

## Introductory Comments

- \*\* We are looking for the author's (Moses') intended meaning = communication.
- \*\* Genesis is a history book, not a scientific book.
- \*\* All sections of the Bible declare God as the Creator [Moses (Gen 1:1); Job 38:1; Kings (Psalm 19:1); OT Prophets (Isaiah 41:20; 42:5); Gospels (John 1:1-3); Epistles (Col 1:15-17); NT Prophets (Rev 21:5).
- \*\* Isaiah 45:18 reads, "*For thus says the Lord, ... (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He...did not create it a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited),*" by animals and humans.
- \*\* Each day created the conditions for the next day's creation.

## Genesis 1 — Creation

**1:1** describes in general introductory terms the same creation activity that God did on all six days of creation. It is a topic sentence that introduces the whole creation account that follows.

- "*in the beginning*"—biblically, the earth has a created beginning and a fiery end (2 Peter 3:10). Earth's history is linear, not cyclical (as in pantheism reincarnation).

**1:1-2** Separating "Ex Nihilo" [out of nothing] from Earth

- "**God created**" —"*He calls into being that which does not exist*" (Romans 4:17). Creation is centered on God, not on what He made. Its purpose is to glorify the Creator. Each day begins with "*God....*" "God" here is the Hebrew word "*Elohim.*" It is the plural form of "El," which is "God Almighty," referring to the Godhead, all of whom were involved in creation. We know more about the Trinity of God in the New Testament. God the Father, "*God the Father, from whom are all things*" (1 Corinthians 8:6); God the Son, "*the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being*" (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16-17), and God the Holy Spirit, "**the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters**" (Genesis 1:2).
- \*\*\*Read Isaiah 41:20; 42:5; 43:10-13; 44:6-20, 24; 45:5-7, 12, 18
- Colossians 1:16 tells us that by Jesus "*all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible...*" Invisible things like truth, love, emotions, creativity, thinking, ...
- He existed before creation in order to create it. Everything owes its origin and existence to God.
- At first, the earth was unorganized, unproductive, and uninhabited. Verse 2 clarifies verse 1.
- "*Darkness*" is not a creation, but is the absence of light. Darkness cannot be measured. Only light (greater or lesser) can be measured. Imagine a dark sky with no stars!
- The earth was "formless," a Hebrew word meaning "empty" or "no purpose."

### Day 1 — Separating Darkness and Light

**1:3** **God said, "Let there be light; and there was light."** God is the source of light and life. Jesus said, "*I AM the Light of the world...the Light of life*" (John 8:12). Revelation 21:23 describes the New Jerusalem on the new eternal earth as, "*the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.*"

- "*The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overtake it*" (John 1:4-5). Darkness arrives only when light leaves. And when light arrives, darkness leaves. The power is in the light!!

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*All Scripture is quoted from the New American Standard Bible, LaHabra, California: The Lockman Foundation.*

**1:4** “*God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.*”

**1:5** God made the measurement of day and night before He made the sun.

- It was all dark, but now it is part dark and part light, a 24-hour cycle. Time is motion (past, present, future). Jesus said, “*I have told you before it comes to pass, that when it comes to pass, you may believe* (John 14:29). Measuring time is needed to recognize fulfilled prophecy. *When the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law* (Galatians 4:4). Jesus said of His Second Coming, “*of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, not the Son, but the Father alone*” (Matthew 24:36). Eternity (and eternal life) is endless time (not without time).
- “***God called the light day, and the darkness He called night***”—Having a name equals having existence. Plants and humans need daylight. Humans will function according to day and night.
- “***there was evening and there was morning, one day***”—this is a description of one 24-hour day, not thousands of years. God Himself defines and names a “day” as light and darkness. [The Jews and the author Moses consider the evening (6:00) rather than the morning as the beginning and end of a day.]

### **Day 2 — Separating the Waters Above from the Waters Below**

**1:7** Day 1 is a finished reality, as God said. Now we move to the activity of day 2.

- God separated the waters above from the waters below, thereby creating our atmosphere, so there is air to breathe. It is an extended surface (usually translated “firmament”). Above, there was a vapor canopy, which made the earth a tropical jungle, which would feed all the animals and mankind (Genesis 1:29-30). You could see through this vapor, however, to see the stars that He will make. It is similar to our ionosphere which is a protective layer between our atmosphere and outer space, but we can see thru it to the stars, sun, moon.
- It is this water canopy that God used to limit the aging effects of the sun, what would then give long ages to the people before the Flood. It is also that canopy that rains down at the Flood (chapter 7).
- Notice, when God speaks, we read, “***and it was so.***”

### **Day 3 — Separating the Waters from the Land**

**1:9** The waters were gathered into one place. “*He set for the sea its boundary*” (Proverbs 8:29; Job 38:8-11). It seems like there is one land and one sea. After the Flood, there are islands, mountains, lakes, glaciers, etc. (Genesis 8:5). The land and water become divided and scattered.

- Dry land appeared. The land was there when He created the earth, but covered with water. It will once again be covered with water at the judgment of the Flood in chapter 7.

**1:10** God saw His creation was good. That is, God defines what is “*good.*”

- Seven times in this chapter (vv. 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31), God says His creation is “*good.*”
- Creation starts as good, with no evil. Good and evil are not equal entities (ying/yang). Evil is a perversion of good. Like a broken arm is a perversion of a good arm.

**1:11** ***Let the earth sprout vegetation***...Now animals and humans would have food to eat.

- Plants with seed in them, they were created to reproduce (not evolve). Trees were already bearing fruit. Both the animals and Adam were to freely eat the plants (no weeds!) (2:16).
- Plants were created with age. They were not seeds or seedlings that had to grow.
- The plants were existing before there was a sun, but there was light.
- Plants absorb carbon dioxide and give off oxygen, making a perfect atmosphere in which animals and humans would live.

### **Day 4 — Separating the Day from the Night**

**1:14-19** The sun and the moon were “***to separate the day from the night***”

- They were for signs for the seasons (less sun=winter, etc.) and to measure days and years.
- They were in the space over the earth, to give light on the earth.
- They were to govern the day and the night (like a light switch governs the electric light in the room)
- ***“He made the stars also. God placed them in the heavens...to give light.”*** These stars were also for signs, for navigation, for example. *“See who has created these stars...He calls them all by name...not one of them is missing”* (Isaiah 40:26). *“He counts the number of the stars”* (Psalm 147:4).
- The stars are not to be worshipped as astrological signs in the occult. *“Beware not to lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, and be drawn away and worship them and serve them”* (Deuteronomy 4:19).

### Day 5 — Separate Water Creatures and Air Creatures

Now there are days and nights, air, water, and land, lights, plants for food...ready for life to begin.

- 1:20-23** *The waters teem* (“aquatic”) *with swarms* (“large number”) *of living creatures*—every living animal that lives in the waters below. Estimates today that 78% of animals live in water.
- and ***“birds fly above the earth...in the heavens”***—in that atmosphere space He made between the waters.
  - ***“God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves.”*** Read Job 40:15-24 and 41:1-34, for God’s description of dinosaurs and sea monsters. The lush tropical plants provided an abundance of food for these creatures. The jaws of dinosaurs are the same as panda bears, who eat bamboo, a very hard, stringy plant. There is no evidence that these dinosaurs were created as flesh-eating. God said, *“to every beast of the earth...which has life, I have given every green plant for food”* (Genesis 1:30). Yes, they were taken on the ark (as babies?) to escape the flood, when it rained for forty days and nights. After the flood, glaciers took up the excess water, the atmosphere turned cold, tropical plants died out, as did dinosaurs, for lack of food. [After the flood, God told Noah he could eat meat, *“Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you”* (Genesis 9:3), so possibly the dinosaurs also began to eat meat, as their tropical plant food had disappeared.] It seems they still exist to some extent at the time of Job, some 500 years later.
  - ***God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply,”*** reproduce *after their own kind*, to fill the waters and multiply in the water on the earth and in the atmosphere over the earth. Left on their own, both water and air creatures will reproduce after their kind. [No relationships! Humans have relationships (part of our spiritual nature), even without reproduction.] For sure, water creatures did not become air creatures and air creatures did not become water creatures, and neither of them became land creatures!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

### Day 6 — Separate Land Creatures

- 1:24-27** God created ***“cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind”*** and ***“everything that creeps on the ground.”*** This is when the serpent was created. Cross-breeding of different kinds of animals creates mutations that cannot reproduce because DNA (in every cell of the body) cannot be cross-bred.
- ***“God created man in His own image, ...male and female He created them.”*** We will discuss the creation of humans in more detail in chapter 2.
- 1:31** ***“God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.”***

### Day 7 — Separating Rest from Work

- 2:1-3** ***“Thus the heavens and the earth were completed*** [lit. “at an end, finished,” it is used of eating a meal, when the food is all gone, it is finished, completed] ***and all their hosts*** (creatures).

- *By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested* [“to sit down” because the work is finished] *on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.*
- *Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made*—The fact that He “rested” proved that it was complete. So to sanctify it (set it apart) is to agree with God that He did indeed complete the creation in the previous six days.
- All of creation was completed by the 7<sup>th</sup> 24-hour day. There were no thousands of years of evolving.
- God “rested” on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, that is, He “rested from all His work which He created and made.” In other words, He stopped creating from nothing—because creation was completed.

**2:5** There was no “*shrub of the field*” and “*no plant of the field,*” which would be garden plants, which God planted in verse 8.

- “*The Lord had not sent rain upon the earth...but a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground.*” Rain will come as the judgment of the flood in chapter 7. Moses, as the author, of course, knew about the rain and the flood.

**2:9** “*Out of the ground the Lord God caused to grow*—we already saw that God created the plants with seeds to reproduce, but now we learn that God also caused them to grow.

- *every tree that is (1) pleasing to the sight*—think of all the beautiful colorful flowers we have. God likes beauty. He did not create the world in black and white!!!
- *and (2) good for food*—perhaps in two ways: beneficial, i.e., life-giving, but also tasty.
- “...*(3) “The Lord commanded the man, ‘From any tree of the garden you may eat freely...’*” (2:16).
- But God also made *(4) “...the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for the day you eat from it you will surely die”* (v. 17). So God also created the tree of death. But this is one of the trees from which they could *eat freely*—i.e., He created humans with a free will to choose which trees from which to eat. God told them the consequences of their choices, but gave them the freedom to make those choices. He did not make them obedient robots. They were to not eat from the tree because God told them not to. Obedience requires a free-will decision. Morality is the capacity to obey. Were they going to trust God’s word? Also, notice it is not “knowledge” that they should not eat of—humans are to gain knowledge and grow, especially in their knowledge of God and His character and works. But it is in knowledge of good and evil that we are not to grow. “*be... innocent in what is evil*” (Rom 16:19).

## **Genesis 1:26 to Chapter 2 — God Created Humans**

**Day 6 — 1:26-27, Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness”**

- A Divine command. “*I, the Lord, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by Myself and spreading out the earth all alone*” (Isaiah 44:24). [He did not use evolution!]
- *Let Us*—In 1:1, and the other mentions of “God” in chapter 1, the Hebrew word for “God” is the plural word “Elohim,” meaning “Almighty God.”
- “*in Our image, according to Our likeness*”—previously, each creature was described as “according to its kind,” but now male and female were made according to God’s likeness. Humans do not simply reproduce after their own kind, they share a likeness to their Creator.
- Plants have bodies, animals have personalities (intellect, emotion, and will), but humans have spirituality (morality [good and evil], creativity, purpose/destiny [eternity—animals do not know they will die]).
- “*our likeness*”—“*God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth*” (John 4:24). Humans are spiritual, moral, eternal beings.

- In Revelation 1:13-16, the resurrected, glorified Jesus is described. Notice He has feet, chest, head, hair, eyes, voice (that talks in words), mouth, face, standing upright. Humans are in that same image, contrasted to animals with 4 legs, wings, fins, etc.
  - Humans are now described as male and female. Gender for humanity is important. There is no reproduction without gender. Jesus said, “*He who created them from the beginning made them male and female*” (Matthew 19:4). [Spiritually, Paul wrote, “*there is neither...male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus*” (Galatians 3:28), there are no distinctions.] But in gender, there are distinctions, and in roles there are distinctions. “*Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ*” (1 Corinthians 11:3). The Godhead has different roles, and males and females have different roles. However, there is no such thing as a “trans-gender.” A person may change their appearance, but it is like changing clothes. It is impossible to actually change one’s gender—a female has two X chromosomes and a male an X and an Y chromosome in their DNA, which permeates every cell of their body. It is impossible to change what God made them to be.
- 1:28** Humans are different than the rest of creation. “*God said to them...*” God spoke words to humans who could immediately understand the words. They are given 7 commands in this verse: (1) ***be fruitful***, (2) ***multiply***, (3) ***fill the earth***—humans were to reproduce after their own kind, in their own likeness. God *formed the world to be inhabited* (Isaiah 45:18). Now there was everything in place for that to happen. They were to “fill” the earth with humans. (By the time of the flood in chapter 6, estimates are 750 million people.)
- (4) ***subdue it***, (5) ***rule over the fish of the sea***, (6) ***rule over the birds of the sky***, (7) ***rule over every living thing that moves on the earth***—Only humans are given dominion over all the other living creatures. This would be similar to being in the image of God, the Supreme Ruler.
  - Notice He says “*over every living thing.*” The animals were not given this assignment. Of course, this is where Adam and Eve failed—they did not rule over the serpent. It ruled over them.
- 1:29** The plants, with seeds, and the fruit with seeds are food for the humans.
- 1:30** God gave “***every green plant for food***” to the animals, also. At this point, the sixth day of creation, all food was good to eat, and life-preserving (except the tree of death).
- 1:31** “***God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good, ...the sixth day.***”

## Genesis 2

**Day 7— 2:2** “***God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day***”—that is, He stopped creating because it was all completed. It is the Hebrew word for “sitting.” He finished His work and “sat down.” Then God set apart the 7<sup>th</sup> day, the day of completion. It is interesting we still operate in this 7-day pattern. Even if a person works on Sunday, they usually take another day off for rest. For thousands of years, we have lived according to this pattern. Genesis tells us where it began—with God.

**2:2-3** ***God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it***—set it apart from the work days

- ***because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made***—“create” is to make but “made” is to make something with an object in view. So God created and made the earth as a home for humans (Isa 45:18). God “worked” and He made humans to “work” (1:28).

**2:4** When writing of God creating the heavens and the earth, Moses writes “Elohim.” But now he uses “Yahweh Elohim,” the name for “Lord God” he learned at the burning bush (Exodus 3:14). It is the relational “Lord” name of God, plus Almighty, powerful God. It is not used of God

before the burning bush. But Moses obviously recognizes that God who appeared to him at the burning bush was the Creator of Adam.

- Genesis 1:1, was the overall statement. Starting in 1:2, Moses wrote more details about the creation. Now in 2:4, Moses will give even more details about that creation.

**2:5-6** In the Hebrew, each of these starts with “when”: “when” ... no “*shrub*” and “*plant ... sprouted,*” refers to plants that need cultivation; “when” *God had not sent rain...but a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground;*” and “when” *there was no man to cultivate the ground* (plant the seeds for reproduction).

**2:7** How God created humans:

- (1) ***The Lord God formed man*** [used of a potter who forms a vessel out of clay, or the work of an artist]
- (2) ***of dust from the ground*** [you will remember that 1:1 was God creating the earth *ex nihilo*, but man was taken from the dust that was already created. In spite of being in the likeness of God (1:27), man was not a heavenly being, humans are earthy (physical). Their bodies are taken from the earth and will return to the earth (Ecclesiastes 12:7). From dust to dust. At this point, man was made but not breathing.
- (3) Then God ***breathed into his nostrils the breath of life***—his life originated in a different way from his body. [Evidently, the animals were created as breathing, living creatures. And plants do not breathe.]

**2:8** ***The Lord God planted a garden...in Eden; and there he placed the man whom He had formed.*** In 3:8, we find that God walked in the garden, to communicate with Adam. Animals roamed the earth, but man was put in a specially prepared place on earth.

**2:9** ***God caused to grow every tree***—beyond creating their existence, God caused the trees to grow. ...but now we have the information of two special trees: (1) ***the tree of life in the midst of the garden*** and (2) ***the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.***

**2:10-14** ***A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divided and became four rivers***—While these rivers were ancient, Moses is probably writing the names he knows them by many years later.

**2:15** ***Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to (1) cultivate it and (2) keep it***—work was created before there was sin in the world, and before there was the curse of weeds. There is also a spiritual meaning here—the garden was the place where Adam was to talk to God in a relationship (3:8) and a place where he had the free-will opportunity to obey or disobey God (2:17), and from where he was sent out (3:23-24).

**2:16-17** God had given Adam the capacity for moral responsibility (a free will to make choices).

None of the animals had that. As we have read over and over, God determines what is good.

“Good” for man would be to obey God!

**An Application:** Joshua received the book of the law from Moses, who wrote, “...meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it” (Joshua 1:8). The purpose of God’s commands is for our obedience. But it is our choice...but the consequences are not our choice!!

- ***The Lord God commanded the man,*** “(1) ***From any tree of the garden you may eat freely,*** (2) ***but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat,*** (3) ***for in the day that***

*you eat from it you will surely die.*” This is the first use of the verb “*command*,” which is prominent in the Old Testament. Adam was to trust that God alone knows what is good and to obey Him. God is the source of morality and making moral decisions=right and wrong.

**An Application:** There was no opportunity for the serpent to tempt Eve until there was a command from God for her to violate. Evil is a perversion of good.

- The death sentence shows God’s seriousness in prohibiting access to the tree. Death will follow eating (and it only takes one bite to disobey). This was the simplest and easiest test in which Adam’s (and Eve’s) faithfulness to God could be exposed.
- Notice that death would be “*in the day*.” Some say that Adam ate but did not die that day. But God did not say he would die on that very day (as the creation days had numbers). Rather, “*in the day*” would start the process of death. (From the NT, we know they did die spiritually from the first bite.)
- There is a choice whether to obey, but once the choice to disobey is made, there is no choice in the consequences, and the right to choose to eat freely from the trees will also be taken away.

**An Application:** Today, people want to escape the consequences of their choices without giving up the right to make those choices. “Why did God let that happen to me?” Well, where along the line did you want Him to step in and take away your choice?

- These two options shows that God created humans with a free will to choose. He could have made Adam with no choice, but that would be a robot. God wanted a love relationship with mankind, and love requires choice. The greater the consequences, the greater the choice, and the greater the choice, the greater the love.

**2:18-19** For the first time, we read that God said, “*It is not good for the man to be alone.*” But God had Adam realize that himself. So God brought all the animals to Adam to see what he would call them. “*And whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.*” Here Adam is exposed to the serpent and evidently gave it its name. But Adam did not talk to the animals. Adam was created with an understandable vocabulary to talk to God, to Eve, and her to the serpent. [We often do not realize that God created the first language, to be able to talk to Adam. Then after the flood, at Babel, God created many languages—yet all languages seem to have the same model: noun, verb, object. Interestingly, the Millennial Kingdom seems to be a return to one language (Zechariah 8:22-23). In fact, at Pentecost, we saw a foretaste of this when the people of many nations all could hear the Gospel in their own language (Acts 2:5-12).]

**2:20** So Adam named the animals. *But for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.* Adam saw that the animals were in pairs and could reproduce after their kind, but he could not. God created the need in Adam, and then He met that need with Eve.

**2:21-22** *God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man...then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. The Lord God fashioned* [“to build,” to complement the man, but not identical] *into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man.* So God made man from the dust and made woman from the man’s rib. The words describe an artist’s work, special things, not like anything else. The result was that the physical nature of both man and woman is identical (hearts, lungs, stomachs, etc.) and therefore one source for the reproduction of the human race (not at the end of a chain of events from a rock to a monkey, as in evolution!).

- So the chain is God to man to woman.

**2:23-24** God had brought the animals to Adam (v. 19), and now He brought the woman to Adam. The woman, from her first moment, was in a relationship with a man. She was never alone. Adam was created a worker, and Eve was created a *“helper suitable for him”* (v. 20), both physically and spiritually.

- The command, *“For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.”* This was not possible for animals, who simply reproduced. When humans came together, they *become one flesh*, that is, a relational unity. This seems to be words spoken directly by God to Adam, and to be God’s purpose in the union of humans.
- This is given to the parents. They are to let the children leave to be joined to their spouses.
- Jesus said, *“So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate”* (Matthew 19:6; see also 1 Corinthians 6:16). God’s goal is to “join.” It is humans who have the goal to “separate.”

So *“God saw all that He had made, and...it was very good”* (1:31). Adam and Eve are living in a garden with beautiful plants to freely eat, they have work to do in cultivating the garden, they are in a relationship with each other and with God, and they have a free will to choose to do whatever and whenever they wanted. They were also given the opportunity to obey or disobey God. He did not make them robots. And God declared it was all “very good.”

**2:25** *“And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.”* “Ashamed” is a consciousness of the nakedness. This is a transition verse to what lies ahead in chapter 3.

## **Genesis 3:1-7 — The Temptation and First Sin**

**3:1** *the serpent...beast of the field which the Lord God had made.*

- The serpent was one of the beasts God created on Day 6 (Genesis 1:25), and it was good when God made it. There was no reason Eve would not talk to it.
- God had brought all the animals to Adam to name them, so he had already had some contact with the serpent when he named it (2:19-20). There was nothing ugly or scary about the serpent. At this point, it did not move on its belly (3:14). It was somehow upright.
- In the Bible, it is not until Revelation 12:9, that we learn *the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world...* The Bible describes Satan and demons as possessing humans and/or animals (pigs in Matthew 8:31). Angels do not possess other beings but materialize into a human physical form (Genesis 19). So it seems that Satan possessed the serpent. Though it is the physical serpent that is cursed (Genesis 3:14-15).
- God warned Adam about the consequences of eating the fruit, but He did not warn Adam about the serpent or temptation that also existed in the garden.
- Notice that evil already existed before Adam and Eve were created. Satan was created as a good angel in eternity past. Evil did not exist until it was found in his heart (Isaiah 14:13-15; Ezekiel 28:14, 16). Evil is anything contrary to God.

**An Application:** So the Bible warns us about the consequences of sin, but sin and temptation to sin come in many forms and ways, usually unique to the individual person.

- *The serpent was more crafty*—*crafty* means “shrewd” or “sensible” or “skilled.” Shrewdness is not evil in itself (Proverbs 1:4). But it does mean that everything should be examined very carefully.

**An Application:** Your temptation may not be my temptation. And the temptation may not be obvious, and it may come unexpectedly, as it did with Eve. And it may not always be tempting.



- *He said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’”*
- Satan took a “God has said” and turned it into a “Has God said?” A command of God was questioned by means of a dialogue, which assumed God’s Word could be subjected to compromise, tolerance, and a fluid morality.
- Notice that God’s Word came before Satan’s lies. God and “good” by its very existence create the possibility of evil. You cannot have a broken window unless you have a window. God gave sex within marriage as a good thing. Adultery is evil. Evil is perverted good. It is not equal to good, as in the ying/yang ☯
- The serpent assumes Adam made this command known to Eve, and she does know it.
- Adam and Eve were created with free will, able to choose God, and choose to obey Him. So far, they have chosen to obey God. We do not know how much time has elapsed.
- Adam and Eve had no sin nature. They were created good and in a good loving relationship with God. But God created the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to give them the choice to stay in that relationship with Him. The tree was a test.

**An Application:** Most things in our lives are tests to see if we will be obedient to God.

- Notice the serpent is the one who initiated the conversation.
- Temptation often comes from something or someone over which we should have chosen to exercise dominion by what we say or do. Humans were to subdue (dominate) and rule over the animals (1:28), but Eve let the serpent subdue her.

**3:2 *And the woman said to the serpent***—Eve chose to stay and talk with the serpent, to engage in a conversation.

**An Application:** This is the path to deception. First listening (or observing) it, then having a conversation (even in your own mind). The longer you stay and expose yourself to the temptation, the more likely you will be to give in to it.

- *“From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat”*—But the serpent had already got her thinking about the one tree she was not to eat of. She took away from what God had actually said, *“From any tree of the garden you may eat freely...”* They could eat as much as they wanted, and when they wanted. No restrictions at all. Also, in the middle of the garden was the *“tree of life”* (2:9), from which they also could freely eat, until it was forbidden after the Fall (3:22). She seemed to devalue all the plenty God had given her.

**An Application:** Our tendency is the same—we look past the good things God has given us and zero in on the one thing we do not have and want.

**3:3 *“but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden...”*** Notice she described the tree as one *“in the middle of the garden”* (2:9). She did not mention that it was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or that the tree of life was there also. Being in the middle of the garden, anywhere she was in the garden, she had to walk past all God DID give her to get to the one tree God said to not eat.

- She continued, *“God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it....’”* Now we see that Eve has added to what God said. He never said anything about touching the tree. She added to the one command that God had given her in a way that somehow lessened the command. God never said, ‘Do not touch this tree or you will die.’

**An Application:** Be careful to not add or take away from God’s Word. How often do we paraphrase, or read books, or watch movies, or listen to podcasts that add cultural information to God’s Word. It is then very difficult or impossible to understand the words of the Bible without including that information, adding humor or emotional responses and other information that is not

there. God has put in His Word what He wants us to know. How would you feel if someone described you and what you say as something that was totally not true about you?

**3:4** Eve correctly understood (Adam told her?) God to say if they ate from the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, they would die (3:3). But Satan said God was lying. ***“the serpent said to the woman, ‘You surely will not die!’”*** Jesus said of Satan, *“he was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies”* (John 8:44-45). God did not lie. Satan was the liar—and Eve believed the lie.

**An Application:** We have been reading in Genesis 1 how God created everything. Yet our culture lies and says the earth and animals and man “evolved.” Do not believe the lie.

**An Application:** Paul wrote, *“But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ”* (2 Cor. 11:3).

**3:5 “God knows...”**—Satan here attacked God’s character, suggesting God was holding them back from knowing something He knew. Up to now, it was God who declared what was “good.” It seems like it is the ability for them to decide/know what was good and what was evil, rather than believing God’s declaration of what was good. They wanted to decide what was good.

— Satan caused Eve to look differently at this tree and at what God said was “good.” The tree did not change. It was the same as the day God made it. It was Eve’s thinking about the tree—and God—that changed.

**An Application:** God said, *“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil... Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight!”* (Isaiah 5:20-21). God gave us many commandments in the epistles so we can learn to do what is pleasing in His sight (Ephesians 5:10). That means you need to be *“transformed”* in your thinking (Romans 12:1-2). The things of the world do not change, God’s Word does not change. It is your thinking that needs to be conformed to God’s thinking—that God is the One who decides what is “good.”

— ***“in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”*** What does “knowing good and evil” mean? Evil is anything contrary to God. It is the absence of God. Up to now, Adam and Eve only knew God and what God said was good. They did not know, or experience, the absence of God.

— However, a narrative clue already points to Eve’s assuming God’s role of “knowing the good” even before she ate of the fruit—that is the description of the woman’s thoughts in the last moments before the Fall. Satan told Eve that *“... your eyes will be opened”* (3:5). Sure enough, now she ***“saw the tree was good...”*** (v. 6). Up until now in the narrative, the expression ***“and He saw that it was good”*** has only been used of God. Now, instead of God, it is the woman who ***“saw that it was good”***—which was NOT what God said about it.

— Satan convinced Eve that it was better to see, i.e., decide for herself, good and evil, than to just experience good as defined by God. This temptation was not presented as a general rebellion from God’s authority. Rather, it was portrayed as a quest for wisdom and “good” apart from God’s provision. And it would seem that she believes they could, on their own, enjoy “good” apart from God and His commandment.

**An Application:** How quickly the transgression happens once the decision has been made! The world says to repeat something often enough and you will believe it. Jesus said it is just the opposite. Jesus told us, *“For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders”* (Matthew 15:19). You will do what you decide in your heart.

— Satan is finished. He did what he set out to do: he got Eve to question God’s prohibition and he

denied the consequences of her choice, so now he leaves. He does not stick around to see what Eve will do. He seems confident. He does not have to say any more.

**3:6** “*When the woman saw*—that does not mean to simply observe. In her mind, she was making judgments or conclusions about what she was looking at. She had actually changed what she “saw” (her judgments) because of talking to Satan.

- Eve *saw that the tree was good for food*—God “*caused to grow every tree that is...good for food*” (2:8). It was not rotten fruit. It was physically good fruit. But now Eve is making the judgment that the fruit is good. Convincing herself.
- Eve *saw that it was a delight to the eyes*—God “*caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight*” (2:8). Pleasing in appearance. Good-looking fruit is so desirable.
- Eve *saw that the tree was desirable to make one wise*—How would she see that the tree would make her wise? She could not. She believed what Satan said about it. She believed that when she obtained the knowledge of good and evil, she would, on her own, decide what is “good.” The possibility that she would know only the “evil” and not the “good” is not raised in the narrative prior to their eating the fruit.
- “*she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.*” Some question about exactly when was “*her husband with her.*” In 1 Timothy 2:13-14, Paul wrote, “*...it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.*” “*fell into transgression*” is one word which can be translated “disobeyed.” So, “*...the woman being deceived, disobeyed.*” Paul is NOT saying that Adam is without guilt, but he is saying Adam was not deceived. And because Adam was not deceived, it implies his eating the fruit was a willful disobedience.
- Romans 5:12-21 says, “*...through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin...*” Since it was Eve who was deceived and seemed to take the first bite, why did sin enter into mankind through Adam when he took his bite? If sin had entered through Eve, all mankind would not have included Adam, who was created before Eve. But when Adam ate the fruit, because every human, even Eve, came from the one man Adam, sin therefore came into all mankind.

**An Application:** Can we conclude deception somehow lessens the consequences? No, because Eve was accountable for disobeying. In the New Testament, the writers have much to say about being deceived. “*...by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive...*” (Romans 16:18). “*Let no man deceive himself*” (1 Corinthians 3:18). “*Let no one deceive you with empty words*” (Ephesians 5:6). “*Let no one in any way deceive you...*” (2 Thessalonians 2:3). Do not be deceived—as Eve was.

**3:7** *Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked* — when they did eat the fruit and their eyes were opened, it was not the “good” that they saw and enjoyed. Their new knowledge was that of their own nakedness.

**An Application:** Temptations are attractive. They are pleasing. They are beautiful. They are desirable—that is what a temptation is. If it is disgusting to you, you probably will not be tempted by it. God did not make the fruit of this tree look bad—He told them it was bad, to not eat of it. Do not judge by appearances. Judge by the revelation God has given in His Word. He knows what is inside. “*Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart*” (1 Samuel 16:7)

- *And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.* This is a transition verse to what lies ahead in verse 8 and following.

## Genesis 3:6-24 — Sin Enters the World

Genesis does not explain the origins of evil. Rather, it says where evil does NOT have its source. Evil was not inherent in man nor can it be said that sin was the consequence of divine entrapment. The tempter stands outside of the humans and stands opposed to God's Word.

**3:6 When** — After Eve's conversation with the serpent. It seems she did not previously see these values in the tree. But now...Satan suggested she change how she looked at the tree.

— ***the woman saw that the tree was good for food***—it sounds like it is unique and tempting, but God had "*caused to grow every tree that is...good for food*" (2:8).

— ***And it was a delight to the eyes***—also sounds like it is unique and tempting, but God had "*caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight*" (2:8). Eve's first thoughts were the positive provisions given to her from God.

**An Application:** Temptations to evil are often disguised as something good. Paul wrote, *...false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ, ...even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light*" (2 Corinthians 11:13-14). False teachers today, even false music, will often begin with something we would agree with or that seems biblical. It is how they deceive you.

**An Application:** Notice, Eve does not even think about God at this point. She only thinks of the tree and the fruit. Ignorance or disregard for God's Word makes one very vulnerable to temptation.

**An Application:** God's prohibitions as well as His provisions are for our good.

— ***And that the tree was desirable to make one wise***—It is not always a good thing to desire to be wise. We are to be innocent in the wisdom of the world and evil. Paul wrote, "*...be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil*" (Romans 16:19).

— ***she took from its fruit and ate***—in exact disobedience to God's Word (2:17). It only took one bite!!

— ***and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate***—

**An Application:** Wives have this "power" over their husbands. We know how to get them to do what we want—if we want it bad enough. It can be a strength, if we want to obey God, but it can be a sin, if it leads them away from God.

**3:7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened**—they both disobeyed, and they both received the consequences of that disobedience.

— ***and they knew that they were naked***—remember, chapter 2 ended with, *and the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed* (2:25), that is, they did not know they were naked. But after eating the fruit, they knew that they were naked.

— ***and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings***—it implies that now they are ashamed, making coverings for their sexual organs

**An Application:** Their eyes were open, but not in the good way Eve thought she would experience. The first thing they saw was their own nakedness and the shame they felt, which they tried to keep from God by coverings and hiding. We try to hide from God when we sin. Trying to cover the consequences of our sin is like Adam using fig leaves. It is temporary and not effective. It is like trying to obtain righteousness by our works instead of by faith in the sufficient payment of Christ on the cross.

**An Application:** Thousands of years later, the Apostle Paul wrote, "*just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men*" (Romans 5:12).

**3:8** *They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool* [Heb. “wind,”] *of the day* — nothing in the context to suggest that it refers to a time of day, similar to Job 38:1, where the Lord answered Job “out of the storm.” So they heard the sound of God.

- *walking in the garden* — They had talked to God in the garden before (2:16-17), when He gave the command about the trees.
- *and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden* — the beautiful trees that God created for man to look at and eat from are now their hiding place, trying to prevent God from seeing them.

**An Application:** Up to now, there was no conscience. Now, in themselves, they experience shame, remorse, fear, a sense of guilt.

**3:9** Then *the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”*— Notice it is man who hides from God, NOT God turning away from man. However, God is demanding an account of their conduct. God addresses the man, not the woman. They understand the question as an invitation to come out and explain their behavior.

**3:10** *He said, “I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked* — he is not afraid because he disobeyed. He was naked before God before, and it was not a problem (2:25). Now he recognizes what God has known all along. His excuse for hiding is the very evidence of his disobedience!!

- *so I hid myself*” — Adam seems consumed by himself, and not he and Eve. Perhaps because the command had been given to him, and he did not obey it.

Effects of the Fall on Adam and Eve:

- (1) They felt guilt and shame (v. 7).
- (2) They tried to change these conditions by their own efforts (v. 7).
- (3) They fled from God’ presence out of fear of Him (vv. 8, 10).
- (4) They blamed their sin on another rather than confessing personal responsibility (vv. 12-13).

**3:11** *And He said, “Who told you that you were naked?”* — a question to prod him into confessing his guilt.

- *Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?”*— Again, giving him an opportunity to confess his own sin of disobedience.

**3:12** *The man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me”*— the man’s attempt to cast blame on the woman—and even on God Himself, which reminds us of God’s original intention: “*It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him*” (2:18). So the man saw God’s good gift as the source of his trouble!

- *“she gave me from the tree, and I ate.”* There are no signs of humility or sorrow over the guilt. Instead, they throw the blame on another. Adam had a free will to choose to obey her or obey God.

**An Application:** People are inclined to justify their conduct by pointing to the circumstances and fate that God gave them in life. But God stays silent to Adam’s charges, no need to defend Himself. Now God’s “good” creation will pay the consequences and die because Adam and Eve ate from the “*tree of the knowledge of good and evil*” (2:17).

**3:13** *Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”* — Now Eve has an opportunity to give an account for her conduct. She also shows no signs of humility or sorrow over the guilt. Instead, she blames the serpent (and even God, who made the serpent).

- *And the woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate”*— But she was free to choose!! She was free to not even talk to the serpent.

**An Application:** Now we will see that sin perverted all the good that God had done. Good, by its very existence, can be perverted. Much like you need a window to have a broken window. Good and evil are not co-equal entities (like the ying/yang ☯).

## The Curse on the Serpent

**3:14** *The LORD God said to the serpent,*

- *“Because you have done this”* — The serpent did not have a spiritual nature, as humans have. Animals were not given the command to not eat from the tree—and in fact, the serpent did not eat from the tree. Yet, because of the spiritual disobedience of the humans, the animals (and plants) were cursed, and the serpent was cursed the most because the temptation came through it.
- Revelation 12:9 says, *“the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world.”* It seems that Satan possessed the serpent and spoke through it (as demons possessed and spoke thru a man in Luke 8:30-31). And the pigs ran down the cliff into the Sea of Galilee when possessed by demons in Luke 8:33, so the pigs suffered as a result of possession by the demons through no action on their part.
- The serpent was *“more crafty than any beast of the field”* (3:1). It had a superior ability, not given to other animals. Now, *“Cursed are you”*—“crafty” is now “cursed.”
- *more than all cattle* — here we realize the cattle are also cursed, but somehow the serpent is cursed “more.” Its basic characterization is changed. For example, cows will now die, but they do not change their form, as the serpent will change, which is more than what cows will experience.
- *And more than every beast of the field* — even every beast is cursed.
- The text does not tell us what the curse was on the other animals. We do know that death was the result of Adam and Eve eating from the tree, and God said, *“in the day that you eat from it you will surely die”* (2:17). So death spread to all creation.
- (1) *On your belly you will go* — this does not mean it previously had legs, but it would seem that it was more upright.
- (2) *And dust you will eat* — Micah 7:17 says, *“...they will lick the dust like a serpent.”* “There is an organ in the roof of a snake’s mouth called ‘Jacobson’s organ.’ This helps the snake to smell in addition to its nose. Its darting, forked tongue samples bits of dust by picking them up on the points of the fork, which it then presents to its matching pair of sensory organs inside its mouth.” [*Creation Magazine* 10(4):38, September 1988]
- *All the days of your life* — as long as it exists on this present earth. In the Millennial Kingdom, the curse is lifted for other animals, *“the wolf and the lamb will graze together,”* but *“dust will be the serpent’s food”* (Isaiah 65:25).

**3:15—(1)** *And I will put enmity*— antagonism between snakes and humans

- *Between you and the woman* — no more “friendly chats” (like 3:1-5)
- *And between your seed and her seed*—the future descendants of both snakes and people will experience this enmity. [By observation, it seems this enmity is even between snakes and other animals. Living things do not like snakes. Humans and animals run from them.]
- (1) *He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel* — the Hebrew word means “bruise, batter, crush” and is only used elsewhere in Psalm 139:11 and Job 9:17. So the word “bruise” does not mean two different things here.
- So the context is more important. Both are described as repeated attacks, trying to injure the other. It is a lifelong mutual hostility between humans and serpents.

- Is the battle never-ending, or will one eventually win? We have a clue in the words “head” and “heel.” The serpent attacks from a weaker position—the person’s heel. But a human can crush the serpent’s head—a superior victory. A serpent’s poison is in its head, so crushing it is fatal.

**An Application**—So while there will be enmity between serpents and humans for the rest of the time on this earth, humans have a superior position in that they can destroy the serpents, crushing their heads. Serpents, however, partly because of their inferior position of going on their bellies in the dust, will harm but not kill the humans. [There will be exceptions, but it is a general rule.]

## The Curse on the Woman

### 3:16 *To the woman He said,*

- (1) With respect to bearing children: ***“I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children”*** — Adam called her *“Eve, because she was the mother of all the living”* (3:20). But she had not yet had a child. Today, the fact that they use pain meds proves there is pain in childbirth.
- (2) With respect to her husband: ***Yet your desire will be for your husband*** — The Hebrew word for “desire” is also used in 4:7, when God tells Cain, *“sin is crouching at the door, and its desire is for you, but you must master it.”* “Desire” is “to control.” So the wife will want to control her husband.

- ***And he will rule over you,***” not just be the head.

**An Application:** God created man as the head and his wife as a helper. But sin and the curse have now perverted that, so she wants to rule him, but now rather than being a head, he will rule her. So there is a conflict of “ruling” within the marriage. This is overcome as believers, when the wife honors her husband as the *“head of the wife,”* and he *“loves his own wife...nourishes and cherishes”* her (Ephesians 5:22-29). So if there is a battle of “ruling” in the relationship, it is the perversion of what God intended in creation and what He intends in a godly marriage.

## The Curse on the Man

**3:17 *Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife*** — Adam chose to obey his wife rather than God. He was not deceived, as she was. This was willful disobedience to God.

- ***and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you,...‘You shall not eat from it’***
- ***Cursed is the ground because of you*** — remember, at this point, God said, *“I have given you every plant...and every tree which has fruit...it shall be food for you”* and *“eat freely”* (Genesis 1:29; 2:16). The ground is not spiritual/moral (as the serpent was not either), yet it will suffer the curse of the humans’ sin.
- ***In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life*** — God had told Adam *“to cultivate it and keep it”* for the garden. So he was to work, but now that work would be “toil” (extremely hard work).

**3:18 *Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you*** — WEEDS!!!

- ***And you will eat the plants of the field*** — before he had good food in the garden, now it would be plants of the field. I think we can understand that difference!!!

**3:19 *By the sweat of your face You will eat bread*** — Adam and Eve sinned by eating—now they would suffer in order to eat.

- ***Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return”*** — here is the consequence of which God had previously spoken: *“for in the day that you eat from it, you shall surely die”* (2:17). This is physical death. Returning to dust.

**An Application:** Paul wrote, *For the creation itself was subjected to futility, not willingly [because they chose it] but because of Him who subjected it...we know that the whole creation groans and suffers...* (Romans 8:20, 22). The evil in creation (hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, storms, etc.) are the result of the curse because Adam and Eve sinned. We live on a cursed planet.

**3:20** *Now the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all the living.*

**3:21** *The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife* — some translate this: “*for their skin,*” i.e., to cover their nakedness. Others say that God killed an animal to get skins for the clothing, as Abel will sacrifice a lamb (4:4). Symbolically, shed blood to cover the consequences of sin.

— *and clothed them* — God did not make the garments before the sin. But now He did.

**3:22** *Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil* — It was God who determined “good” but now humans would decide what was good and evil, called a conscience.

— *and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever*” — in his fallen state. So God in His mercy kept them from that.

**3:23** *therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken* — the plants of the field, where the thorns and thistles grew

**3:24** *So He drove the man out* — the garden was also the place where Adam and Eve could freely talk with God. Now God sent them out, away from His presence and His provision.

— *and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life* — The cherubim are angels who are like God’s bodyguards, guarding the holiness of God.

## **Genesis 4 — Cain and Abel**

Chapter 3 records the root of sin, and chapter 4 records the fruit of sin. Both chapters conclude with the sinners leaving God’s presence and going to live east of Eden (3:24; 4:16). People became increasingly more wicked as time passed.

One of the first things to notice is that God had said, “*from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die*” (2:17).

— God said death would come, “*in the day,*” i.e., at that time, not “on the very day.” He did not speak of a specific day, as He did “on the third day” of creation, for example.

— The first death recorded is of Adam and Eve’s own son, Abel.

**An Application:** Notice this death was not “natural,” but murder, as a result of hatred and anger. Sin was master in Cain’s life (4:7). Anger and hatred are common sins—even today.

### **4:1-2 Two Brothers Are Born**

— *Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, “I have gotten a manchild with [the help of] the Lord.”*

— *“Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks,”* Abel is doing as God intended for humans to “*...rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth*” (1:26).



- **“but Cain was a tiller of the ground.”** Cain chose a cursed work: *“In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face You will eat bread”* (3:17-19).

#### 4:3-5 The Brothers’ Sacrifices

- **“So it came about in the course of time”** — maybe 20 some years after they left Eden, as the boys are adult men doing work.
- **“Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground...but for Cain and his offering He [God] had no regard.”** Was the “fruit” a example of overcoming the thistle curse God put on the plants? Like saying, “I made fruit in spite of Your thistles!” An act of rebellion similar to what his mother Eve had done. God knew the motivations of the two brothers that are not written for us in Genesis.
- **“Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering.”** Abel killed a sheep of his flock, blood was shed, as a sacrifice to God, and soon he himself would be killed as a righteous martyr. And there was death.....
- Notice that Cain brought *“of the fruit,”* whereas Abel brought from the *“firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions.”* Later, in the Mosaic Law, the first animal was sacrificed to God, and the “fat” was for the Lord (Leviticus 3:10-17). It shows a person’s heart attitude of giving God the first and the best you have to offer.
- Hebrews 11:4 says, *“By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous. God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.”*

**An Application:** From the beginning, it has been about faith, not works. It is a faith-righteousness (Romans 4). What they sacrificed showed their faith. Works do not produce faith, they show faith. Abel had faith in God, and the blood he shed showed that faith. Cain was evil, and his sacrifice showed his sin against God. First John 3:12 tells us, *“Cain, whose...deeds were evil, and his brother’s were righteous.”*

#### 4:6-7 **“So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell**—Cain’s response is (1) anger at God and (2) anger at his brother Abel.

