any thing that they worshipped that was not the Lord. It is interesting to me to note that simply getting rid of the object that they worshipped was not enough, thus the call to purify themselves! Getting rid of the object is great but what about the heart that desired to begin with? Jacob was intent upon having his family hating sin again.
2. **PREPARATION** “*And change your garments*”: Here we see Jacob dealing with yet **another aspect of submission to the Lord and having his relationship restored and this deals with a change of habits which is both positive as well as negative**. In other word’s they need to stop doing some things, “*change garments*” and start doing the right things “*put on new clothes*”. Garments through out the Bible always represent a person’s character and a person’s character is made up of: **What they do and don’t do**! It is interesting that *in the Catholic Church a nun’s clothes are called* “*Habits*”. Paul wrote to the Roman’s in 13:14 that we need to “*clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature*.” Apart from “*clothing ourselves with the Lord Jesus*” Isa. 64:6 says that our righteousness is like filthy rags. The truth is that all we can do with garments that are stained through is take them off. The second part of this involves putting on something that more represents we now are in Christ clothing that has been as Rev. 7:14 tells us that “*have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*” Are we prepared to meet the Lord are we warring His robes of righteousness or our old filthy rags?
3. **CONSECRATION** “*Then let us arise and go up to Bethel*”: Here we see as they had “*separated themselves*”, “*purified their hearts*” and “*prepared their lives*” to meet the Lord were **finally ready to consecrate themselves back to the Lord**. The word “*consecrate*” literally means **to dedicate**. So all the other things they had done had brought them back to a place of rededicating their lives to the Lord. Here is the picture the goal was not to get something from the Lord in doing this rather the prize; the goal, was just being nearer to Him! They were in the low lands and Bethel, though only 30 miles away, was 1,000 feet above where they were! Is that not a great picture of what rededication is? With out hesitation we arise from the muck and mire in ours lives and climbs the mountain of the Lord just to be with Him afresh. What’s cool is that all of this takes place before God ever tells them the blessings of dedication in verses 10-11.
4. **ADORATION** “*And I will make an altar there to God*”: Not only is it important to have worship reestablished in our hearts and lives but the basis of it is very important as well. Look here as Jacob gives the reason for such worship as because God had, “*answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way, which I have gone*.” In other word’s his adoration towards the Lord had everything to do with the Lord’s faithfulness and nothing to do with his. William Temple wrote that, “***Worship is to quicken the conscience by the Holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God and to devote the will to the purpose of God****!*" Notice that Jacob made an altar in Shechem and named after the God of Israel here he names it after the Character of God, “*The Strong One*”!

Vs. 4 Here we see that their action reveals that their submission was not just talk. Hey, Folks lets determine in hearts to submit to God and walk up the hill to the House of God, if we do so we need not come down from there.

Genesis 35:5-29

 “Doing the first works”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 5-15 A journey down memory lane

III. Vs. 16-29 So this is living

I. Intro.

The focus of the first four verses of chapter 35 was upon personal renewal in the life of Jacob. There are five parts to having our relationship with Him restored:

1. **Separation**: Putting away attitudes and activities in our lives that are apart from God and His word.
2. **Purification**: A desire to be pure which means that we will again hate sin in our lives as much as we hate it in others.
3. **Preparation**: There will be a change in our habits in which we will put off old ones and put on new ones.
4. **Consecration**: We will rededicate our lives to God and we will have a renewed desire to draw near to God, He will again become the focus of our lives.
5. **Adoration**: When restoration is complete we will have a new since of worship as He will be greater then ever before and we will want to just spend time with Him.

Knowing these five truths will not make you have a renewed relationship with God you still have to get up and go! Further more even upon getting up and going, applying these truths doesn’t mean that everything will start going smoothly in your life. Even a life that is lived in total surrender to the Lord doesn’t mean that you won’t ever be sick, suffer or sorrow. A life lived in surrender to the Lord is never about ease and comfort in this life, it is all about becoming more like Jesus!

**II. Vs. 5-15 A journey down memory lane**

Vs. 5 The land in which Jacob and his family must return through to get to Bethel is where the families of the men that Levi and Simeon had killed. We often have to walk through areas of our lives where sin has destroyed. Because of this we often allow the guilt and fear of our past keep us where we are instead of moving to where God wants us to be. God would have been just in giving Jacob and his family their own medicine for their disobedience but instead He put the fear of Himself in those cites that Jacob needed to pass through. Notice that it was not the fear of Jacob but rather the fear of the Lord that struck the hearts of those cities. In spite of their rebellion God fulfills the promise he made with Jacob 30 years earlier in 28:15 saying; “*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.*” It dangerous for Jacob to travel the 30 miles through their sin and failure, but it was far more safe then staying in the land of disobedience! The safest place to live and dwell is always in obedience God’s word.

Vs. 6-7 These verses answer what most Christians want to know concerning God’s will for their lives. “*How do I get where God wants me to be, I’ve been praying and seeking His direction but nothing happens*.” **You only get to Bethel (The house of God) by obeying His word in your life**. There is no short cut, no elevator only simple obedience. Jacob had said that he would give his heart to the Lord and now by building this altar we see that he begins to do so. Hey, wait a minute didn’t he build an altar in Shechem (safety) in the world? Yes, but here we see that Jacob realizes that the place where God blesses is not what he names where he is at but rather only the place of a heart that obeys.

 He calls the altar that he builds, “*God, of the house of God*”! There has been growth as Jacob is more interested in the God then the place! The God who met him where he was at 30 years earlier is the same God who meets him where he is at now! What has changed is not the Lord but Jacob’s understanding of the Lord!

Vs. 8 We don’t know much about Deborah other than that she came with Rebekah when she left to marry Isaac. With all those faithful years of service she must have been more then just a servant and was seen as part of the family. The place where they bury her is called the “*Oak of weeping*”. She must of pretty old as Jacob is 110 and she came with his mother from Haran so that puts her at 170. This is the first of three losses that Jacob will face when he is where God wants him to be. The “C” on Christianity often stands for “*crisis*”.

Vs. 9 In the 31st chapter God appeared to Jacob and told him to return to the land of promise and now here again God appears as if he was still on that journey home. Those ten years living in “safety” with the world did not happen as far as God was concerned. When you and I refuse to obey the Lord in areas of our life we just don’t go anywhere and so when we return we start right where we strayed off. When we awake to the reality that we are not growing we need not look any further then to the areas where we refused to obey. That can take a few day or a lifetime it’s up to us!

Vs. 10-12 The blessing that is pronounced upon him by the Lord is not new, as they are the same words that the Lord spoke to his Grandfather Abraham and the same that was spoken to him 30 years earlier. God reminds Jacob of how He saw him and not how Jacob saw himself. “*Your name is Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name." So He called his name Israel*.” Yes, he had acted more like the “*heal catcher*” than a man “*ruled by God*”. But God reveals to Jacob ***a powerful truth that we often live as we think of ourselves instead of living based upon how God sees us***. Jacob had a glorious encounter with the Lord but it faded and with it the reality of whom he was in God’s eyes and his behavior reflected what he saw. He moves and dwells in places hoping to recapture the experience he once felt with the Lord only to find himself moving further away. But when he responds in obedience to following the Lord the Lord reminds him of who he is. Jacob didn’t need something new; no all he needed was to be reminded a fresh of what was already true and encouraged to cling to the Lord again. Jesus said something remarkably similar to the Church at Ephesus; “*You have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works*”. The first works are Love and Trust!

 God tells Jacob that He is the God almighty “El-Shaddai” the infinite supplier of all Jacob needs and will ever need, from whom all grace flows! He is the same God that spoke the same things to his father and Grandfather, all that He had promised them He promises Jacob. “*But I’ve failed to live up to what my name means (Ruled by God*)”! When we are in the “beloved”, seated in heavenly place in Christ Jesus, it is our failure to realize this that often leads to our wondering.

Vs. 13-15 God goes up from Jacobs presence at Bethel as Jacob watches. Jacob then makes a pillar, pours out a drink offering and then an offering of oil as acts of worship to the God who knows his name. Wine is a symbol of joy and oil of refreshment thus Jacob has fullness of joy and refreshed which is always what lies behind true worship. All to often instead of this we act as if God has robbed us of what we wanted instead grateful of what He has so richly blessed us with.

III. Vs. 16-29 So this is living

Vs. 16-20 We are not told how long Jacob stayed at Bethel but we are told that they left and that some where between Bethel and Bethlehem Rachel goes into labor. This is her second child and her prayer was to give her a child or she would die, so she fulfills her own prophecy. Jacob told Laban that the one that stole the idols would not live and she doesn’t.

 Rachael names the child “*Son of my sorrow*” and Jacob renames him “*Son of my right hand*”. Her death parallels her life, she was robbed of the sole love of her husband, in competition with her sister she dies at getting what she wanted but at the price of her own life. How tragic life is when it is lived by the world’s standards, always seeking after what the world values at a price we can’t afford! Jacob loved her to the end but perhaps now he realized he did her no favors when he loved her above the Lord!

Vs. 21-22a Here is another painful event in Jacob’s life as the death of Rachael opens the door for Leah’s first son Ruben to sleep with Bilhah Rachael’s handmaid. It seems as though this was not about a romantic interest but rather a power struggle to claim what was already his, the rights of the first born. This no doubt was because he witnessed dad just naming Rachel’s last son “*son of my right hand*”. Three of Leah’s six boys have disqualified themselves as being the child of promise so now the lot will fall upon Judah.

Vs. 22b-26 The list of the 12 sons is no all-star team to say the least as they fit what we would call dysfunctional thus the choice of this family is that of grace and not merit. As Stephen rightly said before the Sanhedrin “*Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute*?”

Vs. 27-29 The last tragic event in this chapter to happen to Jacob is the death of his father. Thirty years had passed since when Isaac thought he was going to die and Jacob deceived him for the birthright that already was his. It would have been interesting to see this meeting between the son whom the father ignored and father whom the son disappointed. Was their sorrow for the past and repentance together before the Lord? We will have to wait to find out but I pray that you and I make sure that we do so before the Lord returns for us!

 After viewing this chapter one might ask what good does it do to get right with God? “*Three deaths a powers struggle with your oldest son*!” Why I thought if we were obedient to God and followed Him in total surrender comfort and ease would follow us? Hey, Christian *peace with God does not mean ease with God*. If you think that obedience will lead to ease you might try looking at a furniture store for a lazy-boy? The point of obedience and surrender is not ease and smooth sailing it is to be more like Jesus and what our Lord lay on was not as Lazy-Boy but rather a cross!

Genesis 40:1-23

 “Hopes and dreams”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-12 I had a dream

III. Vs. 13-23 I’ve got some Good news and some bad news

I. Intro.

The chapter before us centers around three dreams, “*Three dreams, even though most only count the two the butler’s and the bakers*?” The third is Joseph’s and it is how he handles the disappointment of not seeing his happen that interests me the most. One of the greatest qualities in the life of Joseph is in spite of all his circumstances his optimism never wavers. Joseph could well have adopted a pessimistic attitude that always waited for the other shoe to drop. God is always dealing with me on this issue of trusting Him in spite of my circumstances. Real optimism is:

* Aware of the problems but sees God as the solution.
* Knows about the difficulties but believes that in the Lord they will be over come.
* Understands the negatives but choose to see the positives.
* Deals with the worst but expects the best.
* Has reasons to complain but has decided to have joy in the Lord.

II. Vs. 1-12 I had a dream

Vs. 1-2 In these first two verses it is not yet apparent how two servants of the Pharaoh will impact Joseph’s life but they will. Here is something that will bring us closer to the Lord: There are no chance happenings in the Lord everything is by divine appointment. I wonder how many times we have missed out on the joy of the Lord because we failed to see that everything and everyone is part of His plan for us. Christian every day is an opportunity given to us by the Lord that only has our best interest at heart! *Oh forgive me Lord for failing to see that today, last month, last year, was designed to make me more like You*!

 The word “*offended*” is rendered “*sinned*” in other versions and it points to the fact that these two fellows had done something that was very grievous against Pharaoh. Some think since both of them dealt with food that they were involved in an assassination plot, but we can’t be sure.

Vs. 3-4 Joseph was placed in prison but really he just moved from the penthouse to the basement. Yet his heart towards the Lord, as seen in his service, has not moved. There is no hint of bitterness, no attitude towards Potiphar that shows that he is anything other then trusting the Lord for his new position. “*Whenever there is a change in your status it is not a demotion it is a promotion when you are serving the Lord*.” It is designed to draw you closer towards Him, to make you again desperate to be in only His presence. In the worlds eyes you may have gone from the penthouse to the basement but in the Lord you moved up! Joseph just choose to see what happened to him from what he knew to be true about God’s instead of how the world saw it. What enabled him to react this way? Well we are told in 39:21 “*the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.*” This was not blind optimism; no it was confidence in a God who was never going to leave him even during the hardest times. Joseph was not thinking escape rather he was thinking endurance. Ok, how did he endure this dungeon of despair? Let me suggest four things:

1. Vs. 4 Saw His situation as a blessing not a curse. “*The captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them*”: This does not mean that Joseph just a slave towards them the word here means “*ministered*” and accordingly in verses 6-7 we can see the depth of that service was encouraging them. You can not minister to others, be an encouragement to others if you are having some sort of “*why me*” party. Joseph was living out his faith no matter where he was at. He did not view this situation as a set back but as an advancement! As long as he was in the presence of the Lord then he was still being blessed.
2. Rest upon God’s word as truth no matter what the situation was saying: Back in chapter 37 God had assured him that he was going to be elevated above his family. Four times the Lord told him in chapter 39 that he was going to make him successful or blessed. Yet with that said that Lord never indicated WHEN this was going to take place only that it WAS. Joseph was assured that “*someday, someway*” God was going to do what He had told him He was going to do and therefore what he was going through at that time had to be a part of God’s plan for his life. If we don’t believe that then we do not have trust or faith, we only have wishful thinking.
3. Complete confidence in God: Not only in his future but in his present circumstances even through the injustice of being sold into slavery by his brothers and falsely accused by Potiphar’s wife. Trials are part of this life in Christ Christian. Jesus said so in John 16:33 “*In the world you will have tribulation*” but He finishes out those words with the encouragement of “*be of good cheer, I have overcome the world*.” James gave us the WHY of the trials we face when he said, “*My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing*.” We often become very despondent during those times of trials because our faith is based upon God meeting our expectations. In Joseph we see what true faith is all about, as he did not want out of his trial he wanted to get everything that God had for him out of his trail.
4. He realized that God was working in him a more perfect work: *The greater work God does is not through the man but rather in the man*! Joseph was serving in humility he was not rapped up in himself he was broken and pure. He used this as an opportunity to reach others with the hope he had in the Lord. His heart of brokenness was what set him free and eventually would lead others to the same freedom. The most humbling of circumstances are the occasions for God’s greatest works!

Vs. 5-8 People who have become bitter about their situation in life become self centered and are never concerned with the heartaches of others. So many people use the excuses of the injustices done to them as a reason to live just for themselves. We become consumed with what is or isn’t being done towards us and in so doing we treat others the very way we hated being treated ourselves. Not so with Joseph he is all about treating people, as he would want to be treated. Jesus said in Luke 6:31 “*Do for others as you would like them to do for you*.”

 Apparently Egyptians put a lot of stock into their dreams as it related to future events. They had those who were qualified as dream experts and could tell you the meaning of your dreams and because these two guys were in prison they had no access to them. Look again at Joseph’s words, “*Do not interpretations belong to God*?” and remember his situation. I mean here is a guy whose own dreams have not come into fruition and have instead gone exactly the opposite and he is boasting in God’s ability to love and care for him to others. How about it has your present situation caused you to doubt God’s love?

Vs. 9-12 Personally speaking the last time Joseph opened himself up to sharing the interpretation of dreams in brought about jealousy and being sold into slavery. But he invites the two guys to share them with him. The butler shared his dream with out any hesitation most likely because he could see the evidence of Joseph’s life being touched by the Lord.

 Several points need to be made about Joseph and this interpretation:

1. He asked no favors of the Butler prior to giving it.
2. He does not give a vague prediction but rather a very specific interpretation.
3. He obviously believed that the interpretation given him was from the Lord as he made a request upon the dream’s fulfillment.

III. Vs. 13-23 I’ve got some Good news & some bad news

Vs. 13-15 It appears that in some way Joseph is discontent with his placement in prison as he asks the butler to speak to Pharaoh on his behalf. I’m do not believe that is the case rather I think Joseph was perfectly content to be where God wanted him to be but was not convinced that where God wanted him was behind bars. So all he does is attempt to walk through the door provided by the Lord, the results would take two years to come to fruition. There are far to any in the Christian faith that see their faith as “*fatalistic*” and are content that God would have them make no attempt to change. Operating in our own strength is not good either but simple saying, “*What will be will be*!” is not faith any more then trying to make it happen. Now Joseph knows that he will not be out of his situation any sooner then the Lord wants him to be, but that does not mean that Joseph should not make every effort provide for him to accomplish what he believes is what the Lord wants for him.

Vs. 16-19 When the baker saw the favorable interpretation he was embolden to share his dream. What is interesting is that Joseph did not hesitate in telling the baker the interpretation even though it spoke of the baker’s demise. Far to often we are prone only to speak the butler’s message while neglecting the baker’s message not so with Joseph as he spoke of the whole council of the Word of God. Joseph’s faithfulness in giving the interpretation to the baker was far more important then the good news to the butler as it gave him time to repent and get his heart right. Joseph spoke the truth in love and told it like it was and according to 41:13 that impressed Pharaoh.

Vs. 20-23 The dreams fit the interpretations to the tee further more they came to pass as the Lord had shown him. Yet even with his release the butler does not remember to speak to Pharaoh about Joseph for two whole years. Yet Joseph’s hopes were not placed upon the butler but rather the Lord because although the butler forgot him for two years the Lord never did!

Genesis 41:1-57

 “From the prison to the palace”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-13 Dreams and remembrance

III. Vs. 14-36 Dreams with a design

IV. Vs. 37-57 Joseph’s promotion and program

I. Intro.

The 41st chapter seems to cause us to erase the true value of the Lord’s work in the life of Joseph over 13 years. But this chapter is not meant to be an illustration of a man finally getting his lucky break. Joseph’s promotion to being Prime Minister of all of Egypt was not the prize instead the prize was the process that took 13 years transforming his character. The bottom line was that those 13 years had transformed Joseph to the point that he was grateful and not hateful of his experience. Paul said to Timothy in (1 Tim 6:6) “*godliness with contentment is great gain*.” He wrote to the Philippians in 4:11-12 “*I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need*.” I confess that there is a longing in my heart to see only the Lord as my prize and not the circumstances of my life meeting me expectations!

II. Vs. 1-13 Dreams and remembrance

Vs. 1-8 Egyptologists tell us that these dreams fit perfectly with in the framework of Egyptian hieroglyphics which gives credibility to this book. In Egyptian hieroglyphics cows symbolize agriculture and grain symbolizes fertility. I don’t think that the symbols were things that Pharaoh or the interpreters could not understand. What they could not understand was the fact that the ugly gaunt cows and the thin blighted heads of grain consumed yet they were not prospering by the consumption of the fine fat cows and the plump good heads of grain. These dreams were so real to Pharaoh that according to verse 7 he was not sure if they were dreams. When the morning came Pharaoh was troubled by the dreams and calls for two separate groups of people to interpret the dreams:

1. Magicians: Were the best-educated and wisest people in Egypt. It was to this class of people that the hieroglyphics and other inscriptions belonged. They also consulted the stars as well as interpreted dreams.
2. Wise men: Were those folks who trained the magicians in occult practices.

Neither of these two groups could give the interpretation because the dreams were from God and they weren’t.

Vs. 9-13 Pharaoh’s frustration at the wisest most qualified people in the land not being able to interpret these dreams triggered the memory of the butler. He is careful to speak of the incident which landed him in prison as his “*faults*” but in regards to Joseph no where does he mention the injustice done Joseph or his faith in the Lord. The only interest in Joseph is his skill in interpreting dreams, both of which came out true although not equally beneficial. Thus Pharaoh knew from the words of his butler not only that Joseph was an interpreter of dreams but that he was not afraid to speak the truth even if it was not going to be pleasant news.

 Though Joseph had to wait another two years for God’s timing to be perfect when it was right with the Lord if happened quickly. It seems to me that we all go through times when there appears to be no movement forward in our lives. We tend to think that God is not at work, that we have been placed upon some sort of spiritual shelf forgotten and discarded. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is during such time as those that God is doing His greatest work of developing our characters, transforming us and making us more like His Son. Timing is everything, if Joseph would have been released two years earlier his advancement may have not ever happened. Mordecai told Queen Esther “*who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this*?” God has a great since of timing even if we don’t always appreciate it!

III. Vs. 14-36 Dreams with a design

Vs. 14-16 This verse reveals that Joseph had spent his time in the dungeon wisely as he prepared for the moment that God would deliver him. To the Hebrews a beard is a sign of dignity, but to the Egyptian a beard was an offensive thing. Joseph understood the culture and humbled himself to reach it. What good would it do to be an interpreter of dreams and because you didn’t want to shave no one would listen to the interpretation?

 Further more notice how Joseph uses this God given opportunity before Pharaoh, he does not speak of himself, he does not use it as an opportunity to promote his greatness or even to prosper in some way. Neither does he use it as an opportunity to clear his name or right the wrongs done him. We know that according to 40:14-15 that Joseph did not want to be in prison but those two years had brought him still closer to the Lord and his only interest is in serving the Lord not his causes! Amazingly the only statement out of Joseph’s mouth is to correct Pharaoh’s misunderstanding concerning who can interpret dreams. “*It’s not me, it’s God!*” The thing that ruled Joseph’s life was God and Him getting all the glory do Him. Standing before the most powerful man in the world and his only concern is that Pharaoh understands who is the Most Powerful the Lord God who knows what you were going to dream before he was ever created! One of the apostle John’s students went on to become a pastor of the church at Smyrna. Polycarp was quite old and frail when he was captured during an awful time of persecution against the church. He was brought in before the lions if he did not denounce Jesus as Lord. The Lions would not touch him so they threatened to burn him alive to which he spoke to the coliseum, “*For 86 years I have served my King who has saved me, He has done no wrong, so how can I deny Him now*?” In the flames that took his life his hands were raised in praising Jesus!

Vs. 17-33 The only difference in the retelling of the dreams to Joseph by Pharaoh is in the 21st verse where he is amazed by the fact that the ugly cows were as they had been at the beginning even after consuming the healthy cows. Even as Joseph gives the interpretation and then the advice there is still no request made by him to be placed into any position that would benefit himself. To Joseph he already held the most important job in all the world servant of the Lord! The interpretation of the dream was more about what to do to rectify what the dream foretold. The repeated number of “7” was speaking of the time frame to which this would all transpire. That fact that this dream had two separate stories that represented the same thing was meant to show it as a certain fact. The final words of Joseph are to give hope, “*God will shortly bring it to pass*.” In other word’s God not only knows what is going to happen, He also holds the outcome of what is gong to happen! God had a plan in the time of plenty as well as the time of famine and understanding what His plan was and operating within His plan would cause Egypt to prosper. All to often our prayers are about getting God to buy into our ideas and plans and bless them so we would prosper. Instead our prayer ought to be about us buying into God’s plans and ideas, then asking Him to cause them to prosper so His kingdom and will would be furthered for His glory!