- **“The Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry...?”**

**An Application:** Paul wrote that if you present a faith-righteousness to someone who believes in a works righteousness (what they think God should be satisfied with), Jesus becomes a rock of offense (Romans 9:33). They will become angry. They do not see salvation but a rejection of what they want to give or do. As Satan told Eve about the tree, she should get to decide what is good, rather than believing what God said was good.

- ***If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up?*** God graciously questioned Cain, as He had with Adam and Eve (3:9, 11), to give an opportunity for Cain to repent and do the right thing in God’s sight. Adam reluctantly admitted his guilt, but Cain tried to cover it up by lying. He already was much more hardened than Adam. However, it was possible for Cain to recover from sin quickly if he chose to do the right thing. But Cain is so angry, he cannot be talked out of it— even by God.
- God said, **“If you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.”** The consequences of Cain’s reaction to God’s correction are more than the initial sin itself, because if he pursues sin’s anger, it will result in sin’s mastery over him, its rule over him.
- **Crouching** — meaning hiding, ready to pounce.

**An Application:** Sin is not an isolated action. When one gives in to temptation and commits a sin, the path/direction is toward more sin. It will rule over you. *“Sin is couching at the door; and its desire is for you.”* However, you have a choice: *You must master it.* This is the free will to choose that God gave us.

#### 4:8 One Brother Is Killed

- **“Cain told Abel his brother** — twice in this verse Abel is called “his brother.” We do not know exactly what he told his brother, but it was the result of anger at what God told him.
- **“And it came about when they were in the field”** — the field would be an isolated area, away from any help, which indicates a premeditation (Deuteronomy 22:25-27).
- **“that Cain rose up”** — the Hebrew means to rise up with hostility, like from an ambush.
- **“against Abel his brother and killed him”** — a ruthless violence, a slaughter, like killing a beast (which they had already experienced in Abel’s sacrifice). And death entered the human race, the consequences God had said would happen (2:17). Abel becomes the first martyr of the faithful to God by the evil world. Cain not only killed Abel, but also all the generations that would have come from Abel.
- Jesus spoke of *“the blood of righteous Abel”* as an historical fact (Matthew 23:35).
- First John 3:12 says, *“Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother’s were righteous.”*

#### 4:9-10 The Charge

- **Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?”**
- **And he said, “I do not know”** — an outright lie
- **Am I my brother’s keeper?** Cain denied responsibility for his sin. “Keeper” is the word for “shepherd.” He said, “Am I the shepherd’s shepherd?”
- **He said, “What have you done?”** As when God came to the garden and called for Adam, God knew what Cain had done but was giving him an opportunity to confess his sin.
- **The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to Me from the ground** — now the ground contains the evidence of Cain’s sin. Soaked with blood.

**An Application:** In John 8:44, Jesus said Satan *“was a murderer from beginning...he is a liar and the father of lies.”*

#### 4:11-14 The Punishment

- **“Now you are cursed from the ground** — before the ground was cursed, but now Cain himself is cursed from the ground.
- **which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand.**
- **“When you cultivate the ground, it will no longer yield its strength to you** — no longer even the fruit he had brought as a sacrifice would be available
- **you will be a vagrant** [seeking food]
- **and a wanderer on the earth”,** he would be expelled from the family, much like Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden. Now Cain is expelled even further away.
- Cain had tilled the land. He had offered the fruit of the land, and given the land his brother’s blood to drink: but now from the land the blood cries against him, for which now the land refuses him its fruit, as he is banned from the land.
- **Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is too great to bear!** — instead of repentance, Cain’s response is self-pity.
- **“Behold, You have driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Your face I will be hidden, and I will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill**

*me*” — fear of other people killing him—though he seemed to have no problem killing his brother!!

#### 4:15 God’s Mercy

- *So the LORD said to him, “Therefore whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold.”*
- *And the LORD appointed a sign for Cain, so that no one finding him would slay him* — we do not know what the “sign” was, but what God meant is clear—He gave it to Cain to protect him from others, to stop the killing, as well as a reminder of his banishment.

#### 4:16 *Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord* — Cain did not repent and turn to God.

Instead, he went further away from God and multiplied his sin.

**An Application:** Sin separates us from God, and God’s consequences against sin are carried out. Today, of course, we know that judgment was taken by Christ on the cross. But be sure—all sin will be judged, if not by Christ’s death for believers, then at the Great White Throne judgment for unbelievers (Revelation 20:11-15).

- *Cain settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden* — it seems to be even away from his parents, who were cast out of Eden. Verse 25 implies Cain is no longer with them.

**An Application:** The story began with a single serpent (Satan) tempting a single person, Eve, to sin in disobedience to God, and now it has degenerated into a people *who was of the evil one*, far from the presence of God. Sin is not done in a vacuum. It multiplies and continues to move away from God, even to the next generations. Mother Eve sinned first, then her son Cain, then his descendants.

**An Application:** Do not be the first in your family to move away from God, to start down that road.

#### 4:17-22 The Spread of Civilization and Sin

All Cain’s descendants inherit his curse and become part of God’s account of man’s increasing sin. Cain’s wife was evidently one of his sisters or nieces (5:4). Years later, marriages with someone closely related to you were prohibited in the Mosaic Law because of mutations. Close to the time of creation, these would not be a problem, but as the hundreds of years of procreation proceeded, the odds of bad mutations increase if married to someone closely related to you.

- *Cain built a city* — again notice Cain going against what God declared. He was to be a wanderer, but instead he gathered others around him and made a city. It is the first mention of a city in the Bible, and it begins with a cursed line of people. Not that cities themselves are evil, but evil people tend to gather. Throughout the Bible, the righteous people seem to be (or at least feel) they are alone. Elijah, for example, “*I alone am left...*” (1 Kings 19:10).
- (1) Reproducing — they continued to marry and have children. With an average of just 6 children per family, by the time Cain was only 400 years old, he would have had more than 100,000 descendants.
  - (2) Multiplying wives, bigamy, rather than one man and one woman, as God had created (Matthew 19:5)
  - (3) Dwelling in tents, civilized
  - (4) Having livestock, i.e., herdsmen of all kinds of animals
  - (5) Playing the lyre and pipe, i.e., musicians
  - (6) Forging of all implements of bronze and iron, i.e., craftsmen

**An Application:** Just because people are not following God does not mean they are not successful in life. These people have homes, work, creativity, music, and implements for work. They have what seems to be a prosperous and enjoyable life and culture.

#### 4:23-24 Lamech

- His bigamy shows us the decline from the Creator’s pattern for marriage of one man and one woman (Matthew 19:5). Polygamy began with Cain’s line. It was allowed, even with the Israelites, but it was accompanied by many problems.
- **“I have killed...”** seems to be his boasting about what he has done and giving a sort of “self-defense.” He did not shed “innocent” blood and he did not wait to ambush the young man (as Cain had done both things with Abel).
- Lamech killed (1) a **“boy,”** sometimes translated *“child,”* which implies a less strong male, and (2) Lamech killed him for only wounding or striking him, surely not a reason to kill his attacker. This youngster deserved leniency, not death. There seems to be a growth in violence.
- So if Cain is avenged *“sevenfold”* (v. 15) for killing his own brother, then Lamech realizes his punishment should be even greater, *“seventy-sevenfold”* (given by those in the city?)

The Cainite genealogy becomes part of the account of man’s increasing sin, which ends with *the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually* (Genesis 6:5).

### Genesis 4:25 to Chapter 5 to 6:4 — Seth’s Descendants

No one likes to read genealogies. However, among the list of names there are sometimes little pieces of information that are very illuminating. Also, Genesis 4:26 ends with the godly line of Adam and Eve’s son Seth, yet in 6:5, we read, *“the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually,”* and the need for an ark. How did mankind go from “godly” to so much “evil”? The answer lies in the genealogies of chapter 5.

**4:25** In addition to Cain’s lineage, also outside of Eden, *Adam had relations with his wife again; and she gave birth to a son, and named him Seth—*

- Notice she gives God the glory: ***God has appointed me another offspring,*** indicating a hopeful desire for a line of children from Seth, such as described in chapter 5.
- ***In place of Abel, for Cain killed him*** — So this child replaced Abel, not Cain, who went away from Adam and Eve. In this one sentence, Eve mentions all three of her sons.

**4:26** *To Seth, to him also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh.*

- ***Then men began to call upon the name of the Lord*** — Cain and Abel simply gave a sacrifice, but now, men (plural) actually worship the Lord.
- It is through Seth’s descendant Noah that the rest of the mankind will survive. And it is Seth’s line now listed in chapter 5.

## Chapter 5

The genealogies in 1 Chronicles 1:1-4 and Luke 3:36-38 are identical to this one in Genesis 5. This chapter covers the longest period of time in Genesis, about 1650 years.

In spite of the long years they lived in this chapter, each man ended with, *and then he died*. Death reigned, even in Seth’s line. Also, everyone’s death is a contrast to the exception of Enoch, who did not die, *he was no more, because God took him away* (v. 24).

**5:1-2** *In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created* — reminding us that life started with God, making humans in His likeness.

**5:3 Adam...became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image** — Now humans would reproduce after their own likeness, according to their image.

**5:4-20** The years of Adam (930 years), Seth (912 years), Enosh (905 years), Kenan (910 years), Mahalalel (895 years), Jared (962 years). Before the flood, there was longevity of life. It is likely that God used the vapor canopy around the earth to protect them from the aging by the sun. But at the flood, that canopy rained down, so humanity's days were greatly shortened. Now, *As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, or if due to strength, eighty years* (Psalm 90:10).

**5:21-27** Then we come to Enoch who **walked with God three hundred years**, his faith and trust was in God, in the midst of a time of increasing evil in the world, and he got God's attention!!

— **and he was not, for God took him**, so he did not die. Hebrews 11:5-6 says, *"by faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God. And 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 seek Him."*

**An Application:** Being physically taken to the presence of God without dying happens at other times in history:

- Elijah **went up by a whirlwind to heaven** (2 Kings 2:11).
- This will also happen at the Rapture of the believers during the church age. *...we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them (those who have died) in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord* (1 Thessalonians 4:18).

— Enoch lived 65 years and then became the father of Methuselah. **Then Enoch walked with God 300 years after he became the father of Methuselah.** There is no mention of the faith of Methuselah, but he witnessed Enoch's faith for 300 years. Then he became the grandfather of Noah, whom God also called *a righteous man, blameless in his time* (6:9).

— It is also interesting that God said Noah *walked with God*, the very words used of Methuselah's father Enoch. The same explanation for Enoch's rescue from death is made the basis for Noah's rescue from death in the flood—*he walked with God*.

**An Application:** Moses also wrote, *"...what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul* (Deuteronomy 10:12).

— Methuselah was alive during the 100 years Noah built the ark. His death is recorded, so he must have died just prior to God's judgment of the flood on the unbelieving world, but Methuselah lived the longest of any man in recorded history, 969 years. Both Methuselah and his son Lamech (Noah's father) died just before the judgment of the flood.

**5:26-31** Methuselah's son and Noah's father was Lamech (not to be confused with the Lamech in Cain's descendants in 5:23-24). He also lived 113 of the 300 years his grandfather Enoch walked with God.

**An Application:** Enoch's faith was passed on to his son (Methuselah) and his grandson (Lamech), and his great-grandson Noah. The impact of your faith can pass down for generations. My grandparents became believers, then my father, then me, then my daughters, and now my grandchildren.

Lamech is known for his words about Noah. We do not know if this was a prayer or a prophecy. **“This one will give us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands arising from the ground which the Lord has cursed,”** taking us back to the curse on the land in 3:17, making it toil.

- This is fulfilled after the flood, when humans are allowed to eat the animals, in addition to the plants from the cursed ground, when God told Noah, *“Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give it all to you, as I gave the green plant (Genesis 9:3).*

**5:32 Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth**

— This seems to be during the years building the ark. *“In the 600th year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the 17th day of the month, the ark was finished, and the flood began (7:11).*

After the flood, he lived 350 years, for a total of 950 years, and he died (Genesis 9:28-29).

Therefore, it seems the 120 years mentioned in 7:3 are the number of years it took Noah to build the ark.

**An Application:** Methuelah and Lamech’s death are recorded, just prior to the flood, but we do not know anything about any other members of Seth’s lineage. We know that only Noah, his wife, his 3 sons and their wives, entered the ark. It would seem that the rest of the lineage were part of the evil people of chapter 6 who were killed in the flood.

Some have the view that these first four verses introduce the verses on the flood, but I think they are the ending of chapter 5 and the genealogies. [The chapter divisions were added in A.D. 1555, and are not part of the original Hebrew Bible.]

**6:1 Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land**—Based on the genealogies, and the approximately 1650 years between Adam and Noah, and we use the birthrate of the year 2,000 (0.012%), there could have been about 750 million people at the time of the flood. But with the extremely long lifespans, the growth rate could have been much higher, which could be close to four billion people.

- **and daughters were born to them** — so far, the women were not mentioned much, but now they become the focus of attention. This is probably the growing trend throughout chapters 4 and 5. There were some godly men, but there were others (sons and daughters not mentioned in the genealogy) who were increasingly evil. So there would be other descendants of the godly people, who turn away from God to inter-marry with the evil people, and then are killed in the flood.

**6:2 that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.**

- A popular interpretation is that demons had children with the humans, however, when asked about marriage in the resurrection, Jesus clearly taught in Matthew 22:30 that *people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.* No reproduction possible. There is no evidence in Scripture that angels do or are able to reproduce. God created a limited number of them (although it is a huge number). One-third of the good angels followed Satan, becoming demonic (Revelation 12:4). There is no evidence in Scripture that there was any redemption for those demons. They are eternally destined to *“the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels”* (Matthew 25:41). [It’s interesting that this view assumes angels have the same reproductive systems that humans have, though they do not reproduce. God created the animals and humans with an ability and command to reproduce. That is never said of angels. So it is then often claimed that it is demons who possess humans who reproduce.]
- A better interpretation, in keeping with the genealogical descriptions in chapters 4 and 5, the daughters of men would be descendants of Cain, and the sons of God would be the descendants

of Seth, who had some fathers who “walked with God.” So we see one cause of the judgment of the flood—the sins of the sons of God. This information, as well as the next verses on the degradation of even the godly lineage, justifies the flood.

**6:3 Then the LORD said** — God has not spoken since 5:2.

— **“My Spirit shall not strive** (in spiritual battle) **with man forever, because he also is flesh.**

**An Application:** Jesus said, “Enter through the narrow **gate**; for the **gate** is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the **gate** is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).

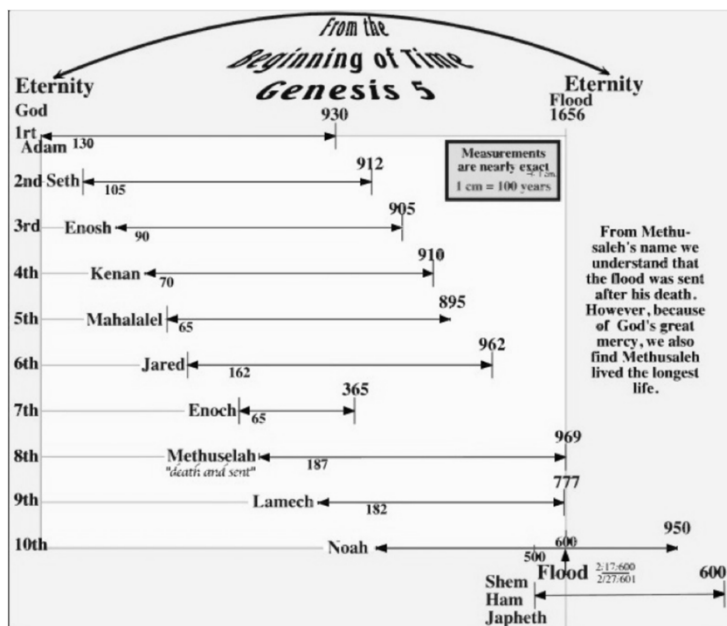
— **nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years** — this seems to be the number of years for Noah to build the ark, before the flood. God will not endlessly and forever permit man to live in this extreme sin on the earth.

— The Bible tells us 8 people went into the ark, but others could have helped Noah build it. For example, Methuselah and Lamech and possibly other relatives who died in that 100 years before the flood. Noah could have hired help. Unbelievers did not have to believe to have a job working on the ark.

**An Application:** In the future, God’s wrath judgment will again be seen in the tribulation (Revelation 6–18), until He comes again as King of Kings (Revelation 19) and once again destroys evil people from the earth.

**6:4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward when the sons of God came**

**in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them** — these Nephilim were on the earth both before and after the flood. Moses described them as powerful military leaders in Numbers 13:33, “*Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.*”



**An Application:** Chapter 4:8 began with 3 people (Adam, Eve, and Cain). People multiplied greatly on the earth, but evil also multiplied so greatly, that God destroyed everyone except the 8 people on the ark. So in tracing humanity’s lineage, it goes back to one of Noah’s 3 sons, to Noah, ... to Seth, to Adam and Eve. Cain’s lineage is destroyed and Abel had no lineage.

## Genesis 6 — Preparing for the Flood

“...the universal catastrophe speaks plainly and eloquently concerning the sovereignty of God in the affairs of men and in the processes of nature. ...It warns prophetically of a judgment yet to come, when the sovereign God shall again intervene in terrestrial events, putting down all human sin and rebellion and bringing to final fruition His age-long plan of creation and redemption.” [John C. Whitcomb and Henry M. Morris, “The Genesis Flood,” rev. 2011]

- 2 Peter 3:3-5 says, *mockers saying, ... “all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation” ...it escapes their notice that by the word of God...the earth was formed out of water and by water (Genesis 1:7), through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.*

## Man’s Condition on Earth

How did we get **from** the end of Genesis 4:26, *Adam had relations with his wife again, and she gave birth to...Seth. ...Then men began to call upon the name of the Lord* **to** the evil continually in Genesis 6:5? While we usually do not like to read genealogies, here they are a crucial description of the ~1650 years or so and downward spiral into evil between these two chapters.

**6:5 Then the Lord saw** — as in in other passages (6:12; 29:31; Exodus 2:25; 3:4; 4:31, etc.), this does not mean that God was suddenly aware of the situation, but rather it introduces the fact that there is now going to be a divine intervention. The long-suffering God would now be the God of judgment.

- In chapters 1 and 2, what God saw was His creation, and it was “good.” Now what God sees is the wickedness that man has done with His good creation.
- **that the wickedness of man was great on the earth** — wickedness seems to be actions, the Hebrew word is for “grazing” or feeding.” Evil originating in the thoughts.

**An Application:** A great word picture even of the time in which we live—people graze or feed on wickedness—whether it is porn, drugs, etc..... We can all ask: on what do we graze?

- The godly line from Seth has intermarried with the ungodly line of Cain, and the result was away from godliness and toward evil. They will all die in the flood, from both the Cain and Seth lineages.
- **and that every intent** — a Hebrew word used of a potter who forms a vessel out of clay or a carver of wood, even used of making graven images. So their minds formed the evil they did.

**An Application:** Jesus said, *“For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders...(Matthew 15:19).*

- **of the thought of his heart was only evil** — The heart is the center of human personality, where our thoughts originate (Proverbs 4:23), and it is here, the text says, that their every human thought, from its very inception, was naturally evil. After the Fall, mankind has a sin nature, luring it into sin.

**An Application:** God knows our thoughts. The gospels record Jesus knowing the thoughts of the people (Matthew 9:4; 12:25; Luke 11:17). [BTW, Satan can plant thoughts in our minds thru the temptations we see, etc. but he cannot know our thoughts (although he has thousands of years of experience with humans and can probably make a good guess by our actions).]

- **continually** — lit. “all his days”
- Jesus said, *“For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark”* (Matthew 24:38). For a hundred years, while Noah built the ark, they had a free will to believe, but they did not believe. Then after Noah entered the ark, *the Lord closed it [the door] behind him (7:16)*—now come the consequences of their choice.

**An Application:** *...it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment* (Hebrews 9:27). There is no reincarnation. No second chance to believe after death. This life is the only time when you can choose where to spend eternity.



## God's Reaction

**6:6** *"The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth — to suffer grief, distress — and He was grieved in His heart"* — the grief and pain of man's sin is not just something that only man feels. God Himself is grieved.

**An Application:** We are told we can also grieve God. We are commanded, *Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God...* (Eph 4:30). He dwells in us, and any sin we think or do will grieve Him.

**6:7** *The LORD said, "I will blot out [lit. "exterminate"] whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them"* — we saw God created the birds and creeping things on days 5 and 6 of creation. Then the animals suffered the curse because of man's sin (3:14). Now all animals would be killed (except those God preserved on the ark, and water creatures).

**6:11** *Now the earth was corrupt [lit. "ruined," a word used of "being spoiled" and "destroyed"] in the sight of God* — for sure, it was not "ruined" in the sight of the people, it was exactly according to their evil plans and actions! It was only ruined in God's sight.

**An Application:** on a very minor scale, we also know the grief when something is ruined, especially if you put a lot of planning and effort into making it.

**An Application:** God is the Judge. Best to do what is good in His sight!!!

— *and the earth was filled with violence* — this is the result of their free-will choice. God did make known the consequences, even today (Romans 1), but He does not remove the free will, even when the choices make Him grieve.

**An Application:** Often people blame God for the consequences they experience as a result of their own choices. Yet we could ask: "Where in all those free-will decisions, did they want God to step in and take away their choice?" You cannot have it both ways. Either you have free will (and the consequences of those choices) or you do not.

**6:12** *God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth* — in spite of various pagan reasons for the flood, the Bible says that the flood was God's moral judgment and consequences on the earth because of their evil.

## An Exception

**6:8** *But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD* — "But" gives us hope that maybe Noah will escape being killed. When God looked at the world, in his time, Noah was the only one who found favor. God said, *"For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His"* (2 Chronicles 16:9).

**An Application:** As believers, we want to find favor in God's eyes, to do what is pleasing to Him, like Noah.

**6:9-10** *These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man* — It seems that the main purpose of the story of the flood is not to show why God sent a flood but rather to show why God saved Noah. Noah's righteousness is contrasted with the violence of all flesh. However, we do not know what "righteous" and "walked with God" specifically mean. For sure, Noah believed and obeyed God in building the ark, but verse 9 is before the ark.

— *blameless in his time* — later this term was used of "blemish-free" animals used in the Law sacrifices (Leviticus 1:3, 10). Job was also described by God as "blameless" (Job 1:2, 8).

**An Application:** We live in different times, with different situations in which to be blameless. For example, today it is not getting an abortion, in the tribulation, it will be not getting the mark of the beast.

- **Noah walked with God** — the author makes a parallel between Noah and his great-grandfather Enoch. Noah was delivered from death at the flood and Enoch was delivered from death (5:22-24). The point is that God delivered those who “walk with” Him and who do not “corrupt” His way.

**An Application:** This is a key concept parallel to the Rapture, where God will deliver those believers who walk with Him from the judgment/tribulation He is about to bring on the world (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; 5:9; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9).

- **Noah became the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth** — they are adult sons with wives (but no children), ~100 years old, at the time of building the ark.

## God’s Plan

### Destroying the People and “the Earth”

**6:13 Then God said to Noah** (God is now giving Noah His assessment of the earth) **“The end of all flesh has come before Me** — once those who committed the “crime” have been brought before the Judge and have been found guilty, and the judgment is death.

- **for the earth is filled with violence because of them** — the descendants of the murderers Cain and Lamech, scattered and multiplied so the earth became filled with the violence.
- **and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth** —the judgment of death to the lineages of both Cain and Seth, who have intermarried, and multiplied the evil. The earth is still cursed after the flood. But the flood resulted in a divided earth, which would scatter the people.

**An Application:** Today, with jets, internet, phones, etc. the message is “one global earth!” preparing it for the global reign of the antichrist and the global judgment of the tribulation.

**An Application:** Abel believed God and died. Enoch believed God and did not die. Noah believed God and everyone else died.

## Building the Ark

God entrusts the task of building the ark to Noah and gives him the necessary information to complete the task—size, layout, and appropriate building materials. Remember, at this point, it has not rained on the earth, so even building the ark showed Noah’s faith in God’s Word. Hebrew 11:7 says, *By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household...became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.*

**An Application:** Noah believed God *about things not yet seen* (the rain, for example). Building the ark was not a works’ righteousness. It was *the righteousness which is according to faith*, believing what God said. From Genesis to Revelation, it is always about faith-righteousness, not works. However, his works showed his faith in what God said.

**6:14 “Make for yourself an [1] ark of gopher wood** — “Gopher wood” is unknown to us today. But there was an abundance of trees, feeding all mankind and animals (think Amazon forest), and Cain’s lineage, who were “*forger of all implements of bronze and iron*” (4:22). And hired workers.

- **you shall make the ark [2] with rooms** — most likely rooms for Noah and his sons and their wives. Possibly the animals were also divided into rooms according to kind or size.

- *shall [3] cover it inside and out with pitch* — which would make it waterproof inside and outside, to withstand the deluge of water (Noah takes that by faith).

**6:15** *“This is how you shall make it: [4] the length of the ark three hundred cubits, [5] its breadth fifty cubits, and [6] its height thirty cubits* — a cubit was about 18 to 21 inches, making the ark about 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 high. (A cubit is a measurement of your forearm, so it was not an exact measurement, it varies in length from person-to-person.) It was approximately as long as 1½ football fields and as tall as a 4-story building. It had the storage capacity of about 450 standard semi-trailers, which each holds about 250 sheep, so the ark could hold at least 100,000 sheep-size animals. The ark was not made to navigate. It was to simply float, like a barge. “...these dimensions are the perfect ratio for a huge boat for seaworthiness and not for speed. Shipbuilders during World War II used that 30:5:3 ratio...”

- 6:16** *“You shall [7] make a window for the ark, and [8] finish it to a cubit from the top* — some understand this to be simply a window, some think it is a window that wrapped around the whole top, or some other size. But it was very near the top, so eventually Noah would be able to send out birds to test the level of the water.
- [9] *set the door of the ark in the side of it* — the only way in and out was this one door, and God controlled it.
  - *you shall [10] make it with lower, second, and third decks* — it had 3 decks.

## Bringing On the Flood

**6:17** *“Behold, I, even I, am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life* — God, the giver of life, is now going to take that life. God makes it crystal clear that God is the One who is bringing the flood. He is the One who will *destroy all flesh*.

- *from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish* — this did not include any fresh or salt water animals.

**6:18** *“But I will establish My covenant with you* — this is the first mention of a covenant in the Old Testament. At this point, we see that the covenant is established by God, and it is between God and Noah. We do not read about the details of the covenant until 9:11.

- *you shall enter the ark, you and your sons and your wife, and your sons’ wives with you* — Noah’s family was included as believers in that covenant. All unbelievers were killed. His sons and wives were important for the reproduction of humans after the flood.

**An Application** — Jesus used this as an example of what will happen at the Second Coming of Christ. In Luke 17:26-36, He said, *“as happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man...the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all... It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed...on that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken [to judgment and death] and the other will be left [like Noah, to go into the Millennial Kingdom].*

**6:19-20** *“And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. Of the birds after their kind, and of the animals after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive* — Just as God had brought the animals to Adam to name them (Genesis 2:19), He will now bring the animals to the ark.

- These are birds of the air and ground animals (not water animals).
- The purpose: *to keep them alive*.

## Genesis 6:21 to Chapter 8 — The Flood

**An Application** — So far, with respect to the earth, there are two major works of God: creation and the flood. *The earth was formed... from the beginning of creation..., the world was destroyed, being flooded with water, and now By His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men...the earth and its works will be burned up* (2 Peter 3:4-10). There is nothing we can do to preserve the future of the earth. It will be burned up by God. He created it, He flooded it, and He will burn it up.

**An Application:** The mention of the flood is prominent in the Bible (Job 12:15; 22:16; Psalm 29:10; 104:6-9; Isaiah 54:9; Matthew 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-27; Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5).

**6:21** *“As for you, take for yourself some of all food [plants, seeds] which is edible, and gather it to yourself; and it shall be for food for you and for them.”* At this time, they were not killing animals and eating meat. That was allowed by God only after the flood (9:3).

- The salt content of the ocean would be minimal compared today. The water came from the raining of the canopy and ocean springs, all fresh water. So plants and/or seeds could survive, floating on the water, in addition to the plants/seeds Noah carried on the ark.
- The question arises—how to care for the animals, to feed them, dispose of the waste, etc. for a whole year. Although we cannot be dogmatic (the Bible does not give us the details), a reasonable possibility would be that God initiated a process called hibernation.
- Hibernation (animals appear to be sleeping, their heart rates dramatically slow, and their breathing can slow to 1 or 2 breaths a minute, they do not eat). It occurs in every group of vertebrates. Animals escape heat, drought, winter cold, food shortage, etc. for many months. Before the flood, there would be no unfavorable weather. The earth was more or less a tropics. After the flood, there began *cold and heat, and summer, and winter* (8:22). Then to survive, animals had to escape the hot or cold weather or die.
- After the flood, if an animal does not hibernate, it most likely migrates (also initiated by God). Monarch butterflies migrate 3,000 miles before winter. Many birds practice migration over long distances to escape unfavorable weather conditions. Hummingbirds fly south as much as 23 miles a day. After the flood, the earth will have cold climates, even glaciers, in the far north and south.
- The instinct in animals to either hibernate or migrate is a great mystery to scientists. The fundamental causes of the condition are still unknown, but God was already preparing the animals to survive after the flood.

**7:2** *...the Lord said to Noah, “Enter the ark, you and all your household [8 people].*

- *take with you of every clean animal by sevens, a male and female* — “Clean animals” were used for the sacrifice when they left the ark at the end of the flood (8:20). If animals by twos were sacrificed, there would be none left. God brought the animals to the ark (6:20), so God was the One who selected the “sevens” which would be sacrificed after the flood.

**An Application:** We will see that again with Abraham, when God provided the lamb for sacrifice (Genesis 22:8). And, of course, we see it with God providing Jesus Christ as the sacrificial Lamb to pay for our sins (Revelation 5:6).

- *of the animals that are not clean two, a male and its female* — animals NOT on the ark: fish, marine creatures like starfishes, mollusks (like clams), corals, jelly fishes, sponges, lobsters, shrimps, crabs. There are also aquatic mammals like whales, seals, porpoises. TODAY, it is estimated that 78% of animals live in the water. Also, 71% of the earth is covered in water, and of that oceans are 96.5%.

- Also, Noah did not need to take the largest or even adult animals, simply each “kind.” Many are small animals like rabbits, cats, snakes, etc. And 80% of all animal life on the earth are insects. When you drive down the highway, you may see a few deer, or a flock of turkeys, but there are literally millions of insects you do not see. He took animals that “creep.” With “baby” or young animals the size of sheep, there would be room on the ark for about 35,000 individual vertebrate animals. Today, the total species of mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians is 17,600. [Morris, p. 69] Of course, those numbers vary with time, there were probably more, as there is evidence that most species have now died out.
- Over the last thousands of years, “kinds” of animals never evolved or merged from the “kinds” God created. However, the varieties and sub-varieties are enormous (just like there are varieties of humans). For example, in the last few hundred years, over 200 distinct varieties of dogs have developed from a single kind of “dog.” This is true both of plants and animals. So a “kind” of animal could go on the ark, and over the next thousands of years, the varieties of that kind would greatly increase. For example, years ago, one would own a “dog.” But now, a person identifies the variety of dog—a mini-labradoodle! Rarely do you hear simply “dog.” And the varieties continue to increase.
- Something to consider is the ark itself. It was most likely completely dark, except for the candles or torches Noah’s family had where they were staying. Also, the sheer size of the ark (remember, 1 ½ football fields), as well as 3 decks, would seem to limit Noah’s ability to care for the animals for over a year that they were in the ark.
- Noah did not have to go and try to find and gather the animals. God said they “*will come to you...*” (6:20). *On the very same day Noah...entered the ark, ...every beast after its kind...went into the ark (7:13-15).* God brought them to Noah, as He had brought them to Adam to name (2:19). *They went into the ark...and the Lord closed it behind him (v. 16).* God controlled the animals and the door.

**An Application:** God also still controls the door for eternal salvation. Jesus said, “*I am the door...if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved...*” (John 10:7, 9).

- *also of the birds of the sky, by sevens, male and female*, for the purpose: *to keep offspring alive on the face of all the earth* — most birds are small, in comparison to the area of the ark.
- And God kept watch over them in the ark during the flood: *God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark (8:1).* It seems that God was involved in the survival of both the animals and people on the ark. The flood was a miraculous event, and it would seem that the care of those on the ark would also be pretty miraculous!!

**An Application:** Peter refers to the flood 3 times as a historical reality (1 Peter 3:18-22; 2 Peter 2:5; 3:5-6). He calls Noah a “*proclaimer of righteousness.*” This could refer to his proclaiming activity not recorded in the Old Testament, or the fact that his lifestyle and building the ark proclaimed righteousness to those around him.

**7:4** *after seven more days, I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights* — this was good information for Noah to have. God keeps His word. Would Noah be able to count the 40? With tremendous rain 24 hours a day, maybe he could not tell the day from the night.

- *I will blot out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made, everything that creeps on the ground (v. 8), all flesh that moved on the earth, ...every swarming thing that swarms on the earth...of all that was on the dry land, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life (vv. 21-22).* These would be the land animals created on the 6<sup>th</sup> day, including humans.

**7:11** *In the 600<sup>th</sup> year of Noah's life, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> month, on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of the month* — with the numbers, it reminds us of the exact days of creation. For over 100 years, Noah was building the ark—must have been much mockery for years—yet the very day is planned by God for the door to be shut and for the Flood to begin.

**An Application:** Jesus said of His Second Coming: *of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone* (Matthew 24:36). Count on it. The very year, the very month, the very day, and the very hour God has planned for when Jesus will return!!

- *the fountains of the great deep burst open* — Fountains of fresh water springs flowing within the ocean have been used for thousands of years. "...the Roman geographer Strabo, who lived from 63 bc to 21 ad, mentioned a submarine fresh groundwater spring 4 km from...Syria, near the Mediterranean island... Water from this spring was collected from a boat, utilizing a lead funnel and leather tube, and transported to the city as a source of fresh water. Other historical accounts tell of water vendors in Bahrain collecting potable water from offshore submarine springs for shipboard and land use." There are many channels and fountains of fresh water in the depth of the oceans around the world being used even today.
- AND *the floodgates of the sky were opened* — this would seem to be the vapor canopy God used to give long life to those living at that time.
- From below and from above — on the very same day!! An amazing miracle!

Noah (it seems) took 120 years to build the ark (Genesis 6:3). He became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth when he was ~500 years old, so they were about 100-some years old when they went on the ark (assuming their wives were about the same ages). [Having children after leaving the ark!]

**An Application:** "Faith" is trusting what you understand is true. Your works are the evidence of that faith. Hebrews 11:7 reads, *By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.* Notice, twice in this verse the writer speaks of Noah's faith.

- *For by faith the men of old gained approval* (v. 2).
- *By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible* (v. 3).
- *By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks* (v. 4).
- *By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death, ...for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.*
- *And without faith, it is impossible to please God...* (vv. 5-6)!!! All these are illustrations we have studied in Genesis. From the beginning salvation has always been about faith in God.

**An Application:** Faith becomes an obstacle, a stumbling block (Romans 9:32-33), to those who are working for their salvation. Faith says it is not about what you do, it is about understanding that what Christ did on the cross completely paid for your sins. There is no work you can add to that.

**7:19-20** *The water prevailed more and more upon the earth, so that all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered. The water prevailed fifteen cubits (22 feet) higher, and the mountains were covered* — At that time, the only measurable standard for such waters was the mountains. Notice "all" and "everywhere under the heavens"—the flood covered the earth. It was not local. We do not know how high the mountains were at that time, but the

water had to be 22 feet higher so the ark, which would sink about 15 cubits fully loaded (half its height), ... *floated on the surface of the water* (7:18).

**7:24** In 7:11-12 we learn, *on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened. The rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights.* Now in verse 24, we learn *The water prevailed upon the earth 150 days.*

Then in 8:2 we read, *the fountains of the deep and the floodgates of the sky were closed, and the rain from the sky was restrained.*

Important to know that God kept His Word:

(1) **Verse 4** *I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights—*

(2) **Verse 8** *I will blot out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made (i.e., everything that creeps on the ground (v. 8), all flesh that moved on the earth, ...every swarming thing that swarms on the earth...of all that was on the dry land, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life (vv. 21-22). These would be the land animals created on the 6<sup>th</sup> day, including humans. And He did what He said He would do.*

Just to understand it easier, here is a sample of a schedule of the dates on the ark:

- **If** on February 10 [on our calendar], in the 600<sup>th</sup> year of Noah, they got on the ark (**7:6-9**)
- It began to rain on February 17 (**7:10**) for forty days
- It stopped raining on March 27 (**7:12**)
- The ark came to rest on July 17, *upon the mountains of Ararat* (**8:4**), near the border of Armenia and eastern Turkey, but the precise location remains unknown. As the waters decreased, the ark rested on a mountain before the mountains became visible. Ararat became



thousands of feet higher as the glaciers increased. So its height then is unknown but lower. There is also lower and higher adjacent mountains called Ararat. He would not see distant mountains.

- The tops of the mountains appear on October 1 (**8:5**)
- The raven is sent out on November 10 (**8:6-7**)
- The first dove is sent out on November 17 (**8:8**)
- The second dove is sent out on November 24 (**8:10**)
- The third dove is sent out on December 1 (**8:12**)
- Noah looks out onto the dry land on January 1 (**8:13**)
- He leaves the ark on February 27 (**8:18**), with his family and the animals

Noah was on the ark for a little over a year.

*...the earth*, radically affected by the flood, confronted Noah with a more hostile environment.

Longevity was decreased, habitable land areas reduced, oceans made more extensive, the crust of the earth made unstable and subject to seismic activity, and the land laid barren.

**8:17** God commanded him to *bring out with you every living thing of all flesh...that they may breed abundantly on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth*, reminding us of the command after creation (1:28).

**8:20** Then Noah *built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird* [however many “7s” he had brought] *and offered burnt offerings on the altar*. At this point, humanity’s wickedness was temporarily removed, and Noah responded with worship and sacrifice.

**8:21** *The Lord smelled the soothing aroma; and the Lord said to Himself, “I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man’s heart is evil from his youth—*if God kept destroying the earth on account of the evil in men’s hearts, there would never be an earth because *the intent of man’s heart is evil from his youth*.

**An Application:** Isaiah wrote, “*Learn to do good*” (2:17). Jeremiah wrote, “*The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick*” (17:9). Jesus also said, “*for out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man*” (Matthew 15:19).

**An Application:** *For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit...and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart* (Hebrews 4:12). *...the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God* (1 Peter 3:4).

— *and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done.*” Here we have the very thoughts of God, which He promised to Himself!!

**8:22** Therefore, *while the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease*. There are now seasons, times to plant and times to harvest, all conditioned by the weather. These seasons makes nature predictable.

**An Application:** The seasons continue these thousands of years later. There is no global warming. There is cold and heat, as determined by God. The Lord Jesus *is the image of the invisible God...for by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth...all things have been created through Him and for Him. ...and in Him all things hold together* (Colossians 1:15-17).

## **Chapter 9 — The Rainbow Covenant**

Genesis 9 begins a new era in the outworking of God’s purpose. The rules changed when Adam sinned and was removed from Eden. Now the rules change again. Man’s relationship will change with respect to nature, the animals, and the earth itself—called the Rainbow Covenant.

**9:1** *And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth”* — the same command as 1:22, 28, given here in 9:1, 7 and never given again to all humans to reproduce. It will be given to the Jews to multiply their nation (Gen 28:3).

### **Killing Animals**

**9:2** But now, *the fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; and everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given* — before the flood, both animals and humans ate plants, with very little



interaction that we know about. But now, humans could kill and eat animals, and vice versa. Now, there will be a violent aggression between them.

**9:3** *Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant* (1:30). Perhaps this is the answer to Noah's father Lamech's prayer, that God would give them rest from *the toil of our hands arising from the ground which the Lord has cursed* (5:51). *Every moving thing that is alive* probably means the animals listed in verse 2 — (1) *beasts of the earth*, (2) *birds of the sky*, (3) *everything that creeps on the ground*, and (4) *fish of the sea*.

**9:4** Only one rule: *you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood* — There are other passages in the Law (Lev 3:17; 7:26-27; 19:26; Deut 12:16-24; 1 Sam 14:32-34) that indicate when an animal is killed, the blood is to be drained out onto the ground, and then they can eat the meat. Possibly, this is new instructions for Noah because they had not eaten meat before, so draining the blood would indicate death. If blood was still flowing, the animal would be alive. So an animal's blood may be shed but not consumed.

- This would prohibit eating animals that died of 'natural' causes (Lev 11:40; Deut 14:21). [Would that be because of animal carcasses from the flood? Don't eat those!! Also, blood quickly spoils the meat of a dead animal, hunters claim.]
- Because it does not say, it probably means Noah could eat "clean" and "unclean" animals, a distinction that was made about food under the Law, some 1000 years later.
- Noah, like Adam, was to have dominion over the animals (9:2; 1:26, 28), and both were given food to eat (9:3; 1:29; 2:16), with one prohibition (9:5-6; 2:17). For Adam, it was to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. For Noah, it was to not eat the blood of animals.

**An Application:** When Jesus was on earth, He *declared all foods clean* (Mark 7:19). And Peter received no restrictions when he was told to *kill and eat* formerly unclean animals (Acts 10:13; 11:7). The Jerusalem Council wrote that the Gentile converts should *abstain from...blood* (Acts 15:19-20). It seems that eating animals is ok. Eating blood is not.

## Killing Humans

**9:5** *I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it* — Whereas an animal's blood may be shed but not eaten, human blood cannot even be shed. If a beast kills a human, that beast is to be killed (also in the Law, Exodus 21:28-29, and usually today, too).

- *and from every man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man* — perhaps this even alludes to Cain killing his brother Abel. At that time, God did not take Cain's life. Now a brother who kills their brother should die. This is the first time "brother" has been used since chapter 4.

**9:6** *whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed* — life is sacred, and humans are not to kill other humans. This begins a dispensation of human government. When someone is killed, the other humans are to determine if the killer is to be killed. Wickedness should not go unchecked (as it had before the flood). Human government was brought in to attempt to control the evil (as even the confusion of languages was to do in chapter 11).

- *for in the image of God He made man* — humans are God's image-bearers (1:27). They are of far more value than animals. Whether an animal (without morality) or another human (with morality) kill a human, they are to die—not because of the morality but because humans bear the image of God.

**An Application:** In Romans 13:1-4, Paul writes, *...if you do what is evil, be afraid;...for it [authority] is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.*

**An Application:** Of course, we can't help but think of abortion—which is so sinful because it is killing a human, who is in the image of God.

**9:7** God repeats to Noah, ***Be fruitful and multiply; Populate*** [lit. “swarm”] ***the earth abundantly***...originally just the sea creatures were told to “swarm” (1:20). Coming out of the ark, the animals were to breed abundantly. Now God wants people to swarm, i.e., to reproduce a very large number of people. The genealogy of Genesis 10–11 shows that was happening.

**9:8** ***Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying...*** This is probably the first time Noah's sons heard God's voice. Notice, it is a voice with audible words!