Vs. 34-36 God did not stop at just giving the interpretation of dreams he gave Joseph the ability to analyze them and determine a coarse of action that would minimize the effects of the dream. The purpose of those 13 years becomes much clearer as such a gifted man who would not touch God’s glory had to be produced through much brokenness. To create a man who could interpret dreams and a man who would be able to steer a coarse through those dreams is not as difficult as it is to find a man who had such abilities but would not be lifted up in pride at God’s work through him! Talents and abilities can be produced through gifting, education and practice but a broken heart is nothing other then a man yielding to the work of the Spirit! That can take a life time if at all! That is why the person God uses is not where we should focus our attention rather our attention and study ought to be upon the heart of the person God uses. Moses and Joseph were two very different people outwardly:

1. Joseph: Began in the land of Canaan and ended up in Egypt. He began his career as a shepherd and was exalted to the position of Prime Minister. It was God’s hand upon Joseph’s life that caused him to “step up” to save his family.
2. Moses: Began his career as an infant prince and moved down to a shepherd among his father-in-laws flocks. It was necessary for Moses to “step down” in order to save his people!

God chose an administrator to save His chosen people, a pencil pusher, and not a warrior! God is always looking for people who do not think in terms of who they are or aren’t but rather in terms of Who He is. 2 Chron. 16:9 tells us that “*the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him*.” Joseph demonstrated this by being diligent and faithful to the day to which God had called him.

IV. Vs. 37-57 Joseph’s promotion & program

Vs. 37-45 Pharaoh clearly sees something different about Joseph then any other in all his kingdom, the “spirit of God” is in him. It took 13 years for Joseph to go from the pasture to the palace and it was made possible only by his willingness to yield to God to transform his character, yes Joseph had God given talents but it was God’s work inwardly that enabled those talents to be used for the glory of God.

 He is given all the trappings of a new position:

1. Signet ring: Like our signature and a credit card.
2. Clothing of fine linen and a gold chain: These were signs of his prominence among the people.
3. Second chariot: Pharaoh got the Rolls, Joseph drove the Benz.
4. His named changed: This meant that “*God speaks and He lives*” was no longer a slave or a foreigner but now an Egyptian.
5. The daughter of the priest of the sun god: Now most likely Asenath was not a woman who did not disagree with Joseph’s worship of God. How do we know? Well if he could say no to Potiphar’s wife he would have said no to any woman who did not love his God.

Vs. 46-57 Here we are told the accuracy of the interpretation and God’s ability to direct the administration of the plan that would prosper Egypt during the years of famine.

 The naming of his two son give another glimpse into his heart:

1. *Maasseh*: “Making to forget” shows that Joseph had an attitude of gratitude towards God as His goodness towards him far out weighed any of the trials. There is no mention of wanting to go back home as wherever the Lord was he was at home. No sign of bitterness as we will see further in 50:20 that causes him to see everything as being for his good.
2. *Ephraim*: “Fruitfulness” Joseph recognizes that all that he has is because of the Lord, there is no hint of deserving all that he now has because of what he had to endure. The Lord has turned the sorrow into joy and we see a powerful truth in these two names we shall never be fruitful until we are first forgetful! There is a worship song that goes like this: “*So let’s forget about ourselves magnify the Lord and worship Him*!”

 Genesis 42:1-38

 “Revenge or restoration”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-5 The need to go to Egypt

III. Vs. 6-25 The testing of brothers

IV. Vs. 26-38 The gift of truth

I. Intro.

We left off looking at Joseph’s two son’s names “*forgetfu*l” and “*fruitful*”. I believe that those names hold a secret to personal peace, “*If we are to be ever fruitful in our lives we must first be forgetful*”. It is that forgetfulness that is the difficult part; I’m very forgetful of the wrongs I’ve done to others but I can remember every word against me. What I need to be is forgetful of the wrongs done me and the key is to recognize how God could have chosen justly to deal with my wrongs. Jesus came not for His rights but rather for my wrongs! I have spent far too much time in my life trying to get even with those who have wronged me and not enough time getting even with those who have helped me and forgiving those who have hurt me!

II. Vs. 1-5 The need to go to Egypt

Vs. 1-5 In the last verse of chapter 41 we were told that the famine was world wide and it will be this world wide famine that will lead to the fulfillment of God’s word to Abraham in chapter 15:13 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*.” God was allowing this famine to drive Abraham’s descendants away from the evil influence of the Canaanites.

 It is clear by the words “*Why do you look at one another*?” that Jacob noticed that there was a perplexity upon his son’s faces as he mentioned their need to go to Egypt. For 20 years they had bore the secret concerning their treatment of their brother Joseph. Yet the word “*Egypt*” brought them back to the guilt that lay in their conscience. Someone has well said that “*Conscience is the knowing part of us that realizes that God knows what we know and agrees with Him on what is right*.” More often though our consciences are a sundial of our soul. “*They only reveal the true time when there is direct sun light that shines upon them but in darkness it is of no use and with any artificial light upon it you can make it read any time you want it to*!” One wonders if every time Benjamin asked about his brother, they saw a caravan, a pit or heard the word Egypt if their conscience was brought to the wickedness of their action? It is interesting to see how Jacob calls his son’s to action based upon hearing that there was grain in Egypt but in verse 4 can’t trust the Lord to protect his youngest son Benjamin who was now around 24 years old. Jacob has become a man of great faith but it is not in the Lord as he sees calamity at every turn. If only he was as hungry for the Lord as he was for grain he would have seen that perhaps the Lord had a great reason for all things. God was setting up the way in which he would be reunited with the son whom he thought was dead. Through our lives it is God in His sovereignty that uses the heartaches in our lives to bring us to places that we would never go on our own volition. The trip was over 200 miles long and no doubt took them several days to get there.

III. Vs. 6-25 The testing of brothers

Vs. 6-7 Joseph’s brothers knew that their success in getting grain lie in their ability to humble themselves before the Egyptian official and they did so but what they did not understand was that the official before them was none other then the brother they sold into slavery. As for Joseph, he recognized them right away but he did not understand the significance of their humility bowing before him until after wards as God caused him to remember the dream twenty years ago in chapter 37:5-8. Twenty years earlier, in defiance of God’s plan for Joseph, seen in his dreams, they sold him into slavery and it was this very act of selling him that caused them to bow before Joseph! This shows us that:

1. It is foolish to resist the hand of God in your life as your resistance may very well be that which causes His plans for you to come into fruition.
2. Secondly we need not worry at others attempts to keep us from where God attends as nothing can thwart the will of God not even the evil attentions of sinful people.

God’s wisdom and goodness are so far superior to anything that man can think or do. The Psalmist wrote in 76:10 “*Human opposition only enhances your glory*.” No doubt Joseph was very much unrecognizable in that 20 years had passed and the last they saw him was when he was 17 now he is 37. He looked like an Egyptian clean-cut, didn’t speak the language and had become Prime Minster from the position of a slave which would have been incomprehensible.

 The phrase “*spoke roughly*” needs to be interpreted through the context of him acting as a stranger towards them. The words in Hebrew mean “hard things” and suggests not the tone being harsh but rather he acted in a manor of Egyptians towards those form other foreign countries. The most obvious reason is so that they would not recognize him, the second is so that he could deduce what kind of men they had become. Thus the first question is to see if they will tell the truth as to their origin.

Vs. 8-14 In these verses Joseph further tests his brothers to see what has changed in their hearts over the last twenty years. The reason for his insistence in calling them spies is to be seen in the eventual answer of the brothers concerning their father Jacob and their youngest son Benjamin both who were not present. If they were spies no one would all of one mans children to spy out a land so they told Joseph that they were all from one man. Still pressing the issue about being spies they continued to insist that they were not spies until Joseph got what he wanted to hear there was yet another brother who was with their father. Joseph now knew that both his brother and father were a live but he got them also to lie about what they had done to him. Why all the intrigue? He wanted to bring his brothers to a place of honest confession of the sin they had done in order that they could be restored. In verse 11 they said they were honest men but Joseph knew that they were not as they lied about what had happened to him. It is interesting to me to note that even in their falsehood in chapter 43:6 their father Jacob rebukes then for telling the truth about having a younger brother.

Vs. 15-17 Joseph gives them two options to prove that they were not lying:

1. Send one of them to go get their younger brother, which would prove that they were not spies.
2. Or the one that you chose could go free and never return leaving the rest to die.

What this would reveal is what they had failed at before concerning their actions towards him, that they thought of others before they thought of themselves. As they were placed in prison they no doubt reflected on the twenty-year-old cries of Joseph in the pit as they at their lunch.

Vs. 18-20 Their self-interest which produced such cruelty is mixed with mercy as what he endured for 13 years they only experience for three days. Upon the third day his words “*Do this and live, for I fear God*” should have brought them hope as it is Joseph’s way of saying that he believed in their God even if they did not. His demand is clear, prove that you are not spies and are honest by bringing back your brother, which based upon verse 20 in the words “*and they did so*” as they agreed to.

Vs. 21-24 The reality of having to leave their brother Simeon to perhaps die brought their actions of 20 years ago to the front of all their thoughts as they began to speak about it publicly for probably the first time since. The callousness of their actions has haunted them and they too have been in prison and need to be set free. The person that is going to be used to set them free from the guilt they have bore for 20 years is the same person who they placed in bondage and sold into slavery. *We who have been wronged by those close to us have the opportunity by our actions to set them free. In fact, if we are not willing to do so then we show that we are not free our selves*! Hear the words of Jesus in Luke 6:27-38 “*But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. To him who strikes you on the one cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask them back. And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise. But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore, be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you*.”

 Ruben speaks up and claims that he is somewhat innocent and even told them not to do what they did towards Joseph; he did not commit the crime but he did not stop it either. He was not guilty of commission but he was guilty of omission. Joseph has a heart of “*restoration*” instead of one of “*revenge*” as he hears the words of confession and repentance from his brothers he believes it and weeps (verse 24). I’m afraid that all to often my tears are not those of broken heartedness and tenderness towards those who have done me wrong but rather anger and rage. Paul wrote to a young Pastor named Timothy and gave him this advise form personal experience, “*This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief*.” (1 Tim 1:15) As far as you are concerned you are the worst sinner you have ever met! Only you and God are fully aware of all the sin that lies in your heart. It is far easier to forgive other’s the debt they owe you when you recognize the huge debt that you owed the Lord! Our problem is in my over estimation of my own person “goodness” and my forgetfulness of my depravity that causes me to think of myself as being better then someone else and deserving better treatment then I have received. If I want to live in that realm and start getting what I deserve then what I deserve is eternal separation from God! I think I’ll chose to forgive how about you!

 Simeon is chosen to remain behind because Ruben was absent and he was the next oldest and the one in charge of the others. The sacks of grain are full and each is given enough for the journey home but Joseph again gives demonstrates God’s grace upon his life by returning the money they brought to purchase the grain. I find that God’s goodness towards me is a stronger tool of personal discipline then any other things. As Romans 2:4 says, “*the goodness of God leads you to repentance*”.

IV. Vs. 26-38 The gift of truth

Vs. 26-28 One of the signs of true repentance is seen in their reaction to the good fortune of receiving the money back plus the grain to which it was suppose to purchase. They could have laughed at the stupidity of the Prime Minister but instead there is fear and a feeling of unworthiness. This is the first mention of God in their lives and it is in questioning their good fortune in light of their sin. No doubt they saw this as misfortune as they perceived that they would be viewed not only as spies but as thieves as well. It is interesting to see in Joseph, his brothers and his father Jacob three different responses to adversity:

1. Vs. 21-22, 28 “*What is this that God has done to us?*”: His brothers see adversity as punishment from an angry God who was getting even with them for their sin. There are a great many times that I to have viewed my circumstances as retribution for my many sins. The truth of the matters is that the things that come upon our lives are designed to draw us too Him not away from Him!
2. Vs. 36 “*You have bereaved me: Joseph is no more, Simeon is no more, and you want to take Benjamin*. *All these things are against me*.”: Jacob sees adversity as some fickle hand of fate that has come upon him because of the stupidity of others. Things happen to him not to draw him nearer to the Lord and not because of his own failures but rather as some mystical circumstances brought about by the negative energy of others.
3. Vs. 39:21, 50:20 “*the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy*…*you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good*”: Joseph viewed his adversity from the perspective of what he knew to be true about God. Because of this what he went through was for his benefit not punishment or fate. It was the gentle and gracious hand of a loving Father who was drawing him closer to Him. Paul wrote in 2 Cor. 4:17-18 that, “*our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal*.”

Vs. 29-38 The brothers come back and tell their father what took place in Egypt, then they open up all the grain bags and see their money returned and they are all afraid of the goodness in spite of their sinfulness. Apparently Jacob thinks less of Simeon and Ruben’s two sons then he does his beloved Benjamin as their will be no bringing his youngest boy as proof. Jacob says that he could not live without Benjamin but when Abraham faced this with his only son Isaac he showed that he could not live with out the Lord. Jacob was singing that all to familiar song that we all like to sing at times, “*No one loves me, this I know, for all my trials tell me so!*” How about it what song is being sung in your heart?

Genesis 43:1-34

 “Unexpected grace”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-15 Not Egypt again

III. Vs. 16-25 Suspicious of grace

IV. Vs. 26-34 Righteous reunion

I. Intro.

Samuel Johnson once said, “*Shame arises from fear of men but conscience from the fear of God*!” Last week we saw that Joseph’s brothers finally had gained a conscience but this week we shall see that they also have fear of men. What this reveals is that they are as James puts it “double minded” men unstable in all their ways! How unfortunate that many times in our lives our fear of men overrides our fear of God and we rob ourselves of greater blessings which could have been ours had we simply chosen to trust the Lord. What blesses me is that in spite of their fear of men God brings them to total surrender by making them face their fear through unexpected grace!

II. Vs. 1-15 Not Egypt again

Vs. 1-7 Have you ever had déjà vu? You know the feeling that you have heard or seen something before? How about having had a very bad experience some place and have to repeatedly go by the place where you experienced it? Well if you can relate that is what Egypt was for those brothers. There are three things these men do out of fear instead of responding in faith:

1. Vs. 1-2a “*Put it off and put it off some more*”: We are told that the famine in the land was severe and that they had eaten up the grain that they had brought from Egypt. These guys were in no hurry to go back and deal with their fear of men so they waited until all the food they had brought was gone and still Dad had to tell them to go. Clearly there was a clash of will’s between Jacob and his son’s. Jacob wanted them to go and get grain in Egypt but the boys didn’t want to go unless Benjamin went with them so they both waited hoping that the famine would end and they would need to go back. But what about Simeon? He is in prison awaiting their return! Look at Judah’s words to Jacob in verse 10 “*If we had not lingered, surly by now we would have returned the second time*.” Procrastination just compounds the problems they already faced as well as putting undo hardships on others!
2. Vs. 2b-5 *Play down the situation or play up the situation*: Jacob knows the specifics of the deal to get more grain and to release his 2nd son Simeon. It will take nothing less them Benjamin to go with his 10 older brothers to Egypt, but look at what he say’s here, “*Go back and buy a* little food”. In other word’s Jacob thinks if the amount of food is smaller perhaps he can’t skirt around having to deal with the fear of losing Benjamin. What they don’t know is according to the interpretation of the dream and Joseph’s words to his brothers in 45:6 the famine was going to last another five years. Judas’s response shows the other end of this as he responds, “*Easy for you to say Dad as you won’t suffer the consequences of not obeying the Prime Minister*”. They are at a stand off and neither one of them is going to blink.
3. Vs. 6-7 *Blame someone else for the situation*: Ok now you have put off the situation, played of the situation, the only thing else left is to blame someone for the situation. So that is what Jacob does, “*Hey if you hadn’t told the Prime Minister you had a brother you wouldn’t be in the spot you’re in*!” This was part of the guilt your son’s to do what you want them to do plan of Jacob’s. Of coarse the son’s response back was “*Dad the guy asked us point blank if we had any other brothers or a dad still alive, did you want us to lie?*”

Vs. 8-10 Judah offers assurance of himself for his brother Benjamin if it came down to that. Three things no doubt led to Jacob’s agonizing decision to let Benjamin go to Egypt with his brothers:

1. There was a sever famine in the land and he could not really wait for it to end.
2. His son’s refused to go with out him.
3. Judah’s assurance that he would trade his life for Ben’s.

But what is not in that equation is simple trust in the Lord!

Vs. 11-15 Jacob practices fatalism instead of faith and there are three clear indications of this:

1. Vs. 11a “*If it must be so, then do this*:” Jacob was not making a choice to trust the Lord rather he saw it as no other choice. It was necessity that was driving Jacob to let Benjamin go with his brothers to Egypt. Now personally I’m thankful for this as God often puts me into the pressure cooker where He, in His love, limits my options down to where I really have no other logical choice. Paul wrote of it this way in 2 Co. 4:11 “*For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh*.”
2. Vs. 11b-12 Clearly we see Jacob trying to stack the deck in his favor so that everything will turn out the way he wants. Amazingly they don’t have enough grain but they do have some of these other delicacies to attempt to bribe a foreign dignitary.
3. Vs. 13-14 “*If I am bereaved, I am bereaved*!” What is interesting is that he says these words after a prayer of success, which reveals that what he prayed he did not believe, would take place anyway! In today’s language this might read, “*Lord bless what we are about to do but if you aren’t going to my life is ruined already anyway*!”

Vs. 15 The interesting thing is that as we go back to the 37:28 the word for silver there and money here is the same Hebrew word. The words “double the amount” refer to a unit of money that is the same amount of money they received from the Midianites when they sold Joseph 20 years earlier. There they split the amount between 10 of them here they each have to pay that same amount back and though they don’t realize it yet they are giving it to the one the wronged. There really are no short cuts are there? These guys are bringing back the money given them for the wrong they did to the person they wronged but even this won’t purchase a clear conscience that can only be received by faith!

III. Vs. 16-25 Suspicious of grace

Vs. 16-22 These guys had to travel 200 miles so I’m sure they ran every possible scenario through their minds on how they were going to approach the Prime Minister. What I’m equally certain of what they least expected was kindness and grace. In fact, it seems as though it was this grace that brought the greatest fear. I think that is true with the Lord’s dealings with us well. It is when we stand before Him knowing our total unworthiness to be in His presence and He showers us with His goodness that we begin to think that we are in really big trouble. They did not know what this Prime Minister was going to do towards them and they were certainly deserving of what ever they got. Can you imagine all those things running through their heads? I bet as they began to explain about the money in their bags that they began to talk real fast. It was the first time that we read that they were actually innocent and they were in a hurry to defend themselves.

Vs. 23-24 The words of Joseph’s servant are quite revealing, “*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.*” It tells us two things:

1. It shows us the terror that was very apparent in their actions otherwise the servant would not have said “*Peace be with you, do not be afraid.*”
2. Secondly, the words “*Your God and the God of your father has given you*” shows that Joseph must have been very active in sharing his faith to those around him and that this fellow obviously gives the glory of the provisions in their grain sacks to the Lord and no one else.

These brothers had though that they were going to be what was for supper and not invited to the supper. Isn’t God great as He bless us not based upon our merit but rather His? One day we will appear before his throne guilty and worthy of eternal judgment and Jesus will stand next to us declaring to all that His blood and His blood alone has forgiven our every wrong. Then He will walk each of us out of the doors of the courtroom and into a huge banquet hall where we will be seated at His table for a huge feast and celebration held in our honor. OUR HONOR? How could anything in heaven be for my honor? Well it is because of Jesus!

Vs. 25 What an emotional roller coaster these brothers must have been on. They had rehearsed and planed every response to what they feared awaited them only to be caught completely off guard by “unexpected grace”! Was their success because of all their strategies they might have wondered?

IV. Vs. 26-34 Righteous reunion

Vs. 26-28 These poor fellows they don’t know what to do so they just proceed with the plan they have and try to present the Prime Minister with the gift of nuts. Joseph could careless about the nuts. What’s more important to you, things or people? What a contrast between Joseph and his brothers, “*What do you mean how’s our father, can’t you see how great these nuts are that we brought you*?”

Vs. 29-34 Joseph hadn’t seen his brother since Benjamin was around four years old and his emotions at God faithfulness overwhelms him as he has to go to his room to weep for joy. The words of Joseph towards Benjamin should have been as hint that this Prime Minister was a little different. Further more the seating of the family in order of their age definitely blew their minds. I’m not sure who to give credit to this but some person calculated the odds of a stranger arranging 11 brothers according to their age at 1 in 40 million.

 Joseph reveals further things about his identity by not sitting with them or with the other Egyptians as Egyptians’ were forbidden to eat with a foreigner. So clearly Joseph was not an Egyptian. Giving their youngest brother five times their portion would have provided another clue as well as a test t their hearts about favoritism and jealousy. More on that next week but we leave these fellows all eating and having a great feast and it wasn’t because of the bags of nuts they brought it was simply because of receiving the unmerited favor offered by another. Christian what a great picture we have in this for us. We can try to earn God’s favor by or works and nuts or we can simply sit down at God’s banquet table and enjoy Him. Solomon wrote in Song of Solomon 2:4 “*He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love*.”

Genesis 44:1-34

 “Regret or repentance?”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-15 Searching out the heart

III. Vs. 16-34 How shall I go to my father

I. Intro.

The most difficult thing to weigh in all eternity is the “*human heart*”, fortunately that will not be something that you or I will have to do. 1 Chron 28:9 reminds us that “*the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts*.” But how can we determine for ourselves whether or not we have true repentance or just regrets? In chapter 42 we examined three statements that the Joseph’s brothers had concerning their treatment of him 20 years earlier:

1. 42:21 Guilt: They clearly saw their present circumstances as the direct result of their previous actions.
2. 42:22 Remorse: They wished they had not sold Joseph into slavery.
3. 42:36, 43:8-9 Sorrow: They felt sorrow for what they had put their father Jacob through.

But do they have true repentance for their actions based upon those three external indicators? We can not tell as yet because it is possible to feel guilt, remorse and sorrow but have nothing more then simply “*regret*” for the consequences of our actions. Any time we face the consequences of our actions we will have guilt, remorse and sorrow but that does not mean that there has been true repentance. With out true repentance there can be no reconciliation. So what’s the difference between regret and repentance?

* *Repentance* is the recognition of our sin, which has resulted in a sorrow that brings about change in our thinking, emotions and actions.
* *Repentance* recognizes the sin, is genuinely sorry for it and demonstrates this by shunning the sin and by further seeking a new way.
* *Repentance* looks at the past with a weeping eye and upon the future with a watchful eye.
* *Repentance* is owning responsibility for what was, accepting responsibility for what is and acting upon responsibility for what is now!

Repentance is what we want for ourselves and we shall see in this chapter how these brothers showed that they had true repentance not just mere regret!