**A Dispensational Application:** The dispensational ages are a way to describe distinct times of different responsibilities of people to God. When they fail, God brings a judgment and a new dispensation with different responsibilities, given through Divine revelation:

**Innocence**—time of Adam and Eve—judgment of the curse of death

**Conscience**—time of Cain to Noah—judgment of the flood

**Government**—time of Noah to Abraham—judgment of Babel and scattering

**Promise**—time of Abraham to the Egyptian bondage

**Law**—time of Moses to Jesus Christ's death on the cross, ending the Law

**Grace**—time of the cross to the Rapture with the judgment of the tribulation

**Millennial Kingdom**—the Second Coming of Christ to when the earth burns with fire

### **9:9-11 Establishing the Covenant**

This **covenant** (vv. 9, 11-13, 15-17) is cosmic and universal: **every living creature**, vv. 10 [twice], 12; **all living creatures**, vv. 15-16; **all life**, vv. 11, 15, 17) is seen from the **rainbow** God gave as a **sign** (vv. 12-13, 17).

- ***“I Myself do establish My covenant*** — a promise God Himself made
- ***with you*** — with Noah
- ***with your descendants after you*** — with all the humans who have descended from Noah
- ***with every living creature that is with you—of all that comes out of the ark, even every beast of the earth*** — with all the animals
- ***...all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth.***”

### **9:12-17 The Sign of the Covenant**

— the ***bow in the cloud...shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth***

**An Application:** A rainbow is not a “thing” which goes about appearing from place-to-place, like a tornado or a hurricane. It is an optical phenomena created by certain conditions. It will be visible anywhere, when the conditions are right. It can even be in a person's back yard. Before the flood, there was no rain, so no rainbows. Now, after the flood, rainbows are formed when sunlight is scattered, from raindrops, into the eyes of an observer. The position of the sun and the raindrops in relation to the observer need to be just right:

- The sun needs to be behind the viewer.
- The sun needs to be low in the sky, at an angle of less than 42° above the horizon. The lower the sun in the sky the more of an arc of a rainbow the viewer will see.
- Rain, fog or some other source of water droplets must be in front of the viewer.

Sunlight has many wavelengths, which appear as colors. When sunlight enters a drop of rain, its light slows down, so it bends and hits the back of the drop at an angle, which bounces some of it back into the drop and some out of the drop. Some bend more, some less. The longest wavelength is

red, always at the top of the rainbow. The shortest is blue, always at the bottom. A rainbow is actually a sphere because raindrops are spheres, which appear as part of a flat circle, which is actually a round ball, but the ground cuts it in half.

Four times God associates the rainbow with a cloud: *I will set My bow in the cloud* (v. 13), *when I bring a cloud over the earth* (v. 14), *the bow will be seen in the cloud* (v. 14), *When the bow is in the cloud* (v. 16). Rain comes from clouds. Rain was something new to the post-flood world. Before the flood, no rain, and therefore, no clouds (v. 2:6). But now in the post-flood world they would see new phenomena: rain and clouds—and RAINBOWS!!

**An Application:** This covenant is not conditioned on the behavior of mankind. The flood was because of the behavior of mankind. The only “condition” is: Does God keep His covenant? Does He keep His word?

**9:18-19** *the sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem and Ham and Japheth (and Ham was the father of Canaan)...from these the whole earth was populated* — Generally speaking, they went in 3 directions from Mt. Ararat: Shem to the East (Abraham and Jews, 10:21-31; 11:10-16, and Arabs); Ham to the South (Canaanites and Africa, Psalm 105:23), and Japheth to the North (Europeans).



**9:20-21** *Then Noah began farming* — as Adam cultivated and kept the garden, so does Noah farm. Soil, plant growth all continue after the flood.

- *and planted a vineyard* — He went back to what he knew—working in the fields, which he did in the years before the flood. God had given every green plant as food (9:3), and told Noah to *take for yourself some of all food which is edible, and gather it to yourself; and it shall be for food for you and for them* (6:21). So he had plants on the ark.
- Vineyards and drinking wine and becoming drunk are not mentioned before the flood. Generally, vineyards take 2-to-7 years to grow from seeds to vines producing grapes. Even wine can take another 3 years, so this is could be five-to-ten years after the flood.
- *He drank of the wine and became drunk* — years later we read more information about wine. It was seen as one of God’s gifts to man (Ps 104:15). Every burnt or peace offering was to be accompanied by wine (Num 15:5-10). Deuteronomy 14:26 encourages its purchase at the festivals. In the New Testament, the first recorded miracle of Jesus was to turn the water into wine (John 2), wine was used in Passover (Matt 26:29), but the warning was to not get drunk (Eph 5:18). For sure, there are other passages in the OT where being drunk caused or enabled trouble.
- *and uncovered himself inside his tent* — Much is written against Noah for drinking, getting drunk, and being naked (even though inside his own tent), calling him sinful and a pagan. But the text does not mention any sin of Noah’s. What is mentioned is the sin of his son Ham. Yet it was Ham’s son Canaan whom Noah cursed.
- There is a similarity to Adam and Eve in their garden. Before they sinned, they *were both naked and were not ashamed* (2:25). But after eating the fruit, *...they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings* (3:7), implying now a shame of their nakedness. God did not now look on their nakedness either, covering them with coats of skin (2:25).
- Noah was naked in his own tent, after he became drunk. Ham *saw the nakedness of his father*— Later, in Leviticus 18, the Law read, *You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father.* In

Leviticus 20:18, *if there is a man...so that he sees her nakedness and she sees his nakedness, it is a disgrace, and they shall be cut off in the sight of the sons of their people.* My point is that Moses, as the author of Genesis and the Law, would understand the wickedness of Ham seeing his father Noah's nakedness, without adding anything to that motivation or action.

- Also, in Genesis 19, merely 10 chapters after Noah, author Moses clearly describes homosexuality in Sodom. So if Ham had some homosexual tendencies in chapter 9 (as some claim), the author Moses could clearly state that.
- Finally, the other two of Noah's sons *took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father* (v. 23). It seems that seeing and not seeing the nakedness is the issue here.

**9:22** *Ham, the father of Canaan* [important to the narrative], *saw the nakedness of his father, and told* [lit. make known, announce, inform] *his two brothers outside* — We are not told his motivation or whether his account to his brothers was belittling of his father (although so many commentaries make it so, with no evidence).

**An Application:** It seems like there are three issues of which we have very little information as to motivations, etc. Then even a fourth in verse 25.

- Noah's drinking and getting drunk and being naked—all in his tent
- Ham's seeing his father's nakedness (in his father's tent)
- Ham telling his brothers

If we go by what is actually written in the account, we have to realize we do not have enough information to make conclusions as to what was sinful—but something was! We do have to be careful to not add motivations, feelings, deductions, etc. to the text.

**9:23** *But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were turned away, so that they did not see their father's nakedness* — If covering was an adequate remedy, and Shem and Japheth took care to not see, it seems that Ham's sin was confined to seeing and not other suggested sinful behavior. Also, how awkward to go backward into the tent, trying to cover their sleeping father without looking at him.

**9:24** *When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him* — notice it was not what Noah had done but what Ham had done. And how did he find out what Ham had done? But to what is Noah referring? Seeing him naked? Telling the brothers? All these questions are evidently irrelevant to the story.

**9:25** *So he* [Noah—first time a person is said to give a curse, though it seems to have the authority of God and affect the future] *said, "Cursed be Canaan* — we are shocked! How did Ham's son Canaan enter the story? Why did Noah curse Canaan, Ham's son, and not Ham himself? There is no obvious answer, but here are two that seem somewhat credible—

- God had recently pronounced His blessing on Noah and his sons (9:1), so Noah could not really unsay that promise.
  - The sons of Noah personify the character of their descendants, so Noah's curse on Canaan represents God's sentence on the sins of the Canaanites. The blessings on Shem and Japheth (vv. 26-27) look beyond Noah's time to their descendants, so the curse on Canaan is looking toward Ham's future descendants.
- *A servant of servants He shall be to his brothers* — The Canaanites were in the Land when Abraham and then the Israelites coming out of Egypt entered the Land.

**An Application:** Sadly, this curse verse was used to support slavery during the American Civil War. Ham's descendants went to Egypt and Africa. Therefore, people from Africa were cursed to be servants/slaves to the Japhethites (Americans who came from Europe)—so they claimed it was biblical!!! NOT!!! The curse was on Canaan, whose people were the Canaanites, NOT the Hamites from Africa!!!

**9:26-27** *He also said, “Blessed be the LORD, The God of Shem — the godly line of Abraham and the Jews will come from Shem’s descendants.*

- *And let Canaan be his servant* — perhaps referring to when the Jews came into the Land and had a long history of defeating the Canaanites and their idolatry.
- *“May God enlarge Japheth (the future Europeans of the Greeks, Romans, and the antichrist), And let him dwell in the tents of Shem And let Canaan be his servant”* — There are many ideas of these verses.
- From these 3, the history of the world will be made. See the chapter 10 genealogy for my possibility.

**9:28-29** *Noah lived three hundred and fifty years after the flood. So all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years, and he died* — By Abraham's time.

## Genesis 10

**10:1** *Now these are the records of the generations of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah; and sons were born to them after the flood* — no children were born to them on the ark. This chapter is bracketed with this verse and a similar one in verse 32. Thus the author stresses that all the rest of mankind originated with these three after the flood. [Obviously, the author already knows of the divisions of people and languages at Babel.]

### Japheth

**10:2-5** *The sons of Japheth were Gomer and Magog and Madai and Javan and Tubal and Meshech and Tiras.*

- *The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz and Riphath and Togarmah.*
- *The sons of Javan were Elishah and Tarshish, Kittim and Dodanim.*
- *From these the coastlands of the nations were separated into their lands, every one according to his language, according to their families, into their nations* — the “coastlands” would be the northern-most nations farthest from Israel. They are prominent in Israel's future prophecy (Ezekiel 27; 37-39), seeming to be the ten-nation empire of the antichrist in the tribulation, who attacks Israel in the battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:13-16).

### Ham

**10:6-20** *The sons of Ham were Cush and Mizraim and Put and Canaan.*

- *The sons of Cush were Seba and Havilah and Sabtah and Raamah and Sabteca; and the sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan* — this is modern-day southern Egypt, northern Ethiopia, and Sudan—Israel often thought of Egypt as their “savior,” but they were also their enemies, at the Egyptian Bondage, from the 400 years of Joseph to Moses.
- *Now Cush became the father of Nimrod; he became a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, “Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD”* — Esau is described this way, too (Genesis 25:27-28).

— *The beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar* — his descendants are the Babylonians, at the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers

**An Application:** Babel will be described in detail in chapter 11, as the place where God divided the people into different languages and nations. While Babel begins after the flood with the descendants of Shem to Eber to Joknan, the sons of Ham also move there and become the Babylonians, who eventually take the Southern Kingdom of Judah into exile in 586 B.C. Babylon will once again be seen as the enemy of Israel under the reign of the antichrist during the tribulation (Revelation 17–18). Biblical history describes Babylon as the enemy of God, and Jerusalem as the people of God.

— *From that land he went forth into Assyria, and built Nineveh and Rehoboth-Ir and Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city* — Assyria conquers the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C. There is also the story of the prophet Jonah’s journey to Nineveh.

— *Mizraim became the father of Ludim and Anamim and Lehabim and Naphtuhim and Pathrusim and Casluhim (from which came the Philistines) and Caphtorim* — the Philistines, located on Israel’s Mediterranean coast, were a constant threat to Israel though the times of the Judges, King Saul, and King David.

— *Canaan became the father of Sidon, his firstborn, and Heth and the Jebusite [Jerusalem] and the Amorite and the Girgashite and the Hivite and the Arkite and the Sinite and the Arvadite and the Zemarite and the Hamathite; and afterward the families of the Canaanite were spread abroad* — the people of the Land when Abraham arrived and when the Israelites came back from Egypt.

— *The territory of the Canaanite extended from Sidon as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; as you go toward Sodom and Gomorrah and Admah and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha* — this describes the Land that was promised to Abraham (Sodom and Gomorrah are at his time) and the Israelites took over after the Exodus.

— *These are the sons of Ham, according to their families, according to their languages, by their lands, by their nations.*

**An Application:** When talking about the history of God’s People, the Israelites (the Shemites), the enemies of the nation were descendants of Ham. When talking about future prophecy of Israel, the enemy will be primarily descendants of Japheth, the 10-nation confederacy under the antichrist.

## Shem

**10:21** *Also to Shem, the father of all the children of Eber* — Shem is the great-grandfather of Eber (see 10:24; 11:13-14).

— *and the “older brother” of Japheth, children were born* — this order would be Shem, Japheth, Ham (the youngest, see 9:24). However, the Hebrew could be translated “the oldest brother Japheth,” in which case, the order would be Japheth, Shem, and Ham.

**10:22** *The sons of Shem were Elam and Asshur and Arpachshad and Lud and Aram.*

**10:23** *The sons of Aram were Uz and Hul and Gether and Mash* — Uz could be the same as Job’s home (Job 1:1), who lived more or less near the time of Abraham.

**10:24** *Arpachshad became the father of Shelah; and Shelah became the father of Eber.*

**10:25** *Two sons were born to Eber; the name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided* — this seems to be the scattering of the nations and languages at Babel in a parenthesis of 11:1-9.

## Eber’s Son Joktan (verses 26–11:9)

— *and his brother’s name was Joktan* — notice this is Peleg’s brother’s descendants, not Peleg’s

descendants (which will be in 11:19f to Abraham).

**10:26-29** *Joktan became the father of Almodad and Sheleph and Hazarmaveth and Jerah and Hadoram and Uzal and Diklah and Obal and Abimael and Sheba and Ophir and Havilah and Jobab; all these were the sons of Joktan.*

**10:30** *Now their settlement extended from Mesha as you go toward Sephar, the hill country of the east* — where Babylon was.

**An Application:** It seems that Joktan's lineage was possibly involved with the tower of Babel, in contrast to Peleg's lineage, which ends with the godly man Abraham (11:10-26).

**10:31** *These are the sons of Shem, according to their families, according to their languages, by their lands, according to their nations* — summary similar to the other two brothers in verses 5 and 20.

**An Application:** After the curse of chapter 3, we read that Adam and Eve were driven out of Eden. Then at the end of chapter 4, after the evil lineage of Cain, we read of Seth, and men who began to call on the name of the Lord. But after some 1600 years, the good and evil intermarried, and the result was only evil continually. But out of Seth's line was a godly man named Noah, through whom God saved humanity during the flood. But now we have Noah's 3 sons. Their descendants will provide the future generations. The godly line of Shem produces Israel and eventually the Messiah. The lines of Ham and Japheth are evil, and God will again destroy them at the Second Coming, when God's people (primarily the 144,000 and other Jews and saints) will be left alive to go into the Millennial Kingdom He has prepared for them. Jesus makes this parallel (Matthew 24:36-42).

**10:32** *These are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, by their nations; and out of these the nations were separated on the earth after the flood.*

## Genesis 11 — Babel

Probably 11:1-9 explains how the arrangement in chapter 10 (vv. 5, 20, 31) came about. Genesis often goes outside the chronological order to arrange the material thematically.

**11:1** *Now the whole earth* (all the people—9:19) *used the same language and the same words* — although the building of the tower seems to be the Shemite descendants, the same language and words were throughout the earth, including the Japhethites and Hamites, i.e., the language of Noah when they came out of the ark (and, we assume, the language of the people before the flood).

- It is important to notice the location of these verses. They are between the Shemite genealogies Eber's two sons. In 10:26-29, the sons of Joktan to Babel are listed and in 11:16f the sons of his brother Peleg to Abraham.
- The founding of Babylon is described geographically (10:30) at the end of Joktan. At the end of the names of the line of Peleg, however, is the account of the call of Abraham (11:27–12:10).

### Eber's Son Joktan

**11:2** *It came about as they journeyed east* — the descendants of Joktan, *their settlement extended...to the hill country of the east* (10:30).

**An Application:** The author has emphasized the eastward movement of civilization. Adam and Eve, driven from the garden, settled in a land *eastward* (3:24). Cain went to dwell in a land *east of Eden* (4:16). The Shemites *journeyed east*. From Ararat, the direction would be south, but the author orients it all to Eden, so he makes the point that the pagans moved eastward, away from Eden (and

the Promised Land), and away from God. Eventually, we even see the Jewish exiles in Assyria and Babylon and Persia—all in the East. Isaiah wrote that God abandoned His people *because they are filled with influences from the east* (Isaiah 2:6). Even today, pantheism is the religion of the East.

— **that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there** — a flat river valley, most likely the Euphrates River Valley (the site of Babylon and Ur).

**11:3-4 They said to one another** — they are speaking and understanding each other

— **“Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly”** — here we hear about their plans, their purposes—a city and a tower. This is not a quick project — they had to make the bricks before they could make the tower.

— **And they used brick for stone** — clay mud from near a river that is dried in a furnace to create bricks (added straw made the bricks stronger), as there was no stone in that area. The Israelites did this by the Nile in Egypt during their Egyptian bondage (Exodus 5:7-8). This was also the *“furnace of blazing fire”* into which was cast Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego during the Babylonian Captivity (Daniel 3:20).

— **and they used tar for mortar** — as oil seeps to the surface and is exposed to air and some evaporation occurs, they are left with thick, sticky tar (asphalt) to use as mortar.

— **They said, “Come, let us build for ourselves a city** — Reminding us of Cain, who moved *east of Eden* and *built a city* (4:16-17).

— **and a tower whose top will reach into heaven** — in independence and rebellion to God, to strengthen themselves and in pride make a reputation for themselves. Noah is still alive, giving evidence to the existence of God and the judgment of the flood.

**An Application:** There seems to be a parallel to Eve in wanting to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in chapter 3.

— **and let us make for ourselves a name** — they do end up with a name, but it is for their failure, not their success.

**An Application:** The people wanted to make a name for themselves, the way they wanted to do it—which was in disobedience to God. Notice, however, 12:1-2, where God tells Abraham, *“...I will make your name great”* when Abraham obeys God. Judgment (even at the flood) comes when people turn away from God and go their own way, what seems good to them. *“There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death”* (Proverbs 14:12). [preserve the planet...equity... women’s right to their body...choose your pronoun...euthanasia]

— **otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth** — in direct opposition to God’s command to fill the earth (9:1). At the conclusion of the story, however, it is the Lord who purposely scatters them over the whole earth (repeated twice in verses 8-9).

**An Application:** What man proposed in verses 3-4: *build a city...tower to reach into heaven...make for ourselves a name...lest we be scattered*, will all be undone by God in verses 5-9. The narrative turns when *The Lord came down to see...* (in verse 5). Things may sound good to us, but what does God think about it when He sees it??? *It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers...* (Isaiah 40:22). Think how “down” you need to get to even look at a grasshopper!!

**11:5 The LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built** — from God’s vantage point—in heaven!—it is insignificant. He must come down to look at it!! This is similar to the time before the flood in 6:5, when *“the Lord saw the wickedness of man was great on the earth,”* meaning, He is about to do something about it.



- There is another similar thing in Genesis 18:21, when Jesus talks to Abraham about Sodom and Gomorrah, before He destroys it, and says, *“I will go down now, and see...”*

**An Application:** There is no way for mankind to get to heaven—the only option is if God will come down from heaven (John 16:28; 17:5) to provide a way.

**11:6** *The LORD said, “Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language — it is the descendants of Shem and his great-grandson Eber’s son Joktan’s descendants who seem to be building the tower. However, the judgment of the new languages will be all over the whole earth.*

- *And this is what they began to do — their desire for greater unity and strength*
- *and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them — according to God, this has the potential for the downward spiral to the greatest evil. If the Shemites unite with the Japhethites and Hamites, what potential evil will result?*

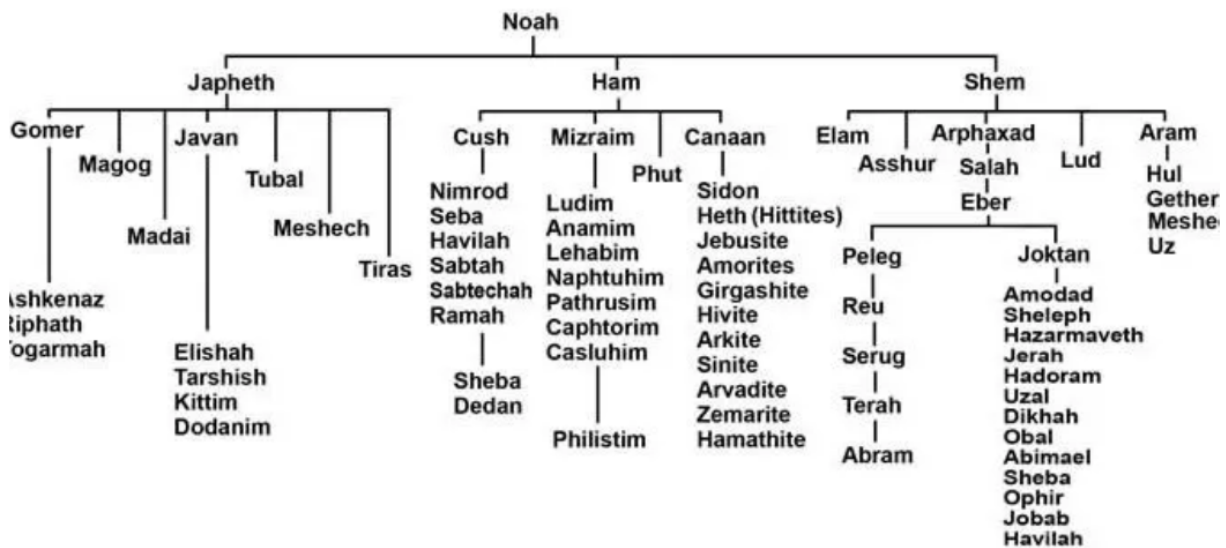
**11:7** *“Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another’s speech” — both commercially and socially, communities have to understand and communicate in order to accomplish anything.*

**An Application:** mankind is heading in the same pre-flood direction. This time God confuses the languages so they cannot intermarry and communicate.

**11:8** *So the LORD scattered them abroad — reminding us of Adam and Eve cast out of the Garden, and Cain cast out from the presence of Adam and Eve*

- *from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city — now there is no mark for protection of the fugitive (4:15), no rainbow, no ray of hope (9:13). Where is the solution? Has God abandoned mankind?*

**An Application:** God’s plan will be accomplished, not with man’s obedience but in spite of man’s disobedience!! In the Millennial Kingdom, when everyone will speak one pure language in worship in God’s holy mountain, gathered from the nations (Zephaniah 3:9-11). The miracle at Pentecost (Acts 2:6-11) was a forerunner of that yet-future event.

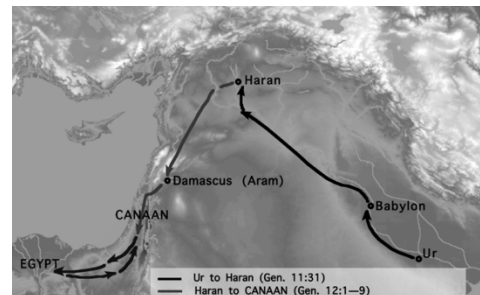


**11:9** *Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth—*

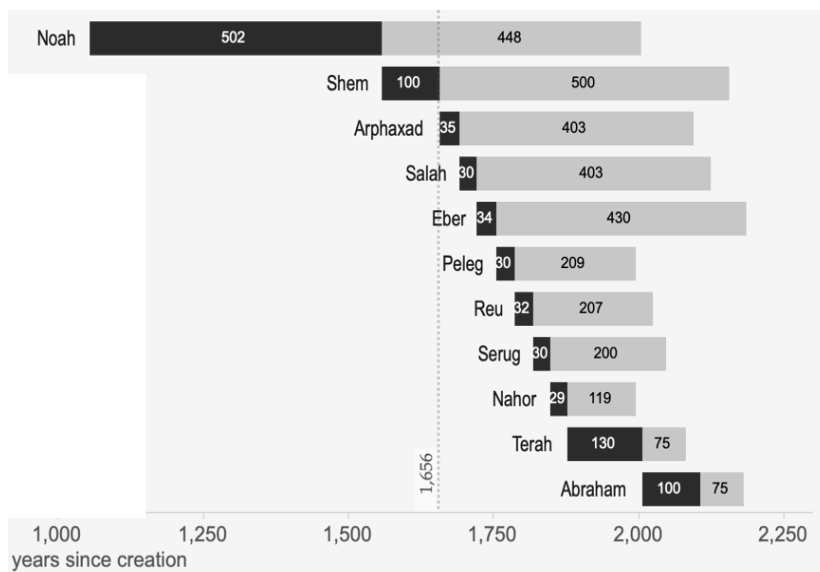
**An Application:** This is the last judgment in this first section of Genesis: (1) the curse (chapter 3), (2) the flood (chapters 7–8), and now (3) the division of languages and scattering. The results of these judgments exist even to this day, and will be overcome only at Christ’s Second Coming and establishing His millennial reign on the earth.

**Eber’s Son Peleg**

**11:10-24** *These are the records of the generations of Shem. Shem was one hundred years old, and became the father of Arpachshad two years after the flood; and Shem lived five hundred years after he became the father of Arpachshad, and he had other sons and daughters. Arpachshad lived thirty-five years, and became the father of Shelah; and Arpachshad lived four hundred and three years after he became the father of Shelah, and he had other sons and daughters. Shelah lived thirty years, and became the father of Eber; and Shelah lived four hundred and three years after he became the father of Eber, and he had other sons and daughters. Eber lived thirty-four years, and became the father of Peleg; and Eber lived four hundred and thirty years after he became the father of Peleg, and he had other sons and daughters. Peleg lived thirty years, and became the father of Reu; and Peleg lived two hundred and nine years after he became the father of Reu, and he had other sons and daughters. Reu lived thirty-two years, and became the father of Serug; and Reu lived two hundred and seven years after he became the father of Serug, and he had other sons and daughters. Serug lived thirty years, and became the father of Nahor; and Serug lived two hundred years after he became the father of Nahor, and he had other sons and daughters. Nahor lived twenty-nine years, and became the father of Terah; and Nahor lived one hundred and nineteen years after he became the father of Terah, and he had other sons and daughters. Terah lived seventy years, and became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran. Now these are the records of the generations of Terah. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran; and Haran became the father of Lot. Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans. Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram’s wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor’s wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah.*



**11:30** *Sarai was barren; she had no child.*



**11:31** *Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram’s wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there.*

**11:32** *The days of Terah were two hundred and five years; and Terah died in Haran.*

# Genesis 12

The Abrahamic Covenant is on which the whole of the Bible rests, from its past history to its future prophecy. This is the change so desperately needed in chapters 1–11. Is there any hope? So far, it has been despair.

God called Abraham out of a pagan world. Joshua 24:2 says, “*Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River [Euphrates], namely Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods.’*” So Terah and the family were idolators.

- c. died 3 years before the flood
- 5. Noah lived 950 years
  - a. Methuselah knew Noah 600 years and died the year of the flood
  - b. Talked with his father, Lamech 595 years
- 6. Shem son of Noah (father of all Semites)
  - a. lived 600 years
  - b. talked with Methuselah 98 years\*
  - c. lived after the flood 502 years
- 7. Eber or Heber (great-grandson of Shem)
  - a. lived 464 years
  - b. knew both Noah and Shem
- 8. Terah (3 x great grandson of Eber)
  - a. lived 205 years
  - b. 130 yrs old when Abraham is born
  - c. talked with both Noah and Shem
- 9. Abraham (Abram son of Terah)
  - a. lived 175 years
  - b. Abraham knew Shem son of Noah 150 years
  - c. Noah died 2 yrs. before Abraham was born
  - d. Heber outlives Abraham by 4 years
- 10. Isaac (son of Abraham and Sarah)
  - a. lived 180 years
  - b. knew Shem (son of Noah) 50 years\*
- 11. Jacob (called Israel and son of Isaac and father of the 12 tribes)
  - a. lived 147 years
  - b. knew Abraham 20 years

[God changes his name from Abram to Abraham in Genesis 17:5, so the names are used interchangeably, depending where they occur before or after 17:5.]

**12:1 Now the LORD** — this would be Jehovah, the pre-incarnate Jesus (Col 1:15, *for He is the image of the invisible God*). Acts 7:2-4 tells us, *The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, ‘LEAVE YOUR COUNTRY AND YOUR RELATIVES, AND COME INTO THE LAND THAT I WILL SHOW YOU.’ Then he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran.* But he brought his father Terah, and his brother Nahor’s family with him.

- **said to Abram** — Notice, God spoke out loud, using words. This was not a mystical message given through mental telepathy. Abram has already been introduced in Genesis 11:27-32.
- **“Go** — the first command. Abram does not know where that land is to which he is going. To God, the first thing was for Abram to move from his home and relatives. To go **from**...

**An Application:** In the church age, we are given the command to “go.” But for us, the command is to **go to** all the nations, “*Go...and make disciples of all the nations*” (Matthew 28:19-20).

- **forth from your country** — Abram had already journeyed from Ur about 600 miles north to Haran, where his father died (11:31-32). But now God wanted him to move away from Haran.
- **And from your relatives** — Abram’s brother Nahor and his family still resided in Haran (24:4, 15). But Abram brings his nephew Lot with him, which will cause trouble later on.
- **And from your father’s house** — the family base was in Haran, from where Abram seeks a wife for Isaac, and Isaac seeks a wife for Jacob.

**An Application:** Following in obedience to God’s Word may entail separating (physically or emotionally or spiritually) from your relatives and/or family. “*He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me*” (Matthew 10:37).

- **To the land which I will show you** — Then God would show him to the land after he leaves. This is a tremendous act of faith for Abram. The physical people of Israel will be given a specific physical land. It begins with Abram and ends with Jesus reigning as King in the land of Israel (Zechariah 8:3). Hebrews 11:8 reads, *By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise...dwelling in tents...*

## **The Abrahamic Covenant (three promises from God):**

**12:2** *And I will make you a **great nation*** — this promise is repeated in 18:18 and to Jacob (46:3), and to Moses (Exodus 32:10). After the dividing of people into nations at Babel (11:9), God now singles out one nation to bless, to make “great” (Heb. in extent, and importance). A nation is a political unit with a common land, language, and government.

- *And I will bless you* — benefit, favor of God to Abram [*the lesser is blessed by the greater* (Heb 7:7). *When God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself* (Heb 6:13).] Similar to what God said of Noah after the flood (8:15-19).
- *And make your name great* — the Hebrew name “Abraham” is *abarekeka*, “I will bless you” and *’abrām*. God promised this also to David (2 Samuel 7:9) in the Davidic Covenant.
- *And so you shall be a blessing* — Abram was to “go” and to “be a blessing” in the land, be a benefit or favor of God in the land. The root for “blessing” occurs 88 times in Genesis compared to 310 times elsewhere in the whole Old Testament. The promise of blessing is central in Genesis. Heb. Abraham’s name would even be used as a blessing.

**An Application:** The land will be the center of God’s blessing in the Millennial Kingdom. The desert will blossom like a rose (Isaiah 65; etc.). God alone is the source of blessing.

**12:3** *And I will **bless** those who bless you* — The way of life and blessing is now marked by identification with Abram and his seed. [This blessing was not for Noah and his family.]

- *And the one who curses* [Heb. “treat with contempt, belittle, despise”] *you I will **curse*** [Heb. a stronger word, for “punishment”] — The God Himself will actively intervene on Abram’s side.
- *And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed* — The seed to come will be the lion of the tribe of Judah (Gen 49:9), and “*to Him shall be the obedience of the peoples*” (49:10); fulfilled by Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:8, 16). Genesis itself will illustrate this in that those who treat the Jews well prosper, those that oppose them do not.

**12:4** *So Abram went forth as the **LORD** had spoken to him* — in obedience to God’s instruction

- *and Lot went with him* — Lot was Abram’s brother Haran’s son. Haran died while they were still in Ur. It seems that Abram kind of adopted him into his family. Lot’s presence prepares the way for the events of chapters 13–14 in the book.
- *Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran* — he still had no children by his wife Sarai.

**12:5** *Abram took Sarai his wife* [who was also *the daughter of my father* (Terah) *but not the daughter of my mother* (Genesis 20:12)] *and Lot his nephew* [see the chronological chart at the end of chapter 11]

- *and all their possessions which they had accumulated* — livestock, silver, and gold (13:2)
- *and the persons which they had acquired in Haran* — herdsmen (13:8)
- *and they set out for the land of Canaan; thus they came to the land of Canaan* — this would be a journey directly south of Haran, following the Mediterranean Coast inland to south of the Sea of Galilee and the Jezreel Valley several hundred miles, into the hill country.

**12:6** *Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem* — Shechem was also where Jacob settled when he first returned to the land. It is the site of Jacob’s well, where many years later Jesus talked to the Samaritan woman (John 4). Shechem will also be the site of Mts. Ebal and Gerizim, where the Law was read after Joshua conquered the land, and the people entered a covenant of obedience to God (Joshua 8:30f).

- *to the oak of Moreh* — although we cannot know for sure, the traditional site is a very high mountain looking over Shechem area.
- *Now the Canaanite was then in the land* — the descendants of Noah’s son Ham, whom Noah cursed. Abram could not immediately take possession of the land because it was already occupied!

**12:7** *The LORD appeared to Abram and said* — This is the first recorded appearance of the Lord to a patriarch (see 17:1; 18:1; 26:2, 24; 35:9; 48:3). What form the Lord appeared as we are not told. [Stephen claimed the Lord appeared to Abraham while he was in Ur—Acts 7:2-4, but it is not recorded in Genesis. From Genesis we only know the Lord spoke to Abraham, until v. 7.]

- *“To your descendants* — the only land Abram himself owned was the cave he bought to bury Sarah. But his descendants did get the land.
- *I will give this land”* — In verse 1, God did not show Abram the land—it was a mystery—but now, Abram is standing on the very land God will give his descendants—***this land.***
- *So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him* — an altar was a place to worship God and so God now had a witness in the midst of the cursed Canaanites who were then in the land. The text does not mention a sacrifice, so probably one was not given. The altar would be a longer lasting witness to God’s promise than a sacrifice would be.

**12:8** *Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent* — Hebrews 11:9-10 tells us, *By faith, Abraham lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob...*

- *with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east* — these two are quite close together, in the hills, above Jericho and the Jordan River Valley. (Years later, Bethel would be where Jacob sees the ladder reaching into heaven—Genesis 28:10-22, and Ai is the second city Joshua conquered when the Israelites invade the land—Joshua 8.)
- *and there he built an altar to the Lord* —again, a sort of staking out a claim of God for the land.
- *and called upon the name of the LORD* — suggesting some kind of formal worship of God in a regular way, perhaps staying in Bethel for a while.

**12:9** *Abram journeyed on, continuing toward the Negev* — “the dry land,” wilderness area between the hills of Judah and Kadesh Barnea, reminding us of the Israelite 40 years of wandering many years later (Numbers 33). It is roughly the southern border of the land promised to him.

- So this brief itinerary in verses 5-9 takes Abram from the northern to the southern border of the land. He not only sees what has been promised to him, he walks through it, and lives (in tents), and worships in it.

**12:10** *Now there was a famine in the land* — notice as we go through these passages the jeopardy to the land and promise by the actions of the characters. But it shows that God remains faithful to His promise in spite of man’s failures.

- *so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn* [“temporary”] *there* — as readers, we are startled to learn that Abram is so quickly leaving the land of promise.
- *for the famine was severe in the land* — Saying it was “severe” implies there was no other option. Famine pressured the patriarchs to leave Canaan for Egypt at different times (26:1; 47:4).

**12:11** *It came about when he came near* [the border] *to Egypt* — and Egypt was the usual refuge for the famine. Canaan was hilly and often dry. Egypt, however, had the flat Nile River valley for fertility. It was relatively close-by, and there were the “King’s Highways” for easy travel, often near the coast.

- *that he said to Sarai his wife* — Abram explains his fears to his wife, and no comments of hers are recorded, implying her consent to his scheme.
- *“See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman* — she is about 65. Why does he consider her as outstandingly attractive? The Egyptians agreed with him (vv. 14-15). Some suggest that since she had no children yet, she would retain a younger appearance (ha, ha!). (And seeing she had her first child at 90, 65 does seem young!!) However, we do not know how “beautiful” was defined then.

**12:12** *and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This is his wife’; and they will kill me, but they will let you live* — with no other family with them, they were at the mercy of the Egyptians. As a widow, she would be in the power of the Egyptians. [Yet, when the Egyptians find out she is his wife, they do not kill him, they send him away.]

**12:13** *“Please say that you are my sister so that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may live on account of you”* — it seems at that time that as her brother, he would have some control over her and who she would marry, called a “fratriarchical” society (as Laban did with Rebekah in 24:55 and Dinah and her brothers in 34:13-17).

**12:14** *It came about when Abram came into Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful* — as Abram anticipated, they thought she was not just beautiful but *very beautiful*

**12:15** *Pharaoh’s officials saw her and praised her to Pharaoh* — oh, no!!

- *and the woman was taken into Pharaoh’s house* — Did he commit adultery with her? I do not think so because that would be a defilement of the godly line. More likely, she became part of his harem, as Esther did in Persia, waiting to spend the night with the king.

**12:16** *Therefore he treated Abram well for her sake; and gave him sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels* — most likely, this is where the Egyptian Hagar servant comes to live with them. Each of Abram’s wife-sister episodes mentions the enrichment of the patriarch as a result of his deception (20:14-16; 26:12-14).

**12:17** *But the LORD* — God intervened. He saved Sarah from the dangerous situation into which her own husband landed her.

- *struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram’s wife* — How does Pharaoh know that his plagues are because of Sarah? We are not told. God made it known.

**12:18-20** *Then Pharaoh called [“summoned”] Abram and said, “What is this you have done to me?”* Pharaoh is quite angry with Abram. He sees it as a deliberate act against Pharaoh himself. It seems like the pagan Pharaoh is more concerned about morality than the patriarch Abram is.

- *“Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ so that I took her for my wife?”* — Abram has no response.

*Now then:*

- *here is your wife,*
- *take her and go* — Pharaoh just wants Abram and Sarah gone.
- *Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him;*
- *and they escorted him away, with his wife and all that belonged to him* — The Egyptians did not kill either Abram nor Sarah. Abram acquires wealth—but still no children.

**An Application:** Similar to the garden, where Adam listened to the sinful suggestion of his wife and ate the fruit. Here Sarah listened to the sinful suggestion of her husband and lied to Pharaoh. As Adam and Eve were driven out of the garden, so Abram and Sarah are driven out of Egypt.

- Abram was to be a blessing to others. Instead he was a pariah. They wanted him gone.
- Here we see part of God’s promise to Abram—he would curse those who curse him. Pharaoh is cursed with plagues because he had Abram’s wife. God was already delivering Abram, in spite of his bad decisions.
- God gave Abram the land of Israel. Yet, when there is famine, instead of relying on God, he abandons where God wanted him to be and comes up with his own faulty solutions. For us, we are told *that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing*(James 1:2-3). When testing situations come, don’t think of escape, as Abram did. Trials test your faith. Enduring them helps you to mature.

## Chapter 13

**13:1** *So Abram went up* (to the north) *from Egypt* (the pagan land) *to the Negev* (back to the promised land), *he and his wife* (Sarah) *and all that belonged to him, and Lot with him* (last mentioned in 12:10, but he will be prominent in the next events, having accompanied Abram to Egypt to escape the famine, also gaining wealth with Abram—v. 5).

**13:2** *Now Abram was very rich* —interesting—the same Heb. word for “severe” famine (12:10) when he left the land is now used for “severely” rich, when he returned, meaning abundant in degree

- *in livestock* —all sorts of animals that are herded (47:16-17)
- *in silver and in gold* —evidently given to him by Pharaoh (12:16), also given to the Israelites by the Egyptians when they left Egypt with Moses (Exodus 12:35-36).

**13:3** *He went on his journeys from the Negev as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai* —after going out of the land and nearly losing Sarah to Pharaoh, Abram returns to the place where he worships God.

**An Application:** In our age, 1 John 1:9 tells us, *if we confess our sin, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*—restore fellowship with God.

**13:4** *to the place of the altar which he had made there formerly; and there Abram called on the name of the LORD* — this time he does not need to build an altar, the old one is still there, waiting for Abram to worship the Lord. He did not do that in Egypt!!

**13:5** *Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents* — it is the physical blessing of God on Abram and Lot that now creates the problem. “Tents” will be important soon.

**13:6** *And the land could not sustain them while dwelling together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together* — similar problems happened between Isaac and the Philistines (26:12-22); Jacob and his uncle Laban (30:43); and Jacob and Esau (36:6-7). There has to be enough crops to feed all the animals.

**13:7** *And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram’s livestock and the herdsmen of Lot’s livestock* — the strife was not between Abram and Lot, but between their herdsmen.

- *Now the Canaanite and the Perizzite* [usually listed with the Canaanites (Gen. 34:30; Deut 7:1; Judges 1:4; 3:5)] *were dwelling then in the land* — because they were there first, they most likely had the best of the land to feed their herds.

**13:8** *So Abram said to Lot, “Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers.*

**13:9** *“Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me; if to the left, then I will go to the right; or if to the right, then I will go to the left”* — NO!! Abram cannot give the promised land to Lot!!! Once again, the gift of God is in jeopardy by the actions of Abram. But God always remains faithful to His word.

**An Application:** Abram was about to hand over the land to Lot, who becomes the father of the Ammonites and Moabites, a people who, in the author Moses’ day, were the obstacle to fulfillment of the promise. Does Abram comprehend God’s gift and promise to him? Do we comprehend God’s gift and promise to us? Or do we treat it so lightly?

**13:10** *Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere* — we see Lot’s morality in choosing what he thought was the best for himself.

Though the strife was because of the herds, so he was choosing what would feed his herds.

- *this was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah* — Moses already knows what God did to Sodom and Gomorrah and how wicked they were.
- *like the garden of the LORD*—he saw the crops for his animals but did not consider the morality
- *like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar* — it seems that the trip to Egypt to escape the famine awakened a desire in Lot. Even when the Israelites were escaping Egypt, their thots were not on the bondage they had there, but rather, on the “fish...cucumbers...melons...leeks...onions” (Num 11:5).

**An Application:** Lot looked to where he could have plenty himself without needing the blessing that came from obedience to God in the land. So today, we try to find “easy” solutions to peace that do not require obedience to God.

**13:11** *So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward*—as was mentioned in earlier chapters of Genesis (e.g. 11:1-2), eastward seems to be the immoral direction. But God’s judgment of the wicked is certain and imminent (19:13).

- *Thus they separated from each other* — God had told Abram to “go forth from your relatives” (12:1). Yet Abram considers Lot his “brother” and is with Abram, until the situation gets so bad, they are forced to separate. It is what God wanted Abram to do to begin with!! But also notice that Lot will now be out of the godly influence of Abram.

**An Application:** You become who you associate (live) with. Choose carefully!! Jesus said, “*He who is not with Me is against Me*” (Matthew 12:30).

**13:12** *Abram settled in the land of Canaan* — so Abram remained in the land. God’s promise was secure, in spite of Abram’s actions.

- *while Lot settled* [“dwelled”] *in the cities of the valley* — the boundary of Canaan is defined in Numbers 34:2-12, which was the Dead Sea and the river Jordan. Lot was moving to the very edge. His descendants, the Moabites and Ammonites, would eventually live across the Jordan border, near this spot.
- *and moved his tents as far as Sodom* — his tents were near Sodom (even though the valley was large, and he could have lived away from Sodom). Reminding us of the city-dwellers of Cain.



**13:13** *Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly* — used of the people before the flood (6:5), who were blotted out.

— *and sinners*—a word only used here in the OT

— *against the LORD* — all sin is against God. He determines what is sin.

**An Application:** “Lot, when he fancied he was living in paradise, was nearly plunged into the depths of hell” (Calvin, 1:373).

**13:14** *The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him* — in chapter 12, Abram had to separate from his country and relatives. Now he must separate from his nephew, whom he had “adopted” into his own family. Considering what Lot did, he would most likely have had an ungodly influence in Abram’s family.