II. Vs. 1-15 Searching out the heart

Vs. 1-5 In the 43rd chapter we saw the brothers in good spirits as their fears concerning the Prime Minister had not come to fruition. Their brother Simeon had been released to them, they had been treated to a great meal in which they were the guests of honor and best of all they had been permitted to leave with their brother Benjamin. As far as they were concerned all their fears of man were for nothing. What they do not realize is that Joseph was being used of the Lord to test their hearts as to whether or not they had just regret for their past actions or if they had true repentance.

Much has been made of Joseph’s “*silver cup*” because of the twice-repeated phrase “*practices divination*”. What we know is that the Egyptians did have such a cup by which they would look into the silver cup filled with water and read the way the light reflected. We are also told in Lev. 19:26 that the Jews were told of the Lord that they were not to practice divination and yes it is the same Hebrew word as here in the 44th chapter of Genesis. So the question is Joseph involved in some forbidden pagan practice? Several points need to be brought out:

1. In verse five it is the servant who suggests that Joseph uses the cup for divination. Perhaps he just assumed that Joseph used that cup for this? The purpose of sending this cup was to distinguish it from just an ordinary cup. It is Joseph who tells the servant what to say and it is clear that he wanted the brothers to continue to think of him as an Egyptian.
2. In verse 15 Joseph explains that he “can” practice divination not that he does and further more he never say’s that he does so by use of the silver cup. The context would show that he wants his brothers to know that he can judge their hearts and he didn’t need the cup to do so since they had it.

Why all the intrigued? Well knowing that the servant was in on this from the start Joseph was being used of the Lord to weigh their hearts and he wanted then to think that he knew everything and in this case accused them of being guilty even though they were innocent? They had 20 years earlier declared their innocence while they were guilty the greater test of repentance is what we say and do when we are innocent and yet are being accused of being guilty! By waiting until they were outside of the city they are being tested as to what they would do when they were alone with Benjamin. It was while they were away from their father that they decided that they were going to kill Joseph out of the jealousy of the favor their father had towards him. Would they do the same by saying, “*Hey the little twerp has always had sticky fingers, take the snot and do with him as you want we don't care!*”

Vs. 6-15 The brother’s response is something that I’m sure each of us would have said, “*Hey if we were crooks we would have ripped you off the first time I would have never brought back the money that was in our sacks of grain*.” Their appeal of innocence is based upon logic because they believe the evidence will prove them as well. They are so confident of their innocence that they willingly risk what they so feared slavery and death to the one whom had the cup. In chapter 31:32 Jacob risked this not knowing that his beloved Rachel has stole her father Laban’s idols.

 Notice that the servant changes the guilty plea to be only slavery upon the person in whom the cup was found & freedom to everybody else. Their quickness at opening their sacks shows the confidence they had in their innocence. Nothing is said at each finding their money in the sack but I’m sure their heart sank with every passing brothers bag was opened. When the silver cup was found in Benjamin’s bag they tore their clothes which indicated extreme sorrow. Let me suggest several signs of repentance:

1. Vs. 13 “*Each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city*.” The sorrow they had as seen in tearing their clothes is seen as repentance and not mere regret because each of them loaded up and went back into the city and face the uncertainty together instead of just leaving Benjamin. Here they had a worldly justifiable opportunity to act on their own selfish behalf and they didn’t. What we believe is not known by what we say and do while others are around but rather it is know by what we do when no one is around and we have every opportunity to act in a manor that others would consider alright.
2. Vs. 14-15 “*They fell before him on the ground*.” There is no attempt to want justice only mercy and Joseph wants to see haw they will react when they think he knows everything & Benjamin is the one whom the cup was found.

III. Vs. 16-34 How shall I go to my father

1. Vs.16-17 “*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*”: It is interesting that Judah was the one that has suggested Joseph’s slavery, here he not only does not suggest any excuse he offers no defense or explanation. What is foremast in his mind is not what he doesn’t deserve but rather what he does deserve which is far greater then what ever Joseph could bring upon him. A person’s heart is not revealed if they have no choice it only is manifested when they have a choice. Thus Joseph’s say’s that only Benjamin will be forced to stay everybody else is free to go.
2. Vs. 18-29 Here is one of the greatest passages in all of scripture dealing with confession and repentance. The irony is that Judah is confessing this before the very person whom he 20 year’s prior suggested his slavery. Judah is careful not to say that he is dead only that he has not been seen since, (verse 28).
3. Vs. 30-34 In one of the greatest examples of what Jesus has done for us Judah offers his life for that of Benjamin’s and just like Jesus it was based upon his love for the father as well as a love for his brother. A 1000 years later a child would be born from Judah that was willing to be come a slave that we might go free. And what must we do in order to be set free? Simply repent of our sins and trust only on Him. The evidence of love and repentance for Judah is his willingness to sacrifice.

Genesis 45:1-28

 “Forgiven”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-8 You sold me, God sent me

III. Vs. 9-20 Seeking relationship and not revenge

IV. Vs. 21-28 From unbelief to enough

I. Intro.

The focus of the last chapter was pointing out difference between “*regret*” and “*repentance*”. Repentance may very well have real regret which is seen in guilt, remorse and sorrow but it goes beyond this to a change in our thinking, emotions and actions which were the cause of our failure to begin with. Joseph was led of the Lord to test the brothers to see if they had true repentance or just mere regret. This chapter deals with the reward of biblical repentance, “*forgiveness*”. There will never be reconciliation apart from true repentance but just what is forgiveness? The word means “*to release or set free*” and is most often used as a cancellation of a debt. Forgiveness is the conscious decision on the part of the person who was offended to release the person who offended them from the rightful penalty and guilt from the offense they committed. The cool thing is that when this is done both parties are free:

* The offender from the penalty and guilt of the offense
* The offended from the anger and bitterness in dealing with the offense

Forgiveness is not leniency or over looking the offense, it is not free as it comes at a price. Yet the offender does not pay the price but rather by the offended. Thus we see forgiveness was granted towards us who trust in Jesus our sin offended Him, but was paid for by His death.

II. Vs. 1-8 You sold me, God sent me

Vs. 1-4 It is an interesting point to realize Joseph chose to reveal his true identity, after he could see that his brothers had true repentance not mere regret. In the 42 and 43 chapters Joseph wept as well at the hearing of the brother’s confession and again at the sight of Benjamin yet in neither of those two circumstances did he reveal who he was. Only after true repentance was manifested did Joseph reveal the mystery of his identity which shows us two things:

1. From Joseph’s perspective forgiveness had already taken place the moment they first confessed.
2. From the brother’s perspective they could not receive the benefits of that forgiveness until their lives brought forth the fruit of their confession as seen in true repentance.

Here is how this works practically as far as our relationship with the Lord is concerned:

The moment we confess “*speak the same as or agree with God concerning our sin*” He forgives us. First John 1:9 says, “*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*” Yet we will not experience the fruit of that confession until we have repented as seen in a change of what we think, feel and act.

 It is interesting that Joseph asks the Egyptians to leave the room prior to his weeping and revelation. It can’t be for fear that someone would see him weep as we are told in verse two that even the house of Pharaoh heard him weep. So why did he conceal this? Well the only answer was that he sought to conceal his brother’s sin against him from those around him. This is one of the clearest indications that you have truly forgiven someone who has wronged you, “*Do you seek to conceal their wrong done to you from others?*” If you don’t then chances are you have not truly forgiven them!

 Picture yourself in these brother’s sandals if you will. They had a good dinner with whom they presumed was the Prime Minister of Egypt only to be stopped outside of town and accused of steeling his silver cup. They have pled guilty even though they knew they were innocent and have now found themselves ready to be sentenced. The first thing that happens to them is the Prime Minister kicks everybody out, then begins to weep uncontrollably. Know doubt they had to be wondering what was behind this sudden burst of emotions when they hear three words that must have struck absolute terror in their hearts, “*I am Joseph*”. I mean it is a bad day to be standing before the Prime Minister being wrongfully accused of theft and still worse to be standing before the very brother you sold into slavery 20 years earlier. Our sin always finds us out does it not? Some times it stares you eyeball to eyeball. Every word spoken from verse 3 through verse 13 comes only from Joseph’s lips and we are told in verse 3 that they were “*dismayed in his presence*.” The Word in the Hebrew means to be terrified which is further illustrated by Joseph’s request in verse 4 that they “*Please come near to me*.” These grown men were cowering in the presence of their own sin and failure, which was 20 years after the fact, the now before the 2nd most important person in the entire world. I have to admit that since I’m a guy who always roots for the underdog that I would have loved to seen their expressions, “*Big mistake ha fellows, huge you could say*!” One can see the parallels of how the nation of Israel will feel when we are told in Zech. 12:10 that “*they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn*.”

Vs. 5-8 Yet that is not how Joseph responds to their terror instead he assures them of several things:

1. Vs. 4 “*I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt*.”: First in no way does Joseph diminish their sin or call it some thing that was more palpable. For reconciliation to occur no excuse or lessening of the charge can happen in repentance, “*I did it & this is what I did*”. Neither Joseph nor God pretends that something never happened in order to forgive. It is only after forgiveness has been granted that it treats the offender as if the offence never happened. Forgiveness does not come about at the expense of the truth instead it comes at the expense of love which pays the price that truth demands!
2. Vs. 5 “*You sold me here … God sent me before you to preserve life*.” Wait a minute, which is true? Both! Their purpose was to thwart God’s plan by destroying the one who dreamed that they all would one-day bow down to him. Yet it was their very action of selling him that fulfilled the dream and which saved their lives. While people’s circumstances may very well be evil and wrong towards us, God can and will use even these to accomplish His purpose and plans for our lives. That is God’s sovereignty at work. Man is no less responsible just because God uses it to accomplish His purposes. In Luke 22:22 Jesus said, “*truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed*!” Poison is still poison even though it can be used to heal in the right applications.
3. Vs. 5 “*Do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me*”. Joseph does not wish them to dwell upon their failure now that they have truly repented. There are two equally disabling mistakes we make with regards to our sin:
4. We often fail to truly repent of our sin, oh we may regret the consequences of our action but we don’t have a change of heart as seen in our actions.
5. We don’t unconditionally receive God’s forgiveness, instead we beat ourselves up over our failures thinking that we should of or could of done better. If we have repented then all that is required of us is to simply receive His forgiveness.

It is clear by Joseph’s response that God ruled his life not “*evil men, bad karma, adverse circumstances, bad luck or fate*”. God was in control & nothing that happen upon him even by those who planed for & executed his destruction were outside of God’s loving hands.

Vs. 6-8 Joseph recounts God’s perfect timing for him being in Egypt to escape the influence of the Cananites upon God’s chosen people as well as to preserve them during the seven-year famine. So it was God’s plan to use the jealous intentions of Joseph’s brothers to cause him to be sold to the Egyptian & end up being the chief adviser “father to” Pharaoh. No doubt these words were to encourage the brothers of what he would later say at the death of their father Jacob in chapter 50:20 “*What you meant for evil God meant for God*.”

III. Vs. 9-20 Seeking relationship & not revenge

Vs. 9-11 The brothers are given instructions to go home and get their father with the rest of their families, then to dwell in the land North East of Egypt called Goshen. We are not sure how long all of this has taken place but it must have been some time as Joseph is concerned again over his father’s health.

Vs. 12-15 The fact that Joseph is speaking to them apart from any interpreter as he had used earlier is a sign that it truly is their brother. As far as convincing their father Benjamin will help with that when they go back to Jacob and as we shall see Jacob does not at first believe this is true.

 What a great sign of Joseph’s heart of forgiveness in that he not only falls upon Benjamin’s neck but ALL of his brother’s as well. It is Joseph that initiated the contact as it is with the Lord after we repent He is the one that reestablishes our relationship with Him after we have blown it. Joseph’s desire was to have fellowship above seeking revenge and so it is with our Lord. Notice that it is after Joseph hug and kissed them that his brothers talked with him, forgiveness is always the precursor to communication! In marriage people will come in and say that they need work on communication skills but before they get those they need to practice mutual repentance and forgiveness as we see here.

Vs. 16-20 God had worked not only upon the hearts of Joseph and his brothers He has worked upon the heart of Pharaoh as well as to take carts and enough supplies to move the whole family. Not only that he says, “*Don’t be concerned about your goods for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours*”! How important was it in the scheme of things that Joseph maintained a great witness of the Lord in his life? How important was it that he never trashed his brothers who have so wronged him? I’m inclined to believe that Pharaoh had no idea that his brothers had been the ones who had perpetrated this crime upon Joseph. Yes, Joseph told the butler of the crime against him but never who had done it. The point is that our silence of others sins makes their restoration easier!

IV. Vs. 21-28 From unbelief to enough

Vs. 21-24 The brothers of Joseph were given carts for transportation instead of walking alongside of their donkeys. Others carts were full of provisions, clothes but to Benjamin he gave 5 changes of clothes & 300 pieces of silver. Why more to Ben? Well he was the only one who was completely innocent & was used to draw his older brothers into repentance. What I find interesting is that the brothers received a reward based upon their repentance & Joseph’s forgiveness. In other words they were blessed because of the forgiveness granted them even though they didn’t deserve it.

Vs. 25-28 Jacob’s fears must have intensified as each day passed. By the time his sons return with the news that not only is Joseph alive but the Prime Minister of Egypt his fears have so paralyzed him into unbelief. Remember Jacob was told that Joseph was dead & believed it but now he is told that he is alive & he can not believe it. Only after his sons speak al the words of Joseph & he saw all the carts from Egypt did he allow himself to believe. Think of this Christian “*The only way people will know Jesus is alive is if we tell them His words & show them our carts full of His blessings in our lives*!” These sons of Jacob had some explaining to do towards dad & apparently they did so as we are told in Jacob’s own words in 49:22-24 “The archers (*brothers*) have bitterly grieved him, Shot at him and hated him.” It is good to realize that we need to not only tell God of our sins but to confess to others as well.

 Jacob went from a man that in chapter that all things were against him, (42:36) to pure fatalism thinking that if Ben did not come back he would just die (43:14). To finally saying that just to hear that Joseph was alive was “enough”. Hey, Christian what is “enough” for you & I?

* Matt. 10:25 “*It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master*.”
* 1 Peter 4:3 “*we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles; when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries*.”

I’ve personally had “enough” of me & only want to have enough of being like my Teacher & master!

Genesis 46:1-34

 “A crises of faith”

1. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-7 The promise of rest

III Vs. 8-27 The promise of 70

IV. Vs. 28-34 Family reunion

1. Intro.

On the 15th anniversary of the day in which we first started Calvary Chapel Merced I’m going to share from the 46th chapter of Genesis. Although from the 37th chapter to the end of the book the focus is mainly upon Joseph & the glorious fruit of the presence of God in his life the 46th chapter focuses upon his father Jacob. Joseph was a guy that always seemed to interpret life through the lens of what he knew was true about God. It is for this reason that, though I’m thoroughly instructed by God’s work in his life, I don’t relate much to it. In my quest to find encouragement wherever it may lay I have uncovered an interesting truth, while looking at the patriarchs of our faith.

* The life & times of Abraham covers only 14 chapters (11-24)
* The life & times of Isaac covers only 15 chapters (21-35)
* The life & times of Joseph covers 20 chapters (30-50)
* But by far & away the bible character that has the most chapters written about his life in Genesis is Jacob, 25 chapters (25-50), that’s right a whopping 25 chapters. You could make the argument that the reason there are so many chapters devoted to him is because it took so long for him to mature. Still I’m thinking that God did so for our benefit because if we are honest with ourselves we look for more like Jacob then we do Joseph.

Through out those 25 chapters we have seen the constant struggle of a man who wrestled with his spiritual life & quite frankly appears to have failed much more then he ever succeeded. The truth of the matter is that for the most part God chooses to use failures like Jacob, so that the world can see the greatness of God & not the talents & ingenuity of man.

 The spiritual development in Jacob’s life can be followed by looking at his name, that’s right his name. You see his given name would be translated in today’s English as “*con-man*”. While the name given him by the Lord after he wrestled with him by the river Jabbok was Israel or in today’s English “*ruled by God*”. From the 32nd chapter where he is first given the name “ruled by God” to the 45th chapter he is called “con-man” 54 times & “ruled by God” only 18 times. But from the 46th chapter to the end of Genesis he is called “con-man” 27 times & “ruled by God” 23 times. In other words the end of his life was far better in terms of his spiritual growth then was his earlier years. Jacob became more like how God knew him nearing the end of his 130 years & the key to that was not trying to gain victory through his own strength.

II. Vs. 1-7 The promise of rest

Vs. 1-4 Notice that the name used here is the one given him by God & it is this name that is used as he steps out & takes this venture of faith. You can only take a step of faith if you are “ruled by God”. Jacob is around 115 years old as he starts this journey to see his son. Three things would have made this venture of faith very difficult for Jacob:

1. Practical history: We all know that the older we become the more we like the same surroundings because of familiarity. And Jacob is leaving all that is familiar for that which radically different then everything he knew.
2. Personal history: Once Jacob left Beersheba he was no longer in the land promised to him, perhaps he knew of the word of the Lord given to his father during a time of famine not to go down Egypt but rather to stay in the land as God would be with him.
3. Prophetic history: Even further back his grandfather Abraham had gone down to Egypt during a time of famine & had exhibited his greatest unbelief in his spiritual life. No doubt he knew of the prophecy given to Abraham that his descendants would become stranger in Egypt & afflicted for 400 years.

Notice as well that this journey that Jacob takes is “*with all that he had*”, this was no half hearted attempt it was rather a “*Egypt or bust*” leaving. So what did Jacob do to counter all this “history”? Well we are told that “*when he reached Beersheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac*.” Beersheba was a place of a clear personal revelation of God’s word. With all that “history” Jacob went to the one place where he knew he would get a clear word from the Lord & Beersheba was just that place:

1. Forty years earlier as he was leaving the Promised Land God spoke to him in a dream as he rested his head upon the rock.
2. His father Isaac had renewed his covenant with the Lord in this same place.
3. Abraham had offered to the Lord on this spot right after offering Isaac.

And so here God gives Jacob a threefold revelation of his hand upon Jacob in the move to Egypt in spite of all the history he was facing. Before we see those three things notice how God addresses him, “*Jacob, Jacob*”. Why does God call him by his old name & not his new name? Because Jacob did not see himself as God saw him thus he would not of responded.

1. Vs. 3 Practical blessing: Jacob is told that it will be in Egypt that God will make him a great nation. Egypt would be a mother’s womb to the nation of Israel. Wow, a place that had a history of personal, practical & prophetic failure associated with it would be the place where God would work a great blessing towards the nation. The numbers are startling it took 25 years for God to add a son to Abraham, 60 more years to add another son, over 50 years for Jacob to add another 12 sons. Why 215 years passed by to grow to 70! You talk about a slow growth. Yet in a little over 400 years these 70 will grow to over 600,000 men. It is always in the most unlikely of places that God will chose to bless us with growth.
2. Vs. 4a Prophetic blessing: Jacob is assured of God’s presence with him in Egypt & further more the promise that He will bring the nation back to the land of promise. So not only will Jacob & the family receive an immediate blessing they also will be fulfilling God’s promise to Abraham. In other words going to Egypt was far from a bad thing it was actually fulfilling God word.
3. Vs. 4b Personal blessing: Finally Jacob is assured of being comforted for the remainder of his life. Four times in 22 years Jacob thought he was going to die & the reason for this seems to be how he viewed God after his encounter in 28:10. In the 47th chapter verse 9 Jacob describes his life to Pharaoh by saying, “*My years have been few and difficult, and they do not equal the years of the pilgrimage of my fathers*.” In other words Jacob recognized that although he knew the Lord he did not always enjoy a walk with the Lord. In fact he revealed as much in chapter 42:36 when he said, “*Everything is against me*!”

Vs. 5-7 So Jacob left & went with the assurance of the Lord & they all went to the place where God would cause them to grow. I can only imagine that Jacob was realizing that as he left the land of promise he was seeing it for the last time. Yet he took everything & everyone with him assured of personal blessings, practice blessings & prophetic blessings. It is important that we hear from the Lord but it is equally important to follow through on what you have heard from the Lord.

III Vs. 8-27 The promise of 70

Vs. 8-15 Here we are given the 33 descendents of Jacob by way of Leah.

Vs. 16-18 Next we are given the 16 descendents of Jacob by way of Leah’s handmaiden Zilpah.

Vs. 19-22 Then we are given the 14 descendents of Jacob by way of his beloved Rachel.

Vs. 23-25 Finally we are given Jacob’s 7 descendents by way of Rachel’s hand maiden.

 Within this list of names is the son’s of Judah in verse 12 & his son Perez by way of Tamar will be seen again in Luke 33:3 in the earthly line of Jesus. Personally I’m thankful that it is Perez that is in the earthly ancestry of Jesus as his birth through Judah sleeping with whom he thought was a prostitute reveals that God can & does redeem even my failures! Also the only girls name mentioned as coming with them is found in verse 15 “Dinah” although verse 7 we are told that daughters as well as sons accompanied him into Egypt. What is the purpose of all these names?

There are three reasons for this genealogy listed here:

1. Moses, who was the general editor, no doubt wanted the nation to know to whom they came from some 400 years earlier. Administratively the 600,000 men would be divided upon the basis of their ancestry dating from when they entered Egypt. Think of what an encouragement this would have been to read this list of ancestors & find the person that you came from & then look at what God had done in 400 years. Since God had kept his word then He will keep His word now!
2. Then of coarse you have the prophetic importance, as the Messiah would be traced to Hezron the son of Perez the son of Judah.
3. Finally this list of names reminds us of another list of names & this one will be found in Rev. 20:15. There we are told that “*If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire*.” The names in that list may not be the most popular of the day; they will not be made up of those who were in “People’s” top 100 most important people. They won’t be the wealthiest either but you want to make sure your name is on that list. Interestingly enough God desires that your name is on that list, in fact He is not willing that anyone would be left off that list. So how do you get your name on the list of the book of life? Well you repent from your sins & ask Jesus into your heart.

In Acts 7:14 Steven quoting from the Septuagint tells us that there were 75 people that left for Egypt, yet here we are told plainly that the number was 70. So is this a contradiction? Well no the number was arrived by counting the 5 grandsons of Joseph born while they were in Egypt. Even though they did not leave with Jacob he none the less wanted them included as being his grandchildren.

IV. Vs. 28-34 Family reunion

Vs. 28-30 Judah is given the responsibility of going ahead to meet Joseph 7 the others would follow. Is God’s grace not transforming? Twenty two years earlier it was this Judah that suggest his brothers slavery to Egypt. God is a miracle working God & the greatest miracles are not done in the physical realm they are the miracles that He does within the human heart.

 Jacob had not looked upon the eyes of Joseph for those same 22 years & had in fact believed that he was dead, wow what an embrace. Words were not needed & they just hugged each other for a good long time making u for 22 years of separation. This kind of gives you a picture of what it will be like when we see Jesus face to face for the first time doesn’t it? Interesting to see Jacob’s perspective on death change upon seeing his son whom he thought was dead but is now alive. Death is something that he is looking forward to not just to escape the pain of living life on this planet. Seeing his son was the high light of his life & it could get no better then this. The same is true for those of us who have seen the “Son” of God whom we presumed was dead but is alive. Yet just like Jacob we too will have to wait for a season. Jacob had 17 years with his son Joseph; 22 years apart from him but God will grant him another 17 with him. God is so God to us!