—“*Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward...*”

**13:15** *for all the land which you see* — in 12:1, Abram was to go “*to the land which I will show you.*” Now God is giving him *all the land which you see.*

— *I will give it to you and to your descendants forever* — although at this point Abram had no descendants, and although he saw Lot as his “brother,” Lot is not his descendant either.

— *Forever* — lasting all the way to the Millennial Kingdom!!

**13:16** “*I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth* — uncountable

— *so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth* — of course, no one can do that

— *then your descendants can also be numbered* — so no one can count the descendants

**13:17** “*Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you*”

— Whereas Lot went east, Abram now goes south from Bethel (about 7 miles north of Jerusalem) to Hebron (about 22 miles south of Jerusalem), and he had already been to Shechem in the north.

**13:18** *Then Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre*—not mentioned outside of Genesis. Thought to be close to Hebron.

— *which are in Hebron* — here is where the cave is which is the only land Abram owned (23:1-20), where he buries Sarah (and Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Leah are also buried there).

— *and there he built an altar to the LORD* — the chapter ends with the worship of Yahweh.

## Genesis 14

Very little information is given about these actual battles, but there is a lot of geographical and political details. What is clear is that the events were global to the time and they ended with the disgraceful defeat of the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah (vv. 10-11).

In an effort to put down a rebellion (v. 4), four powerful Eastern kings invaded the Jordan River Valley near the Salt Sea (the Dead Sea, v. 3):

**14:1-4** *And it came about in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim, that they made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). All these came as allies to the valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but the thirteenth year they rebelled.*

Defeating all the forces in the region (vv. 5-7):

**14:5-7** *In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him, came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim and the Zuzim in Ham and the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim, and the Horites in their Mount Seir, as far as El-paran, which is by the wilderness. Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and conquered all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, who lived in Hazazon-tamar.*

Plundering the five Jordanian kings (vv. 8-11)

**14:8-11** *And the king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrah and the king of Admah and the king of Zeboiim and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) came out; and they arrayed for battle against them in the valley of Siddim, against Chedorlaomer king of Elam and Tidal king of Goim and Amraphel king of Shinar and Arioch king of Ellasar — four kings against five. Now the valley of Siddim was full of tar pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and they fell into them. But those who survived fled to the hill country. Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food supply, and departed.*

Now we leave this rather massive war, and suddenly zero in on an individual—taking of Lot.

**14:12** *They also took Lot, Abram’s nephew* — it was Lot’s choice in 13:11-12 to live near Sodom.

The only reason Lot is even significant is because he was *Abram’s nephew*.

— *and his possessions and departed* — Lot was rich, which is why he separated from Abram *for he was living in Sodom* — last we read, he “*moved his tents as far as Sodom*” (13:12), but now we see he is living in Sodom.

**14:13** *Then a fugitive* [one who escapes] *came and told Abram* — he seemingly knows of the relationship between Lot and Abram

- *the Hebrew* — means Bedouin, living in tents. This is the first mention of “Hebrew,” now that Abram is living in tents in the promised land (Heb 11:9). [Abram is not an “Israelite,” as that was a name given to the descendants after Abram’s grandson Jacob’s 12 sons were born.]
- *Now he was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner* — Abram, in the southern hill country, seems unaffected by the war in the Jordan Valley. Seemingly living a peaceful life, now that Lot’s group has moved away.
- *and these were allies with Abram* — who take military action together (see v. 24).

**14:14** *When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he led out his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and went in pursuit* — besides his allies, he has his own 318 trained men who had been born in his house. He was “severely” rich!!

— *as far as Dan* — Dan is the area in the far north of Israel (140 miles from Mamre). It was Laish until the tribe of Dan captured it and renamed it “Dan” [Judges 18]. Calling it Dan at this point indicates a later editor or scribe.

**14:15** *He divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hobah* [another 100 miles north of Dan—altogether, about from Grand Rapids to Indianapolis], *which is north of Damascus* — Four kings defeat five kings—but Abraham defeats them all!

**14:16** *He brought back all the goods, and also brought back his relative Lot with his possessions, and also the women, and the people* — It mentions their goods and food supply in verse 11, but now we see women and people were taken captive also. They evidently went back to living in Sodom with its king (vv. 21-22; 18:21f). This whole event had no impact on their morality at all.

They were captured as Sodomites and returned as Sodomites [God will soon “*overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities*—19:25, and Lot went back to living with them.]

- This is the first of two intercessions on behalf of Lot, first via Abram’s army. The second will be when God destroys Sodom and rescues Lot again, via Abram’s prayer (18:23-32; 19:29).

**An Application:** Why wouldn’t God just let the Sodomites stay captured and just rescue Lot and his family? Then God Himself wouldn’t have to destroy Sodom. Possibly, it could be that the whole thing was to create Abram’s encounter with Melchizedek, whose priesthood Jesus is (Heb 7–8). We do not know what God is doing in our lives. We have to trust Him. He has a purpose and plans. His overall purpose is to bring glory to Himself, as the Creator and Judge.

After his return from battle, Abram was met, simultaneously it seems, by two kings: king of Sodom and king of Salem (Heb. “peace”). The contrast between the two is obvious in Abram’s response: negative to king of Sodom and positive to the king of Salem.

**14:17** *Then after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King’s Valley)* — unknown place, but near Jerusalem. To be sure, the king of Sodom is as wicked as his people, who will be killed by God (19:29). We learn what he said in verse 21. But inserted right in the middle is the section on Melchizedek.

**14:18** *And Melchizedek* [Heb. “king of righteousness”] *king of Salem* [king of peace (*shalom*), later called “Jerusalem” Ps 76:2]. He appears out of nowhere and is just as quickly gone, and not encountered again nor explained.

**An Application:** David’s high priest was called Zadok, the blessed priesthood of Aaron, which will continue into the Millennial Kingdom. Melchi-zadok.

(1) *brought out bread and wine* — food given to honor one (1 Sam 16:20). It was special. Common would be bread and water. This was a “banquet.”

- *now he was a priest of God Most High* — this is the first mention of “priest” in the Bible. Later in Israel’s history, kings will be from the lineage of David (2 Sam 7), and priests from the lineage of Aaron (Lev 8).

**An Application:** When Jesus returns, He will “*rule on His throne...He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices*” (Zech 7:13). As Melchizedek is both a king and priest.

- *of God Most High* — El [God]-Elyon [Most High]

(2) **14:19** *He* [Melchizedek] *blessed him* [Abram] *and said, “Blessed be Abram* — God had already promised blessing to Abram (Gen 12:1-3), and here is the first mention of it. Abram has God’s support. With an even smaller untrained “army,” Abram defeats multiple kings and soldiers. Those who remain with Abram will share in that blessing from God. Lot did not.

- *of God Most High, Possessor* [Heb. “creator”] *of heaven and earth* — Genesis 1:1; Ps 115:15; 121:2; 124:8; 134:3

(3) **14:20** *And blessed be God Most High* — the praise and glory go to God

- “*Who has delivered your enemies into your hand*” — it is God who cause the deliverance, not Abram

- *He* [Abram] *gave him* [Melchizedek] *a tenth of all* — this would be a tenth of all the spoil brought back from the battle (as contrasted to “take the goods for yourself” that the king of Sodom was proposing), not a tenth of all his possessions.

**An Application:** Hebrews 5–7 tells us the huge significance of this event. In the Aaronic priesthood of the Mosaic Law, there were many priests over the years, new ones born and old ones died. They were sinners, like everyone else, and over and over had to offer sacrifices for their sins. Jesus, however, was a priest of the priesthood of Melchizedek—of which is recorded neither genealogy or descendants because he was appointed by God, and was sinless and eternal. Also, Aaron was a descendant of Abram. Therefore, Aaron was in the loins (future) of Abram who gave a tenth to Melchizedek. This shows the priesthood of Melchizedek was greater than the priesthood of Aaron. Jesus holds His priesthood permanently, so “*He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them*” (Heb 7:25).

**14:21** *The king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give the people to me* — Genesis 1:1; Ps 115:15; 121:2; 124:8; 134:3

- *and take the goods for yourself*” — Abram did not need or want any more goods

**14:22** *Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have sworn to the LORD God Most High, possessor* [Heb. “Creator”] *of heaven and earth* — remember, Abram is a descendant of Noah, and Shem was still alive for Abram’s first 50 years.

**14:23** *that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, for fear you would say, ‘I have made Abram rich’* — Shows how humble Abram was. He was not going to take any credit for the great delivery. This was a test of Abram’s faith. Abram was looking forward to what God promised him, which would greatly outnumber and outlast anything the king of Sodom could give him.

**14:24** *“I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten* — as they journeyed (a lot of food for 318 men, plus allies, on a journey of several weeks) and fighting battles.

- *and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their share*” — so they took a share of the goods, not only goods captured from Sodom, but goods captured from the enemy kings. These were the neighbor friends of Abram who went to battle with him (v. 13), allies from Mamre.

## Genesis 15

**15:1** *After these things* — the rescue of Lot in chapter 14—

- *the word of the LORD came to Abram* — usually said of a prophet (1 Sam 15:10; Hosea 1:1), but in Genesis, it is said only here and in verse 4. [The office of prophet was during the time of the kings. They functioned as spiritual advisers to the kings.] In 20:7, Abraham is called “*a prophet*.” Men may prophecy without being a prophet, Saul, for example (1 Sam 19:20f).
- *in a vision* — this will be a visual communication with God, not just words. God’s first words to Abram, “*go to the land which I will show you*” [12:1]—was not visual, only words.
- *saying,*
  - *“Do not fear, Abram* — in the context, he seems afraid he will not have a child—it has been years since God’s first promise in Ur—what is the delay?
  - *I am a shield to you* — For example, God already protected Sarah, the future mother of Abram’s child, from Pharaoh when Abram went to Egypt (11:17).

— *Your reward shall be very great* — descendants like the “*dust of the earth*” (13:16)

**15:2 Abram said, “O Lord GOD** — this is the first time it is recorded that Abram spoke to God, and only spoke to Him rarely (vv. 2-3, 8; 17:18; 18:23-33; 22:11). And he asked a question.

— *what will You give me, since I am childless* — How and when would God’s promise be fulfilled? He never questioned “if.”

**An Application:** As is often with the promises of God in the Old Testament, the people must “wait.” In our church age, we are also told to wait, “*looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus*”(Titus 2:13). So we wait...

— *and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?*” Damascus is outside the boundary of the promised land. That is bad. In fact, the kings had taken Lot *as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus* (14:15), and Abram had just brought them back from there. Eliezer was born in Abram’s house, but his lineage was still from Damascus, and not Abram’s family. It was important, in the future, that Abram’s son Isaac marry within his family, and not a Canaanite (Gen 24:3-4).

**15:3 And Abram said, “Since You have given no offspring to me** — he definitely recognizes that it is God who opens and closes the womb (Gen 29:31; 30:22). Three times (12:2, 7; 13:16) Abram has been promised a multitude of descendants.

— *one born in my house is my heir*” —Eliezer was “born in my house,” yet not an offspring from Abram. That is bad. It seems Abram is already planning his own bad solutions—

**15:4 Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, “This man** [does not even say his name!] *will not be your heir* — God put a stop to that thinking!!

— *but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir* — God promised Abram a real son, not simply an heir. So Abram still comes up with a solution with Ishmael (ch 16)—he is from Abram’s body, but not Sarah’s—OK. Now we are halfway there!!

**15:5 And He took him outside and said, “Now look** [word for “take a long look”] *toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.*” It is interesting that God “*counts the number of stars; He gives names to all of them*” (Psa 147:4). “*Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these stars, the One who...calls them all by name; because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, not one of them is missing*” (Isa 40:26).

— Now Abram is introduced to the power and magnitude of God.

— *And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be”* — so many, Abram cannot count them.

**15:6 Then he believed in the LORD** — “belief” or “faith” is trusting what you understand to be true. Abram’s faith in God was first when he left Ur. It is recorded here because it is foundational for making the covenant.

— *and He reckoned* [counted it] *it to him as righteousness* — it does not say Abram was righteous, that is, without sin, but rather God considered Abram’s faith to be righteousness.

**An Application:** This truth is repeated three times in the New Testament (Romans 4:3; Galatians 3:6; and James 2:23). From the beginning, the relationship with God was based on faith, not works. The works simply showed the faith.

**15:7 And He said to him, “I am the LORD** — one of only four times in Genesis where God refers to Himself as Yahweh (the LORD)

- ***who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans*** — this is the first of God’s actions with Abram, to get him away from his country and relatives
- ***to give you this land to possess it*** — So far, Abram is living there as a nomad in tents

**An Application:** Four times Abram almost loses his promised inheritance:

- (1) His wife Sarah is taken by Pharaoh
- (2) Abram allows Lot to choose his own land
- (3) Eliezer (from Damascus) is Abram’s heir
- (4) Has a son by the Egyptian Hagar

**15:8** *He said, “O Lord GOD, how may I know that I will possess it?”* — Abram is asking for a sign that he will possess the land.

**15:9** *So He said to him, “Bring Me a three year old heifer, and a three year old female goat, and a three year old ram, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon”* — in response to Abram’s request, God asks him to bring some animals to Him. These are all the animals that will later, under the Law, be offered in sacrifices

**15:10** *Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, and laid each half opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds* (Lev 1:6, 17) — they were in two rows

**15:11** *The birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away* — this shows it was while Abram was awake, and the carcasses were real, luring the birds of prey, they also probably represent the prophecy of Egypt trying to keep the Israelites from the land, but the birds do not succeed.

**An Application:** It is interesting that in Matthew 24:28, Jesus also used this example to illustrate the sureness of His Second Coming. *“Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.”*

**15:12** *Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him* — to introduce the prophecy, which is the Egyptian enslavement and oppression of the Israelites

**15:13** *God said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years* — Even though Abram’s descendants will be enslaved in another land, it is temporary, for about 400 years, which we know will be the Egyptian bondage, which began when Jacob moved there in 1876 to 1446 B.C. (in rounded off years, actually 430 total years—Ex 12:40; Gal 3:17).

**15:14** *“But I will also judge the nation* — the plagues on Egyptians, and destruction of army  
 — *whom they will serve* — the Israelites are slaves in Egypt, making bricks (Exo 1:14).  
 — *and afterward they will come out with many possessions* — Exodus 12:35-39—similar to when Abram went to Egypt and came out with many possessions (Gen 12:16).

**15:15** *“As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age* — Gen 25:7-8, Abram died at 175 years of age. He will not be enslaved or oppressed.

**15:16** *“Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete”* — The Amorites were the inhabitants of Canaan, the curse of Ham’s son Canaan (Gen 9:25). The fulfillment of the promises to Abram also involved the judgment on the

Canaanites when Joshua conquers the land. It will be horrible judgment, like the birds of prey (Samson killing the Philistines, for example).

**An Application:** At the time of Noah, the evil was so bad, *that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually* (Gen 6:5). Then came the Flood...

**An Application:** Probably the Rapture will not happen until the world gets wicked enough, so Jesus will remove us from it. Also, the Second Coming will be when the wickedness of the antichrist is complete and ready to be judged (2 Thess 2). The promises for believers also include the judgment of the wicked.

**15:17** *It came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark* — earlier it was not as dark, as Abram could “count” the stars in verse 5. Now evidently, he could not see the light of the stars — *and behold, there appeared a smoking oven* — symbol of heat of judgment — *and a flaming torch* — Heb. “supernatural fire, attending theophany (presence of God)” — *which passed between these pieces* — this obviously signifies God “signing” the covenant. But also perhaps signifying God’s presence walking in the midst of Abraham’s descendants.

**15:18** *On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram* — a pledge, a promise, an agreement. God did tell Abram in 12:1-2 He would make Abram a great nation, but here God describes it as a “covenant.” — *saying, “To your descendants I have given this land* — “*the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants...*” Abraham foreshadows the history of Israel. — *From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates* — now we see the measurable dimensions of the land. Only in Solomon’s day did Israel’s boundaries even approach the limits described here (1 Kings 5:1). This would cross today’s Arabian Desert. This also seems to be the boundaries of the Millennial Kingdom, when the “*the wilderness and the desert will be glad, ...and blossom profusely...they will see the glory of the Lord* (Isa 35:1-2)

**15:19-21** *the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite* — the pre-Israelite ancient inhabitants of Canaan

**An Application:** Genesis implies that the sons of Abram must be men of faith, Paul turns the words around and explains, “*it is men of faith who are sons of Abraham*” (Gal 3:7). “*By faith Abraham obeyed*” (Heb 11:8). *Faith was completed by works* (James 2:22). Works show your faith. Works do not replace faith.

**An Application:** The whole rest of the Bible rests on the fulfillment of this covenant. Isaiah, Romans 11, the book of Revelation, it is all the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant. The Jews will inherit the land. The Jews will multiply like the stars in the sky. Thru the Jews, people in all nations will be blessed, both through salvation in Jesus Christ, and when Jesus comes as king of the Jews, establishing His millennial rule throughout the whole world.

## Genesis 16

**16:1** *Now Sarai, Abram’s wife had borne him no children*—This is the background for the whole chapter. Sarai is the prime mover, and she is motivated by her barrenness, mentioned already in 11:30, earlier in their marriage, before they even left Ur. Then they lived in Haran, and now they have been living in the promised land for 10 years (16:3). In 15:2, Abram said he was *childless*, and in 15:3, he said, ...*Thou hast given no offspring to me.* [Abram is 86 when Ishmael is born to

Hagar (16:16), and Sarai is 10 years younger than Abram (17:17), making her about 76 here.] Yet he still looks to God for fulfillment. Sarah is not content to do that. She comes up with her own worldly solution.

- ***and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar*** — A “maid” is a servant companion of a rich woman (Psa 123:2), such as Bilhah to Rachel and Zilpah to Leah (Gen 30:24, 29), under the *authority* of Sarai (vv. 2, 3, 6). Because Hagar is described as *Egyptian*, it is likely Sarai acquired her in Egypt when they were there, and Pharaoh gave Abram *female servants* (12:16). Because she is expected to conceive, she must be quite a bit younger than Sarah, whose hoping to conceive must be in the past tense.

**16:2 So Sarai said to Abram** — Sarai gives the orders, and both Abram and Hagar obey.

- ***“Now behold, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children.*** In 15:3, *Abram said, “Since You have given no offspring to me”* — they definitely recognize that it is God who opens and closes the womb (Gen 29:31; 30:22). So Sarai first blames God, then she blames Abram. With no child, there was no heir (and Abram was very wealthy). There were no future generations, and no one to bury him when he died. [It is interesting that Abram’s previous army was made up of “trained men, born in his house” (14:14), so babies were being born—just not to Abram and Sarai!]
- ***Please go in to my maid; perhaps I will obtain children through her”*** — Hagar becomes a surrogate mother, so Sarai would then feel that her maid’s child was her own and have some control over it in a way that she could not if her husband simply took a second wife. This was a common practice in the ancient East to prevent childlessness (like with Leah and Rachel), and seemed a proper and respectable course of action.
- ***And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai*** — reminding us of Adam, when God said, *Because you have listened to the voice of your wife...*” (Gen 3:17). Heb. “yield to,” “obey,” “hear favorably.” This phrase is only used in these two instances.

**16:3 After Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan** — because Hagar was Egyptian, this ten years included the famine and trip to Egypt, the dividing of the land with Lot, and the rescue of Lot from the kings of the north. Busy ten years.

- ***Abram’s wife Sarai took Hagar the Egyptian, her maid, and gave her to her husband Abram as his wife*** — here Hagar is given “*as his wife*,” but in 21:10-13, she is called *your* [Sarai’s] *maid* and Ishmael is called *the son of the maid*. She cannot be Abram’s “wife” because Sarai said so—without actually becoming his wife!!
- Sarai “solves” the problem instead of waiting for the Lord’s intervention, reminding us of Abram’s “solution” in 12:10-20, calling Sarai his sister.
- Again, as Eve did with Adam, “*she took from the fruit...and gave also to her husband with her*” (3:6). It is not just the same words, it is the actions that are the same. The author is carefully making that connection. The woman takes the initiative of the gift, and the husband accepts the gift. They are both accounts of a fall.

**16:4 He went in to Hagar, and she conceived** — so God closed Sarai’s womb, but opened Hagar’s womb to conceive. Now Abram would have his own son. Seems Sarai’s plan succeeded.

- In 15:4, God had told Abram, “...*one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.*” Ishmael did come from Abram’s own body, but we learn later the author’s [God’s] intended meaning = from Abram and his legitimate wife Sarai, not just any woman [especially, an Egyptian!].
- ***and when she*** [Hagar] ***saw that she had conceived*** — Before the child was born.



— *her mistress* [Sarai] *was despised* [Heb. “treat with contempt”] *in her* [Hagar’s] *sight* — A disaster in the making!! No peace or happiness in this home.

**16:5** *And Sarai said to Abram, “May the wrong* [Heb. “treat violently”] *done me* — Sarai exaggerates the treatment she is receiving as a term also used to describe the sins that brought on the Flood, “*the earth was filled with violence*” (6:11, 13).

- *be upon you* — the Abrahamic Covenant was made with Abraham, not Sarai. He was the one responsible. As the command was to Adam. God said, ...*to Adam...because you listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, “You shall not eat from it”* (Gen 3:17).
- Much as both Adam and Eve did (3:12-13), Sarai shifts the blame [from herself and her plan, to Abram].
- *I gave my maid into your arms, but when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised* [“treat with contempt”] *in her sight*—
- *May the LORD judge between you and me*” — NOW Sarai wants Abram to decide and be responsible. Before she just wanted him to cooperate with her idea. Abram becomes caught up in a chain of causes and effects that would trouble him for years to come, as the Arabs, even today, are still hostile to the Jews.

**16:6** *But Abram said to Sarai, “Behold, your maid is in your power* — usually slaves served as concubines of the masters, not under authority of the mistresses. As Abram’s “wife,” carrying his child, he was to protect Hagar. But Abram gives that power to Sarai.

- *do to her what is good in your sight*” — Hagar was Sarai’s maid. The conception was Sarai’s idea. Sarai was the one who felt she (as the mistress of the home) was treated with contempt.
- Hagar conceiving was what was “*good in your sight*” —but it was not good!!
- *So Sarai treated her harshly* — Used of the harsh treatment of the Israelites in the control of the Egyptians: “*they were afflicted*” (Exo 1:12).
- *and she* [Hagar] *fled* [often used of people escaping from attempts to kill them—Gen 27:43; Exo 2:15, etc.] *from her* [Sarai’s] *presence* —The location of the narrative now shifts from the household of Abram to the wilderness. And away from Abram and Sarai to Hagar and God.

**16:7** *Now the angel of the LORD* — The author Moses knows this is Jesus talking to her. But this is the first reference in the OT to the “Angel of Yahweh.” It is mentioned 58 times in the OT (the “angel of God” 11 times). Angels appeared singly, as here, or in groups. When they are first seen, they are thought to be men, but as here, Hagar realizes she is talking to God (v. 13). The angel of the Lord appears frequently in Genesis and Judges, but rarely in literature in later periods of OT.

**An Application:** Sometimes, it is actually angels, such as who came to Lot in Sodom (Gen 19:1f). Angels are not worshipped (Rev 19:10). But if there is worship, then the angel (lit. “messenger”) is a theophany (a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus), such as Judges 6:11-22; 13:3-22.

- *found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur* — Shur is in Sinai wilderness, a southern route from Canaan to Egypt (Exo 15:22). She was evidently heading home to Egypt.

**16:8** *He said, “Hagar, Sarai’s maid* — For the first time, we learn her name. How does this stranger know her name? Here she is referred to as Sarai’s maid, not Abram’s “wife” or even the mother of Abram’s child.

- *where have you come from and where are you going?*” Again, there is a parallel to the earlier stories of Adam and Eve, when God walks in the garden and asks, “*Where are you?*” (3:9). Or He asks Cain, “*Where is Abel?*” (4:9). He knows, but asks to give them opportunity to answer.
- *And she said, “I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai”* — she answers honestly— she is a runaway slave. “fleeing” indicates being with Sarai was dangerous, as mentioned in verse 6, she was being “afflicted.”

**16:9** *Then the angel of the LORD said to her, “Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority”* — This is the same Heb. word Abram used in verse 6, “*your power.*” It means “dominion.” God did not take that dominion away from Sarai, even though it was an affliction. Hagar is being told to submit not only to her mistress but to suffering at her hand. What the Egyptians would later do to Sarai’s children, Sarai did to a child of Egypt.

**16:10-12** *Moreover, the angel of the LORD said to her* — 9 prophecies:

- (1) *“I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be too many to count”* — Abram had been told his descendants will be too many to count (13:16; 15:5), and now Hagar learns that her offspring are included in that promise. They are interconnected descendants of Abram. Her descendants are the Arabs. (Not to be confused with “Muslim,” which is their religion, and includes more than the Arabs.)

*The angel of the LORD said to her further,*

- (2) *“Behold, you are with child* — other “child” angelic predictions in the Bible (18:9-15; Judges 13:3-7; Isa 7:14-17; Luke 1:31-33). Other pregnancy predictions refer to the near future, but here the angel comments on Hagar’s present condition, already pregnant.
- (3) *And you will bear a son* — all angelic predictions are to mothers and are for sons
- (4) *And you shall call his name Ishmael* — *yishma’el*, “the Lord has heard.” Notice it is God who names him, not Abram or Hagar. She was not promised relief from the affliction but that God was aware of it.
- (5) *Because the LORD has given heed to your affliction* — God has heard Hagar’s affliction, but also a future prediction of the Arabs afflicting others and being objects of affliction
- (6) *He will be a wild donkey of a man* — the freedom Hagar was seeking will be her son’s. A wild donkey lives in the desert, an individual-type lifestyle, like a Bedouin
- (7) *His hand will be against everyone* — to have disregard for all others, an arrogance, not joining others, not just against the Jews [much of today’s hostility is a result of their Muslim religion in the Koran, which promotes hate and murder]
- (8) *And everyone’s hand will be against him* — consequently, all others will be against them
- (9) *And he will live to the east of all his brothers”* — “east” Heb. means “first” [as the sun rises first in the east] or “in defiance of,” with hostile sense

**16:13** *Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, “You are a God who sees”* — The author calls Him “the Lord” (Yahweh), the name revealed to Moses (Exo 3:14-15), but Hagar calls him “El,” a more common name for God. Moses is writing that the God who rescued Hagar in the wilderness is the One who redeemed Israel from Egypt in the future.

- *for she said, “Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?”* — Here is a contrast. Ishmael means “God who sees,” yet here Hagar is seeing God and amazed she is still alive.

**16:14** *Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered* — the name means “Well of the living who sees me.” The exact location is not known. Probably near Beersheba. Often in the OT, a well would be the sign of a covenant.

**16:15** So ***Hagar bore Abram a son*** — Hagar is back with Abram, giving birth to a son. Sarai intended for the son to be hers (v. 2), yet 3 times in these 2 verses the text says that Hagar gave birth to a son for Abram. Sarai’s scheme finally succeeded, but she does not enjoy its success. In fact, in the next chapter, we see the hostility grow.

— ***and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael*** — there seems to be a hint that Abram is now protecting Hagar and his son from Sarai. Notice: “*Abram a son,*” “*his son,*” “*Ishmael to him.*”

**16:16** ***Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him*** — So Abram has been in the land 11 years. The chapter leaves us wondering: Is Ishmael the promised seed?

## Genesis 17

**17:1** ***Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old*** — It is now 13 years after chapter 16. With Sarai’s (who is 89) ability to have children seemingly incurable and Abram’s focus being on Ishmael as his heir as the subjects of this chapter, it makes the chapter even more amazing. It is mostly a monologue by God.

### Changing Abram’s Name (vv. 1-5)

— ***the LORD*** [Yahweh, known by Moses] ***appeared to Abram and said to him*** — God appeared as God Almighty and said new revelation (in contrast to chapter 16, where the angel of the Lord appeared to Hagar). Both were words of God, of course, but how they appeared gives greater impact. For example, I may come across King Charles out riding his horse, but if I come across him with his crown and royal robes, the impact is greater, even though both times it is King Charles.

— ***“I am God Almighty*** [El Shaddai] — “God with abundant strength.” God told Moses, “*I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty [El-Shaddai], but by My name the Lord [Yahweh] I did not make myself known to them*” (Exo 6:3). Yahweh (Lord Jehovah) was the relational name God used after appearing to Moses (the author of Genesis). Moses knows God as both names (as well as Elohim from Genesis 1).

— ***Walk before Me*** — both Enoch and Noah walked “with” God, but here is a different preposition, to walk “before” God. “God directs Abram (who here represents Israel) to live life before Him, a life in which every step is taken looking to God and every day of which is accompanied by Him” [Allen Ross, *Word Commentary*].

— ***and be blameless*** — When one is consciously walking before God, they will be blameless as a result. Also reminding us of previous saints like Enoch and Noah.

**An Application:** In our church age, we are also told, “*...walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God* (Col 1:10). As you increase in knowledge of God, you will please Him and bear fruit in your walk.h

**17:2** ***“I will establish My covenant between Me and you*** — God is confirming the covenant He inaugurated earlier, but is now stressing different aspects of it. The original in 12:1-3 seems to be the overall statement. Chapter 15 talks more about the land. This chapter is more about the descendants.

— ***And I will multiply you exceedingly*** — in Hebrew this whole phrase is an anagram (re-arrangement) of the letters for “Abraham.” Adam (1:28) and Noah (9:1) had been told to be “fruitful,” but now Abram is to be ***exceedingly*** [mega] fruitful—and God will cause it.

**17:3 *Abram fell on his face*** — bowing, in an act of worship of the presence of God (Rev 19:10).

God is more impressive than His words (which were themselves very impressive!!)

— ***and God talked with him, saying*** — in real words.

**An Application:** God also talks to us—and everything He has said to us is written in the pages of the Bible. If you want to “hear” His words, read the Bible out loud!! “*All Scripture is inspired by God...*” (2 Tim 3:16).

**17:4 “*As for Me* [God], ***behold, My covenant is with you*** [Abram] — it starts with the faith of a single man (Heb 11:8-9).**

**An Application:** Sadly, our faith cannot extend to our descendants. Each person has to have their own faith in God and promise from God. For sure, the history of the Jews reflects this.

— ***And you will be the father of a multitude of nations*** — In 12:2, God said, “*I will make you a great nation...*” In 16:10, God said, “*I will greatly multiply your descendants...*” Now God clarifies the promise in more detail.

— The first observation is that it is the Jewish descendants who become the great nation. They are a unique people, in a unique relationship with God, not promised to any other people group.

— From Scripture, we see “multitude of nations” includes Ishmael (Arabs) and Esau (Edomites). Genesis 25:1f. says, “*Abraham took another wife (after Sarah’s death), whose name was Keturah. And she bore to him Zimran and Jokshan and Medan and Midian and Ishbak and Shua.*” He “*sent them away from his son Isaac...to the land of the east*” = “multitude of nations”

**17:5 “*No longer shall your name be called Abram***

— ***But your name shall be Abraham*** — In the OT, changing a personal name expressed character and destiny. Here we have God Himself dictating a name change in midlife, to Abram and Sarai, and He also does it with Jacob (32:28). It is like a statement of Divine guarantee. Looking to Abram’s future. Every time someone addressed him now as Abraham, he would recall God’s promise to him.

**An Application:** God did it, too. He is Elohim and El-Shaddai (God Almighty) in the beginning of Genesis, then changes His name to Yahweh (Jehovah Lord) to Moses and the Israelites, to reflect His relationship with them. In our age, when God takes on a human form, God becomes known as “*you shall name Him Jesus, ...and will be called the Son of the Most High*” (Luke 1:32). We do it, too, for example, when a woman marries, she usually changes her last name to reflect that.

— ***For I have made you the father of a multitude of nations*** — This is not a natural result of having children. God Himself is making Abraham this father of many descendants.

**17:6 “*I will make you exceedingly* [abundance] ***fruitful*** — at this point, Abraham had only one son Ishmael, like the first apple of a tree which will become full of apples!!**

— ***and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you*** — of course, there are the kings of Judah, in the Davidic line (Matt 1), but all nations usually have kings throughout history

**17:7 “*I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you*** — The promises of the covenant did not depend on the faithfulness of the descendants (who were, in fact, not faithful!). It depended on God who made the covenant!!

— The Israelites were not to have other gods or idols (Deut 6:1-15). El-Shaddai (Yahweh) was to be their God (all the way through the Millennial Kingdom). Jesus will always be King of the Jews,

it is an everlasting covenant. Even today, the orthodox Jews read the Torah (OT) that describe the God of Abraham and his descendants. They do not worship Allah, for example.

**17:8** ***I will give to you and to your descendants after you*** — the covenant extends out from Abraham to his descendants

- ***the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan*** — this is the first time God names the specific land that Abraham had migrated to.
  - ***for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God*** — although the land of Israel is their “everlasting possession,” God continues to be their God wherever they live (in Babylon during the exile, for example).
- So God’s promise to Abraham is an abundant people, and an everlasting God.

### **The Circumcision of the Males of the Family (vv. 10-14)**

**17:9** ***God said further to Abraham, “Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations*** — God is already using Abraham’s new name “Abraham.” The covenant is in effect.

**17:10** ***“This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you*** — this applied to all males who shared the promise

- ***every male among you shall be circumcised*** — but also every male who joined Judaism, such as Abraham’s servants. Males, not females, are circumcised.

**17:11** ***“And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin*** — this was a symbol of separation from the world, purity in marriage, and loyalty to the covenant.

- ***and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you*** — circumcision was the sign, much as the rainbow was the sign of no more flood.

**17:12** ***“And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations*** — circumcision was practiced elsewhere in adults in ancient times (for example, Jacob’s sons circumcised the men of Shechem (Gen 34:22-24) and David circumcised 200 Philistine men—1 Sam 18:27), but circumcising all male babies was new and was only practiced by the Jews.

- ***a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants*** — these are specific servants born in Abraham’s house, bought not from fellow Israelites but bought from foreigners

**17:13** ***“A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised*** —this would be servants born in Abraham’s house but bought from fellow Israelites

- ***thus shall My covenant be in your flesh*** — this is a physical sign of a national promise
- ***for an everlasting covenant*** — not to change

**17:14** ***“But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant”*** — if any Israelite male refused to be circumcised, they were to be separated from God’s people because of disobedience to God’s command. That did not terminate the covenant, but disobedience had consequences (Isa 24:5-6).

**An Application:** Even in Israel, they were to have “*circumcision of the heart*” (Deut 30:6). Paul refers to this in Romans 2:28-29; 4:11), that is, be devoted in belief in God. Unbelief is described as having an uncircumcised heart (Jer 9:26; Ezek 44:7-9). So a Jew could be part of the covenant people without having a heart that worships God (as seen by many, including kings, during the

history of Israel). Being a Jew means you participate in the national promises to Israel, but individually, one has to have faith in God, like Abraham.

### Changing Sarai's Name (vv. 15-21)

**17:15** *Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah* [Heb. "princess"] *shall be her name* — no explanation is in the text or in Hebrew for the name change. God had prefaced His name-change of Abraham by explaining why He was doing it (vv 4, 6). Why Sarah's new name? Because the promised son will come from her (v. 16).

**17:16** *"I will bless her* —up to now, the blessing has been all about Abraham, but was never isolated to being via Sarah (but it was assumed to be her, and thought to be transferrable to Hagar).

- *and indeed I will give you a son by her* — In 15:3, Abraham had complained, "You have not given me descendants." Since then, God gave him the land (15:18) and a covenant (17:2) but no son (except Hagar's). Now Abraham learns these descendants will be from Sarah.
- *Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her* — Now, in her old age, God will show that He alone can fulfill the covenant promises—and He will do it thru 90-year-old Sarah!!

**17:17** *Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed* — Abraham is shocked by this new revelation. His next statement, which he said in his heart, indicates the littleness of his faith.

- *"Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"* — His reasoning seems justified. But his faith must be pushed beyond its present limits. His faith needed to grow. He even says "child" rather than "son."
- *and said in his heart* — God knows our thoughts! Even Satan fell from heaven because God saw what was in his heart (Isa 14:13-15).

**17:18** *And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before You!"* — This seems to indirectly express his reservations about Sarah being able to have a son. The prayer request is not simply that God would bless Ishmael. Abraham wants the promise to come through Ishmael because he does not believe that Sarah will have a son.

**17:19** *But God said, "No* — God is answering Abraham's prayer with a "No!" The promise of the covenant will NOT go through Ishmael, the son of an Egyptian slave!!

- *but Sarah your wife* [not your Egyptian servant] *will bear you a son*—
- *and you shall call his name Isaac* — "Isaac" in Hebrew means "he laughed," which would remind both of his parents of their skepticism when told of his birth (v. 17; 18:12-15). Notice it is God who names him, as He had named Ishmael (16:11).
- *and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him* — not after Ishmael!! It is God's covenant and God's choice, not Abraham's. Later, God will say to Isaac, *"I will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham"* (26:3b).

**An Application:** God may say "no" to our prayers, too, as He has more information and plans than we have. We need to trust Him to do what He thinks is best, not what we think is best. Do not think the end justifies the means. You cannot get a righteous end by sinful means!!!

**17:20** *"As for Ishmael, I have heard you* — Ishmael is excluded from the covenant promises, but God does answer Abraham's prayer for him.

- *behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall become the father of twelve princes* [tribal leaders, listed in 25:13-15], *and I will make*

*him a great nation* — not a multitude of nations, promised to Abraham. Israel will also be divided into 12 tribes.

**17:21** *“But My covenant I will establish with Isaac* — Isaac is not even conceived yet, but he has a covenant promise. Usually, a king will have multiple children, but the heir is a specific child, who meets specific criteria, including who the mother is. Without Isaac, there would have been no Israel. So the rest of Genesis tells us how Isaac was born, his life, and his descendants.

— *whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year*” — now the narrative creates a feeling of suspense and drama as to what lies ahead.....

**17:22** *When He finished talking with him,* — usually nothing is said about God stopping to speak, but here we see not only did God stop, but God was finished in what He had to say to Abraham.

**An Application:** God is finished speaking in His Word. No one is to add to it (Deut 4:2; 12:32; 1 Cor 4:6; Rev 22:18-19). “...learn not to exceed what is written” (1 Cor 4:6).

—*God went up from Abraham* — God’s abode is always seen as “up,” later called heaven.

### **The Circumcising (vv. 23-24)**

**17:23** *Then Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all the servants who were born in his house and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham’s household, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin*

— *in the very same day* — notice Abraham’s immediate obedience. It is one of the major turning points in history. This begins the Jews. It is comparable to Noah entering the ark (7:13) or the Exodus from Egypt (Exo 12:17, 41, 51).

— *as God had said to him* — Abraham’s obedience of exactly what God had stipulated as a part of the covenant promise, reminds us of verse 1, “*I am God Almighty, Walk before Me and be blameless.*” If Abraham did not do this, it was breaking the covenant (v. 14) on the first day!!!

**17:24-27** *Now Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin* — the date stated in verse 1.

— *And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin* — His obedience to circumcise Ishmael shows Abraham accepted God’s “no” answer to his prayer.

— *In the very same day Abraham was circumcised, and Ishmael his son. All the men of his household, who were born in the house or bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him* — obeying verses 12-13.

**An Application:** This narrative is repeated in Hebrews 11, in the great hall of faith. *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 seek Him* (11:6). *By faith, even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life...* (11:11). Next, we watch as prophecy becomes history!!

**An Application:** God will reaffirm these promises to Isaac (26:3-5), Jacob (28:13-15), and is the motive for the Exodus (Exod 6:4-6), and the guarantee of the conquest of the land in Joshua and Judges. When Israel rebels and disregards the covenant, she brings upon herself the exile, but the covenant is not invalidated. National repentance will lead to national restoration and the New Covenant of the future Millennial Kingdom (Jer 31:31-37; 32:40; Ezek 16:60; 37:26). Through this new and eternal covenant, all nations would be blessed (Isa 55:3; 61:8). God has not now rejected His people. One day, all Israel will be saved (Romans 11). It is the unbreakable covenant/promise God made to Abraham about 4000 years ago!

# Genesis 18

No other 24-hour period in Abraham's life is related more fully than that described in Genesis 18–19. There is the midday lunch with the Lord and two angels that ended with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah early the next morning.

## Scene 1—The Prophecy of Life (vv. 1-15)

**18:1** *Now the LORD appeared to him [Abraham] by the oaks of Mamre* (Hebron, 13:18; 14:13), *while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day* — this is the subject verse for the chapter. At first, Abraham does not know it is the Lord, and only gradually discovers who He is from the conversation. But, as the readers, we are made aware, from the start of the story, of the real nature of the encounter so that we can interpret the narrative more accurately.

— From 17:21, Abraham learned Sarah will have the promised son *at this season next year*. In this chapter, he (and Sarah) learns, *...at this time next year; and behold, Sarah your wife will have a son*" (v. 10).

**18:2** *When he lifted up his eyes and looked, behold, three men were standing opposite him* — verse 1 says they *appeared to him*. It seems they did not walk up, they were just standing in front of him.

— *and when he saw them* — as it was the heat of the day, and he was sitting—maybe dozing—he was not aware of their approach. But this is the OT world of the supernatural, they often just appear.

— *he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth*—In a gesture of warmth and respect for his visitors (but unknowingly also treating them as representatives of Deity)

**18:3** *and said, "My Lord, if now I have found favor in Your sight, please do not pass Your servant by* — Abraham politely encourages them to stay. He does not know it, but they are there specifically to talk to him. He somehow even distinguishes the Lord (in the singular) as leader of the three, in addressing Him as the one in charge.

**18:4-5** *"Please let a little water be brought and wash your feet, and rest yourselves (plural) under the tree; and I will bring a piece of bread, that you may refresh yourselves* — he offers what most hikers want: water to drink, wash their feet, and rest under a shady tree and some food.

— *after that you may go on, since you have visited your servant*" — It is true—he does not know it, but they are here for Abraham's benefit.

— *And they said, "So do, as you have said"* — they agree to stay and eat.

**18:6-7** *So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Quickly, prepare three measures of fine flour, knead it and make bread cakes." Abraham also ran to the herd, and took a tender and choice calf and gave it to the servant, and he hurried to prepare it* — his "little water" and "piece of bread" turned into a feast. Little did he know that he was preparing the very best he had for God. [Reminding us of Abel in 4:4.]

**18:8** *He took curds and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and placed it before them and he was standing by them under the tree as they ate* — Interesting to note that both the Lord and the angels ate the food.

— Also, as a side note—angels take on physical form but do not indwell humans (but demons do).



**18:9** *Then they said to him, “Where is Sarah your wife?”* — they know the name of a woman (whose name was recently changed to “Sarah” in 17:15), it seems they have never met and that she is his wife (they did not ask for Hagar!). It is not an actual question because they know the answer. Rather, it reveals something about the questioner (what they know) and introduces the real reason they are there.

- *And he said, “There, in the tent”* — It seems to not occur to Abraham that they know Sarah.
- Sarah is not part of the narrative until 15b. But we readers are aware of her thoughts and motives as she was listening in on the conversation between the men and Abraham.

**18:10** *He [the Lord] said, “I will surely return [visit] to you at this time next year* — it seems like another visit is planned, but the verb is used elsewhere of God’s intervention (Zech 1:3; Ps 80:14), and it must be in this sense from the next phrase. The birth of Isaac next year by God’s intervention.

- *and behold, Sarah your wife will have a son* — as already predicted by God in 17:21.
- *And Sarah was listening at the tent door, which was behind him* — But this time, Sarah was listening from the tent. And the tent door was behind the Lord, His back was to it, not facing her. The fact that He can discern Sarah’s reactions in herself, without seeing her, shows He is God.

**18:11** *Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; Sarah was past childbearing (90).*

— We may think that due to long ages then (she lived to be 127—23:1), she could have a child later in life, but the text specifically says, “...*past childbearing*.” So it was not simply that Sarah had long been infertile but that she was also well past menopause, too. Conception was not just not likely, it was impossible (v. 14). Hopelessness caused her unbelief.

**An Application:** We know now that a female at birth has all the eggs she will ever have. When she reaches puberty, she releases one egg every month. She will reach menopause when all her eggs are gone. So Sarah has no more eggs, plus her whole reproductive system is therefore shut down. Second only to the miraculous birth of Jesus (who was conceived with no sperm), God created an egg, put it in Sarah, and jump-started her whole reproductive system so that she would conceive and give birth.

**18:12-13** *Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I have become old [lit. “worn out], shall I have pleasure [conceiving, giving birth] — We might excuse her laughter over something impossible to believe (from a human perspective), and the narrative explains why she receives a mild rebuke. It seems this is all a surprise to her—had Abraham not told her?*

- *my lord being old also (100)?”* — But Sarah is the obstacle. Abraham is not the obstacle, as 25:1-3 tells of six children he has by Keturah, whom he married after Sarah’s death.
- *And the LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, when I am so old?’* — The Lord does not call her “worn out.” He knew she had laughed in her thoughts, even with His back to her and with her inside the tent. Already an “impossible” thing. He says the real obstacle was Sarah’s age, and He does not mention Abraham’s age.

**An Application:** It seems that God wants Abraham and Sarah (and us) to understand that this is impossible!! And no one knows this better than Sarah!! Jesus said, “*With people it is impossible, but with God all things are possible*” (Matt 19:26). The Jewish nation began with an impossible situation. God started it.

**18:14** *“Is anything too difficult for the LORD? — NO! God is both omniscient (all-knowing) and omnipotent (all-powerful). Jeremiah 32:17 says, “Ah Lord God! Behold, Thou hast made the heavens and the earth by Thy great power and by Thine outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for Thee!!”*

— ***At the appointed time I will return to you*** — God had appointed the time to Abraham in 17:21, *at this season next year*. See verse 10, God will return in the sense of His intervention in Sarah’s body to conceive and give birth to a son.

**An Application:** God is bound to time. Jesus said of His Second Coming, “*of that day and hour no one knows...but the Father*” (Matt 24:36). The Father has appointed the time, and He is the only One who knows it. Nothing will make it sooner or later. It is not controlled by the conditions on earth. All prophecy (and history) is connected to time, when it is fulfilled exactly as predicted.

— ***at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son*** — Hebrews 11:11 says, *...Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life...*

**18:15 Sarah denied it however, saying, “I did not laugh”; for she was afraid** — She lied because she afraid. Afraid of what? Did she have a sense of a power that knew she was laughing in her thoughts? We don’t know. But her denial allowed the name of her future son, Isaac (“I laughed”).

— ***And He said, “No, but you did laugh”*** — The truth is—she did laugh (to herself).

**An Application:** There is nothing hidden from God. “*It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness...*” (Dan 2:22).

## **Scene 2—The Prophecy of Destruction (vv. 16-33)**

**18:16 Then the men rose up from there, and looked down toward Sodom** — This information alerts the reader of what we know is ahead, but it is unknown to Abraham.

— ***and Abraham was walking with them to send them off*** — From the Hebron area in the mountains, it is not far to walk to the eastern edge and look into the Dead Sea valley where Sodom was.

**18:17 The LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do** — The Lord seems to be asking the two men with him the question of whether or not He will tell Abraham. There is no question about what the Lord is going to do to Sodom. At this point the reader knows more than Abraham knows. Will Abraham have access to the Lord’s plans? Maybe, due to the privilege of the Divine promise God has made him.

**18:18 since Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation**—it is sure because God said so — ***and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed*** — that would have to include Sodom, so it needed to be removed before it had a chance to be blessed (already it had benefitted from Abraham delivering the king and people taken captive with Lot in chapter 14).

**18:19 “For I have chosen him** — Abraham was living in Ur, worshipping idols (Josh 24:2), when God chose him to believe.

**An Application:** God also *chose us in Him before the foundation of the world* (Eph 1:4).

— ***so that*** [purpose] ***he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice*** — Moses also wrote, “*these words...shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons...*” (Deut 6:1-9). God wanted a God-fearing nation on the earth. For sure, He did not want the evil of Sodom to influence anyone.

**An Application:** We are also to *...bring them* [children] *up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord*” (Eph 6:4).

- ***so that*** [purpose] ***the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him*** — Remember, God had told Abraham the consequences of keeping the covenant (Gen 17:9, 14).

**18:20** ***And the LORD said*** [now Abraham hears it], ***“The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great*** — much like we read about Abel, *“your brother’s blood is crying to Me from the ground”* (4:10), and the sin before the Flood (ch. 6), and the tower of Babel (ch. 10), and the tribulation martyrs in heaven, crying out, *“How long, O Lord, ...will Thou refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”* (Rev 6:10).

- ***and their sin is exceedingly*** [Heb. “to a great degree,” used of Cain’s anger against Abel in 4:5] ***grave*** [Heb. heavier than sand]

**18:21** ***“I will go down now, and see if they have done entirely according to its outcry, which has come to Me”*** — similar to before the Flood and at the judgment at Babel. It is not that God needs to go down to confirm what He knows, but that He is going down to judge.

**An Application:** Our world now seems so wicked. Surely its outcry is coming to God. It seems like we are closer than ever to the tribulation judgment of God against the wickedness, *...that they may be judged who did not believe the truth but took pleasure in wickedness* (2 Thess 2:12).

- ***and if not, I will know*** — it seems like Abraham bases his following plea on this slender hope. He will communicate with the angels in Sodom without them being in His presence.

**18:22** ***Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom*** — we know from 19:1, they are angels, and they arrived in Sodom. They were there to check on the wickedness of the people, to see if they were living as wickedly as the outcry coming to God. [We also know from the next chapter they were there to rescue Lot and to destroy Sodom.]

- ***while Abraham was still standing before the LORD*** — to talk to Him

**18:23** ***Abraham came near and said, “Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?”*** — Abraham knows God will sweep away the wicked of Sodom, but he seems optimistic that there are some righteous there. He had personally rescued these people in battle (14:16). [He does not mention Lot or Lot’s family, which would be a personal reason.] This would say that God fails to distinguish good from evil. Other prophets intercede for Israel (like Moses, Samuel, Jeremiah, and Daniel), but Abraham is interceding for the Canaanites!

- It seems like Abraham is attempting to once again rescue these people.

**An Application:** There will be judgment for everyone. The judgment of the righteous falls on Jesus, *He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him* (2 Cor 5:21). The wicked, however, will stand before the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:11-15).

**18:24** ***“Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it?”*** — i.e., kill the 50 righteous

**18:25** ***“Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?”*** — Possibly he knows this from the Flood. Noah’s son Shem was still alive in Abraham’s lifetime (see chapter 11 chart). God did not treat the righteous (Noah) like those destroyed in the Flood. This gives Abraham hope.

**18:26** *So the LORD said, “If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city — this would be based on the report of the angels. Of course, in His sovereignty, God knew who was righteous and how many there were. Interestingly, God seemed to give the angels some freedom in making decisions regarding Sodom. But whatever the angels decide, it is the will and plan of God. — then I will spare the whole place on their account.”*

**18:27** *And Abraham replied, “Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord, although I am but dust and ashes — from the curse of Genesis 3:19, For you are dust, and to dust you shall return. Of course, this written record of Moses is later, but there was word of mouth for hundreds of years.*

**18:28-31** *“Suppose the fifty righteous are lacking five, will You destroy the whole city because of five?” And He said, “I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.”*

— *He spoke to Him yet again and said, “Suppose forty are found there?” And He said, “I will not do it on account of the forty.”*

— *Then he said, “Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak; suppose thirty are found there?” And He said, “I will not do it if I find thirty there.”*

— *And he said, “Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord; suppose twenty are found there?” And He said, “I will not destroy it on account of the twenty.”*

**18:32** *Then he said, “Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak only this once; suppose ten are found there?” And He said, “I will not destroy it on account of the ten” — However, God’s solution, when not even finding ten righteous people, was to remove the righteous people so the city could still be destroyed, much like He removed Noah and his family (8 people) so the earth could be destroyed by the flood.*

— *The logical conclusion would be say, “Suppose one is found there...” but Abraham did not have the courage to ask that.*

**18:33** *As soon as He had finished speaking to Abraham the LORD departed — God terminates the conversation and leaves Abraham.*

— *and Abraham returned to his place — back to his tent at Mamre (Hebron), in the mountains. He will not stay and watch the destruction he knows is coming. Does he think Lot will be killed?*

## **Genesis 19**

**19:1** *Now the two angels — these would be the two visitors Abraham just had in chapter 18, that the Lord sent to Sodom (18:22), but to Lot, they just looked like two men.*

— *came to Sodom in the evening — they spent most of the day eating with Abraham. The distance from Mamre to Sodom is about 20 miles, and Hebron is in the Judean hills, about 2500 feet above sea level, and the Dead Sea is about 1,000 feet below sea level—all too far to walk in that short time. They must have just appeared, as they had earlier with Abraham.*

— *as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom — where business was often carried on (Boaz redeeming Ruth, for example, in Ruth 4:1). Was he there to rescue anyone who showed up?*

— *When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground — reminding us of Abraham’s warm greetings when they approached him in chapter 18.*

**19:2** *And he said, “Now behold, my lords, please turn aside into your servant’s house, and spend the night* — because it was evening. This seemed a custom then (Gen 24:23, 54; Judg 18:2).

However, it is the foreigner who brings them into his house, not the citizens.

- *and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way*— evidently, the homosexuals would not bother them in the early day, just the night time.
- *They said however, “No, but we shall spend the night in the square”*— why? Are they there to inspect the city for the Lord? They definitely are not afraid of the men of the city.

**19:3** *Yet he urged them* [“very”] *strongly* — Lot is scared of what may happen if they do not spend the night in his house. It is like he “twisted their arm” to leave the square and go to his house.

- *so they turned aside to him and entered his house* —
- *and he prepared a feast for them* — be made quickly, like Abraham had done in chapter 18.
- *and baked unleavened bread* — quick bread, not waiting for yeast to rise.
- *and they ate* — again, notice angels ate, both with Abraham and now with Lot.

**19:4** *Before they lay down* — to sleep for the night

- *the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house* — there are no women here. Homosexual women would not be interested in these men.
- *both young and old* — how young and how old? It does not say, but it includes them both.
- *all the people from every quarter* — all the people of the city, rich or poor—this makes us realize God’s destruction of the entire city was deserved.

**19:5** *and they called to Lot and said to him, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may have relations with them”*— homosexual gang rape. This showed, in a very visual way, the horrible wickedness of their sin. Some want to defend homosexual relations, but homosexual rape is like other rape. Not to be tolerated even by pagans.

**19:6** *But Lot went out to them at the doorway, and shut the door behind him* — this not only was intended to protect the men inside but it also cut off his own escape.

**19:7** *and said, “Please, my brothers, do not act wickedly*—which did nothing to dissuade the crowd. Lot speaks to them as “my brothers,” but they said of him, *as an alien...acting like a judge* (v. 9).

**19:8** *“Now behold, I have two daughters who have not had relations with man* — virgins (19:31).

Lot tried to deter sin with another sin. They were engaged to other Sodomites (v. 14). The people had to reproduce.

- *please let me bring them out to you, and do to them whatever you like* — this shocks us readers. In Judges 19:25, the homosexuals gang-raped the man’s concubine until she died.
- *only do nothing to these men, inasmuch as they have come under the shelter of my roof*— it seems his hospitality was more important to him than protecting his daughters.

**19:9** *But they said, “Stand aside”*—they want him to move away from the door

- *Furthermore, they said, “This one came in as an alien, and already he is acting like a judge*— the tense of the words indicate he possibly had already in the past been judging their behavior.
- *now we will treat you worse than them*— now Lot himself is in danger from them
- *So they pressed hard against Lot and came near to break the door*—

**19:10** *But the men* [angels] *reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them, and shut the door* — Lot went outside the door to try to protect the angels, but now the angels are protecting him.

**19:11** *They struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness* — now we understand the supernatural nature of these angels — the Sodomites were spiritually blind and now they were also physically blind.

— *both small and great, so that they wearied themselves trying to find the doorway* — even though now blind, they still tried to get through the door. Romans 1:27 says the homosexual men “*burned in their desire toward one another...*”

**19:12** *Then the two men said to Lot, “Whom else have you here?”* in his house or in Sodom

— *A son-in-law, and your sons, and your daughters, and whomever you have in the city, bring them out of the place* — out of Sodom. The angels wanted to deliver Lot’s family. Two of Lot’s daughters lived with him, but the sons-in-law who were to marry his daughters did not live with him, so he went out into the city to warn them (see v. 14). Possibly other sons and daughters are living in the city.

**An Application:** This must remind us of later history when the Israelite spies told Rahab of the impending judgment on Jericho, and that her family would be saved if they came to her house (Josh 2:19). And Noah’s family saved on the ark (Gen 6–9). Believers know how to escape the coming judgment of God against wickedness, and it is our job to warn the unbelievers.

**19:13** *for we are about to destroy* [Heb. “pit” for catching and killing a lion] *this place* — like Noah, Lot is warned of coming judgment

— *because their outcry* [Heb “cry out,” their evil was so loud] *has become so great before the LORD* — see 18:20. Like the evil before the Flood (6:5).

— *that the LORD has sent us to destroy it* — angels are also used in the destruction of the antichrist and the seal judgments of Revelation 6–19.

**19:14** *Lot went out* [of his house and into the city] *and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, and said, “Up, get out of this place, for the LORD will destroy the city”* — here he seemed to believe the coming judgment, but then he is reluctant to leave (v. 16).

— *But he appeared to his sons-in-law to be jesting* — i.e., “laughing” or “mocking”

**An Application:** Laughing ties these chapters together. They laughed at God’s promise of blessing: Abraham laughed when the Lord told him Sarah would have a son (17:16-17); Sarah laughed when the Lord said she would have a son (18:12); God names the son Isaac, which means “he laughs” (17:19). Now these sons-in-law laugh at word of God’s judgment. Many people today laugh at news of God’s judgment, even laughing (mocking) at God’s escape from it if they would believe in Him.

**19:15** *When morning dawned* — there is an urgency in this judgment that was not in the Flood event, where the people had about 100 years to believe.

— *the angels urged Lot, saying, “Up, take your wife and your two daughters who are here* — in his house. Possibly implying other daughters not in his house the angels had sent him to warn (I v. 12).

— *or you will be swept away in the punishment of the city* — Because, as Abraham had said, God will not “...sweep away the righteous with the wicked” (18:23), so the angels wanted him out of there. Judgment is sure.

**19:16** *But he hesitated*—he did not want to leave everything behind, his whole life — probably his friends, possibly other family members. Remember, Lot had so much possessions, which is why he had separated from Abraham.

- *So the men seized his hand and the hand of his wife and the hands of his two daughters*
- *for the compassion of the LORD was upon him* — the reason Lot is spared is not because of his righteousness or even because of Abraham’s prayer—but because of the compassion of the Lord.
- *and they brought him out, and put him outside the city* — they had to drag him out of Sodom

**An Application:** 2 Peter 2:7-8 says, “*if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds).*” We do not have that information in Genesis, but are told about it in 2 Peter. God knows *those whose heart is completely His* (2 Chron 16:9). Although we are to discern if a person is a believer today from the fruit in their life—the bottom line is that only God knows those who are righteous in Him.

**An Application:** When God told Abraham to “go out,” he went—from Ur and from Haran. He obeyed. The angels had to drag Lot out of Sodom.

**An Application:** Why do some of God’s people today fall in with the corrupt, evil world rather than willingly flee a society destined for destruction? “*Flee immorality*” (1 Cor 6:18).

**19:17** *When they had brought them outside* — Lots of commands for Lot to do:

- *one said, “Escape for your life!* — Lot will die if he does not do this.
- *Do not look behind you* — at Sodom and the fire raining down on it [and mourn for the people he knows and possibly his own home and possessions?]

**An Application:** Jesus said, “*No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God*” (Luke 9:62). As followers of Jesus, do not look back on what you left.

- *and do not stay anywhere in the* [Jordan River] *valley* — the destruction extended beyond Sodom city
- *escape to the mountains* — where Abraham was living, the place Lot had earlier rejected
- *or you will be swept away*— this is a literal command, expected to be followed literally.
- The Hebrew word for “Lot” is similar to the word “escape.”

**19:18** *But Lot said to them, “Oh no, my lords!*— first, he did not want to leave the city, they had to drag him out. Now he will not leave the valley after they warned him. Amazing! They are trying to save his life, and he is saying, “no!”

**19:19** *“Now behold, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have magnified your lovingkindness, which you have shown me by saving my life* — Lot recognizes it is God’s lovingkindness or mercy that has saved his life.

- *but I cannot escape to the mountains, for the disaster will overtake me and I will die* —instead of obeying without question, we see his selfish motive, whereas Abraham had pleaded with God for divine justice (not even specifically for Lot). Does Lot’s slowness to escape show his hesitancy to leave, much as the angels had to seize his hands and drag him away (v. 16)?

**19:20** *now behold, this town is near enough to flee to, and it is small. Please, let me escape there (is it not small?) that my life may be saved*— not because Zoar has righteous people. He does not even seem to understand why judgment is falling on Sodom. And what does “small” have to do with anything? And what about the people living in Zoar?

**19:21** *He said to him, “Behold, I grant you this request also* — Divine grace is the ultimate basis of salvation, not human righteousness.

— *not to overthrow the town of which you have spoken* — he pleads with the angels to not destroy Zoar! Again, we see some of the flexibility the angels had when sent by God on this mission [like staying night with Lot, causing blindness to the people, forcing Lot out of the city].

**19:22** *“Hurry, escape there, for I cannot do anything until you arrive there”*— Remember, as Abraham had said, God will not “...sweep away the righteous with the wicked” (18:23), so with Lot in Zoar, it was protected.

— *Therefore the name of the town was called Zoar* — it was the town formerly known as “Bela” but was renamed Zoar, which means “small.”

**19:23** *The sun had risen over the earth when Lot came to Zoar* — there is some time between dawn (when the sky starts to get light—v. 15) and when the sun rises.

**19:24** *Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone* [fire rocks, like from a volcano] *and fire from the LORD out of heaven* — this was not merely burning the tar in the area, actual brimstone and fire rained down on the area, but for sure, it also caused the tar soil to burn. This area was then covered by the Dead Sea, which even today is a barren rocky shoreline, and there is no life in the Dead Sea—either plant or animal.

**An Application:** Jesus quoted this as a literal event: *on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all* (Luke 17:29). This will happen again in the tribulation time (Rev. 9:17-18; 14:10). The future destiny of the antichrist and false prophet, Satan and his demons, and all unbelievers is *the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death* (Rev 20:10; 21:8).

**19:25** *and He overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground* — remember, Lot chose it because it was a well-watered garden (13:10). Evidently, even Zoar was burned when Lot left it for the mountains later in the day.

— This became a standard phrase: *“like the overthrow of Sodom”* (Deut 29:22-23; Amos 4:11; Isaiah 13:19; Jeremiah 49:18).

**19:26** *But his wife, from behind him, looked back* — in a deliberate act of disobedience —*and she became a pillar of salt* —she forfeited her God-offered salvation, identifying herself with the damned town. She went from being rich to having nothing, possibly looking with longing for her possessions and lifestyle. The angels had to seize her hand to drag her out of the city (v. 16). Her heart was still in Sodom, and we will soon see her daughters’ hearts and actions are, too.

**19:27** *Now Abraham arose early in the morning and went to the place where he had stood before the LORD* — there is no indication at this point that Lot, his wife, and two daughters were to be saved. The reader knows it, but Abraham did not know that.

**19:28** *and he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the valley, and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land ascended like the smoke of a furnace* — From the top of the hills, it was easy to see the burning valley.

**19:29** *Thus it came about, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, that God remembered Abraham* — Reminding us of 8:1, *“But God remembered Noah...and the water subsided.”* So God remembered Abraham, and rescued Lot. These two events are parallel: two cataclysmic acts



of Divine judgment on outrageously sinful communities, with the only righteous man and his family spared. But societies that ignore standards of decent human behavior and spurn God's messengers cannot hope to escape divine judgment. [Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary*] The destruction of Sodom is just a foretaste of the judgment that will fall on the other inhabitants of Canaan for their sin and their treatment of God's people, the Israelites (Isa 1:9; 3:9; 13:9; Jer 23:14; 49:18; Amos 4:11; Zeph 2:9; Deut 29:23; 32:32).

**An Application:** James 5:16 says that *the effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much*. Unbelievers cannot pray, but we believers are encouraged to pray for them.

**An Application:** Jesus said that the towns that rejected Him or His messengers are more to blame than Sodom. "*Truly, I say to you, it shall be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town*" (Matt 10:15; 11:23; Luke 10:12).

- *and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot lived*—The unrighteous and their lifestyle will one day be destroyed by God, just as He destroyed Sodom.
- This event in the life of Lot, however, will have great ramifications for the future of Abraham's descendants.

**19:30** *Lot went up from Zoar, and stayed in the mountains*—when is not known. Possibly later that day? But the point is, he does go to the mountains like the angels told him to do (v. 19).

- *and his two daughters with him; for he was afraid to stay in Zoar*—possible reasons: it was to be destroyed like Sodom was, or the inhabitants of Zoar might consider him responsible for Sodom and take revenge on him.
- *and he stayed in a cave*—he left the mountains *with possessions were so great* (13:8-11), and now he has nothing and living back in the mountains—but in a cave.
- *he and his two daughters*—his wife has turned into a pillar of salt, but the angels had to seize the "*hands of his two daughters*" (v. 16), to get them to leave Sodom.

**19:31** *Then the firstborn said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of the earth*—not that there were not other men on the earth, but that other men would associate them with Sodom and its destruction and not want anything to do with them. So she exaggerates the effects of the recent catastrophe. Or perhaps she thinks her father is too old to find a husband for her.

**19:32** *"Come, let us make our father drink wine*—Where did they get the wine? The fact that they had to get their father drunk shows that they were consciously disregarding normal accepted behavior.

- *and let us lie with him that we may preserve our family through our father*—she wants children, not a husband.
- The angels rescued Lot and his virgin daughters from the Sodom mob, but now they sacrifice their virginity and their father's honor when there is no actual danger.

**19:33** *So they made their father drink wine that night, and the firstborn went in and lay with her father; and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose*—the one who offered his daughters for sexual gratification now is used as a sexual object. Lot's most painful loss of honor at the hands of those who should have loved him the most.

**19:34** *On the following day, the firstborn said to the younger, "Behold, I lay last night with my father; let us make him drink wine tonight also; then you go in and lie with him, that we may*

*preserve our family through our father*”—they were taken out of Sodom, but the sin of Sodom was not taken out of them.

**19:35** *So they made their father drink wine that night also, and the younger arose and lay with him; and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose*—because he was so drunk

**19:36** *Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father*—Lot is not mentioned again in the Old Testament. His death is not even recorded. We have no record of any further connection to Abraham. His descendants, the Moabites and Ammonites, are antagonistic to Israel when they left Egypt on their way to the Promised Land.

— We have just spent chapters reading about years of Sarah not getting pregnant, and yet these daughters lie with the father just one night and both of them get pregnant!

**19:37** *The firstborn bore a son, and called his name Moab; he is the father of the Moabites to this day*—Moab means “from the father”

**An Application:** Ruth, who married Boaz, was a Moabite, who chose the people of God, and is in the lineage of King David (Ruth 4:18-22) and eventually Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:5).

**19:38** *As for the younger, she also bore a son, and called his name Ben-ammi; he is the father of the sons of Ammon to this day*—means “son of my kin”

## Genesis 20

**20:1** *Now Abraham journeyed from there* [Mamre, near Hebron] *toward the land of the Negev* [southward], *and settled between Kadesh and Shur* [south toward Egypt]—guessing he may have needed new pasture land for his herds

— *then he sojourned in Gerar* [west, toward the Mediterranean Sea], ~8 miles SSE of Gaza (later called the land of the Philistines).

**20:2** *Abraham said of Sarah his wife, “She is my sister.” So Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah*—into his harem. What was a fuller story in chapter 12 in Egypt, is here condensed into a single verse. Abraham’s motive, intention, and rationalization of the deception are withheld until verses 11-13. The king’s motive was probably to ally himself to Abraham, a rich nomad. Notice there is no mention of her beauty this time, as there was in Egypt (but she is about 90 now!!). Also, he was Abram and she was Sarai when they went to Egypt (ch. 12). Now, their names reflect their covenant relationship to God (ch. 17).

**20:3** *But God*—one of the great phrases in the Bible!!

— *came to Abimelech in a dream of the night*—God speaks to pagans in their dreams (Pharaoh in Genesis 41 and Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2 and Pilate’s wife in Matthew 27:19), and they understand them to be the truth, and even scary. With Pharaoh, God sent plagues (12:17). With Abimelech God spoke in a dream—but God did some action too (vv. 6, 17). So Abimelech clearly knows he did wrong by taking Sarah, and what the judgment will be.

— *and said to him, “Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is married”*—God is declaring the penalty to Abimelech because of Sarah. It must have been a surprise and shock to him. We, the readers, of course already know she is married.

**20:4** *Now Abimelech had not come near her*—he had not had sex with Sarah—but because God intervened (vv. 6, 17).

- *and he said, “Lord, will You slay a nation, even though blameless?”*—usually, death would be for adultery, but no adultery had happened. Because Abimelech is the king, he rightly supposes the penalty will be on all the people of his nation. Although a dream, Abimelech is in conversation with God. Abraham had previously declared that God would not slay the righteous (18:23).

**20:5** *“Did he not himself say to me, ‘She is my sister’?”*—though she is actually Abraham’s sister, that was not his motivation in saying so. Lying is an intention to deceive, regardless of the words

- *And she herself said, ‘He is my brother’*—Sarah agreed to the deception suggested by Abraham.
- *In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this*—as the readers, we agree with Abimelech. He was misled and was ignorant of the true situation.

**20:6** *Then God said to him in the dream, “Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this*—then God agrees with Abimelech—but that does not mean he would not have done it if given the opportunity—which we see in the next phrase. God knows more about the situation than Abimelech is saying here.

- *and I also kept you from sinning against Me*—the fact that God came to Abimelech in the dream to warn him of judgment kept him from sinning against God.

**An Application:** All sin is against God. But often it may be against other people too.

- *therefore I did not let you touch her*—how did God keep him from touching Sarah? (1) With the information in the dream; (2) Abimelech, his wife, and maids had something from God that kept him from having sex with Sarah (maybe sexual diseases?) (v. 17); and (3) God had closed the wombs in his household (v. 18). How did they know that? Maybe more time has passed.

**An Application:** God’s purpose was not to just reduce Abimelech’s guilt (though that seems to be Abimelech’s purpose). God’s purpose was to keep Sarah from having illegitimate children, which would negate the covenant, which anticipates the birth of Isaac (21:1-7). We do not always know God’s purpose. We have to trust Him. He has more wisdom and information than we do.

**20:7** *“Now therefore, restore the man’s wife*—send Sarah back to Abraham. First Abimelech had to demonstrate his willingness to obey God. His works would show his faith, that is, that he understood God was telling him the truth.

- *for he is a prophet*—this is the only reference to Abraham being called a prophet. The office of prophets existed in the time of the Mosaic Law and the kings. They were spiritual guides and teachers. The prophets would also intercede to God from the people.

**An Application:** Prophets ended with the writing of Scripture (to get direction from God) and the church age, where all believers are indwelt with the Holy Spirit and can read the Bible and pray directly to God. An unbeliever may ask you, knowing you are a believer, to pray to God for them.

- *and he will pray for you and you will live*—much as Abraham interceded in chapter 18. God included Abraham’s prayer as part of the healing process. This would definitely lift up Abraham and his importance to Abimelech. Abraham’s prayer will actually save their lives!!
- *But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours*—and Abraham’s prayer will not change the judgment of God on Abimelech if he does not obey.

**20:8** *So Abimelech arose early in the morning*—he did not waste any time in obeying God.

— *and called all his servants and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were greatly frightened*—Abraham was wrong when he thought there was no fear of God in this place (v. 11).

**20:9** *Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, “What have you done to us?”*—Abimelech saw his own action as innocent, and Abraham’s action as sin. The sin is against his whole family.

— *And how have I sinned against you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin?* Abimelech wants to know what he did to Abraham that would cause Abraham to lie to him and endanger his whole family.

— *You have done to me things that ought not to be done*—we know—he should not have lied.

It is interesting to make a comparison of these two accounts:

— Pharaoh put all the blame on Abraham (ch 12). Abimelech admits he is partly to blame.

— Pharaoh is concerned for himself. Abimelech is worried about his family and kingdom.

— Pharaoh asked Abraham why he lied. Abimelech asked, *“How have I sinned against you?”*

— Pharaoh did not give Abraham a chance to reply. Abimelech does.

— Pharaoh expels Abraham from Egypt. Abimelech lets Abraham have the pick of the land.

**20:10** *And Abimelech said to Abraham, “What have you encountered, that you have done this thing?”* Did Abraham have other experiences that warranted this behavior?

**20:11** *Abraham said, “Because I thought, surely there is no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife*—Abraham totally misread the situation.

**An Application:** For us, knowing Abraham’s history so far, his actions are totally unjustified. There’s God’s covenant of blessing (ch 12); God enabled him to defeat kings (ch 14); He talked and saw God (chs 17-18). Plus, he escaped unharmed from Egypt in a similar situation. Abimelech may have accepted Abraham’s excuse, but as readers, we do not. We do not understand his lack of trust in God. What difference does it make if there is “no fear of God in this place”? God is God!!!

**20:12** *“Besides, she actually is my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife*—This is forbidden later in the Law (Lev 18; Deut 27:22). It does not justify Abraham’s failure to mention it. It was partial truth, intending to deceive.

**20:13** *and it came about, when God caused me to wander from my father’s house*—his behavior here in Gerar was his general policy, wherever he went, even tho we know he actually did it only one other time. It must not have been necessary other times.

— *that I said to her, ‘This is the kindness which you will show to me: everywhere we go, say of me, “He is my brother”’*—evidently, Sarah agreed to do that. What about kindness to Sarah?

**An Application**—Abraham’s motive was self-preservation. But we have to ask: What about Sarah? She was, therefore, put into a pagan harem. Dangerous? And her proper status as Abraham’s wife was just cast aside—to possibly never see him again.

**20:14** *Abimelech then took sheep and oxen and male and female servants, and gave them to Abraham, and restored his wife Sarah to him*—as Pharaoh did (12:16).

**20:15** *Abimelech said, “Behold, my land is before you; settle wherever you please”*—Abraham left Egypt. Of course, we know that Abimelech is actually living in Canaan, the land God already gave to Abraham, but Abimelech does not know that.

**20:16** *To Sarah he said, “Behold, I have given your brother*—a little poke at Abraham’s claim of her being his brother and not his wife.

—*a thousand pieces of silver*—a huge amount of money. A typical Babylonian laborer at that time received a wage of ½ a shekel a month.

—*behold, it is your vindication before all who are with you, and before all men you are cleared*—she would be seen by all men as Abraham’s wife, and no connection to Abimelech

**20:17** *Abraham prayed to God*—God has said that through Abraham all the families of the earth would find blessing (12:3; 18:18). Here we see an example of that.

— *and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his maids, so that they bore children*—what sickness or condition they had became evident over some time—weeks if not months.

**20:18** *For the LORD had closed fast all the wombs of the household of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham’s wife*—this gave evidence that when Sarah did get pregnant, it was not while being in the household of Abimelech.

**An Application:** Coming right after the destruction of Sodom, we might conclude that all Canaanites were like Sodomites, but here is Abimelech, who was not godless, as Abraham thought he would be. Also, once again, God has to deliver Abraham from the effects of his bad decisions. In closing the wombs of Abimelech’s household, God protected the promise of the covenant, that Sarah would have the covenant child. Also, we see that God’s mercy was not restricted to just Abraham’s family. When confronted by the judgment of God, Abimelech responds appropriately, and he blesses Abraham. Abimelech giving land to Abraham is like a stage in his possessing the land of promise.

Also, interesting that this chapter happens between the two chapters promising the son Isaac and the chapter of his actual birth. It is showing that Abraham is the father of Isaac. Not only has Sarah’s womb been closed for her whole life, but her presence among Abimelech’s household meant their wombs were also closed!! Rather than her getting pregnant, no one could get pregnant!!

## **Genesis 21**

### **Weaning the Promised Seed (vv. 1-8)**

**21:1** *Then the LORD took note of Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had promised*—God had made several promises, and this is one Abraham would see in his lifetime.

**21:2** *So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age* (100), which has been an issue (17:17; 18:10-12). She is 90 at this time (17:17). But will the baby survive? See vv. 7-8.

— *at the appointed time*—the last time this phrase appears in Genesis, to emphasize the literal fulfillment of God’s promise. Isaac was not born one day sooner or one day later (17:21; 18:10).

— *of which God had spoken to him*—at the exact time God had prophesied, with the fulfillment of this prophecy came assurance of the fulfillment of the rest of the covenant prophecy.

**An Application:** God obligates Himself when He gives prophecy. Jesus said, “*I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe* (John 14:29). When it happens, you will not give glory to something else (read Isaiah 41:20-29).

**21:3** *Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him*—the covenant promise was a child from Sarah (not his other wives Hagar or Keturah)

— *Isaac*—God had named him (17:19), meaning “he laughs”

**21:4** *Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him*—in 17:12, the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant

**21:5** *Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him*—he was old, but his age was not the problem. He fathered 6 more children after Sarah’s death (25:2). It was Sarah’s age in which the miracle happened. Sarah lives to be 127 years old (23:1), until Isaac is 37 years old (and she does not get to see Isaac’s wife Rebekah).

**21:6** *Sarah said, “God has made laughter for me;*—before, she laughed in unbelief (18:12), now that laughter has turned to joy (but Ishmael will turn the laughter into mocking—21:9)  
— *everyone who hears will laugh with me*”—she is inviting us to rejoice with her over this miracle, this fulfillment of prophecy.

**21:7** *And she said, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? No one. — Yet I have borne him a son in his old age”*—but God did announce/predict it. He said it!!

**21:8** *The child grew and was weaned*—this could be even 3 years old. Moses’ mother kept him until he was weaned (Ex 2:9-10), Hannah kept Samuel until he was weaned (1 Sam 1:23-24).  
— *and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned*—with much infant mortality, there is a celebration that the infant survived. Now he will be the heir.

### **Sending Out the False Seed (vv. 9-21)**

**21:9** *Now Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian*—Ishmael was 13 when he was circumcised (17:15), he would be 14 when Isaac was born, and 17 or so when Isaac was weaned. Abraham calls him “his son,” but Sarah calls him “her son” (v. 10).

— *whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking*—earlier Sarah had mistreated Hagar (16:6), now Hagar’s son was mistreating Sarah’s son. This teenager was making fun of this little boy. Pretty sure he sees his position (as heir) in the family usurped by this boy. And he was right... Ishmael was a danger to the covenant promises made to the seed Isaac. But mocking the chosen covenant seed put his own life in danger, as God said, “*The one who curses you I will curse*” (12:3).

**21:10** *Therefore she said to Abraham*—Sarah had earlier said to Abraham, “*please go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children through her.*” *And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai*” (16:2). Note—it was her idea, she insisted Abram do it, and she said she would consider the child as her own, calling Hagar “my maid.”

— *“Drive out this maid and her son, for the son of this maid shall not be an heir with my son Isaac”*—Once again, it is Sarah’s idea. But now she has her own child. And she calls Ishmael “son of this maid,” and again insists Abraham do what she wants. And obviously, as the true wife, her son Isaac will be the true heir.

**21:11** *The matter distressed* [Heb. vicious in disposition or temper] *Abraham greatly because of his son*—Ishmael has been Abraham’s only son for some 17 years [BDB]. He calls Ishmael “his son,” not Hagar’s or the maid’s. [How Sarah must have suffered seeing Abraham’s relationship (seeing his reaction now) with Ishmael for 13 years!!, with a child she longed so much to have.]

**21:12** *But God said to Abraham, “Do not be distressed because of the lad and your maid;*  
— *whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her*—God agreed with Sarah—Ishmael needs to go.  
— *for through Isaac your descendants shall be named*—from the beginning, the covenant promises were going through the son of Abraham’s wife, not an Egyptian maid.

**21:13** *“And of the son of the maid I will make a nation also, because he is your descendant”*—God assures Abraham of what he previously asked—for God to bless Ishmael (17:20). His descendants are the Arabs. [Probably the Jews now wish Abraham would not have prayed that!]

**21:14** *So Abraham rose early in the morning*—it is Sarah’s desire, yet it is God’s reassurance that makes Abraham consent to send Hagar and Ishmael away from the family.

— *and took bread and a skin of water* [holds about 3 gallons] *and gave them to Hagar, putting them on her shoulder, and gave her the boy* [not “his son”], *and sent her* [softer than “drive her away” in v. 10] *away. And she departed and wandered about in the wilderness of Beersheba*—in the wilderness, south of where Abraham was. It could be that Abraham gave them money, for example, but it is the water and bread in the desert that matters for the rest of the story.

**21:15-16** *When the water in the skin was used up, she left the boy under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down opposite him, about a bowshot away, for she said, “Do not let me see the boy die.” And she sat opposite him, and lifted up her voice and wept*—she went from a grand lifestyle in Abraham’s compound to being homeless.

**21:17** *God* [*Elohim*—almighty God, not as *Yahweh*—the covenant Lord God] *heard the lad crying* [both he and his mother are crying]—It is Ishmael’s mocking behavior toward Isaac that got them expelled, and now it is his crying to God that brings deliverance from God. Ishmael means “God will hear.”

— *and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven*—They may be away from the covenant family, but not away from God.  
— *and said to her, “What is the matter with you, Hagar? Do not fear, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is*—remember, through Abraham’s descendants all the nations will be blessed. Ishmael is one of those descendants. And Abraham had prayed for God to bless Ishmael.

**21:18** *“Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him by the hand, for I will make a great nation of him”*—this was promised to Abraham in 17:20 (21:13) in response to his prayer, but this is the first time Hagar hears of the promise.

**21:19** *Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the skin with water and gave the lad a drink*—the well was there, it was just that she did not see it, perhaps due to her weeping, and looking away from the lad (vv. 15-16). When she hears God’s promise and instruction to stand and hold Ishmael’s hand—she quit crying and saw the well. Her understanding God’s promise was true allowed her to begin to see His deliverance.

**An Application:** Sometimes we are so emotional over a person or situation, we do not remember or understand God’s promises to us. Like Phil 4:6-7, *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God...will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”* Understand and trust this is true=faitth.

**21:20-21** *God was with the lad, and he grew; and he lived in the wilderness and became an archer. He lived in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt*—an Hamite, in contrast to Isaac’s wife taken from the Shemites in Haran.

**An Application:** “This account of Isaac’s birth and Ishmael’s expulsion is of decisive importance in the unfolding of the patriarchal promises. It is to this aspect of the story that Paul refers in Rom 9:7 and in his more extended reference to the role of Hagar and Ishmael in Gal 4:21–31. For Paul, the all-important point is that Isaac was born following God’s promise and in that respect anticipates the

Gentile believers in God's plan, while Ishmael, born through human contrivance, is a forerunner of the Jews who sought salvation through works of the law" [Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary*]

### **Making Peace in the Land (vv. 22-34)**

**21:22** *Now it came about at that time*—when Abraham lived in Gerar, maybe after Isaac's weaning celebration

- *that Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, "God is with you in all that you do*—Abraham's success was so evident, Abimelech wanted to make sure that his successors continued to live in peace with Abraham's descendants (now that Isaac was born).

**An Application:** Here is a foreigner recognizing God's blessing on Abraham (12:2), in contrast to Ishmael who had mocked the seed of the covenant (v. 9), and is cast out. We see the same reactions today. People are either drawn to God or mock Him.

**21:23** *now therefore, swear to me here by God*—Abraham's God

- *that you will not deal falsely with me or with my offspring or with my posterity*—as happened when Abraham lied to him about Sarah being his sister and not his wife. Now Abimelech wants assurances for his future family and kingdom. Also, indicating the future blessing on Abraham, as per the covenant of God.
- *but according to the kindness that I have shown to you, you shall show to me and to the land in which you have sojourned*—it is interesting that Abraham came to Abimelech's land, yet Abimelech approaches Abraham like it is Abraham's land (which it is, given by God).

**21:24** *Abraham said, "I swear it"*—however, Abraham does have an issue with Abimelech. So he does not agree that Abimelech's actions have been all "kindness."

**21:25** *But Abraham complained to Abimelech*—not in general, but about a specific well, which with all Abraham's flocks, was very important.

- *because of the well of water which the servants of Abimelech had seized*—to forcefully take

**21:26** *And Abimelech said, "I do not know who has done this thing; you did not tell me*—why had Abraham not told him about it before? But Abraham believes Abimelech is sincere.

- *nor did I hear of it until today*—again, just as he did not know Sarah was Abraham's wife, so now he claims to not know who of his people seized the well. He has good intentions, but seems ignorant of what is really going on.

**21:27** *Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant*—it seems that Abraham believes Abimelech, and gives him sheep and oxen, and he proposes a covenant. [Later, under the Mosaic Law, they were not to make treaties with the Canaanites.]

**21:28** *Then Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves*—for some reason, Abraham sets these seven apart from the sheep and oxen he gave him.

**21:29** *Abimelech said to Abraham, "What do these seven ewe lambs mean, which you have set by themselves?"*—Ewes, as females, were more valuable: reproduced and lived longer

**21:30** *He said, "You shall take these seven ewe lambs from my hand so that it may be a witness to me, that I dug this well"*—not to redeem the well, but that Abimelech acknowledges it is Abraham's, to get it away from the men who had seized it.



**21:31** *Therefore he called that place Beersheba*—means “well of the oath”

— *because there the two of them took an oath.*

**21:32** *So they made a covenant at Beersheba*—about 26 miles south of Hebron, and halfway between the coast and the Dead Sea.

— *and Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, arose and returned to the land of the Philistines*—out near the Mediterranean coast.

**21:33** *Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba*—a tree common to the Negev, known for its shade near the well, and its soft branches, which the flocks eat, and water supply for the tree.

— *and there he called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God*—not only through revelation from God, but settling a dispute over water with his neighbors, Abraham has assurances of God’s continuing to provide for his needs.

**21:34** *And Abraham sojourned in the land of the Philistines for many days*—though the Philistines did not settle in Canaan until about 1200 B.C., there is evidence of some arriving there at the time of Abraham. Or it could be an editor/scribe, like Ezra, identified the land that was later where the Philistines lived.

## **Genesis 22**

**22:1** *Now it came about after these things*—Already God had asked Abraham to leave his country and his father’s house (12:1) and expel his son Ishmael (21:10-12). He was still living near the well in Beersheba (22:19), south of Mamre.

— *that God tested Abraham*—as the readers, we learn what God is about to do, but Abraham does not know it. A “test” means it be something difficult.

— *and said to him, “Abraham!”*—the name of the covenant that God gave him (17:5). God has spoken and appeared to Abraham numerous times over the years, so there was no question now—he knows it is God talking to him.

— *And he said, “Here I am”*—3 times we read the response, “Here I am” (vv 1, 7, 11), each with a new development in the narrative. Up to now, God’s communication with Abraham has been positive in His covenant promises.

**22:2** *He said, “Take now your son*—the one God promised him. All covenant hopes were on him.

— *your only son*—Ishmael is no longer considered his son. He is gone. His nephew Lot is gone (does he know whether he is alive?). All Abraham’s hopes are now on Isaac.

— *whom you love*—after many years of waiting and yearning, he has the promised son with Sarah. It is the love of God vs. the love of his son that is being tested. Abraham loves them both.

— *Isaac*—because he walked so far, and carried wood for Abraham, he is possibly a teenager now

— *and go to the land of Moriah*—from 2 Chronicles 3:1, this is the future temple site in Jerusalem.

— *and offer him there as a burnt offering*—the sacrifice was cut in pieces and burned on the altar

— *on one of the mountains of which I will tell you*—as we pass through the history of Israel, this specific mountain is where the temple will be built, the place of sacrifice and worship of God.