Vs. 31-34 Joseph’s plan was the same as Pharaoh’s that they should go to the land of Goshen & there they will prosper having all the benefits of Egypt without contracting it worldly ways as the Egyptians hated shepherds. +Here too we see God’s plan for us as we are in the world but not of the world, we are blessed through life that we might be a blessing to others.

Genesis 49:1-12

 “All in the family (part 1)”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 1-2 The final words

III. Vs. 3-12 The future of the sons of Leah

I. Intro.

These are the final words of Jacob and they are to his sons. They have particular interest as fulfillment of prophecy and refocus our attention upon future events, although most of Jacob’s words now would be of historical interest. The truth is we, like Jacob’s sons, have a tendency to live our lives as if they have no future. We become so involved in the present that we fail to prepare for the future and in so doing become so earthly minded that we are no heavenly good. These words of Jacob for his son’s ought to motivate us to live our life in Him, with all purity having our hope assured that what awaits us is of greater importance then what we have now.

**II. Vs. 1-2 The final words**

There are five things that we need to realize prior to looking at the details of this prophecy from Jacob to his 12 sons.

1. **First**, we are told in verse 33 that these are the final words spoken by Jacob and that they were done so on his death bed. Generally, the words of any person on their deathbed are taken as truth even more then the word of a father to his sons.
2. **Second**, notice how the words are printed in our Bibles, they are written in poetry format. What this suggests is that these words were not written in haste, but spoken with much fore thought. Jacob prayed for his sons and their future and the Lord had spoken to him concerning these things with these words being from the Lord.
3. **Third**, these words are more then poetry they are prophecy as we are told as much by Jacob himself in verse 1 “*Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days*”. For us they have become more history then prophecy, to these sons they were able to hear the words of the Lord through their father and look down the halls of time to see the general peoples that would come from their loins.
4. **Forth**, we are told in verse 28 that these words were intended to be a blessing. Now as you read through the individual prophecies for each family it is hard to call them a blessing. So how do we see them as a blessing? Though they reveal the individual characteristics of each family those characteristics didn’t need to be true of each individual in the specific tribe. In some ways they were a blessing, as they would provide an early warning system to potential fleshly behavior. Ruben’s descendants who would read of their family heritage as being “*unstable as water*”, could repent and turn from such behavior.
5. **Finally**, the future that was told of each tribe had an extension to the past. For instance, Ruben’s family’s future was unstable because he was unstable, thus the words spoken to each family were related to there past behavior. What a great lesson and tool this would be for future change, without having to repeat the mistakes of our forefathers!

Vs. 1-2 The words “*in the last days*” will become an expression that will command our attention used some 8 times and this will be the first time it is used to speak consciously with regards to the future. There had been many times where God had spoke directly of future events but this is the first time where man has been conscious of the fact that what he was saying was going to happen.

 It seems as though this event happens soon after the last chapter as we are told that Jacob summed strength while on the bed. Then in verse 33 at the conclusion “*he drew his feet up into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people*.” This ties in with the author of Hebrews words “*By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff*.” Jacob was a man on the go the difference was in what powered him as he went for most of his life it was the power of his own flesh, at the end of his lie it was the power of the Spirit.

**III. Vs. 3-12 The future of the sons of Leah**

Vs. 3-4 Here Jacob gives Ruben’s future who was the first born of the family and as such had the rights of the first born which were to be the spiritual leader (priesthood) as well as the social leader (ruler). Notice how the Lord describes Ruben “*you are my firstborn, My might and the beginning of my strength*”. It seems as though Jacob saw a lot of himself in Ruben a man of natural talents and abilities but he got in his own way as he often operated in his own power. Further more Jacob says that Ruben and his descendants will be “*The excellency of dignity and the excellency of power “but” unstable as water*.” It was the struggle with his own flesh that made him unstable, which was most clearly scene in the incident recorded in 35:22 where Ruben went into his father’s concubine Bilhah, which as we noted then was not about sex but rather about power that Ruben wanted then and now. It was his pride that caused him to commit sexual immorality. From this tribe we know that no one ever excelled, they had not one prophet, judge, King or priest from among them. How could this be seen as a blessing? Simple, it is a blessing, as they would know of the bent of their flesh and the struggle they would have on handling success, which would cause them to fall into pride. So God in His wisdom did not allow for their outward success.

Vs. 5-7 From Ruben Jacob moves to his net two son’s Simeon and Levi. They also had not demonstrated godly character as you will recall in 34:25-29 where they had killed all the men of the city of Shechem for the action of one man who had taken advantage of their sister Dinah. Because of this they receive a blessing from their father that fits this deed.

 Their problem was anger, which was rooted in their “*self-will*”. In the 34th chapter we were told of the killing the of the men of the city but here we are told of another detail this incident which was “*hamstrung an ox*.” Horses were hamstrung by cutting the tendons of the leg because of their use in a military use, but oxen were not used for anything other then a peaceful purpose. Thus these sons did this just for the sake of violence which teemed from their anger. Their blessing was to be that of a division and scattering.

 **Simeon**: We know that as they departed from Egypt 450 years, latter they did so as the 4th largest tribe, yet 35 years after that after taking a census 63% of the tribe had perished in the wilderness and they became the smallest tribe. Their portion allotted to them in the land of promise was surrounded by the tribe of Judah and they became mostly absorbed by that tribe. They were blessed as they were divided by a far better tribe and not left to their own self-wills.

 **Levi**: They were scattered to serve the people as servants in the sanctuary. They were the lone faithful tribe at the rebellion in the wilderness over the worship of the golden calf. They received no portion of land, as the Lord was their inheritance. They were blessed and became a blessing.

Vs. 8-12 Jacob here reveals the 4th son’s “Judah’s” future. In the 37th and 38th chapter you will recall that he did not act very well either. It was he who had suggested selling Joseph to make a buck. It was him as well who had not dealt right with his daughter in law Tamar having sex with her thinking she was a prostitute. But it was also Judah who offered himself as a substitute for Benjamin.

 The grace of God is clearly evident as this blessing is bestowed upon Judah. All of these statements refer to the fact that this tribe shall be over all the other tribes and they shall praise the Lord for it. The rights to become the ruler and priest are therefor given to Judah and they are described not only in terms of ruling over their brothers but over other nations. Militarily he is described as strong as a lion a term applied to Jesus in Rev. 5:5. In verse 10 we are told that the extent of his government will be until “S*hiloh comes*”. The word means tranquil or rests and is an epithet of the Messiah. In effect what this is saying is that Judah’s tribe will have a ruler over the land until the Messiah who brings rest comes. So from David’s kingdom until the beginning of the reign of the Herod’s a prince of Judah was head over the nation. The promise was Judah would keep that scepter until Shiloh or rest came and even under foreign occupation they maintained limited rule until 7 A.D. when under Roman occupation Herod an Edomite began to reign. The Rabbis struggled with this verse in light of that and walked through out the streets of Jerusalem saying, “*Woe unto us, for the scepter has been taken away from Judah*.” There are many that believe that it was at this very time that Jesus was discussing God’s word in the temple telling them of God’s promise spoken of here.

 Judah blessing has three parts to it:

1. That there they are to be the ruler over all other tribes and although this will take some 640 years to be fulfilled it will start with the reign of David.
2. The second part of it deals with Judah being a “law giver” or priest, which would take 1600 years when Jesus came.
3. The third part of this has to do with “*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.*” And this deals with the prosperity of Judah’s material blessings. Again fulfilled in Christ as we have all of His spiritual blessings in heavenly places.

These words record by Joseph and edited by Moses neither of which saw their fulfillment and now we look at them and await their final consummation.

Genesis 49:13-32

 “All in the family (part 2)”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 13-21 The future of the son’s of concubines

III. Vs. 22-27 The future of the son’s of Rachel

IV. Vs.28-32 Final resting place

I. Intro.

In the first 12 verses of 49th chapter Jacob spoke poetically and prophetically using words to bless his sons born to him through Leah. This week he continues his words to the son’s born him through the concubines of Leah (Zilpah) and Rachel, (Bilhah), then he speaks to the two son’s of Rachel. These words speak to us as the final declaration of a father to his sons. Words that you no doubt would want to say to your children about pitfalls to avoid and what matters most in this life. For most of us we don’t appreciate what we have until it is gone. We spend most of our lives striving for things in this world rather then enjoying what we already have in Christ! My Grandmother had something she use to do for her four grandchildren that drove my mother nuts, and I’m told she never permitted her to have as her mother. She would often allow us to have desert before we had our dinner. She would say to my mom, “*Rae, life is to short not to enjoy what you heart desires now and then!*” Our Lord has called us to enjoy our reward now and in fact it is in doing so that we are the most productive for His Kingdom. There is something about age that teaches you the value of enjoying the life He has given you now! Paul spoke of this to a young pastor named Timothy when he wrote saying; “*Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content*.” Contentment is one of the most difficult attitudes to learn yet it is one of the most important. It’s so easy to get all caught up in the worlds attitude of working harder and harder to gain things which we think will bring more contentment and happiness. What we have in Jesus cost us nothing and it is in Him that we have the most joy!

## II. Vs. 13-21 The future of the son’s of concubines

Vs. 13 Jacob skips the chronological order here and stays instead with Leah’s 9-10 sons through her concubine Zilpah. What Jacob shares with Zebulun primarily deals with the location of the tribe in the land of promise. The word “*by*” here can also be rendered “*towards*” as the allotment of land given this tribe touched the Sea of Galilee on the east and had the tribe of Asher between it and the Mediterranean coastline, thus they did look towards the Sea both on its eastern and western boarders. In 1 Chron 12:33 the tribe is noted for its faithfulness to David and its supply of the largest amount of soldiers of any of the tribes. There is no other mention of achievement or blessing of this tribe other then its location and that they would be involved in trade and commerce. It was this land and the land that bordered it, Naphtali, which prompted Jesus’ comment in Matt. 4:15-16 saying, “*The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned*.”

Vs. 14-15 Jacob then speaks to Issachar whose characteristics are described as a “*strong donkey*”. They were the tribe that did most of the labor and were content with what they had. According to the census taken in Numbers 26 they were the 3rd largest tribe and though they had the numbers to fight for the nation they chose not to do so. Because of this they were most often enslaved by invading armies, hence the prophetic word of Jacob that they would be a “*band of slaves*”. Judah subdued her enemies, Issachar was mastered by hers and like a donkey had physical strength but a weak character and was far too lazy and docile. God gave them “*pleasant land*” and “*good rest*” but they did not use this to pursue victory. ***The truth is that which we fail to master will end up mastering us***! The lesson learned is that pleasant land and good rest but failure to root out the enemy in your life will cause you to become enslaved by what we possess. God has blessed each of us with that which He gave Issachar and if we do not take advantage of that and possess our possession instead choosing to bury it we will not prosper as we should.

Vs. 16-17 Jacob next brings up the tribe of Dan and says that they shall judge his people and people like Samson came from this tribe. Though Dan was going to supply judges we are told that they would also be “*a serpent by the way, a viper by the path, that bites the horse's heels so that its rider shall fall backward*.” Simply put it was through the tribe of Dan that idolatry was introduced to the rest of the nation which caused them to “*fall backwards*”. Based upon this verse and Daniel 11:37 and Jeremiah 8:16 some feel that the antichrist will come from this tribe. The land which Dan occupied became the center of idol worship in Judges 18:30 it is for this reason that it is omitted in the listings of the tribes in Rev. 7:5-8 although mentioned as have land during the 1000 year reign of Christ.