**An Application:** God must have experienced the same thing when He offered up His Son, His only Son, whom He loves, as a burnt offering for our sins (John 3:16).

**22:3** *So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering*—Abraham had

appealed to God on behalf of the people in Sodom, yet here, he does not question God, or pray for help or another solution. We see only perfect obedience.

- ***and arose and went to the place of which God had told him***—it seems God spoke to him again, telling him which mountain, so he would know where to go. The hill country was all mountains.

**22:4** *On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance*—about 63 miles from Beersheba to Jerusalem. Now he sees the mountain and is coming up to it.

**22:5** *Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey*—we are not told why

- ***and I and the lad will go over there***—this was a private worship
- ***and we will worship***—saying, “worship” instead of burnt offering (which is worship, of course)
- ***and return to you***—God had told him his descendants would be through Isaac, so he was confident God would somehow make that happen.

**22:6** *Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son,*

**An Application:** We cannot help but think of Jesus carrying His own cross to His crucifixion

- ***and he took in his hand the fire and the knife***—they did not have matches. They would carry a torch with a fire to start new fires.
- ***So the two of them walked on together***—indicates their isolation and their companionship

**22:7-28** *Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” And he said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” Abraham said, “God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son”*—Isaac completely trusts Abraham and his answer. And Abraham completely trusts God.

- ***So the two of them walked on together***—Isaac about 17 and Abraham 117.

**An Application:** There is no work that will satisfy the payment for our sins. God has to provide for Himself the payment price. It has to be great enough to cover all our sins for all time.

**An Application:** Calvin wrote: “This example is proposed for our imitation. Whenever the Lord gives a command, many things are perpetually occurring to enfeeble our purpose: means fail, we are destitute of counsel, all avenues seem closed. In such straits, the only remedy against despondency is to leave the event to God, in order that He may open a way for us when there is none. For as we act unjustly towards God, when we hope for nothing from Him but what our senses can perceive, so we pay Him the highest honour, when, in affairs of perplexity, we nevertheless entirely acquiesce in His providence” (1:568).

**22:9** *Then they came to the place of which God had told him*—Abraham is obeying God so far.

- ***and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood***—
- ***and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood***—he could have easily killed him first, and then put him on the altar, but in this sense, Isaac was a living sacrifice. What total faith and love Isaac had for his father Abraham.

**An Application:** It is important to note that God is not asking for a dead son as an appeasement of his wrath (as is believed when children are sacrificed to idols). This is all about a test for Abraham’s obedience and trust of God.

**An Application:** It reminds us of Romans 12:1, *present yourselves as a living sacrifice...*

**22:10** *Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son—*

**An Application:** Hebrews 11:10-19 tells us what Abraham was thinking at this moment: *By faith, Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; and he who received the promises was offering up*

*his only begotten son; ...he considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead.” His experience with God so far, was in the birth of Isaac. Therefore, also, there was born of one man, and him as good as dead...” i.e., he 100 years old and Sarah 90 years old. God gave life to Sarah’s dead womb, He gave life to Isaac to begin with. So He could give life to Isaac again!!*

**22:11** *But the angel of the LORD*—God’s covenant name (16:9-11), last used when the promised Isaac was born (21:1)

- *called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!”*—sense of urgency
- *And he said, “Here I am.”*

**22:12** *He said, “Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him*—He’s actually explicitly countermanding the original order in v. 2.

- *for now I know that you fear God*—in His omniscience, God already knew that, but in Abraham’s free-will decision, God knows that he fears God.
- *since you have not withheld your son, your only son*—v. 16.
- *from Me*—in obedience to what God said

**22:13** *Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns*—God did provide for Himself a sacrifice

- *and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering*—in praise and thanksgiving for deliverance, much as Noah did when he left the ark after the Flood (8:20-21)
- *in the place of his son*—as a substitute

**An Application:** Jesus Christ’s death was a substitute payment for our sin. Abraham was able to not kill his son, but God’ Son was killed. Jesus ...*humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross* (Phil 2:8).

**22:14** *Abraham called the name of that place The LORD (Yahweh yireh) Will Provide, as it is said to this day, “In the mount of the LORD it will be provided”*—

**22:15** *Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven*

**22:16** *and said, “By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD*—this phrase occurs 364 times in the OT, mostly in the prophets, but only in one other place in the Pentateuch (Num 14:28). God has spoken, and God will carry it out. He is dependable. He cannot swear by anything or anyone higher than Himself, so He does swear by Himself—Jer 22:5; 49:13; Amos 4:2; 6:8; Heb 6:13-18

- *because*—Abraham’s obedience really impressed God
- *you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son*—i.e., because Abraham obeyed God completely and 100%

These verses are very important to the text, or else it would end with the blessing of God on the descendants of Ishmael (17:18).

**22:17** *indeed* —Heb. “how much more,” it surpasses all other promises God made Abraham

- *I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore*—one cannot number the stars, but even more, one cannot number the sand, which greatly outnumbers the stars
- *and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies*—this will be finally fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom.

**22:18** *“In your seed [his descendants] all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you [one man Abraham] have obeyed My voice”* [notice, it was real, understandable words, or else Abraham would not have been able to obey them]—The covenant in 12:1-3 was given to him before he obeyed. Now God restates the covenant with “greatly” because Abraham obeyed.

No mention is made of how Isaac felt or how Sarah felt. It is tempting to add details to the story, but that would draw our attention away from the central facts—Abraham’s whole-hearted obedience and the great blessings that flowed from it. That is what is important.

**22:19** *So Abraham returned to his young men*—as he said in verse 5, he left them with the donkey — *and they arose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham lived at Beersheba.*

Now a transition into the next narrative. Isaac is older and needs a wife.

**22:20-24** *Now it came about after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, “Behold, Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor: Uz his firstborn and Buz his brother and Kemuel the father of Aram and Chesed and Hazo and Pildash and Jidlaph and Bethuel.” Bethuel became the father of Rebekah; these eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham’s brother. His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah and Gaham and Tahash and Maacah*

## **Genesis 23**

### **Sarah’s Death and Burial**

**23:1** *Now Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; these were the years of the life of Sarah*—Sarah was 90 when Isaac was born, so he is now 37 (and not married), so there is approximately 20 years between chapters 22 and 23. And Abraham is now 137 years old. Sarah was last mentioned in 21:12, when she wanted Hagar and Ishmael driven away. She is the only patriarch’s wife whose age at death is recorded.

**23:2** *Sarah died in Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan*—20 miles south of Jerusalem, on way to Beersheba. It is generally Mamre, where Abraham received most of the covenant promises (13:18; 14:13, 24; 18:1). Abraham moved from Beersheba back to Hebron. — *and Abraham went in to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her. Then Abraham rose from before his dead...*—The mother of the promised covenant son died in the land of promise. Her body lay in a tent, where they mourned.

A very polite negotiation for a burial cave:

**23:3-4** *...and spoke to the sons of Heth [descendant of Canaan (10:15)], saying, “I am a stranger and a sojourner among you; give me a burial site among you that I may bury my dead out of my sight”*—up to now, Abraham owns no property because he is an alien in the land. So he is asking for permission to bury his dead in their land.

**23:5-6** *The sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him, “Hear us, my lord, you are a mighty prince among us*—though an alien, he is a tribal chief, almost one of them.

— *bury your dead in the choicest of our graves; none of us will refuse you his grave for burying your dead.”* The people of the land highly respected Abraham, giving him permission.

**23:7-8** *So Abraham rose and bowed to the people of the land, the sons of Heth. And he spoke with them, saying, “If it is your wish for me to bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and approach Ephron the son of Zohar for me—but he does not want to simply use one of their graves (it was common to re-use burial caves because of the rocky terrain). He wants to own his own burial cave.*

**23:9** *that he may give me the cave of Machpelah which he owns, which is at the end of his field; for the full price let him give it to me in your presence for a burial site”—Abraham only wants the cave for burial at the end of the field, but was willing to pay the price for the whole field.*

**23:10** *Now Ephron was sitting among the sons of Heth; and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the sons of Heth; even of all who went in at the gate of his city, saying—where business was usually carried out, as where Boaz redeemed Ruth (4:1).*

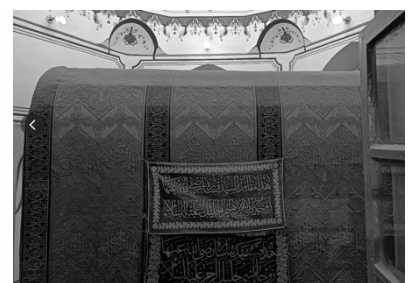
**23:11-13** *“No, my lord, hear me; I give you the field, and I give you the cave that is in it. In the presence of the sons of my people I give it to you; bury your dead.” And Abraham bowed before the people of the land. He spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, “If you will only please listen to me; I will give the price of the field, accept it from me that I may bury my dead there.”—Ephron says he will give Abraham the field/cave, but Abraham insists he pay for it.*

**23:14-15** *Then Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, “My lord, listen to me; a piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is that between me and you? So bury your dead”*  
— Then Ephron kind of casually mentions how much the field is worth that he is giving Abraham.

**23:16-18** *Abraham listened to Ephron; and Abraham weighed out for Ephron the silver which he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, commercial standard. So Ephron’s field, which was in Machpelah, which faced Mamre, the field and cave which was in it, and all the trees which were in the field, that were within all the confines of its border, were deeded over to Abraham for a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city—so now Abraham has a cave to bury Sarah.*

**23:19-20** *After this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field at Machpelah facing Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. So the field and the cave that is in it, were deeded over to Abraham for a burial site by the sons of Heth.* This burial cave is the cave of the patriarchs: Abraham is buried there (25:9), Isaac and Rebekah are buried there (49:29-31), Jacob buries Leah there and says he wants to be buried there, too (50:13). Often (even today), people go back to the land of their birth for burial. Here Abraham assures that the future burials will be in the land of promise.

**An Application:** Going back to Josephus in the first century (still ~2000 years after Abraham), tradition identifies the site of Machpelah with the area of a huge building built by Herod, supposedly



over the patriarchs' tombs. It is now a mosque Haram El-Khalil in the town of Hebron. Inside is the replica sarcophagus of each patriarch and wife on display behind fenced walls. It is a site for Jews to visit (and is also a synagogue for the few Jews in Hebron). It is also a place for the Arab Muslims because Abraham was the father of Ishmael. (Hebron itself today is a mostly Arab city and dangerous place to visit.)

## Genesis 24

### Getting a Bride for Isaac—

**24:1** *Now Abraham was old, advanced in age*—137 when Sarah died (23:1), and Isaac was still mourning the death of his mother (24:67). Abraham was old to travel the distance to Haran, so he sends his most trusted servant—with an extremely critical assignment.....

— *and the LORD had blessed Abraham in every way*—very rich, see verse 35

**24:2** *Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he owned*—unnamed (unlike Eliezer in 15:2), but obviously someone greatly respected and trusted by Abraham.

— *“Please place your hand under my thigh*—called a “bodily covenant,” this suggests touching Abraham’s genitals. Having been circumcised as a mark of the covenant, this added a sacredness to the oath. It was especially important for finding a wife for Isaac to continue the descendants of the covenant.

**An Application:** It is common for giving an oath to lay one’s hand on some sacred object. It used to be on a Bible when testifying in court, and even swearing in someone like the president.

**24:3** *and I will make you swear by the LORD [Yahweh], the God of heaven and the God of earth* [i.e., the Creator and God of the covenant]—this will be the most important task of his career as Abraham’s servant

— *that you shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live*—the Canaanites were descendants from Noah’s son Ham, the cursed people (9:25).

**24:4** *but you will go to my country*—about 450 miles away to Haran, where they moved to from Ur.

— *and to my relatives*—he got word his brother Nahor had some children (see 22:20-24)

— *and take a wife for my son Isaac*—a Shemite [Isaac himself does the same thing for a wife for Jacob, his son of the covenant (28:1-2)]

**24:5-6** *The servant said to him, “Suppose the woman is not willing to follow me to this land*—The servant wonders if he cannot even do this minimum requirement. What if she refuses to leave?

— *should I take your son back to the land from where you came?”*—Haran. Good question.

— *Then Abraham said to him, “Beware that you do not take my son back there!*—the Promised Land is their home now, and under no circumstances is Isaac to go back to where they used to live!! That would endanger God’s whole covenant plan!!

**24:7** *“The LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my birth, and who spoke to me and who swore to me, saying, ‘To your descendants I will give this land’* (12:7)—Abraham quotes the covenant promise the descendants must be in this land.

— *He will send His angel before you*—so far, God has enabled every aspect of the covenant promise, so He will prepare the way for this, too. He declares his faith that the Lord will provide.

— *and you will take a wife for my son from there*—the wife must come from Haran to Hebron

**24:8** *“But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this my oath— only do not take my son back there”*—if the woman will not come, then forget the oath. Again, he stresses to not take Isaac back to Haran.

**24:9** *So the servant placed his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter*—and Abraham trusts him.

**24:10** *Then the servant took ten camels from the camels of his master, and set out with a variety of good things of his master’s in his hand; and he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor* [Haran]

**24:11** *He made the [10] camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw water*—the time and the place. A “spring” is someplace where water comes up. It’s used of wells, which are the common source of water in Israel.

### **The Prayer—**

**24:12-14** *He said, “O LORD [Yahweh], the God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today, and show lovingkindness to my master Abraham*—the prayer

— *“Behold, I am standing by the spring [i.e., the well, v. 11], and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water*—there were a number of young women

— *now may it be that the girl to whom I say, ‘Please let down your jar so that I may drink,’ and who answers, ‘Drink, and I will water your camels also’*—she volunteers to do it. Camels can drink up to 20 gallons a day (it is stored in their bloodstream, not the humps). Ten camels (having just arrived from a trip of over 400 miles) were thirsty. Therefore, need maybe 200 gallons of water. But maybe they had drunk earlier. Text does not say, and Rebekah does not know how thirsty they are.

— *may she be the one whom You have appointed for Your servant Isaac*—he wants God’s chosen one, no one else

— *and by this I will know that You have shown lovingkindness to my master*—yes, the servant prayed for a sign. Jews are known for asking for signs (Matt 12:38; 16:1).

**An Application:** Just because the servant asked for a sign does not mean we should ask for signs. As we get near the end times, it is the false Christs who will give signs to mislead people (Matt 24:24). Believers have the Word of God, they do not need signs. The servant did not have that.

### **Rebekah Arrives—**

**24:15** *Before he had finished speaking, i.e., praying*

— *behold, Rebekah who was born to Bethuel [Abraham’s nephew] the son of Milcah, the wife of Abraham’s brother Nahor*—definitely a relative [we readers are given information the servant does not have yet—and we see the extent to which the Lord went to prepare the perfect wife for Isaac]

— *came out with her jar on her shoulder*—to the well to get water

**24:16** *The girl was very beautiful, a virgin, and no man had had relations with her*—perhaps this is again information for the narrative. Does the servant know she is a virgin? We do not know.

— *and she went down to the spring [well] and filled her jar and came up*—indicating steps

**24:17** *Then the servant ran to meet her, and said, “Please let me drink a little water from your jar”*—here comes the first test.....

**24:18** *She said, “Drink, my lord”; and she quickly lowered her jar to her hand, and gave him a drink—she passed*

**24:19** *Now when she had finished giving him a drink, she said, “I will draw also for your camels until they have finished drinking—his prayer was that she would offer to draw for the camels (the second test), but she goes even further, saying, until they have finished drinking!!”*

**24:20** *So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough, and ran back to the well to draw, and she drew for all his camels—a big job. Gallons of water. Even if they only drank 1 gallon each, that would be 10 gallons for all 10 camels. But how much until they have finished drinking?!”*

**24:21** *Meanwhile, the man was gazing at her in silence, to know whether the LORD had made his journey successful or not—as readers, we know Rebekah is a relative, but the servant does not know that yet.*

**24:22** *When the camels had finished drinking—how long did it take? He is patient, but wanting to know.....*

— *the man took a gold ring weighing a half-shekel and two bracelets for her wrists weighing ten shekels in gold—these gifts were a nice reward for a task freely undertaken. They also confirm that the servant has a wealthy master, important as the narrative progresses.*

**24:23** *and said, “Whose daughter are you? Please tell me, is there room for us to lodge in your father’s house?”—asking for an even greater favor than a drink of water.*

**24:24** *She said to him, “I am the daughter of Bethuel [her father], the son of Milcah [daughter of Abraham’s other brother Haran, married to Nahor], whom she bore to Nahor [Abraham’s brother]”—she mentions her grandparents and father but not her mother (see chart at ch 22). So now he knows who she is (next test), but she still does not know who he is.*

**24:25** *Again she said to him, “We have plenty of both straw and feed, and room to lodge in”—this indirectly indicates her own family’s wealth, plenty of room for visitors*

**24:26** *Then the man bowed low and worshiped the LORD.* The servant’s first act at the well was prayer, and so also was his last. God had answered his prayer (v. 12-14) so far. But the final test—would she leave her family and go with him to Abraham?

**24:27** *He said, “Blessed be the LORD, the God of my master Abraham—this servant knows of Abraham’s God and of the covenant concerning Isaac.*

— *who has not forsaken His lovingkindness and His truth toward my master—this is a lot of information about God that they knew.*

— *as for me, the LORD has guided me in the way to the house of my master’s brothers”—* Abraham had assured the servant that God would send His angel to lead him in the way (v. 7), as God had led Abraham all these many years.

**24:28** *Then the girl ran and told her mother’s household about these things—was her mother still alive? Will they be excited over Rebekah leaving to go to Isaac?*

**24:29** *Now Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban; and Laban ran outside to the man at the spring—As we learn in the next chapters, Laban was all about riches!!”*



**24:30** *When he saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister's wrists, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, "This is what the man said to me"*—Rebekah was motivated by hospitality (v. 25) but Laban is motivated by greed—when he notices the man standing by the 10 camels...

— *he went to the man; and behold, he was standing by the camels at the spring* [well]—he was glad the man had not already left

**24:31** *And he said, "Come in, blessed of the LORD!* Kind of a polite greeting (but more true than he realizes—The Lord blessing Abraham is the point of the story)

— *Why do you stand outside since I have prepared the house, and a place for the camels?"*—

**24:32** *So the man entered the house. Then Laban unloaded the camels, and he gave straw and feed to the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him.*

**24:33** *But when food was set before him to eat, he said, "I will not eat until I have told my business." And he said, "Speak on"*—the point of the servant's telling the full story is to convince the family to let Rebekah come with him back to Abraham.

In the first verses, we learn if Rebekah is worthy as a wife for Isaac. Now in this second section, we learn if Isaac is worthy to be a husband for Rebekah.

**24:34-** *So he said, "I am Abraham's* [Nahor and Haran's brother] *servant*—indicating the wealth is not his but his master's. Thereby, stating Abraham is a relative.

**24:35** *"The LORD has greatly* [exceedingly] *blessed my master, so that he has become rich; and He has given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and servants and maids, and camels and donkeys*—Abraham has great wealth

**Now Family News—**

**24:36** *"Now Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master in her old age*—Rebekah is a whole generation younger, but Isaac is not that old because Sarah was in her old age when she bore him  
— *and he has given him all that he has*—Isaac is the only heir of all that wealth

**24:37** *"My master made me swear, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live*—he wants them to understand that Abraham does not want his son Isaac to marry a Canaanite and give all that wealth to a Canaanite.

**24:38** *but you shall go to my father's house and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son'*—in v. 4, his assignment was to go to Abraham's country and relatives, but now he realizes this family is closely related, not just "relatives," even more than Abraham had anticipated. Perhaps even to help persuade them for Rebekah to go.

**24:39** *"I said to my master, 'Suppose the woman does not follow me.'*

**24:40-41** *"He said to me, 'The LORD, before whom I have walked, will send His angel with you to make your journey successful, and you will take a wife for my son from my relatives and from my father's house; then you will be free from my oath, when you come to my relatives; and if they do not give her to you, you will be free from my oath'*—the servant had asked Abraham if the woman would not come—but now it is if the relatives will give her to Isaac. Also, the servant

had mentioned to Abraham, should Isaac leave home, but it is twice rejected by Abraham (vv. 5-6, 8), and the servant does not even mention it here.

### **The Partial Fulfillment So Far—**

**24:42-48** *“So I came today to the spring, and said, ‘O LORD, the God of my master Abraham, if now You will make my journey on which I go successful; behold, I am standing by the spring, and may it be that the maiden who comes out to draw, and to whom I say, “Please let me drink a little water from your jar”; and she will say to me, “You drink, and I will draw for your camels also”; let her be the woman whom the LORD has appointed for my master’s son.’ “Before I had finished speaking in my heart, behold, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder, and went down to the spring and drew, and I said to her, ‘Please let me drink.’ She quickly lowered her jar from her shoulder, and said, ‘Drink, and I will water your camels also’; so I drank, and she watered the camels also. Then I asked her, and said, ‘Whose daughter are you?’ And she said, ‘The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor’s son, whom Milcah bore to him’; and I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her wrists. And I bowed low and worshiped the LORD, and blessed the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had guided me in the right way to take the daughter of my master’s kinsman for his son.”*

- This seems to be an accurate telling of what happened, until the end. Here he says he found out that she was the relative before he gave her the bracelets. Which was it? Don’t know.

### **Are They Going to Let Her Go?—**

**24:49** *“So now if you are going to deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me—*he kind of loads this comment. It is not just saying “yes” or “no” to the servant. It is “deal kindly” and “truly” with Abraham! And there’s God’s guidance.....

- *and if not, let me know, that I may turn to the right hand or the left*—I may look elsewhere, to relatives who care more about these things.

**24:50** *Then Laban* [her brother] *and Bethuel* [her father] *replied*—suddenly her father is mentioned. Up to now, Laban has been the dominant male, and the negotiations are by him and his mother (vv. 53, 55). Why? Abraham is 137, so Bethuel must be that or older, so may not participate in the negotiations. Also, perhaps Bethuel is under his wife’s thumb, as Rebekah was later with Isaac.

- *“The matter comes from the LORD; so we cannot speak to you bad or good*—this happens later to Laban also (31:24, 29). Not that he knows or believes in Abraham’s Lord, but more like superstition. They were idol worshippers (Josh 24:2-3).

**24:51** *“Here is Rebekah before you, take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master’s son, as the LORD has spoken”*—They agree to the main point. But now are negotiations as to how that will happen (bride-money in v. 53, and the wedding in vv. 54-58).

**24:52** *When Abraham’s servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the ground before the LORD*—he was skillful in his presentation, but thanks God for its acceptance.

**An Application**—This servant was a man who prays before he acts, praises God when his prayers are answered, and lives ever conscious that the affairs of men are controlled by the hand of God.

**24:53** *The servant brought out articles of silver and articles of gold, and garments, and gave them to Rebekah*—at first, he gives the items to Rebekah, the bride-to-be

- *he also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother*—kind of buying the bride, but it was also to encourage them to not back down on this deal.

- 24:54** *Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank and spent the night*—now that the deal was accomplished, the servant could eat and have a well-earned rest for the night.
- *When they arose in the morning, he said, “Send me away to my master”*—so he was ready to leave first thing in the morning to travel back to Abraham with Isaac’s bride Rebekah.
- 24:55** *But her brother and her mother said, “Let the girl stay with us a few days, say ten; afterward she may go”*—now there is a tense exchange of Laban and the mother, who wants her to stay, and the servant, who wants to leave now. Actually, the phrase is lit. “a year or 10 months,” as it does in Leviticus 25:29. But others understand it to mean a “few days, say ten.”
- 24:56** *He said to them, “Do not delay me, since the LORD has prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master”*—Why the hurry? Maybe afraid they would not let her go. Maybe afraid Abraham would die before he could get back.
- 24:57** *And they said, “We will call the girl and consult her wishes”*—Maybe thinking she is attached to home and mom and would agree with them.
- 24:58** *Then they called Rebekah and said to her, “Will you go with this man?” And she said, “I will go”*—reminding us of when God told Abraham to go to the land, and he went (12:1, 4).
- 24:59** *Thus they* [assume it is Laban and her parents] *sent away their sister Rebekah and her nurse* [Deborah, 35:8] *with Abraham’s servant and his men*—
- 24:60** *They blessed Rebekah and said to her, “May you, our sister, Become thousands of ten thousands, And may your descendants possess The gate of those who hate them”*—as more of a common blessing for brides (Ruth 4:11-12), yet she will be a mother of the covenant promise.
- 24:61** *Then Rebekah arose with her maids*—evidently part of her dowry, like Rachel and Leah later (29:24, 29)
- *and they mounted the camels*—good thing he had enough camels!
  - *and followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah and departed*—there seems to be 3 years between Sarah’s death (23:1) and Isaac’s marriage (25:20). Though they lived hundreds of miles apart, a long journey.
- 24:62** *Now Isaac had come from going to Beer-lahai-roi; for he was living in the Negev*—Why did the servant report to Isaac and not Abraham? We assume Abraham is still near Hebron (23:2) and Sarah’s cave/grave. But the servant knew where to find him. Beer-lahai-roi is interesting because it is the well God showed pregnant Hagar when she was sent out from Sarah (16:14). This is the well/water supply in the Negev wilderness.
- 24:63** *Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening; and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, camels were coming*—and he was walking toward them (v. 65).
- 24:64** *Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from the camel*—and she notices Isaac walking toward them.
- 24:65** *She said to the servant, “Who is that man walking in the field to meet us?” And the servant said, “He is my master”*—that must have been communicated to him, maybe before he left.
- *Then she took her veil and covered herself*—reminding us of Leah (29:23-25)

**24:66** *The servant told Isaac all the things that he had done.*

**24:67** *Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and he took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her; thus Isaac was comforted after his mother's death*—the story has reached its goal. Abraham's wishes have been carried out. Isaac is now head of the family. And Rebekah has replaced Sarah as the leading woman of the patriarch families.

- Some think Abraham is dead at this time, but the years do not add up. He is 137 when Sarah died (23:1), and 175 (25:7) when he died. For Rebekah to comfort Isaac after his mother's death, seems to put the narrative closer to that time. If their wedding is after Abraham's death, that would make Isaac 75 years old, but 25:19-20 says he was 40 when he married Rebekah.

## **Genesis 25**

### **Abraham's Death**

**25:1** *Now Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah*—the book is in chronological order, so it seems that he married Keturah after the death of Sarah. Sarah did not tolerate Hagar and her son, it does not seem she would tolerate Keturah and her six sons! Sometimes Keturah is called his wife, and sometimes his concubine. But the point here is that Abraham had 7 other sons (Hagar's and Keturah's), but all his wealth went to Isaac, the son of the promise.

**25:2-4** *She bore to him Zimran and Jokshan and Medan and Midian and Ishbak and Shuah. Jokshan became the father of Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim and Letushim and Leummim. The sons of Midian were Ephah and Epher and Hanoch and Abida and Eldaah. All these were the sons of Keturah.*

**25:5** *Now Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac*—Abraham is described by his herds, gold, silver, garments, servants. He was very wealthy (see 24:35).

**25:6** *but to the sons of his concubines*—Hagar and Keturah

- *Abraham gave gifts while he was still living, and sent them away from his son Isaac eastward, to the land of the east*—so there was no dispute after his death. Also, as observed earlier in the book, the move to the east is away from God and away from the promised land.

**25:7-8** *These are all the years of Abraham's life that he lived, one hundred and seventy-five years. Abraham breathed his last and died in a ripe old age, an old man and satisfied with life; and he was gathered to his people*—the years of life are getting shorter after the Flood. Death is not described as who a person leaves on the earth but rather going to be with the people who already died. The same thing is often said today.

**25:9-10** *Then his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, facing Mamre, the field which Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth; there Abraham was buried with Sarah his wife*—although not the son of the covenant promise, Ishmael had his own promise from God (17:20) that the sons of Keturah did not have. So Ishmael was not one who was sent away to the land of the east. Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born, and Ishmael was 13. So at Abraham's death, Isaac is 75 (35 years after he married Rebekah, v. 19-20), and Ishmael is 88 (v. 17). It seems their children were born while Abraham was still alive.

**25:11** *It came about after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac; and Isaac lived by Beer-lahai-roi—where he lived when Rebekah arrived. It is the well God showed pregnant Hagar when she was sent out from Sarah (16:14). This is the well/water supply in the Negev wilderness.*

## **Ishmael**

**25:12-16** *Now these are the records of the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's maid, bore to Abraham; and these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, in the order of their birth: Nebaioth, the firstborn of Ishmael, and Kedar and Adbeel and Mibsam and Mishma and Dumah and Massa, Hadad and Tema, Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah. These are the sons of Ishmael and these are their names, by their villages, and by their camps; twelve princes according to their tribes—as promised by God (16:10; 17:20).*

**25:17** *These are the years of the life of Ishmael, one hundred and thirty-seven years; and he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people—unknown where he is buried. He died about 49 years after Abraham's death. [Isaac dies at 180 years (35:28-29), 56 years after Ishmael's death, 105 years after Abraham's death.]*

**25:18** *They settled from Havilah to Shur which is east of Egypt as one goes toward Assyria; he settled in defiance of all his relatives—Hagar, the Egyptian, was his mother, he lived across the Arabian Desert area between the Red Sea and the Euphrates River and Assyria.*

## **Isaac**

**25:19-20** *Now these are the records of the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham became the father of Isaac; and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel [Abraham's brother Nahor's son] the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban [who will re-appear in the narrative] the Aramean, to be his wife.*

— Compared to his father Abraham and his son Jacob, Isaac seems to be a passive rather than active link between the two.

**25:21** *Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was barren—as was Sarah, his mother many years ago, when Abraham prayed for Isaac's birth.*

— *and the LORD answered him and Rebekah his wife conceived*—although Sarah had to wait 90 years, Rebekah conceives after only about 20 years of marriage (vv. 19-20, 26). This is the main point of the narrative—descendants of the promised covenant seed.

**25:22** *But the children struggled together within her—she knew something was not right, this struggle between the two is indicative of the rest of the narrative also.*

— *and she said, "If it is so, why then am I this way?"*—is this an evil omen?

— *So she went to inquire of the LORD*—where and how she looked for this revelation is not recorded, so it is unknown. But maybe she asked Abraham, who is still alive another 15 years.

**25:23** *The LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples [nations?] will be separated from your body—twins, they will be as divided as they are when they are born*

— *And one people shall be stronger than the other*—but which one will be stronger?

— *And the older shall serve the younger*"—But if they are twins, how can one be older than the other? As the readers, we know what this means.

— There is no indication that she made Jacob aware of this prophecy.

**An Application**—Romans 9:10-12 says, when Rebekah conceived twins, by Isaac, “...*though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God’s purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, ‘The older will serve the younger.’*” It was totally God’s choice, not Rebekah’s, not Isaac’s, not the twins.’ It seems if God chose based on works and character, He would not have chosen Jacob (or Esau).

**25:24** *When her days to be delivered were fulfilled*—answer to the prayer of v. 21

— *behold, there were twins in her womb*—fulfilled prophecy, in answer to her prayer

**25:25** *Now the first came forth red, all over like a hairy garment; and they named him Esau*—meaning “hairy one.” Red hair or red skin? His descendants, the Edomites, means “reddish.”

**25:26** *Afterward his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau’s heel*—

— *so his name was called Jacob*—which means “he clutches the heel” or “supplants.” It alludes to the fact of Jacob’s deceptive nature, and grabbing what he wants.

— *and Isaac was sixty years old when she gave birth to them*, 20 years after the marriage (v. 20)

**25:27** *When the boys grew up*—their different characters, suggested at birth, begin to be apparent

— *Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the field*—open spaces, outside, rough and tough

— *but Jacob was a peaceful man, living in tents*—stay-at-home, quiet (but planning strategy?)

**25:28** *Now Isaac loved [chooses] Esau, because he had a taste for game*—Esau’s nature and occupation were favored by Isaac because of his taste for food! Seemingly unaware of Esau’s lack of interest in his birthright. But that had to be somewhat suspected (at least to Jacob) before this incident or else Jacob would not know what to do to tempt Esau. In the end, both Isaac and Esau made choices because of the taste of food.

— *but Rebekah loved [chooses] Jacob*—obviously, he was home where she was, in her world

**25:29** *When Jacob had cooked stew*—seems strange that Jacob cooks the stew, but it is part of plot

— *Esau came in from the field and he was famished*—he was a “skillful hunter,” yet he could not find game at this time.

**25:30** *and Esau said to Jacob, “Please let me have a swallow of that red stuff there, for I am famished”*—starving, to the point of death—obviously an exaggeration

— *Therefore his name was called Edom*—again, the word sounds like Heb. “red” [èdōm]

**25:31** *But Jacob said, “First sell me your birthright”*—it is not known specifically what the birthright meant here, as it varies with times and places. But it was a special right to rule over the entire family. And Jacob was willing to go to great lengths to obtain it from his brother. Notice Jacob is not deceptive here. He explains exactly what he wants. He knew what was of value and went after it.

**25:32** *Esau said, “Behold, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?”*—Esau was willing to trade a future promise of blessing in favor of the sensual enjoyment of the present.

**An Application:** Reminding us of Eve, who *saw that the tree was good for food, and it was a delight to the eyes...* (Gen 3:6). John warns us about the *lust of the eyes...is not from the Father, but is from the world* (1 John 2:16). Be careful what you look at.....

**25:33** *And Jacob said, “First swear to me”*—Jacob takes advantage of Esau’s weakness

— *so he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob*—Esau willingly gave up his birthright

**25:34** *Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew*—and Jacob gave Esau some soup!

— *and he ate and drank, and rose and went on his way*—unaware of the significance

— *Thus Esau despised his birthright*—the conclusion of the author (and God) is the Scriptures judge and condemn the conduct of Esau. He treated with irreverence something of great worth (the covenant promises). In doing so, he also despises Yahweh.

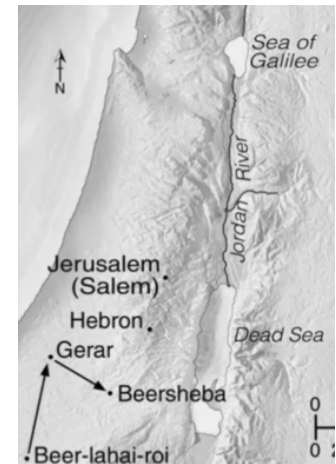
## Genesis 26

**26:1** *Now there was a famine in the land, besides the previous famine that had occurred in the days of Abraham*—when Abraham and Sarah went down to Egypt (12:10). The author is making a connection between these two passages. A famine meant they needed a well for water.

— *So Isaac went to Gerar*—toward the Mediterranean coast, where Abraham had made a treaty with Abimelech for the well there (21:32-33).

— *to Abimelech king*—Abimelech is a king title, like Pharaoh in Egypt and Caesar in Rome

— *of the Philistines*—The later evil Philistines of Gath, Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Ekron arrived in Canaan about 1200 B.C. There is evidence of some Philistines at the time of Abraham, but they were peace-loving and centered around Abimelech.



**26:2** *The LORD appeared to him and said, “Do not go down to Egypt; stay in the land of which I shall tell you*—God gave a direct command to Isaac to not go to Egypt, as Abraham had.

**26:3** *“Sojourn in this land*—God wanted Isaac to stay in the land of promise. But does that mean Canaan or Gerar?

— *and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands*—This is the first promise made directly to Isaac, but repeats the promises made to Abraham, which he probably had told to Isaac.

— *and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham*—the Abrahamic Covenant given in 12:1; 22:2. Isaac is not to follow his father physically to Egypt, but he is to follow him spiritually, in obeying the commandments of Yahweh.

**26:4-5** *“I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven*—though Isaac has only 2 sons

— *and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants*—as a descendant of Abraham, the promise of descendants is now made to Isaac. In fact, he saw more of the promise fulfilled than Abraham had.

— *all the nations of the earth shall be blessed because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws*—the covenant promises were already in effect in Abraham’s obedience. But Isaac is not the patriarch Abraham was!!

**26:6** *So Isaac lived in Gerar*—because of the peace covenant Abraham had made (21:22f), it was a much safer place than Egypt had been.

**26:7** *When the men of the place asked about his wife, he said, “She is my sister,” for he was afraid to say, “my wife,” thinking, “the men of the place might kill me on account of Rebekah, for she is beautiful”*—Similar to Abraham both in Egypt and Gerar, Isaac said Rebekah was his sister for the same reason Abraham had about Sarah. Worried about his own life.

**26:8** *It came about, when he had been there a long time*—the famine was over?

— *that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out through a window, and saw, and behold, Isaac was caressing his wife Rebekah*—this is different than Abraham’s situation, where Sarah had been taken into both the kings’ harems, but God kept them from touching her. Now, with Isaac, Rebekah is with him, and he was caressing her in a way that showed she was his wife, and it is obvious that he had lied to Abimelech.

**26:9** *Then Abimelech called Isaac and said, “Behold, certainly she is your wife! How then did you say, ‘She is my sister’?”*—why did Isaac lie? Right was on Abimelech’s side, not Isaac’s.

— *And Isaac said to him, “Because I said, ‘I might die on account of her’”*—because the men of Gerar might kill Isaac, then have the widow Rebekah. It is interesting that a brother is thought to be more protection than a husband.

**26:10** *Abimelech said, “What is this you have done to us? One of the people might easily have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us”*—Abimelech had no intention of taking her into his harem, but he worried that one of his people would inappropriately touch her. He realizes the danger without God having to tell him in a dream.

**26:11** *So Abimelech charged all the people, saying, “He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death”*—so he commanded his people to not touch Rebekah. God had again protected the seed of promise, in spite of the patriarch’s bad decision, but in a very different way. We are not told whether Abimelech knows the Abraham event, some 80 years previously.

**26:12** *Now Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold*—this is the Shephelah area, between the hills and the flat coast. Even today, full of fields of crops. This is the only time one of the patriarchs is said to have sown and harvested crops.

— *And the LORD blessed him*—if he sowed 10 acres, he reaped the crops of 1,000 acres!! Blessing comes from staying in the promised land.

**26:13** *and the man became rich, and continued to grow richer until he became very wealthy*—in addition to the wealth he inherited from Abraham (25:5).

**26:14** *for he had possessions of flocks and herds and a great household, so that the Philistines envied him*—they were jealous. It has happened before and will happen later (30:1; 37:11).

**26:15** *Now all the wells which his father’s servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father*—had been seized in the days of Abraham, but Abimelech said he did not know about it and returned them to Abraham (21:25, 30). Now they were filled, not seized.

— *the Philistines stopped up by filling them with earth*—but Isaac would dig them again (v. 18)

**26:16** *Then Abimelech said to Isaac, “Go away from us, for you are too powerful for us.”*

**26:17** *And Isaac departed from there and camped in the valley of Gerar, and settled there*—away from the city.



**26:18** *Then Isaac dug again the wells of water which had been dug in the days of his father Abraham, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham; and he gave them the same names which his father had given them*—it is easier to re-dig the same well filled with dirt and/or debris than to dig new wells, which would be in hard ground.

**26:19-21** *But when Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found there a well of flowing water*—Isaac moved, but still needed wells of water

- *the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with the herdsmen of Isaac, saying, "The water is ours!" So he named the well Esek ["dispute"], because they contended with him.*
- *Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over it too, so he named it Sitnah [opposition].*

**26:22** *He moved away from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it*—he was moving more to the center of the land and away from the coastal area where the Philistines were

- *so he named it Rehoboth ["room"], for he said, "At last the LORD has made room for us,*
- *and we will be fruitful in the land"*—where he was to remain

**26:23** *Then he went up from there to Beersheba*—about halfway between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. Abraham lived there quite a while (21:31).

**26:24** *The LORD appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham*—this is God's new introduction, "Abraham's God"—forever after for the Jews

- *Do not fear, for I am with you*—Isaac's fear was only mentioned in verse 7
- *I will bless you, and multiply your descendants*—a repeat of verses 2-4
- *For the sake of My servant Abraham*"—the promise was made to Abraham, and God will keep His promise, no matter what Isaac, Jacob, or the Jews do.

**26:25** *So he built an altar there and called upon the name of the LORD (in worship), and pitched his tent there,* wanting to stay

- *and there Isaac's servants dug a well*—the depth of wells varies. They are dug until they reach a water supply below the surface. There is a well at the Beersheba tel, thought to be Abraham's.

**26:26** *Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar with his adviser—Ahuzzath and Phicol—the commander of his army*—but now without his army—this is a peace mission.

**26:27** *Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, since you hate me and have sent me away from you?"*—referring to the conflict about the wells, although Abimelech did not drive them away, but simply let them leave in peace. Isaac, rather than confronting Abimelech, had just moved on and dug more wells. He is not the fighter Abraham and Jacob were.

**26:28** *They said, "We see plainly that the LORD has been with you*—Isaac has grown very rich, AND, everywhere he dug a well, he got water!!

- *so we said, 'Let there now be an oath between us, even between you and us, and let us make a covenant with you.* It is interesting that the narrative begins with Isaac trying to survive in the territory of Gerar, but it ends with Isaac blessed in the land, and the men of Gerar coming to make peace with him.

**26:29-31** *that you will do us no harm, just as we have not touched you [i.e., his wife Rebekah] and have done to you nothing but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the LORD."*

- *Then he made them a feast, and they ate and drank*—to close the treaty
- *In the morning they arose early and exchanged oaths; then Isaac sent them away and they departed from him in peace.*

**26:32-33** *Now it came about on the same day*—the day he made peace, but did not go back to Gerar

- *that Isaac’s servants came in and told him about the well which they had dug, and said to him, “We have found water!!”*—blessed in the land
- *So he called it Shibah; therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day.*

Isaac spends most of his life in the shadow of other members of his family, either of his father Abraham or his sons Jacob and Esau. He is timid, fearful, prepared to lie and put his wife at risk to save himself, yet despite Isaac’s failings, the Lord is with him, protects him, blesses him, and makes him extremely wealthy. After chapter 27, he disappears from the story until a brief mention of his death in 35:27-28.

**26:34** [When Isaac was 100 years old (25:26)] *When Esau was forty years old he married* (the same age Isaac was when he got married (25:20) *Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite*—but unlike Isaac who married a woman from Abraham’s family, Esau marries two Hittite women (a sub-group of the Canaanites (10:15; 23:3; 36:2). Is this a result of Isaac not finding a wife for him or a deliberate rejection of the family by Esau?

**26:35** *and they brought grief to Isaac and Rebekah*—how? We do not know. But already Isaac’s seeming indifference and Esau’s rebelliousness are causing grief. This gives the background of what happens next, in chapter 27.

## Genesis 27

Moses, the author, makes the narrative very suspenseful, right to the end, where Jacob is leaving “*at the same moment as*” his brother returned from the hunt.

**27:1** *Now it came about, when Isaac was old* (137, though he did not die until 43 years later at 180 years [35:28]) *and his eyes were too dim to see*—which is why Jacob could now trick his father. Isaac was 40 when he married (25:20), he prayed for children for 20 years (25:26). Therefore this chapter 27, twins Esau and Jacob are 137-60 = 77 years old.

- *that he called his older son Esau and said to him, “My son”* —his favorite son (25:28). Throughout this chapter, Esau is called “his son” and Jacob is called “her son.”
- *And he said to him, “Here I am.”*

**27:2** *Isaac said, “Behold now, I am old and I do not know the day of my death*—We have to wonder at his intentions—he wants to make sure to bless Esau and to give nothing to Jacob (perhaps before any other mishap, like the birthright, happens). Surely, the issue of the birthright is known—and he does not like it. It all is supposed to belong to Esau—his favorite!!

- Also, the grief Esau caused his parents (26:35), makes this a surprise that Isaac wants to bless Esau with the covenant promises. Isaac knows how important it was that Abraham arranged for him to not marry a Canaanite—so how could the promise go to Esau, married to 2 Canaanites? Isaac was willing to take the blessing of God, but not willing to obey the commandments.

- Also, the readers and Rebekah know (but does Isaac know?) of the prophecy God made to Rebekah when the babies were still in her womb—the older will serve the younger. We know Isaac does not want that—though already Jacob has the birthright, as predicted.

**27:3-4** “*Now then, please take your gear, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me; and prepare a savory dish for me*—his sensuality is more powerful than his theology [Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary*] This is like Esau eating before selling his birthright. Isaac and Esau are much alike, maybe why Esau is Isaac’s favorite. A lot is riding on food!!!

- *such as I love*—suggests his bondage to his appetite
- *and bring it to me that I may eat, so that my soul may bless you before I die*—so we have Isaac’s will vs. God’s and Rebekah’s!! Why does he need to eat a meal before the blessing?

**27:5** *Rebekah was listening while Isaac spoke to his son Esau*—so she knows Isaac’s plan

- *So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game to bring home*—as Isaac requested

**27:6** *Rebekah said to her son Jacob*—notice how much of what happens is Rebekah’s doing. She overheard Isaac, she planned what to do, she got Jacob to go along with her plan, she cooked the meal, she gave Jacob Esau’s clothes to wear, and put goat hair on Jacob’s hands. She even wants the curse to be on her if they are found out.

- “*Behold, I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, saying*—could she not even call Esau her son? Of course, she knows that Jacob tricked Esau into giving him the birthright...

**27:7** “*Bring me some game and prepare a savory dish for me, that I may eat, and bless you in the presence of the LORD before my death*’—How much time? While Esau is hunting and making dish. The plan? To make Isaac think Jacob is really Esau. The object? To get the blessing.

**27:8** “*Now therefore, my son, listen to me as I command you*—Rebekah’s plan. She had God’s promise (when she was pregnant), but did not trust God to perform His Word. She had to make it happen, in a sinful way.

**An Application:** You cannot do God’s will in a sinful way. If it is sin, it is not God’s will. The end does not justify the means.

**27:9** “*Go now to the flock and bring me two choice young goats from there*—for meat

- *that I may prepare them as a savory dish for your father, such as he loves*—Rebekah can prepare it the way Isaac loves, so he will not notice the meat difference. Isaac will be convinced he is speaking to Esau, so if the dish tastes a bit different, it will not matter.

**An Application:** If a person is convinced something is true, real truth will not matter or even be suspected. “*The first to plead his case seems just, until another comes and examines him*” (Prov 18:17). Isaac will, in the end, realize it was a deception and not the truth (v. 35).

**27:10** “*Then you shall bring it to your father, that he may eat, so that he may bless you before his death*”—sounds like a simple plan to Rebekah

**27:11** *Jacob answered his mother Rebekah, “Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man and I am a smooth man*—But Jacob immediately is aware of a problem—he will be found out...

**27:12** “*Perhaps my father will feel me*—because Jacob knows his voice is not like Esau’s

- *then I will be as a deceiver in his sight, and I will bring upon myself a curse and not a blessing*—He agrees with Rebekah’s aim to get the blessing, but is worried the whole scheme will backfire, and he will be cursed instead.

**27:13** *But his mother said to him, “Your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice,* later, the blessing is not transferable (v. 35), so how could the curse be transferable?

**An Application:** Each person will have the consequences of their own choice (called “free will”). No one (or parent) can take that consequence in place of them. Although the consequences often overflow to the parent (Rebekah will not see Jacob the rest of her life). It is the miracle of our salvation, that Jesus Christ took the consequences of our sin on Himself (2 Cor 5:21).

— *and go, get them for me*—there is a sense of urgency. Do not know when Esau will return.

**27:14-16** *So he went and got them, and brought them to his mother; and his mother made savory food such as his father loved*—so he tastes the food he loves

— *Then Rebekah took the best garments of Esau her elder son, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son*—he smells the clothes of Esau

— *And she put the skins of the young goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck*—the goats come to the rescue again!! He feels the hairy neck. Goats have hair, not fur.

**27:17-19** *She also gave the savory food and the bread, which she had made, to her son Jacob. Then he came to his father and said, “My father”*—identifying him as his son, but which?

— *And he said, “Here I am. Who are you, my son?”*—Isaac seems already suspicious at first, because he got there so quickly (v. 20).

— *Jacob said to his father, “I am Esau your firstborn*—an outright lie. Didn’t need to remind Isaac he was the firstborn—but it identifies the occasion, and how the firstborn got the blessing. Isaac wants the firstborn, but he does not get him. [It is interesting that later (29:26), Jacob will be deceived and get the firstborn (Leah) that he does not want!!]

— *I have done as you told me*—he knows of Isaac’s assignment to Esau, but he is actually doing as Rebekah told him. Isaac did not tell him anything.

— *Get up, please, sit and eat of my game, that you may bless me*—he sounds like he wants Isaac to hurry up and eat—of course—before Esau actually gets there.

**27:20-24** *Isaac said to his son, “How is it that you have it so quickly, my son?”*—He is suspicious

— *And he said, “Because the LORD your God caused it to happen to me”*—God will put things in Jacob’s life (like the ladder to heaven, wrestling with God), so God will become Jacob’s Lord.

— *Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Please come close, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not”*—tension mounts—will Jacob be discovered or not?

— *So Jacob came close to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, “The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau”*—he does not see well, but he can hear...

— *He did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau’s hands*

— *so he blessed him. And he said, “Are you really my son Esau?” And he said, “I am.”* Lie.

**27:25-27** *So he said, “Bring it to me, and I will eat of my son’s game, that I may bless you.” And he brought it to him, and he ate; he also brought him wine and he drank*—dulls the senses.

— *Then his father Isaac said to him, “Please come close and kiss me, my son”*—a sign of affection from the son to the father. But here, it was another test.

— *So he came close and kissed him; and when he smelled the smell of his garments, he blessed him and said, “See, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field which the LORD has blessed*—in spite of Isaac’s hesitancy in identifying Jacob as Esau, he believed his senses.

**27:28-29** *Now may God give you of the dew of heaven, And of the fatness of the earth,*

*And an abundance of grain and new wine; May peoples serve you, And nations bow down to you; Be master of your brothers, And may your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be those who curse you, And blessed be those who bless you*”—This seems to be a combination of the blessing of the covenant promise and the prophecy God told Rebekah that the older would serve the younger. From Isaac's perspective, this is intended for Esau, but it is given to Jacob.

**An Application:** From Romans 9:11-13, we read God's perspective: *for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER."* Just as it is written, *"JACOB I LOVED [chose], BUT ESAU I HATED [did not choose]."* So we understand that God chose Jacob instead of the firstborn Esau. However, God did not choose for it to happen through deceit. The end does not justify the means. In fact, the deceit resulted in Jacob fleeing for his life, and Rebekah never seeing him again.

**27:30-31** *Now it came about, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob*—the plot worked.

Jacob has the birthright AND the blessing!! And just in time.....

- *and Jacob had hardly gone out from the presence of Isaac his father*—unknown to him, Esau was close to stopping the blessing
- *that Esau his brother came in from his hunting*—for his birthright, he did not get any game. But now, he had a successful hunt—he realizes how important this is.
- *Then he also made savory food, and brought it to his father*—before, he ate Jacob's stew, but this time he made his own stew.
- *and he said to his father, "Let my father arise and eat of his son's game, that you may bless me"*—again, the object was to get the blessing

**27:32** *Isaac his father said to him, "Who are you?" And he said, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esau"*—almost a repeat of what Jacob has said, reminding Isaac it was "blessing" time.

**27:33** *Then Isaac trembled violently*—extreme anger and trembling because his favorite son did not receive the blessing

- *and said, "Who was he then that hunted game and brought it to me, so that I ate of all of it before you came, and blessed him? Yes, and he shall be blessed"*—Isaac has blessed some unknown, and that blessing cannot be revoked.

**27:34** *When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry*—Heb. he "screamed" in distress

- *and said to his father, "Bless me, even me also, O my father!"*—

**27:35** *And he said, "Your brother came deceitfully*—Isaac realizes all the deceit Jacob did. Does he know about Rebekah's hand in all this? We don't know. He does not call Jacob his son.

- *and has taken away your blessing*—but it cannot be undone or transferred

**27:36** *Then he said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob, for he has supplanted me these two times?"*—as his name indicated (25:26), "Jacob" means "one who takes by the heel or supplants."

- *He took away my birthright* (25:21-34)—No! Esau gave it to Jacob, Jacob did not take it.
- *and behold, now he has taken away my blessing*—Esau has lost everything, and his brother Jacob has gained everything.
- *And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?"*—of course not. Isaac did not know he would need an additional blessing because he thought his first blessing was for Esau!

**27:37** *But Isaac replied to Esau, “Behold, I have made him [Jacob] your master, and all his relatives I have given to him as servants; and with grain and new wine I have sustained him—* as prophesied by God to Rebekah (25:23).

- *Now as for you then, what can I do, my son?”* —What is left to do for Esau? The blessing of Jacob is actually a curse for Esau—he will be the “relative/servant” to Jacob.

**27:38** *Esau said to his father, “Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father” So Esau lifted his voice and wept—*too late he recognizes all he lost.

**An Application:** *See to it...that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears (Heb 12:15-17).* Some things cannot be changed.

**27:39-40** *Then Isaac his father answered and said to him [Was this intended by Isaac to be a “curse” on Jacob? Or did he not even think of this until Esau asked about it?]*

- *“Behold, away from the fertility of the earth shall be your dwelling, And away from the dew of heaven from above—*to Jacob, Isaac said, “May God give you of the fatness of the earth” (v. 28), but now for Esau, it is “away” from the fertility of the earth. The Edomites (Esau’s descendants) live in the mountains of Edom, east of the Dead Sea—away from fertility, one of the most barren mountainous countries in the world
- *By your sword you shall live—*the prophecy book Obadiah is written against the Edomites because they rejoiced over Babylon conquering Jerusalem.
- *And your brother you shall serve—*as prophesied by God to Rebekah when she was pregnant
- *But it shall come about when you become restless, That you will break his yoke from your neck”*—but it would only be temporary because Israel would again conquer them. The whole Old Testament and inter-testament time records this continual path: revolt, reconquest, servitude.

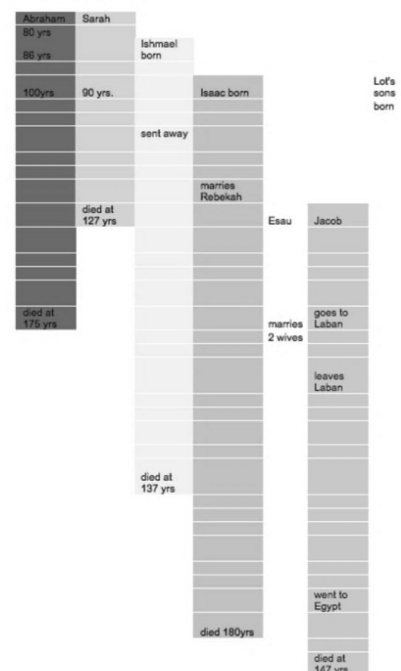
**27:41** *So Esau bore a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him; and Esau said to himself (but God knew what he was thinking, and author Moses tells us)*

- *“The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob”*—he talked about it (v 42), he did not just think about it. Reminding us of Cain killing his brother Abel, for similar reasons—because Abel and Jacob received God’s blessing—and Cain and Esau did not.

**27:42-45** *Now when the words of her elder son Esau were reported to Rebekah, she sent and called her younger son Jacob, and said to him, “Behold your brother Esau is consoling himself concerning you by planning to kill you—*not caring what God would want

**An Application—** “consoling himself” is not good. It is feeling sorry for yourself. Pity party! Jesus said, *If anyone wishes to come after Me, he just deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me”* (Matt 16:24). Our choice: feel sorry for myself or deny myself and follow Christ.

*Now therefore, my son, obey my voice, and arise, flee to Haran, to my brother Laban! Stay with him a few days, until your brother’s*



*fury subsides, until your brother's anger against you subsides and he forgets what you did to him. Then I will send and get you from there. Why should I be bereaved of you both in one day?"*—Rebekah hears Esau's plan of anger, revenge, even killing of Jacob, so she devises another plan. She is looking to protect Jacob, but the covenant promise will come through Abraham's Shemite relatives, not through the Canaanites, whom Esau had married.

**27:46** *Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am tired of living because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob takes a wife from the daughters of Heth, like these, from the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?"* She does not mention Esau's plan of revenge, but used the marriages as the excuse for Jacob to go to Haran. Probably she died before Jacob returned to the land, as she is not mentioned. She thought he would just be gone a short time, but he ended up being there for over 20 years.

## **Genesis 28**

**28:1** *So Isaac called Jacob and blessed him*—even Isaac cannot undo the blessing he already made to Jacob.

— *and charged him, and said to him, "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan—* this is the command of the covenant promise (17:19). When Noah left the ark, he said, "*Blessed be the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant...*" (9:27). It was also what Rebekah desired.

**28:2** *"Arise, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's [Rebekah] father; and from there take to yourself a wife from the daughters of Laban your mother's brother—*This is the area of Haran, some 400 miles or so to the north, where they settled when they left Ur.

**28:3-4** *"May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples. May He also give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your descendants with you, that you may possess the land of your sojournings, which God gave to Abraham."* The Abrahamic Covenant is passed down to Jacob. He is the heir.

**28:5** *Then Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Paddan-aram to Laban, son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau—*Abraham (and his servant) were unaware of the situation with any of Abraham's relatives. But now, Jacob is sent specifically to his mother's brother Laban, to marry one of Laban's daughters.

**28:6-7** *Now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Paddan-aram to take to himself a wife from there, and that when he blessed him he charged him, saying, "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan," and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and had gone to Paddan-aram.* Jacob's motivation was to please both his parents.

**28:8-9** *So Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan displeased his father Isaac [even more than displeased—they were forbidden in the covenant (24:3-4)]; and Esau went to Ishmael[ites, Ishmael died at 137 years (25:17)] and married, besides the wives that he had [two Hittites (26:34-35), Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebaioth—so now there is a connection to Egypt, too. He does not mention his mother (as Jacob had)—and his relationship with his father has now deteriorated. He was his father's favorite (25:28). No longer.*

## God Appears

**28:10-11** *Then Jacob departed from Beersheba and went [north] toward Haran. He came to a certain place [Bethel—v. 19, about 75 miles] and spent the night there*—this is near where Abraham built an altar when he came into the land (12:8) and received the covenant promises.  
— *because the sun had set; and he took one of the stones of the place...put it under his head...lay down in that place*—to sleep. It seems to be out in the open.

**28:12** *He had a dream*—one of the ways God communicated to man before Jesus came

**An Application:** *God spoke long ago to the fathers...in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son* (Heb 1:1-2). So we do not look for God to speak to us in dreams. We read the Scriptures that tell us about Jesus. Dreams are different than visions (15:1), as dreams are when one is sleeping, visions when one is awake.

- *and behold, a ladder [a place of ascension] was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven*—the main point is it went from Jacob on earth to God in heaven.
- *and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it*—angels are often seen as intermediaries between God and what He wants done on earth.

**28:13-14** *And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, “I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants. Your descendants will also be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed”*—almost exactly 13:14-16. Both passages are also associated with the Bethel area. The covenant promise is reaffirmed to Jacob, as he flees.

**28:15** *“Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go*—additional promise from God that He will be with Jacob as he leaves the land of promise

- *and will bring you back to this land*—and God will bring him back to this promised land
- *for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you*—to bring him safely back to the land.

**28:16** *Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it”*—this land was the land of promise. But God has promised to be with Jacob where he is going, too.

**28:17** *He was afraid*—when confronted with a holy God, like Isaiah said, *“Woe is me...because I am a man of unclean lips”* (Isaiah 6:1-7).

- *and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God* [“Bethel” means “house of God”]
- *and this is the gate of heaven”*—access to the presence of God in heaven. Notice he is not having a conversation with God. God is doing all the talking.

## Jacob’s Vow

**28:18-19** *So Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on its top*—a memorial, a sacred witness. He does it again when he returns to the land (35:14-15).

- *He called the name of that place [area, not city] Bethel; however, previously the name of the city had been Luz.*



- **28:20-22** *Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, and will give me food to eat and garments to wear—God had just promised him He would do that very thing (v. 15).*
- *and I return to my father’s house in safety, then the LORD will be my God—*Jacob’s promise to God
- *“This stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God’s house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You”*—a sacred thank offering, like Abraham gave Melchizedek.

**An Observation:** When reading this, it is almost a surprise to Jacob that God would be with him and the covenant promise was his. So far in his life, the seed of promise went from Abraham to Isaac—but it seems that Isaac surely intended it go to his favorite son Esau—but it didn’t. So we are left to wonder what, if anything, Isaac did or said to prepare Jacob to inherit the covenant. When he sent Jacob away, he sent him with the covenant promise (vv. 3-4), but Jacob now understood that covenant was with the all-powerful God—and it included him!!

## Genesis 29

### Jacob Arrives in Haran

**29:1** *Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the sons of the east—*At Bethel, Jacob was fleeing from Esau. But now, he is looking for his bride, and God directed him to the right place, though Jacob does not seem to reflect on God’s guidance or promise to be with him. There is no prayer, as Abraham’s servant had prayed (24:27), who was looking for direction. Jacob was looking for Laban.

**29:2-3** *He looked, and saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep were lying there beside it, for from that well they watered the flocks. Now the stone on the mouth of the well was large. When all the flocks were gathered there, they would then roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the mouth of the well—*the well Abraham’s servant found had jars and a trough (24:20), and watered camels. This well, has a stone covering, and the sheep gathered around it. Not clear exactly how it worked.

**29:4** *Jacob said to them, “My brothers, where are you from?” And they said, “We are from Haran”*—he is at the right area. He most likely asked that question at other places, too.

**29:5** *He said to them, “Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?”* In contrast to the servant who had to ask Rebekah who her family was. As directed by his parents (27:43; 28:2), Jacob’s primary concern was to find his uncle Laban. Three times he mentions Laban in verse 10,  
 — *And they said, “We know him”*—the family has been in the area for a long time.

**29:6** *And he said to them, “Is it well with him?” And they said, “It is well—*  
 —*and here is Rachel his daughter coming with the sheep”*—ask her about Laban, may take a while for her to get there with the sheep.

**29:7** *He said, “Behold, it is still high day; it is not time for the livestock to be gathered. Water the sheep, and go, pasture them”*—sounds like he wants the shepherds out of there.

**29:8** *But they said, “We cannot, until all the flocks are gathered, and they roll the stone from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep”*—the narrator had already explained that in verse 3.

The issue was the large stone. When all the sheep were there (led by some of the women) all the shepherds would remove the stone for everyone—implying Jacob was not one of them.

**29:9** *While he was still speaking with them*—Jacob talking to the shepherds. As soon as Rachel arrives, the shepherds pass out of the narrative. We are not told what they are thinking or doing.

- *Rachel came with her father's sheep*—they are not her sheep but her father's sheep. Jacob was looking for Laban, so the narrative keeps stressing these are Laban's sheep.
- *for she was a shepherdess*—she worked outside (and with stinky animals?) Was she “swarthy” from working outside, like Solomon's bride (Song of Sol 1:6)?

**29:10** *When Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother*—three times in this verse he mentions “Laban his mother's brother”—it was his goal. Now he is here and found him.

- *and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother*—at this point, it is because the sheep belong to Laban, his mother's brother, not because of his attraction to Rachel.
- *Jacob went up and rolled the stone from the mouth of the well and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother*—he must have been strong to roll the stone that took a number of shepherds together to do. In Genesis 24, it was Rebekah who demonstrated her great quality by watering Abraham's camels. Now it was Rebekah's son who did so by watering Rachel's sheep.

**29:11** *Then Jacob kissed Rachel* [surely introduced himself first!], *and lifted his voice and wept*—again, the connection to finding Laban—his journey's end and possibly a wife.

**29:12** *Jacob told Rachel that he was a relative of her father and that he was Rebekah's son*—it seems likely they had not heard any word of Rebekah after she left with Abraham's servant. Isaac and Rebekah were married 20 years before the twins were born (25:26), and Jacob was about 40 years old when he deceived Isaac (26:34), so it has been at least 60 years since Rebekah left home.

- *and she ran and told her father*—Laban

**29:13** *So when Laban heard the news of Jacob his sister's son*—a positive beginning

- *he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his house*—he may be also remembering when he had met Abraham's servant, all the jewelry gifts he gave Rebekah—but here is Jacob—with no gifts or money!!
- *Then he related to Laban all these things*—probably just the relationship, not the whole Esau saga. But perhaps that he was there to get a bride, much as his mom was a bride.

**29:14** *Laban said to him, “Surely you are my bone and my flesh”*—he accepted that Jacob was his relative, Rebekah's son (remember, he had not met Isaac—it was the servant who took Rebekah to Isaac hundreds of miles away).

- *And he stayed with him a month*—so he stayed at Laban's house, helping with the animals, obviously, demonstrating his shepherding ability. But Rebekah had told him to “*stay with him a few days*” (28:44)—maybe she remembered Laban's character and was warning Jacob.
- Also, he wouldn't mind staying away from any repercussions from Esau back home!
- Also, remember that the servant arranged to take Rebekah to Isaac the very next morning. But here, Jacob is staying a month, and no mention of any marriage so far.

**29:15** *Then Laban said to Jacob, “Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?”*—though a relative, Laban offered to pay him. But Jacob’s goal from the beginning was to get a bride—and Rachel was it!!!

**29:16** *Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel*—important to the narrative. Jacob, as the younger, had already supplanted Esau the older, so it is no problem for him to have the younger Rachel instead of Leah. But Laban will reverse that—and replace the younger with the older.

**29:17** *And Leah’s eyes were weak*—no one knows exactly what this really means, except to contrast it to Rachel’s beauty, and she definitely is always seen as less attractive in some way.

— *but Rachel was beautiful of form and face*—each of the patriarch wives were beautiful: Sarah (12:11), Rebekah (24:15-16), and Rachel (29:17).

**29:18** *Now Jacob loved Rachel, so he said*—after just a month. Seems an easy choice to him.

—*“I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel”*—probably because he had no dowry to pay for a bride [although back home, he was very wealthy, having inherited all Abraham’s and Isaac’s fortunes!! He evidently did not come with the jewelry Abraham’s servant had—and he did not brag on his fortune as Abraham’s servant had (24:22, 35).]

**29:19** *Laban said, “It is better that I give her to you than to give her to another man; stay with me”*—Is Laban already scheming? He does not say who “her” is. Jacob means Rachel, but Laban may already be meaning Leah.

**29:20** *So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her*—It cannot get any better than this! But it can get worse!!

**29:21** *Then Jacob said to Laban, “Give me my wife*—no “please,” it is a demand

— *for my time is completed*—it is now 7 years later

— *that I may go in to her*—he has not been living with Rachel. The wedding has not occurred.

**29:22** *Laban gathered all the men of the place and made a feast*—a wedding feast—most likely with lots of drinking, too.

**29:23** *Now in the evening he [Laban] took his [unloved (v, 31)] daughter Leah, and brought her to him; and Jacob went in to her*—Jacob’s dream was turned into a nightmare. Jacob had deceived his own father and brother, and now he was the one being deceived by his mother’s brother. This time Jacob was the object of the deception. The bride was veiled, it was dark, after partying. Ripe for deception, especially if it was planned, as it was by Laban. The women participated in the deception (whether they agreed to it or not). Leah, getting married, but the only way to get a husband was to trick him, else he would not marry her. And Rachel, who loved Jacob, yet had to watch and think of him sleeping with her sister.

**29:24** *Laban also gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a maid*—she will soon be important in the narrative.

**29:25** *So it came about in the morning that, behold, it was Leah!* The day after—with no veil.

— *And he said to Laban, “What is this you have done to me?”*—What God said to Eve (3:13), and Pharaoh to Abraham (12:18), and Abimelech to Isaac (26:10).

— *Was it not for Rachel that I served with you? Why then have you deceived me?*” The deceiver has been deceived.

**An Application:** Jesus described deception as clothing: “*Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves*” (Matthew 7:15). Outward appearances can be very deceptive, they can even look godly—but dig deeper. What is behind those appearances? *Ravenous wolves*? Do not let outward appearances deceive you.

**29:26** *But Laban said, “It is not the practice in our place—remember, Laban and the relatives at Haran are not God-fearing people. They are pagans. God delivered Abraham away from them.*

— *to marry off the younger before the firstborn—*if that were really true, why did not he tell Jacob earlier during the seven years? Could he not find a husband for Leah? Or was marrying her to Jacob his plan all along?

**29:27** “*Complete the week of this one—the wedding week for Leah?*

— *and we will give you the other [Rachel] also for the service which you shall serve with me for another seven years.”*

**29:28** *Jacob did so and completed her week, and he gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife—*but this time he married Rachel before the seven years.

**29:29** *Laban also gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her maid—*another maid who will be important in the narrative.

**29:30** *So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and indeed he loved Rachel more than Leah—*but God saw that Leah was unloved (v. 31).

— *and he served with Laban for another seven years—*but they were not the joy of the first seven years (v. 20). These seven were filled with sorrow and bitter conflict among the women.

**29:31** *Now the LORD [Yahweh] saw that Leah was unloved, and He opened her womb, but Rachel was barren—*as we have observed in Genesis, being barren and having children are very important to the narrative. When *the Lord saw*, it means He is going to take some action. The origin of Israel will not be a work of nature but of the grace of God.

**29:32** *Leah conceived and bore a son and named him Reuben, for she said, “Because the LORD [Yahweh] has seen my affliction—*she thought she could know God’s motivation, to get Jacob to love her—but that was her motivation, not God’s. God was increasing the 12 tribes of Israel.

— *surely now my husband will love me—*but Jacob did not love Rachel because he wanted kids, so he would not love Leah for that reason either.

**29:33** *Then she conceived again and bore a son and said, “Because the LORD [Yahweh] has heard that I am unloved, He has therefore given me this son also.” So she named him Simeon—*Again, she thinks she knows God’s motivation, but she does not. It is true that God saw she was unloved. But God also knew that having kids would not make Jacob love her.

**29:34** *She conceived again and bore a son and said, “Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons.” Therefore he was named Levi—*why would this time have different results?

**29:35** *And she conceived again and bore a son and said, “This time I will praise the LORD [Yahweh].” Therefore she named him Judah*—Finally. Her motivation changed to praising God instead of manipulating her husband. The author Moses makes this distinction in God’s name.

- *Then she stopped bearing*—however, what Leah saw as a gift, Rachel saw as a curse to herself.

**An Application:** You cannot know what God is going or what His motivation is. “*How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!*” (Rom 11:33).

## Genesis 30

- 30:1** *Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children*—Leah has four children, so at least four years since the wedding. And Rachel still has no children.
- *she became jealous of her sister*—just wonder how many times Leah was jealous of Rachel’s beauty and the attention and love Jacob gave to Rachel (29:31).
  - *and she said to Jacob, “Give me children, or else I die”*—this desperate desire of the women is often expressed in the OT (v. 23; 1 Sam 1:6-8, 15-16; Prov 30:16).
- 30:2** *Then Jacob’s anger burned against Rachel*—because she thought he was responsible (of course, he could have not slept with Leah, but too late—there was the wedding night!!!)
- *and he said, “Am I in the place of God [Elohim], who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?”*—God had promised Jacob would have descendants, more numerous than the “dust of the earth,” but Rachel, Jacob’s intended wife, was barren, and it is God’s doing.
  - This pattern will be in the rest of Genesis: Leah’s son Judah vs. Rachel’s son Joseph (the tribes of Joseph’s two sons: Ephraim and Manasseh—the northern kingdom of Israel). Judah is ultimately given the place of prominence (throughout the rest of the OT—it is about the southern kingdom, the tribe of Judah; and David is King of Judah, and Jesus is of the tribe of Judah).
  - With a twist in the narrative, Jacob wanted Rachel as a wife, God wanted Leah to be his wife, Jacob wants to have Rachel’s sons, but Leah has the sons. And it is God’s doing.
  - Sarah’s and Rebekah’s reactions in similar situations seem mild compared to Rachel’s, and they waited a lot more years (16:2; 25:21), but then they were not competing with their sister.
- 30:3** *She said, “Here is my maid Bilhah*—given to her by Laban at her wedding (29:29).
- *go in to her that she may bear on my knees that through her I too may have children*”—quoted from Sarah in 16:2. Not waiting for God to act (that did not work out so good when Sarah did that with Hagar!!)
- 30:4** *So she gave him her maid Bilhah as a wife, and Jacob went in to her*—Jacob seems to give in to the plans of women—first his mother deceiving his father, and now Rachel’s plan.
- 30:5-8** *Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. Then Rachel said, “God [Elohim] has vindicated me, and has indeed heard my voice and has given me a son.” Therefore she named him Dan. Rachel’s maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. Rachel said, “With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, and I have indeed prevailed.” And she named him Naphtali*—Rachel takes the credit for her ungodly solution to get two sons. (But less than Leah’s four sons).
- 30:9-13** *When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing, she took her maid Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. Leah’s maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son. Then Leah said, “How fortunate!” So she named him Gad. Leah’s maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. Then Leah said, “Happy*

*am I! For women will call me happy.” So she named him Asher.* Another ungodly solution—so now the score is Leah (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah); Bilhah (Dan, Naphtali); Zilpah (Gad, Asher).

**30:14** *Now in the days of wheat harvest Reuben* [probably a young teenager] *went and found mandrakes* [a Mediterranean plant that bears bluish flowers in winter and yellowish plum-sized fruit in summer] *in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah*—Fifty-five principle odoriferous constituents were identified in rather bizarre chemical composition of mandrake fruit aroma, which has a potential aphrodisiac effect of mandrake fragrance.



— *Then Rachel said to Leah, “Please give me some of your son’s mandrakes”*—it is believed to promote child-bearing (even practiced by Arabs today). They considered it a fertility drug, although what they do with it is unknown. Just the smell in the room?

**30:15** *But she* [Leah] *said to her* [Rachel], *“Is it a small matter for you to take my husband?”*—obviously, because Jacob loves Rachel, he would prefer to sleep with her, although he is Leah’s husband, as she was the first to marry him.

— *And would you take my son’s mandrakes also?”*—Leah thought that with the mandrakes, she could conceive again, but she gave the mandrakes to Rachel (so Rachel would conceive)

— *So Rachel said, “Therefore he may lie with you tonight in return for your son’s mandrakes”*—so Leah bought a night with her own husband for the price of the mandrakes.

**30:16** *When Jacob came in from the field in the evening, then Leah went out to meet him and said, “You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son’s mandrakes.” So he lay with her that night*—just as Jacob purchased the birthright for a pot of stew (25:29-34), so also Leah purchased with mandrakes the right to more children by Jacob.

**30:17** *God gave heed to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son*—But Rachel still has no son, in spite of the mandrakes, because it is God who causes Leah to have another child.

**30:18** *Then Leah said, “God [Elohim] has given me my wages because I gave my maid to my husband.” So she named him Issachar*—Leah seems to now attribute her son Issachar to her own wise decision because she gave her maid to Jacob. She has wandered far from when she had her fourth son Judah and said, in 29:35, *This time I will praise the LORD* [Yahweh].

**30:19** *Leah conceived again and bore a sixth son to Jacob*—

**30:20** *Then Leah said, “God [Elohim] has endowed me with a good gift*—Leah’s jealousy and fighting over Jacob has affected her. She does not seem like the same person.

— *now my husband will dwell with me*—first Leah wanted Jacob to love her. Then she wanted him to be attached to her. Now, because she has born 6 sons, she wants Jacob to live with her. With Rachel selling a night with Jacob for some mandrakes, it seems he was probably dwelling with Rachel.

— *because I have borne him six sons*—this becomes half of the tribes of Israel.

— *So she named him Zebulun*— “dwelling”

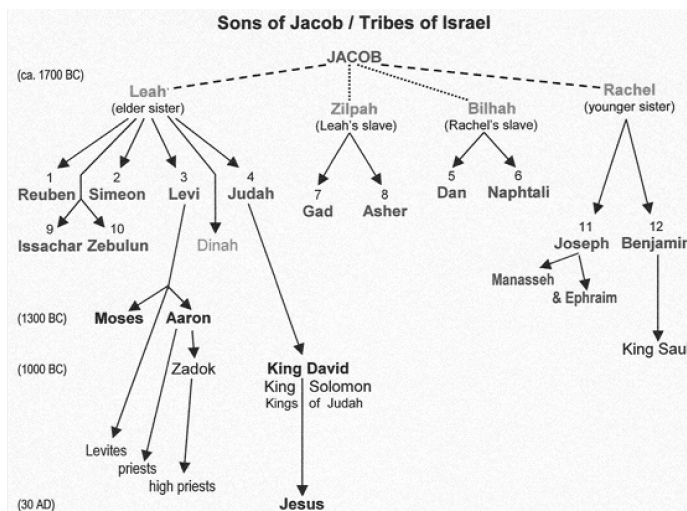
**An Application:** From earth’s perspective, we may feel sorry for Leah, but God has a different perspective. Leah was the first and true wife. It is Leah who gives birth to Levi (the tribe of priests) and Judah (the tribe of the kings, including David and Jesus). And it is Leah who was buried with

Jacob in the tomb of the patriarchs of Abraham and Sarah, and Isaac and Rebekah (Genesis 49:31). What might seem “unfair” to us today, God can use to bring glory to Himself. We have the short view, He has the long view.

**30:21** *Afterward she bore a daughter and named her Dinah*—Jacob had other daughters (37:35; 46:7), but Dinah is key to the narrative in chapter 34, when they enter the land.

**30:22-24** *Then God [Elohim] remembered Rachel, and God gave heed to her and opened her womb. So she conceived and bore a son and said, “God has taken away my reproach.” She named him Joseph, saying, “May the LORD [Yahweh] give me another son”*—she will have another son, but it will cost her life, and she will not see the sons grow up.

- There was a definite order to the wives, as is illustrated when they approach Esau, and Jacob sends the maids and their kids first, then Leah, then Rachel (33:2).



**30:25-27** *Now it came about when Rachel had borne Joseph*—these 11 sons and 1 daughter are born in the second 7 years Jacob worked to marry Rachel (29:20, 27). This fits if you consider their pregnancies rather than actual births.

- *that Jacob said to Laban, “Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my own country*—back to the promised land
- *“Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you (for 14 years), and let me depart; for you yourself know my service which I have rendered you.”*
- *But Laban said to him, “If now it pleases you, stay with me; I have divined that the LORD has blessed me on your account”*—For sure, Laban has gotten richer since Jacob arrived. As an outsider, he recognizes that God has blessed Jacob, which we know is via the covenant.
- *He continued, “Name me your wages, and I will give it”*—Laban is willing to pay Jacob to stay with him—whatever wages Jacob would ask will be small compared to what Laban has already received because Jacob is working for him.
- 30:29-30** *But he said to him, “You yourself know how I have served you and how your cattle have fared with me. “For you had little before I came and it has increased to a multitude, and the LORD has blessed you wherever I turned*—Jacob agrees. Laban has done very well.
- *But now, when shall I provide for my own household also?”*—but Jacob has nothing but his wives and children.

**30:31-33** *So he said, “What shall I give you?” And Jacob said, “You shall not give me anything*—Jacob already worked the agreed 14 for his wives and children.

- *If you will do this one thing for me, I will again pasture and keep your flock*—he will keep taking care of the animals—it’s Jacob’s idea
- *let me pass through your entire flock today*—so there would be no question at a later date

- *removing from there every speckled and spotted sheep and every black one among the lambs and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and such shall be my wages.*
- *“So my honesty will answer for me later, when you come concerning my wages”—*they evidently did not brand the animals, but the speckled and spotted would be like a brand
- *Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, if found with me, will be considered stolen”—*so just at a glance, the flocks could be separated, and if there was one not striped or spotted, Jacob would be accused of stealing.

**30:34-35** *Laban said, “Good, let it be according to your word”—*Laban agrees. Since striped and spotted animals were rare, Laban thinks he got the good end of this bargain.

- *So he removed on that day the striped and spotted male goats and all the speckled and spotted female goats, every one with white in it, and all the black ones among the sheep, and gave them into the care of his sons—*it is Jacob’s idea, but this verse changes to Laban, who removes the spotted and striped animals and put them in the care of Laban’s sons (who are older, the ages of Leah and Rachel—the oldest of Jacob’s children is Reuben, who is 7). Jacob was taking care of Laban’s flocks (v. 36).

**30:36** *And he put a distance of three days’ journey between himself and Jacob—*so Jacob could not do selective breeding, and so Jacob’s flocks would not increase mating with Laban’s flocks

- *and Jacob fed the rest of Laban’s flocks—*he continued to work for Laban’s flocks

**30:37-39** *Then Jacob took fresh rods of poplar and almond and plane trees, and peeled white stripes in them, exposing the white which was in the rods. He set the rods which he had peeled in front of the flocks in the gutters, even in the watering troughs, where the flocks came to drink; and they mated when they came to drink. So the flocks mated by the rods, and the flocks brought forth striped, speckled, and spotted—*Jacob’s flocks increased

**30:40-42** *Jacob separated the lambs, and (1) made the flocks face toward the striped and all the black in the flock of Laban; and he put his own herds apart, and did not put them with Laban’s flock. (2) Moreover, whenever the stronger of the flock were mating, Jacob would place the rods in the sight of the flock in the gutters, so that they might mate by the rods; (3) but when the flock was feeble, he did not put them in; so the feebler were Laban’s and the stronger Jacob’s—*Jacob even got more spotted ones from Laban’s flocks

**30:43** *So the man became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks and female and male servants and camels and donkeys—*for six years (31:41). It was the blessing of the Abrahamic Covenant (28:14)—not the white rods, etc. Jacob arrived in Haran with nothing but the promise, but he leaves a wealthy man, with a huge family—promise fulfilled (31:9).

## Genesis 31

**31:1-2** *Now Jacob heard the words of Laban’s sons, saying, “Jacob has taken away all that was our father’s, and from what belonged to our father he has made all this wealth”—*the sons taking care of Jacob’s flocks (30:35), Jacob’s brothers-in-law, whose flocks were bigger than their own father Laban’s (which would be their future inheritance).

- *Jacob saw the attitude of Laban, and behold, it was not friendly toward him as formerly—*Laban (his father-in-law) himself was not friendly toward Jacob any more either



**31:3** *Then the LORD said to Jacob, “Return to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you”*—But returning is more difficult than leaving was. He left single, with nothing. But now he is returning with 4 wives, 11 children, and a lot of flocks.

**31:4-9** *So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to his flock in the field*—his wives, not the maids

- *and said to them, “I see your father’s attitude, that it is not friendly toward me as formerly, but the God of my father has been with me*—your father vs. God of my father!!
- *You know that I have served your father with all my strength*—Jacob’s integrity
- *Yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times*—Laban’s no-integrity
- *however, God did not allow him to hurt me*—he puts Laban in opposition to God, not Jacob!
- *If he spoke thus, ‘The speckled shall be your wages,’ then all the flock brought forth speckled; and if he spoke thus, ‘The striped shall be your wages,’ then all the flock brought forth striped*—even changing the conditions did not keep God from helping Jacob
- *Thus God has taken away your father’s livestock and given them to me*—Laban’s sons said Jacob did it (vv 1-2), but here, Jacob says God did it.

**31:10-13** *And it came about at the time when the flock were mating that I lifted up my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the male goats which were mating were striped, speckled, and mottled*—this dream seems to have occurred earlier in the narrative

- *Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, ‘Jacob,’ and I said, ‘Here I am.’*
- *He said, ‘Lift up now your eyes and see that all the male goats which are mating are striped, speckled, and mottled;*
- *for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you*—as in Genesis, when God “sees” something, it means He is going to do something about it. So He fixed the flocks.
- *‘I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar, where you made a vow to Me; now arise, leave this land, and return to the land of your birth’*—God said He would be with Jacob when he left the land (and blessed him with children and flocks) and will bring him back (28:15).

**31:14-16** *Rachel and Leah said to him, “Do we still have any portion or inheritance in our father’s house? Are we not reckoned by him as foreigners? For he has sold us, and has also entirely consumed our purchase price*—he treated them as servants, sold them like strangers (Jacob had to work 14 years for the price to marry them)

- *“Surely all the wealth which God has taken away from our father belongs to us and our children* (the spotted flocks, etc.); *now then, do whatever God has said to you”*—Jacob has their complete support to do whatever God has told him to do. They turned against Laban.

**31:17-21** *Then Jacob arose and put his children and his wives upon camels; and he drove away all his livestock and all his property which he had gathered, his acquired livestock which he had gathered in Paddan-aram, to go to the land of Canaan to his father Isaac.*

- *When Laban had gone to shear his flock*—the busiest time of the year, which is why Jacob could “sneak” away
- *then Rachel stole the household idols* [teraphim] *that were her father’s*—this nearly costs her her life (vv 32-35). This is usually a small idol, often used for divination (like a St. Christopher medal). The word occurs 15 times in the OT. The writer is careful to note that Jacob did not know this (v. 32). Why did she take it? We do not know her motivation. She was not the only one with idols, though. Later God told Jacob to have his household put away the foreign idols when they entered the Land, and they buried them near Shechem (35:1-4). They were entering God’s country, and there would be no idolatry.

- *And Jacob deceived Laban the Aramean by not telling him that he was fleeing*—again, the deceiver is deceiving.
- *So he fled with all that he had; and he arose and crossed the Euphrates River, and set his face toward the hill country of Gilead*—area east of the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River.

**31:22-23** *When it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled*—had been shearing sheep  
 — *then he took his kinsmen with him and pursued him a distance of seven days' journey, and he overtook him in the hill country of Gilead*—they could move much faster than Jacob's group

**31:24** *God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream of the night and said to him, "Be careful that you do not speak to Jacob either good or bad"*—as already mentioned in Genesis, God did speak to pagans in their dreams (Pharaoh, Abimelech, also Nebuchadnezzar, Pilate's wife). They always understood it to be the truth. They could tell it was God compared to other dreams.

**31:25-26** *Laban caught up with Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country, and Laban with his kinsmen camped in the hill country of Gilead*—east side of the Jordan River  
 — *Then Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done by deceiving me and carrying away my daughters [no, they are Jacob's wives] like captives of the sword?"*—he thinks Jacob has been unreasonable. But they are not captives, they came of their own free will (vv 14-16). Irony—these are the words Jacob spoke to Laban the morning after his wedding (29:25; see also 3:13; 4:10; 12:18; 20:9; 26:10). "What have you done..."

**31:27-29** *"Why did you flee secretly and deceive me, and did not tell me so that I might have sent you away with joy and with songs, with timbrel and with lyre*—yeah, like that would happen!!  
 — *and did not allow me to kiss my sons and my daughters? Now you have done foolishly.*  
 — *"It is in my power to do you harm, but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Be careful not to speak either good or bad to Jacob'*—so it really is not in his power!

**31:30-31** *"Now you have indeed gone away because you longed greatly for your father's house*—that makes some kind of sense to him, that Jacob would want to go to his home country  
 — *but why did you steal my gods?"*—Abraham's family in Ur were idol worshippers (Josh 24:14)  
 — *Then Jacob replied to Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force*—Jacob counterattacks, accusing Laban of wanting to steal his daughters.  
 — *"The one with whom you find your gods shall not live*—he is so convinced of the innocence of his group that without knowing it, Jacob has put a death sentence on his favorite wife—as the readers, the tension and suspense are heightened.  
 — *in the presence of our kinsmen [those who came with Laban?] point out what is yours among my belongings and take it for yourself*—even if something other than the teraphim  
 — *For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.*

**31:33** *So Laban went into Jacob's tent*—no idol—but the suspense grows with each tent  
 — *and into Leah's tent*—no idol  
 — *and into the tent of the two maids, but he did not find them.*  
 — *Then he went out of Leah's tent and entered Rachel's tent*—to our surprise—no idol!! Though we know she took it. Where did she hide it?

**31:34** *Now Rachel had taken the household idols and put them in the camel's saddle, and she sat on them*—but reason she gave was the lie.