Vs. 18 At the end of the words concerning Dan, Jacob calls saying “*I have waited for your salvation, O LORD!*” The words here are where we get the word “*Yeshuw’ah*” or in English “Jesus”. Jacob has very little strength left as well as seeing that the tribe’s future has not been good and thus their only hope is in the God of salvation. The cry of our heart ought to be like Jacob as we see that our hope lies not in our nation or us but rather in our God. If our hope and security is based upon our goodness and not upon Jesus then we have no hope. It is far better to wait upon Him for our salvation then to take matters into our own hands.

Vs. 19-21 Here we are given the futures of Gad, Asher and Naphtali.

1. **Gad** will continue to be invaded be her enemies, but in the end will be victorious. They supplied many troops for David (Chron. 12:14). I can’t help but think of us in as much as we too may go through seasons of being invaded by our enemies but in Christ will “*triumph at last*”.
2. **Asher** was to be a wealthy tribe. Their land allotment was below Mount Carmel to the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. In Deut. 33:24 Moses would speak prophetically of this tribe saying, “*Asher is most blessed of sons; Let him be favored by his brothers, and let him dip his foot in oil*.” The produce grown here did indeed fill the king’s tables and it is interesting that many have used these words of Moses to dig for oil in Israel but perhaps the reference deals with an oil pipe that flows through this territory to the bay at Haifa.
3. **Naphtali** is described as a “liberated deer” that speaks beautiful words. The Judges of Deborah and Barak came from this tribe in Judges 5 but most likely this is a reference to Jesus teaching ministry, which was mostly done in the land, allotted to them on the shores of Galilee.

## III. Vs. 22-27 The future of the son’s of Rachel

Vs. 22-27 Jacob moves to the two sons of Rachel, Joseph and Benjamin.

 Joseph, out of all the sons has the most blessings pronounced upon him. His future is described as both “fruitful and abundant.” This in spite of his early disadvantage from the hands of his brothers. Joseph did not wonder away from the Lord based upon man’s injustices instead he remained true to the Lord. In verse 26 we are told that his ancestor will never attain to his stature. So this makes these words of Jacob more of a personal testimony then a prophetic one. His tribe already received a double portion when Jacob took as his own Joseph’s two sons in chapter 48. Although Jacob blesses Joseph he also realizes that this was not Joseph’s character but rather the God of Joseph who is given five titles that depict His influence upon the life of Joseph:

1. Vs. 24 Mighty God
2. Vs. 24 The Shepherd
3. Vs. 24 Stone of Israel
4. Vs. 25 God of your fathers
5. Vs. 25 The Almighty

It is great to see how Jacob now describes God compared to how he saw him back in chapter 31:53 only as the God of Abraham and the fear of Isaac.

 Benjamin will be known by its fierceness. King Saul came from this tribe as well as Paul the apostle. Judges 3:15-23 and chapters 19-20 will reveal the depth of their cruelty. Moses in Deut. 33:12 speaks of a gentler side of the tribe when he predicts that they will be “*The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by Him, who shelters him all the day long; and he shall dwell between His shoulders*.” It was only this tribe that went with Judah when the nation divided.

## IV. Vs.28-32 Final resting place

Vs. 28-32 Jacob concludes his blessing of the future of his sons and though some hardly seems a blessing they were as they provide great godly insight into character defects. Jacob recognizes that Egypt is not his home and he makes his sons promise that upon his death they will take his body back to the land of promise. Egypt was filled with the glory of man honoring the death of their pharaohs but none of them were good enough to place Jacob in he preferred an old cave in Cannon. Why? Well he waited for a city which has foundations, builder and maker is God! How about us?

Genesis 49:33-50:26

 “Homeward bound”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 49:33-50:14 Jacob’s journey home

III. Vs. 15-21 Fearful regrets of life

IV. Vs.22-26 A life of hope

I. Intro.

The end of Genesis is caricaturized by two funerals and it is a fitting end to the book. In the beginning of Genesis, we saw the creation of man as he was brought forth in perfection and paradise that which God had for him was glorious. But man chose to walk away from God to rule his own life, he didn’t need God, he didn’t want to listen to God. The out come of which is that he dies; yet there is a journey that starts in this book, a journey of reconciliation. It is interesting that although the book ends with two men in their coffin (*one in the land of promise the other in Egypt with instructions to be taken with them when the nation leaves*) it none the less ends with a hope of future restoration. A restoration not built upon man’s faithfulness but God’s! In the final chapters of another book we see that the journey will one day be completed as we read in Rev. 21:4 “*And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away*.”

The story is told of a man whose friend was expanding his business and needed a larger space. In celebration of this he sent some flowers on the day of the grand opening of the new facility. When the flowers arrived the business owner read the card with his friend’s name but the saying on the card caused him to question what his friend had in mind. The card you see simply read, “*Mt deepest sympathy during this time of sorrow*”. When he called his friend to inquire as to the meaning he was informed that it was an error made at the florist. Upon further investigation the phrase that was intended to be the store owners went to a memorial service and it read “*Best wishes in your new location*!” Some perhaps would see this as a cruel gesture, however for a believer in the Lord the card would make every bit of since as we have completed a long awaited journey!

## II. Vs. 49:33-50:14 Jacob’s journey home

Vs. 33 The last acts of Jacob on earth were acts of faith:

1. He summoned all that was with in him to share God’s word to his son’s.
2. He set forth to them how and why he wished his remains to be taken care of.

The final words of a man who had spent most of his 147 years being preoccupied with himself spends the last 17 years as well as his final moments on earth speaking the Word of God and future hope to his descendants so that they might only trust in the Lord.

Vs. 1-3 In these verses we are given the **eight normal process** that every person will have to go through when a loved one dies. I say “***normal***” as far as “***fallen human***” experience is concerned but it is not what God had originally planed for us. The truth is we can look out the windows of life as we know it and what we see is the reality that we are not experiencing “***life***” as God designed for us, we have missed the mark. In the life that we will one-day experience we see what we could have had. A life that would have not included “*tears from our eyes; nor death, sorrow, or pain*”. Oh how we long for these and in the case of believers who have gone on to experience this I’m envious.

1. Vs. 1 **Sorrow** “*Joseph fell on his father's face, and wept over him, and kissed him*.” The first reaction is “sorrow” in our fallen state it is a normal and natural expressions of our love. Our sorrow, as seen in Joseph’s weeping, is the only response we can have when love has lost fellowship with another. We can see this same response in Jesus in Luke 19:41 when He drew near to Jerusalem at the beginning of His final week of earthly life. We are told that when He saw the city He wept over it. The truth is the moment we choose not to obey His word and separate fellowship with Him He sorrows at that separation and it breaks His heart to not be able to shower His affection upon us.
2. Vs. 2-3a **Arrangements** “*And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel. Forty days were required for him, for such are the days required for those who are embalmed.*” These are the practical side and include the medical arrangements. We are told that Jacob was embalmed and we know that according to the historian Herodotus this was a lengthy process that took 70 days, which coincided with the number of days, they would mourn, (verse 3).
3. Vs. 3b **Remembrance** “*The Egyptians mourned for him seventy days*.” Here is where the public is invited to show respect, love and sympathy. In this case it was a national time of morning, on a smaller scale we would write an obituary and place in the newspaper. The fact that Egypt mourned for Jacob 70 days is quite remarkable considering the Egyptians hate for foreigners, they would only morn two days longer for the Pharaoh upon his death. Jacob died at home in his bed with loved one around him saying good bye. The circumstances of death are beyond our control but our attitude to death is not. How a heart responds to death can reveal a lot about where that heart is! Jacob had been preoccupied with his death mentioning it 5 times seeing it as an escape from earthly difficulties. Instead we ought to see it not so much an escape from earthly struggles but instead the beginning of an irreversible eternity.
4. Vs. 4-6 **Burial Preparation** Where the body was to be placed and who would attend had to be arranged just as the body needed to be prepared. All the family with exception to the children and the flocks were to attend the burial. The internment of the body was to be along side Leah in cave purchased and prepared for many years prior. Jacob wanted to make sure that he would be placed in the land of promise and not in the world, thus his death spoke to his family of where his as well as their true home is, as well as how it is that we will one day dwell in that home. We are not of this world and it is by trust in the Lord that we shall dwell with Him!
5. Vs. 7-9 **Funeral Procession** This is the largest and longest funeral procession ever recorded in history. The Egyptians provided the transportation and security. The procession took an unusual route traveling northeast through Jordan instead of northwest the normal trade route as they left Egypt. What is of interest is that 400 years later God would instruct them to travel to the land upon the very same route as they had taken Jacob.
6. Vs. 10-11 **Public Burial** Which we are told was at the “*threshing floor of Atad*”. The service lasted seven days and was such a spectacle that the Canaanites who occupied the land called the pace afterward the “*Abel Mizraim*” which means “*the deep mourning of the Egyptians*”.
7. Vs. 12-13 **Private Farewells** The actual laying to rest of Jacob’s body was only for the immediate family as they placed his body in the cave, which Abraham had purchased for a burial place.
8. Vs. 14 **Return to Life** “*Returned to Egypt*”: Every person who has gone through this knows that eventually we have to return back to the world in an attempt to go on with life as we know it.

## III. Vs. 15-21 Fearful regrets of life

Vs. 15-21 There are two contrasting emotional responses to death that we can see in Jacob’s sons:

1. Vs. 15-17 **Guilt**: Grief is something that we all will experience and there is nothing wrong with it, guilt however is something that we need not experience. These brothers had guilt over their past behavior in how they had treated Joseph and was triggered by the death of their father no doubt upon the remembrance of how their father had responded when told that Joseph was dead. Their life had been a life of jealousy they had erupted into hatred and they now feel as though perhaps Joseph had not dealt with their sin and was waiting until their father had died to take vengeance. Guilt produces fear and fear causes us to look upon things with a wrong view. Joseph had been around them for 17 years and had demonstrated over and over again his forgiveness of the wrong done to him by them. Yet the death of their father brought all of this back again. Upon hearing the words and lie of their brother Joseph weeps probable because they reveal in their guilt that they did not trust his forgiveness of them.
2. Vs. 18-21 **Faith**: Joseph shows the opposite emotion by his actions of humility and grace. He understood that he was not God, it was not for him to right the wrong done, instead he chose to trust God to work it out both for his benefit and for others as well. God had used their cruelty towards him to make him godlier and also to save the nation. The perspective of faith always views death through the sovereign loving hand of God and not trough the human eyes of guilt and fear.

## IV. Vs.22-26 A life of hope

Vs. 22-23 Fifty-four years pass between verses 21-22 yet Moses places these two deaths side by side. Moses tells us that Joseph’s life was full at 110. He lived long enough to see his great, great grandchildren and played with them on his knees. I can think of nothing in this life more fulfilling then to enjoy the simple blessings of spending time with those you love. Joseph was not preoccupied with death he loved life and made the best out of every opportunity and in the end was looking foreword to going home.

Vs. 24-26 Joseph like his father 54 years earlier had specific instructions concerning his death and burial. He did not want his body to remain in Egypt but like Jacob wanted it carried back to the land of promise when the nation left. So for 350 more years after the death of Joseph the Israelites would walk by Joseph’s old coffin and if they would listen he would be speaking to them about their future departure from Egypt. His death was as much of an example as his life had been it was a testimony of faith and trust in the God who holds the future in His hand. Death was not Joseph’s end it was but his beginning to be with the One who loved him and those that love Him. We Christians also walk by a tomb only this one is empty and it speaks to us as well.