— *And Laban felt through all the tent but did not find them.*

**31:35** *She said to her father, “Let not my lord be angry that I cannot rise before you, for the manner of women is upon me”*—the idol “god” is only saved by menstruation!! This would make it as unclean as it could be. It came near to functioning as a sanitary napkin!! Laban never would have dreamed that she would treat the idols in such an unclean manner. So Rachel deceives her own father—and, of course, Jacob, who was convinced the idols were not there.

**An Application:** How many women have used this as a reason to not do something?!? Just saying...

— *So he searched but did not find the household idols*—so Jacob is deceived.....

**An Application:** The New Testament commands us: “*Do not be deceived...*” (James 1:16). “*Do not be deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals*” (1 Cor 15:33). “*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap*” (Gal 6:7). “*deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ*” (2 Cor 11:13). “*the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons* (1 Tim. 4:1). The Old Testament has some good warnings also: “*the arrogance of your heart has deceived you*” (Obad 3), “*The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick*” (Jer 17:9). You are being deceived right this minute if you do not think these warnings are true for you!!!

**31:36** *Then Jacob became angry and contended with Laban*—and Jacob confronts Laban

— *and Jacob said to Laban, “What is my transgression? What is my sin that you have hotly pursued me?”*—Jacob is innocent. Laban cannot find a reason [sin] to pursue Jacob.

**31:37** *“Though you have felt through all my goods, what have you found of all your household goods?”*—No teraphim and no other goods stolen by Jacob

— *Set it here before my kinsmen and your kinsmen, that they may decide between us two*—kind of like a court—but Jacob goes beyond what he has with him now as he leaves, he goes into his experience these 20 years working for Laban. If anyone is “bad,” it is Laban, not Jacob!!

**31:38** *“These twenty years I have been with you; (1) your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried, (2) nor have I eaten the rams of your flocks. (3) That which was torn of beasts I did not bring to you; (4) I bore the loss of it myself. (5) You required it of my hand whether stolen by day or stolen by night*—Jacob took nothing of Laban’s flocks or herds.

**31:40** *“Thus I was: by day the heat consumed me and the frost by night, and my sleep fled from my eyes*—usually, the hotter the day, the colder the night, horrible working conditions—especially for a son-in-law!

**31:41** *“These twenty years I have been in your house; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters and six years for your flock, and you changed my wages ten times*—so he has been gone from the Land for 20 years. We do not know about the ten times his wages were changed.

**31:42** *“If the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had not been for me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God has seen my affliction and the toil of my hands, so He rendered judgment last night”*—Jacob has prospered in spite of Laban, not because of Laban. God has been the one who cared for Jacob.

**31:43** *Then Laban replied to Jacob, “The daughters are my daughters, and the children are my children, and the flocks are my flocks, and all that you see is mine. But what can I do this day*

*to these my daughters or to their children whom they have borne?*—But Laban still makes a claim on the family and the flocks, even Jacob says it is God who caused Jacob to prosper.

**31:44-49** *“So now come, let us make a covenant, you and I, and let it be a witness between you and me.” Then Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. Jacob said to his kinsmen, “Gather stones.” So they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there by the heap. Now Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed. Laban said, “This heap is a witness between you and me this day.” Therefore it was named Galeed [“witness”], and Mizpah [“watch”], for he said, “May the LORD watch between you and me when we are absent one from the other”—Laban could be referring to his experience when “your God” told him not to speak good or evil to Jacob (vv. 24-29), and that this pillar was a witness to that.*

**31:50** (1) *“If you mistreat my daughters, (2) or if you take wives besides my daughters, although no man is with us, see, God is witness between you and me.” Laban said to Jacob, “Behold this heap and behold the pillar which I have set between you and me. “This heap is a witness, and the pillar is a witness, that (3) I will not pass by this heap to you for harm, and (4) you will not pass by this heap and this pillar to me, for harm—Laban makes it sound like Jacob is the villain in the narrative, but it was actually Laban who mistreated his daughters, who gave Leah instead of Rachel, and who came after Jacob to do him harm!! But God, as the witness, stopped him. But this covenant is a truce. Laban will not come after Jacob, and Jacob will not come after Laban.*

**31:53** *“The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor (Abraham’s brother, Laban’s father, Rachel’s grandfather), the God of their father [Terah], judge between us”—Laban seems to cover all the gods he can think of, coming out of a family that worships idols (Josh 24:14).*

— *So Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac*—but Jacob swears only by “the fear of Isaac,” which we know as Yahweh Elohim.

**31:54** *Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain, and called his kinsmen to the meal; and they ate the meal and spent the night on the mountain—sacrifices often were followed by a meal*

**31:55** *Early in the morning Laban arose, and kissed his sons and his daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned to his place—*and Jacob continued back to the Promised Land.

On this trip, Jacob encounters Laban, Esau, and God Himself.

## **Genesis 32**

**32:1** *Now as Jacob went on his way—the greedy evil taskmaster Laban has turned his back and left. — the angels of God met him—*and the angels of God are welcoming him back into the Land, reminding him of the angels he saw on the ladder before he left the Land 20 years before.

**An Application:** This is a beautiful picture of our salvation, turning our back on the darkness of evil and being welcomed into the loving, peaceful arms of God. Or even it could be a dark experience of illness, etc. that also ends in the arms of God—even in heaven, when one day *“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes...no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain... (Rev 21:4).*

**32:2** *Jacob said when he saw them, “This is God’s camp.” So he named that place Mahanaim—* meaning “two camps.” It is a hill north of the Jabbok River, and east of the Jordan River, within sight of Canaan. At that same moment, Jacob saw God’s spiritual camp and the physical camp.

**An Application:** All Christians are living in these two camps. We are in our physical bodies, yet we also live in the spiritual realm. Everything we do, say, and think has spiritual meaning. Paul wrote, we need to *Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against...the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places* (Eph 6:11-12).

**32:3** *Then Jacob sent messengers before him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom—*Edom is outside of Canaan. It is along the southeastern shore of the Dead Sea. Edomites (means “red”) were descendants of Esau. Because Canaan is the land promised to Jacob, it seems obvious that Esau had to move outside the boundaries of Canaan.

**32:4** *He also commanded them saying, “Thus you shall say to my lord Esau: ‘Thus says your servant Jacob—*calling Esau “lord” and referring to himself as “servant” is obviously a sign of humility and reconciliation toward Esau.

— *“I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed until now—*it is where he has been for 20 years

**32:5** *I have oxen and donkeys and flocks and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight”’—*Jacob wants Esau to know that Jacob does not want anything from Esau, except to be reunited in peace.

**32:6** *The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, “We came to your brother Esau, and furthermore he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him”—*while we do not know Esau’s motivation, we can guess he was perhaps trying to show what a mighty prince he was (without the “blessing”), or just in case of a hostile reunion.

**32:7-8** *Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed—*Jacob is fearful—partly because of his own deception 20 years previously, and would Esau still be angry about that? 400 men! Wow!!

— *and he divided the people who were with him, and the flocks and the herds and the camels, into two companies for he said, “If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the company which is left will escape”—*Jacob has a plan to possibly escape if there is hostility

**32:9-12** *Jacob said, “O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac—*the God of the Covenant Promise to his father and grandfather, as God introduced Himself at Bethel in 28:13.

— *LORD, who said to me—*at Bethel, when Jacob left home, and God spoke to him (28:12-17).

— *‘Return to your country and to your relatives, and I will prosper you’—*God said He would be with Jacob when he left, but He would also bring him back to the Promised Land (28:15). So Jacob is here, in this predicament, because he was doing what God had told him to do.

— *I am unworthy of all the lovingkindness and of all the faithfulness which You have shown to Your servant—*God had told him, “*I am with you and will keep you wherever you go*” (28:15).

— *for with my staff only I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two companies—*God delivered him these 20 years, from the evil of Laban, even when Laban had just chased him.

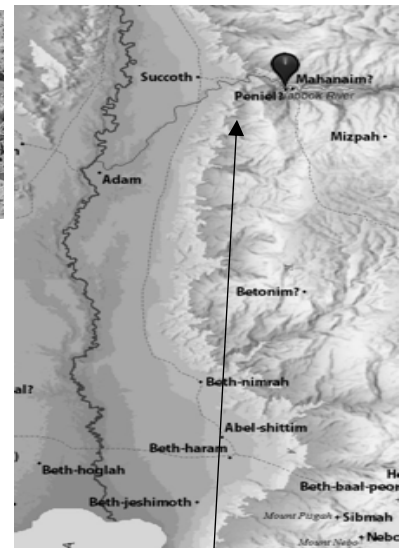
— *Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, that he will come and attack me and the mothers with the children—*Jacob had taken the birthright and blessing by cunning, but now he feels powerless. How can the descendants multiply if Esau attacks and kills the mothers and children?

- *For You said, ‘I will surely prosper you and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which is too great to be numbered’*—God said, “Your descendants will also be like the dust of the earth” (28:14).

**An Application:** Jacob is holding God to His promise. We can hold Him to His promises to us, too. Jesus said, “I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you” (Heb 13:5; see Phil 4:1-7). But be warned!! Make sure it is a promise for us believers in the church age. Do not claim promises God made to Israel, for example.

**32:13-16** *So he spent the night there. Then he selected from what he had with him a present for his brother Esau: two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milking camels and their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. He delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, “Pass on before me, and put a space between droves.”*

**32:17-20** *He commanded the one in front, saying, “When my brother Esau meets you and asks you, saying, ‘To whom do you belong, and where are you going, and to whom do these animals in front of you belong?’ then you shall say, ‘These belong to your servant Jacob; it is a present sent to my lord Esau. And behold, he also is behind us.’” Then he commanded also the second and the third, and all those who followed the droves, saying, “After this manner you shall speak to Esau when you find him and you shall say, ‘Behold, your servant Jacob also is behind us.’”*



- *For he said, “I will appease him with the present that goes before me. Then afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me”*—Jacob wants to overwhelm Esau with generosity, hoping to make peace with Esau. Jacob had taken Esau’s birthright and blessing and had taken the best of Laban’s herds—but in spite of it all, God prepared Jacob’s way.
- **32:21-23** *So the present passed on before him, while he himself spent that night in the camp. Now he arose that same night and took his two wives and his two maids and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream. And he sent across whatever he had*—the Jabbok is a stream that flows from east to west into the Jordan River. Esau would be coming from the south (arrow), on the east side of the Dead Sea. It took a while during the night to do all that, in preparation to meeting Esau.
- **32:24-26** *Then Jacob was left alone [on the north side], and a man wrestled with him until daybreak*—First described as “a man”, so at this point Jacob does not know it is God. This is God’s answer to Jacob’s prayer in vv. 9-12: “*Deliver me, I pray...from the hand of Esau...For You said, ‘I will surely prosper you and make your descendants as the sand of the sea...’*”
- *When he [God] saw that he had not prevailed against him [Jacob]*—Jacob would not let go unless God would bless him, i.e., deliver him from the hand of Esau.
- *he touched the socket of his thigh; so the socket of Jacob’s thigh was dislocated while he wrestled with him*—God supernaturally touched Jacob’s thigh and dislocated it, the strongest sinew of the wrestler. This shows it was not a dream or vision but a literal physical wrestling.
- *Then he said, “Let me go, for the dawn is breaking”*—
- *But he said, “I will not let you go unless you bless me”*—now he knows it is God, as God just supernaturally dislocated Jacob’s hip.

**32:27-28** *So he said to him, “What is your name?”* Of course, God knew his name, but wanted Jacob to say it.

- *And he said, “Jacob”* — “heel-catcher”
- *He said, “Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel—* “El [God] fights”
- *for you have striven with God* [a preincarnate Jesus, *Elohim*] *and with men and have prevailed*—he did not let go. So Jacob has a new relationship with God. And the sons of Israel have a history of wrestling with God.
- Remember the ladder that extended into heaven, and *the Lord stood above it and said, “I am the Lord...I am with you, and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land”* (28:10-17). So Jacob had already seen God.

**32:29-30** *Then Jacob asked him and said, “Please tell me your name.” But he said, “Why is it that you ask my name?” And he blessed him there. “Without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater”* (Heb 7:7).

- *So Jacob named the place Peniel, for he said, “I have seen God [Elohim] face to face,*
- *yet my life has been preserved*—if he survived his encounter with God, he will survive his encounter with Esau, God’s answer to his prayer. Now physically crippled, yet bold in his faith. *“Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the Lord* (Zech 4:6).

**32:31-32** *Now the sun rose upon him*—his night of conflict, anguish, and fear was over

- *just as he crossed over Penuel*— “face of God”
- *and he was limping on his thigh. Therefore, to this day the sons of Israel do not eat the sinew of the hip which is on the socket of the thigh, because he touched the socket of Jacob’s thigh in the sinew of the hip.*

## **Genesis 33**

**33:1-2** *Then Jacob lifted his eyes and looked*—the sun rose, and there is Esau coming

- *and behold, Esau was coming, and four hundred men with him*—he already knew (32:7)
- *So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two maids. He put the maids and their children in front, and Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last*—arranging his family according to those he loved the most and with still some fear, putting Rachel and Joseph in the most protected place.
- Notice he does not mention the names of the other children, but he says, “Rachel and Joseph.” Already he is showing his favoritism that will be trouble later.

**33:3** *But he himself passed on ahead of them and bowed down to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother*—Jacob is showing respect for Esau’s lordship of the 400 men, plus he is trying to undo his deception when he cheated Esau out of his blessing. He is expecting revenge. But notice that Esau calls Jacob “brother.” This is all a contrast to Isaac’s blessing when he made Jacob Esau’s lord (27:29).

**33:4** *Then Esau ran to meet him and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him,*—Esau warmly responds to Jacob, with not even a hint of bitterness of when they parted. God has interceded with the blessing for which Jacob prayed when he wrestled with Him.

- *and they wept*—together. The brothers are reconciled. Now they can talk.

**33:5** *He [Esau] lifted his eyes and saw the women and the children, and said, “Who are these with you?”—*

- *So he [Jacob] said, “The children whom God has graciously given—*Jacob does not use the word “bless” possibly because it will remind them of the day Jacob cheated Esau out of the blessing. Also, given grace (gift) suggests forgiveness. “Bless” means something is deserved.
- *your servant—*Jacob still referring to himself as “your servant” and Esau as “my lord” (v. 8).

**33:6-7** *Then the maids came near with their children, and they bowed down—*Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher

- *Leah likewise came near with her children, and they bowed down—*Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dinah
- *and afterward Joseph came near with Rachel, and they bowed down—*Joseph

**33:8** *And he said, “What do you mean by all this company which I have met?”* The gifts of the herds, etc. in 32:13-16. Obviously, Esau knew what they were. Jacob had told the servants to explain it to Esau.

- *And he said, “To find favor in the sight of my lord”—*again, calling him “lord”

**33:9** *But Esau said, “I have plenty, my brother; let what you have be your own”—*but Esau calling Jacob “my brother.” But Jacob was not giving the gift because Esau did not have enough. Esau had plenty. The gift was a symbol of reconciliation.

**33:10** *Jacob said, “No, please, if now I have found favor in your sight, then take my present from my hand—*if [“since”] Esau received Jacob, now receive Jacob’s gift

- *for I see your face as one sees the face of God, and you have received me favorably—*since Esau received Jacob with forgiveness as God has, Esau needs to receive the present

**33:11** *“Please take my gift which has been brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me and because I have plenty.” Thus he urged [“pressed”] him and he took it—*all Jacob’s preparations were worthless, as God had already changed Esau’s heart.

**33:12** *Then Esau said, “Let us take our journey and go, and I will go before you”—*rather than attacking Jacob, Esau brought his men to safeguard Jacob’s journey.

**33:13-14** *But he said to him, “My lord knows that the children are frail and that the flocks and herds which are nursing are a care to me. And if they are driven hard one day, all the flocks will die. Please let my lord pass on before his servant, and I will proceed at my leisure, according to the pace of the cattle that are before me and according to the pace of the children,*

- *until I come to my lord at Seir [Edom]—* when? “I” implying not everyone will come. [However, verse 17 says Jacob went north from the Jabbok, away from Seir in the south!!]

**33:15** *Esau said, “Please let me leave with you some of the people who are with me”—*as a bodyguard (sounds like he knows there is danger in the Land where Jacob is going!!)

- *But he said, “What need is there?—*Does Jacob finally have faith God will protect him?
- *Let me find favor in the sight of my lord—*what matters to Jacob is that they are reconciled

**33:16** *So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir.*



**An Application:** The picture of Jacob and Esau foreshadows the relationship between the historical Israel of the Davidic monarchy and Esau’s own descendants, Edom, as that relationship is depicted in the later prophetic books. Though often there was bitter resentment between the two nations (Obad 1-18), ...in the end God’s kingdom was to be extended even to include the land of Edom (Obad 21). [Sailhamer, “Expositor’s Bible Commentary”]

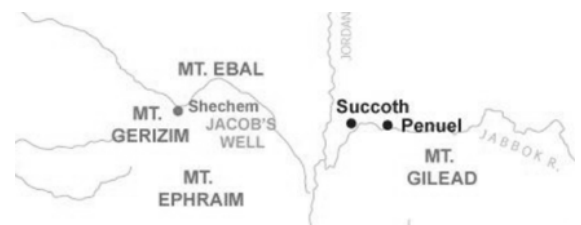
**33:17 Jacob journeyed to Succoth**—east side of the Jordan Valley, about 1 mile north of the Jabbok — **and built for himself a house and made booths for his livestock**—Leah’s first-born son Reuben is about 12 (9 months pregnant, 6 years for Rachel, and 6 years for herds, for total of 20 years, v. 31:41), and rest of the children are younger. But Dinah is a teenager (for Shechem to sleep with her (34:2), and her brothers came to her defense (probably in early 20s), which would make their stay in Succoth about ten years. Building a house is more permanent than dwelling in a tent. — **therefore the place is named Succoth** [“booths”]—see map at 32:21

**An Application:** In Jacob, God brought about a spirit of humility and generosity. Esau went from seeking revenge to wanting reconciliation. These changes proved that God delivered Jacob in answer to his prayer. When the heart changes, the actions change (Col. 3:12).

These next verses really belong to chapter 34.

**33:18 Now Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan**—about 22 miles west of Succoth

— **when he came from Paddan-aram, and camped before the city**—another name for Haran, the home of Laban



**33:19 He bought the piece of land**—Jacob now owns land in the Land of Promise

— **where he had pitched his tent from the hand of the sons of Hamor, Shechem’s father, for one hundred pieces of money**—it seems that it is at this time he digs what is called “Jacob’s Well.” It is here in the New Testament, where Jesus sits in Sychar (Shechem) to speak to the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:5).

**33:20 Then he erected there an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel**—“God, the God of Israel” (Jacob’s new name).

## Genesis 34

**34:1 Now Dinah, the daughter of Leah, the unloved wife, whom she had borne to Jacob**—after all her sons were born (30:21)—Jacob had other daughters (37:35; 46:7), but Dinah becomes the center of Jacob’s conflict with the Canaanites in Shechem. She’s 13 to 15 years old now.

— **went out to visit the daughters of the land**—to look at with interest. “This action loosened a stone that caused a landslide” [Ross, BKC]. Jacob had made a commercial connection in buying the land, but now Dinah was making a social connection.

**34:2 When Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the land**—as son of the king, he is used to getting whatever he desires.

— **saw her, he took her and lay with her by force**—the very negative words indicate rape. Her brothers see it as **Should he treat our sister as a harlot?** (34:31).

**34:3** *He was deeply attracted to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the girl and spoke tenderly to her*—at first we are horrified he raped her, then we read—but he loved her. So many times after a rape, the woman is abandoned in her misery (2 Sam 13:15-17), and often would not expect to get married. But.....

**34:4** *So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, “Get me this young girl [“child”] for a wife”*—he demands it (much like he demanded sex from Dinah).

**34:5** *Now Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter*—we would expect a fierce reaction by Jacob [like David who heard about Tamar’s rape and was “very angry” (2 Sam 13:21)].

— *but his sons were with his livestock in the field*—It seems that Simeon and Levi were plotting revenge (v. 24).

— *so Jacob kept silent until they came in*—[Perhaps if she were the daughter of Rachel, he would act differently!!] As the narrative progresses in the rest of Genesis, the sons will take the place of their father Jacob. But it starts here.

**34:6** *Then Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him*—contrast: Jacob does nothing, kept silent—Hamor goes out to arrange a marriage, as his son desired.

**34:7** *Now the sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard it*—perhaps Jacob sent word to them and they rushed home or they learn of it when they got home—it is unclear which it is.

— *and the men were grieved*—their reaction—intense pain

— *and they were very angry because he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel* [Jacob’s new name—the first mention of the nation by this name] *by lying with Jacob’s daughter*—

— *for such a thing ought not to be done*—possibly the narrator and readers’ information, to agree with the reaction of Dinah’s brothers.

**34:8** *But Hamor spoke with them, saying, “The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter; please give her to him in marriage*—no mention of what Hamor has already done to Dinah, or that she is still in Shechem’s house (v. 26). Hamor told his father, “Get me...” but Hamor tells Jacob, “please give her to him...” He wants to arrange a marriage.

**34:9** *“Intermarry with us; give your daughters to us and take our daughters for yourselves*—but he takes it further—all of them intermarry with each other, not just Shechem and Dinah! Just what Abraham said NOT to do (24:3), and Isaac said NOT to do (28:1). They just get back into the Promised Land, and the pressure is to break the covenant!!

**34:10** *“Thus you shall live with us, and the land shall be open [travel freely] before you; live and trade in it and acquire property in it”*—but really he was being deceptive, too, as he tells his own people *“Will not their livestock and their property and all their animals be ours?”* (v. 23).

**34:11-12** *Shechem also said to her father and to her brothers, “If I find favor in your sight, then I will give whatever you say to me. Ask me ever so much bridal payment and gift, and I will give according as you say to me; but give me the girl in marriage.”*

**34:13-17** *But Jacob’s sons [but not Jacob] answered Shechem and his father Hamor with deceit, because he had defiled Dinah their sister. They said to them, “We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that would be a disgrace to us. Only on this condition will we consent to you: if you will become like us, in that every male of you be*

*circumcised*—but the Canaanites were not joining the sons of Abraham—the sons of Abraham were joining the Canaanites!! (see v. 23) Deceit again—learned from Jacob and Laban?!?!)

- ***then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters for ourselves, and we will live with you and become one people***—for sure, the covenant people were not to become one people with the Canaanites!! Abraham had told his servant, “...*not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites*” (24:3). And Isaac’s command: “*Do not marry a Canaanite woman*” (28:1).
- ***“But if you will not listen to us to be circumcised, then we will take our daughter and go”***—but circumcision was the “sign” of the covenant. No way is the covenant made with these Canaanites

**34:18** *Now their words seemed reasonable to Hamor and Shechem, Hamor’s son*—he would not have to pay any money/dowry. In fact, he was planning to get all of Jacob’s livestock and property. Who was deceiving who?!?!)

**34:19-23** *The young man did not delay to do the thing, because he was delighted with Jacob’s daughter. Now he was more respected than all the household of his father.*

- ***So Hamor and his son Shechem came to the gate of their city and spoke to the men of their city, saying, “These men are friendly with us; therefore let them live in the land and trade in it, for behold, the land is large enough for them. Let us take their daughters in marriage, and give our daughters to them***—He is going beyond just Hamor with Dinah. He wants all their daughters and son to intermarry with Jacob’s sons and daughters. Soon, there would be no Israelites if that happened. No covenant people.
- ***“Only on this condition will the men consent to us to live with us, to become one people—that is what the Canaanites want. No racial distinctions. *that every male among us be circumcised as they are circumcised****—But the covenant people worship God. Canaanites do not.
- ***“Will not their livestock and their property and all their animals be ours?”***—so we see the motivation of the Canaanites. Not what they give to Jacob but what Jacob can give them.
- ***Only let us consent to them, and they will live with us”***—Hamor convinced the men

**34:24** *All who went out of the gate of his city listened to Hamor and to his son Shechem, and every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city*—these brothers abused the covenant sign of the circumcision for their own revenge.

- ***Now it came about on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of Jacob’s sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah’s brothers, each took his sword and came upon the city unawares, and killed every male***—there was no excuse for them to kill everyone in the city because of what Shechem did. But the fact that all the males circumcised at the whim of Shechem makes them complicit.
- On Jacob’s deathbed, he rebukes Simeon and Levi (49:5-7). He says, “*Cursed by their anger, for it is fierce; and their wrath, for it is cruel. ...I will...scatter them in Israel.* Simeon was given land in Judah, but becomes absorbed by Judah (do not know for sure, the tribe just disappears). Levi becomes the priests who are given no land but cities within the land.

**34:26** *They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem’s house, and went forth*—was she being held hostage...

**34:27-29** *Jacob’s sons came upon the slain and looted the city, because they had defiled their sister. They took their flocks and their herds and their donkeys, and that which was in the city and that which was in the field; and they captured and looted all their wealth and all their little ones and their wives, even all that was in the houses*—Jacob’s sons did to the Canaanites exactly what the Canaanites were planning to do to them (v. 23). Later, in the Law, Israel’s

foreign policy was to destroy the Canaanites completely before they could defile the Israelites (Deut 20:16-18). So the instinct of Simeon and Levi was correct, but not to use deception and the sign of the covenant to do it.

**34:30** *Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, “You have brought trouble on me by making me odious among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and my men being few in number, they will gather together against me and attack me and I will be destroyed, I and my household”*—Jacob will not be destroyed. God made the covenant with Abraham for this land, and this seed!! God will keep the covenant, no matter what Israel does.

**34:31** *But they said, “Should he treat our sister as a harlot?”* The motive of the sons was not only to plunder the Canaanites but the honor of their sister.

**An Application:** We have sin in our lives (like Canaanites). Do we try to make peace with that sin or sinful unbelievers? Believers cannot be one with them. *“What fellowship has light with darkness?... What has a believer in common with an unbeliever?”* (2 Cor 6:14-16).

## Genesis 35

Three deaths are recorded in this chapter (Deborah, Rachel, and Isaac).

**35:1** *Then God said to Jacob, “Arise, go up [although it is south, Shechem is in a valley, and Bethel is up in the hills] to Bethel [about 15 miles from Shechem] and live there*—they had looted the wealth of Shechem. If Jacob was scared to travel because of Canaanite hostility (34:30), whatever he does now will take courage in the land.

- *and make an altar there to God*—this is the first time a patriarch is told to build an altar.
- *who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau*—referring back to 28:10-15.

**35:2-4** *So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, “Put away the foreign gods which are among you*—including Rachel’s teraphim (31:19). Coming from the pagan area of Haran, where his relatives *served other gods* (Josh 24:2).

- *and purify yourselves and change your garments*—perhaps from the blood of chapter 34
- *and let us arise and go up to Bethel, and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone*—they have now entered God’s Land, the Land of the covenant—and no other gods will be before Him
- *So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods which they had and the rings which were in their ears, and Jacob hid them under the oak which was near Shechem*—It could also be part of the booty captured by them from the people of Shechem.

**An Application:** What should we do with books, CDs, jewelry, etc. from our time as an unbeliever? Jacob buried it (and it was worth a lot of money, I’m sure!). In Acts 19:19, those who converted *who practiced magic brought their books together and began burning them in the sight of all; and they counted up the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver*. Don’t give it to Good Will where it will encourage unbelief in someone else.

**35:5** *As they journeyed, there was a great terror upon the cities which were around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob*—in 34:30, he thought the Canaanites would now attack him, and he would be destroyed, but God caused a terror on those around Jacob so they did not pursue

**35:6-7** *So Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him. He built an altar there, and called the place El-bethel [“house of*

God”], *because there God had revealed Himself to him when he fled from his brother*—some 30 years previously

**35:8** *Now Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under the oak; it was named Allon-bacuth* [“oak of weeping”]—perhaps Rebekah had sent her to take care of her daughters-in-law, or she may have gone there after Rebekah’s death. At this point, she was traveling with Jacob. It is strange that her death is recorded but Rebekah’s is not (and Rebekah never saw her favorite son Jacob again after he had left—27:45). We know nothing else.

**35:9** *Then God appeared to Jacob again when he came from Paddan-aram* [Haran], *and He blessed him*—God has appeared to Jacob at the top of the ladder at Bethel when he escaped Esau (28:19), the angels when he got to Mahanaim (32:1), and then wrestling with God at Penuel (32:24-31), and now at Bethel again. Notice, it was not at Haran!

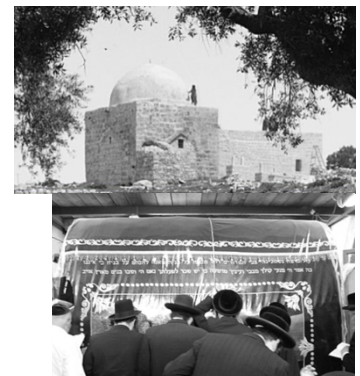
**35:10** *God said to him, “Your name is Jacob; You shall no longer be called Jacob, But Israel shall be your name.” Thus He called him Israel*—the reader is supposed to know the previous story of Jacob wrestling with God (32:24-31). God had changed Abram to Abraham, Sarai to Sarah, now Jacob to Israel.

**35:11-12** *God also said to him, “I am God Almighty; Be fruitful and multiply; A nation and a company of nations shall come from you*—re-stating the covenant  
— *And kings shall come forth from you*—this is new information for Jacob  
— *“The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, And I will give the land to your descendants after you”*—Basically repeating Isaac’s blessing of Jacob (28:3-4) and God’s to Abraham in chapter 17.

**35:13-15** *Then God went up from him in the place where He had spoken with him. Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He had spoken with him, a pillar of stone, and he poured out a drink offering on it; he also poured oil on it. So Jacob named the place where God had spoken with him, Bethel*—an altar where Jacob worships God

**35:16** *Then they journeyed from Bethel; and when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath*—on the road from Bethel to Hebron (where Isaac was). Notice, *still some distance to go to Ephrath*. They were not in Bethlehem itself but north of there (in the territory that would later become the tribe of Benjamin). Jacob also says this in Genesis 48:7, *when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)*. Bethlehem later becomes the northern city of the tribe of Judah (1 Sam 17:12). The Hinnom Valley in Jerusalem (1-2 miles away) was the border between Benjamin and Judah (Josh 15:8). The Ephrathites were the people who lived in that area.

[Two points: (1) There is another “Bethlehem” in the tribe of Zebulun (by Nazareth) in the north (Josh 19:15). (2) In the A.D. 400s, traditions began putting the tomb close to the village of Bethlehem. It became a sacred site to Jews, Christians, and Muslims, as in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the Muslims put a mosque there. Today, there is a building that is at the edge of the West Bank and Jerusalem and is protected there by the West Bank wall. There is much mysticism attached to it, praying there for fertility. Refer to Wikipedia for its modern history—right up to present day disputes.]



— **Rachel began to give birth and she suffered severe labor**—11 of Jacob’s sons were born out of the Land. Only Benjamin was born in the Land.

**35:17** *When she was in severe labor the midwife said to her, “Do not fear, for now you have another son”*—at the birth of her first son Joseph, she had prayed, “May the Lord add to me another son” (30:24). The midwife’s words are a reminder of Rachel’s prayer.

**35:18** *It came about as her soul was departing (for she died)*—one of the best descriptions of death

— **that she named him Ben-oni**— “son of my trouble”

— **but his father called him Benjamin**— “son of my right hand”—the 12<sup>th</sup> son of Jacob

**35:19-20** *So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)—Jacob set up a pillar over her grave*—1 Samuel 10:2 records Samuel telling Saul, ...*you will find two men close to Rachel’s tomb in the territory of Benjamin*. Jeremiah 31:15 also connects Rachel with Ramah (Josh 18:25), in Benjamin’s territory.

— **that is the pillar of Rachel’s grave to this day**—of the author Moses. It is still there at the time of the dividing of the land under Joshua and the time of Samuel and King Saul (of Benjamin).

**An Application:** Why is it important? Rachel died and was buried in the territory of the tribe of her son Benjamin. Bethlehem itself is in Judah. King David and Jesus are from the tribe of Judah. So it seems important that Rachel was buried “some distance” away in Benjamin, “on the way” to Bethlehem but not in Bethlehem of Judah (as today’s “sacred” Rachel site is promoted as being).

**35:21** *Then Israel journeyed on and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder* [“tower of the flock”]. This is the only time this name is mentioned. Nothing else is known.

**35:22** *It came about while Israel was dwelling in that land*—evidently still on the way to Isaac.

— **that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father’s concubine**—by whom Jacob had Dan and Naphtali (30:3-8). Why did he do it? It was not just sexual, he could have found that in other places. Notice it is placed right after Rachel’s death. Was Rachel’s maid (or her sons) going to replace Rachel as Jacob’s favorite? Also, Jacob was not honoring Reuben’s mother Leah. Obviously, this action is going to have a big impact on the rest of Genesis and really, the rest of the Bible, as Reuben, as well as Simeon and Levi who killed the Shechemites, are eventually replaced by Judah (from whom comes King David and King Jesus).

**An Application:** It reminds us of Lot’s daughters (19:33-38), and foreshadows Absalom’s rebellion when he slept with his father David’s concubines (2 Sam 16:21-22). What to do about sin? Do you just remain silent as Jacob did? Sin, especially sexual sin, greatly impacts a family.

— **and Israel heard of it**—such an offense cannot go unpunished, yet Jacob is silent. Similar to his reaction at hearing of the rape of Dinah (34:5). But he remembers it on his deathbed. “*Reuben, my firstborn...you shall not have preeminence, because you went up to your father’s bed; Then you defiled it...*” (49:3).

Just like chapter 12 was a major turning point of dealing with the descendants of Noah and centering on the lives of the first three patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) and the beginning of the children of Israel, this is another turning point in the book of Genesis. The narrative will now be leaving the lives of the patriarchs and moving to the lives of the twelve sons of Jacob, the children of Israel.

— **Now there were twelve sons of Jacob**—now that Benjamin is born

**35:23-26 the sons of Leah: Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, then Simeon and Levi and Judah and Issachar and Zebulun;**

- **the sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin;**
- **and the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maid: Dan and Naphtali;**
- **and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maid: Gad and Asher.**
- **These are the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Paddan-aram**—i.e., before he came back to live in the land where Isaac lived.

**35:27-29 Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre of Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned**—Isaac moved from Beersheba to Hebron (13:18; 23:2)

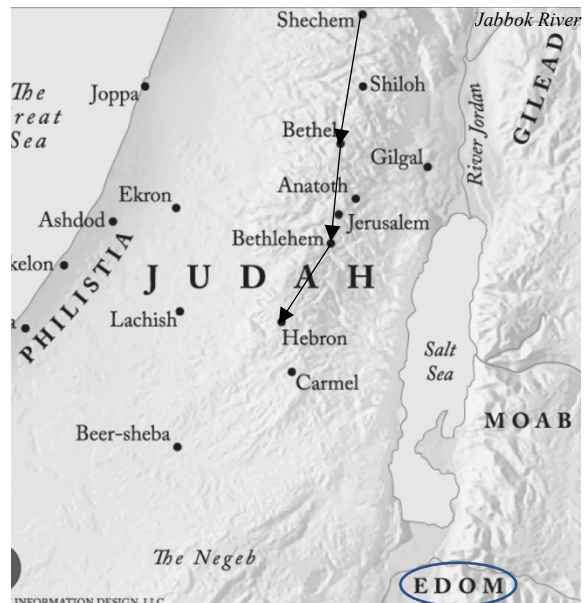
- **Now the days of Isaac were one hundred and eighty years**—see note below
- Isaac breathed his last and died and was gathered to his people, an old man of ripe age; and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him**—in the cave in Hebron that Abraham bought, where Abraham (25:9) and Sarah (23:19) were buried and where Rebekah is buried, and where Jacob and Leah will be buried (49:41).
- Reminding us of how Isaac and Ishmael came together to bury Abraham (25:9).

### Attempted Years of Genealogy:

- Joseph was 30 when he was introduced to Pharaoh (41:46). Add 7 years of plenty, 2 of famine, Joseph is 39 when he brings Jacob and the family to Egypt.
- Jacob is 130 years old when introduced to Pharaoh (47:9).
- So Jacob is  $130 - 39 = 91$  when Joseph is born. Joseph is 17 when sold by his brothers, which makes Jacob 108 at the time Joseph was taken.
  
- Isaac was about 60 when Jacob was born (25:26). So  $60 + 108 = 168$  when Joseph is sold.  
Joseph sold at 17 years of age  
Jacob is 108 years of age when Joseph is sold  
Isaac is 168 years of age when Joseph is sold
  
- Isaac died at 180 (35:28). So death at  $180 - 168$  when Joseph is taken. Therefore, Isaac is still alive for  $180 - 168 = 12$  years after Jacob returned to Hebron and is alive to experience the grief of Jacob when Joseph is taken. So there are about 12 years between verses 27 and 28.

## Genesis 36

Important to note: Isaac blessed Esau: “Behold, away from the fertility of the earth shall be your dwelling, and away from the dew of heaven from above. And by your sword you shall live, and your brother you shall serve; But it shall come about when you become restless, that you shall break his yoke from your neck” (Gen 27:39-40). Edom is Mt. Seir, which was the territory south and east of the Dead Sea, outside the land of promise. It is similar to Ishmael's history. Obadiah is a prophecy regarding the Edomites.



**36:1** *Now these are the records of the generations of Esau (that is, Edom). Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan*—and they lived in Edom, southeast of the Dead Sea.

**I will not list all the names of the Edomites.  
Refer to chapter 36 in the Bible.**

## **Genesis 37**

**37:1** *Now Jacob lived in the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan*—he lived for 20 years outside of the land, in Haran, maybe 10 years in Succoth, but now he is back in the Promised Land, and in the area of his father Isaac, i.e., Hebron.

**A reminder** of God’s prophecy to Abraham in 15:13-16—*God said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land [Egypt] that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out [with Moses] with many possessions. ...Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite [Canaanites] is not yet complete.”* It is through what happens to Joseph that God brings about the fulfillment of this prophecy.

- 37:2** *These are the records of the generations of Jacob*—In Genesis 25–50 (skipping Esau in chapter 36), it begins with the conception of Jacob in 25:21 and ends with his burial in 50:14. This is when Jacob is head of the promised seed, though the narrative is going to follow his sons.
- **Joseph**—the oldest son of Rachel, born in Haran
  - **when seventeen years of age, was pasturing the flock with his brothers** (Benjamin—maybe too young to be with them—Leah’s sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun)
  - **while he was still a youth**—only Benjamin was younger. The rest were older.
  - **along with the sons of Bilhah** (Dan and Naphtali) **and the sons of Zilpah** (Gad and Asher), **his father’s wives**—it is interesting he does not call them his brothers.
  - **And Joseph brought back a bad report about them to their father**—the tension between Leah and Rachel (Gen 29–31) erupts into open warfare between Leah’s sons and Jacob. What the bad report was is unknown, but it contributes toward the animosity between them. Besides, it seems that Jacob already had ill feelings toward these boys, so was ready to believe a bad report.
  - Here “we have a glimpse of the embryonic nation—with the Judah and Joseph tribes destined to have preeminence in the south and the north respectively. Thus it is not surprising to find one chapter (chap. 38) devoted entirely to Judah before the three chapters (39–41) in which Joseph is the only son of Jacob on stage. Then in the following chaps. 42–46, the two leading actors are Judah and Joseph with Jacob, Reuben, Simeon, and Benjamin in supporting roles. Throughout Gen 37–50 the author shows his interest in the history of the whole family of Jacob, not just in Joseph.” [Wenham, WBC]
- 37:3** *Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons*—Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah (29:30), so it follows he would love her son more, too. His family history: Rebekah loved Jacob, the youngest son, more than Esau, and Isaac loved Esau more than Jacob. And what happened? Jacob was separated from his mother Rebekah, fleeing for his life from Esau who wanted to kill him, and that favoritism will also separate Joseph from Jacob.
- **because he was the son of his old age**—he was the last one born in Haran, when Jacob was 91.
  - **and he made him a varicolored tunic**—it marked Joseph as the one Jacob loved, and it was a constant visual reminder to the other brothers, every time they saw him.



**37:4 His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers**—saw the coat

— **and so they hated him** (vv. 4, 5, 8)—Leah is described as “hated” (29:31, 33), so her sons hate.

**An Application:** Characteristics a parent has are passed down to the next generation unless there is a deliberate attempt to stop it. Hebrews 12:15 says, “*See to it that...no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble...*” Parents’ sins bury a root in their children’s lives that they have to contend with for the rest of their lives. Watch yourself. What are you passing on to your children?

— **and could not speak to him on friendly terms**—their hatred was so deep, they could not even speak civilly [lit. “peace, welfare, health”] to him (v. 2).

**37:5 Then Joseph had a dream**—there are two other pair of dreams, but this is the only pair that is dreamed by Joseph himself. Both the dreams seem to make the same one point—one day his family will bow down to him (not that they will bow down to him on two occasions)—and the meaning (interpretation) is obvious to the brothers—and to Joseph.

— There is no mention of God in vv. 5-11, however, the dreams were prophecy from Him that were literally fulfilled. Later, in Egypt, Joseph remembered the dreams about them (42:9).

— **and when he told it to his brothers**—perhaps wanting to feel good about himself in spite of their hatred—but it is just a guess as to why he would tell them something like that

— **they hated him even more**—the dreams fueled the hatred. The author tells us the impact the dreams had on the brothers—it is that hatred that causes them to get rid of Joseph.

**37:6 He said to them, “Please listen to this dream which I have had**—this setting is agricultural

**37:7 for behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf rose up and also stood erect; and behold, your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf**—notice that Joseph makes the connection to the brothers “my sheaf stood” and “your sheaves” bow.

— **Note:** The way the brothers will bow before Joseph in Egypt is surpassed by Jacob’s words in 49:8, “*Judah...your father’s sons will bow down to you.*” Also, the double blessing the sons of Joseph receive in chapter 48 is surpassed by that of Judah in chapter 49. Of course, prophesying the future Judean kings as well as Jesus Christ, the king of kings.

**37:8 Then his brothers said to him, “Are you actually going to reign over us? Or are you really going to rule over us?”**—this first dream showed Joseph’s supremacy over his brothers

— **So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words**—they already hated him for the love and favoritism his father showed to him, but the hatred continues to grow

**37:9 Now he had still another dream**—later, Joseph explained to Pharaoh, “*as for repeating of the dream...twice, it means that the matter is determined by God, and God will quickly bring it about*” (41:32).

— **and related it to his brothers, and said, “Lo, I have had still another dream**—this setting is in the heavenlies

— **and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me**—this showed a supremacy over all of Israel. The sun represented his father, and the moon his mother, and the stars his brothers. Obviously, Jacob is the father. But who is the mother? That there are 11 brothers indicates Benjamin’s existence, so it means Rachel has died. Perhaps Bilhah (Rachel’s maid) took over the “mother” job. But the point of the dream is that everyone in the family—

parents and siblings will bow to Joseph—he is the youngest (besides Benjamin) and “should be” bowing to them, not them to him.

**An Application:** Reminding me of similar situation today when Queen Elizabeth was crowned in England. There was a question of whether her husband Philip, who expected allegiance from his wife, would bow in allegiance to her as his queen. Many thought he would not do it—but he did.

**37:10** *He related it to his father and to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, “What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?”*—Maybe telling them was Joseph’s choice, but he was not responsible for having the dreams OR for what the dreams meant.

**An Application:** Hebrews 1:1-2 says, “*God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son...*” Dreams were one of those ways. Now that God has spoken to us in His Son, there is no longer any need for other ways.

**An Application:** The dreams were prophecy. God has told us beforehand what is going to happen, so we should not mourn what the brothers do to Joseph. Today, God has told us the world will get worse until under the control of the antichrist. So we should not mourn conditions now—we know the end—God has told us it is going to get worse, not get better.

**37:11** *His brothers were jealous of him*—they must have seen pride and selfish ambition (like they would have!!).

— *but his father kept the saying in mind*—because Jacob himself had received dreams from God.

**37:12** *Then his brothers went to pasture their father’s flock in Shechem*—back in Shechem, the place of the massacre. Were they checking the place out to see what was happening there now?

**37:13-14** *Israel said to Joseph, “Are not your brothers pasturing the flock in Shechem? Come, and I will send you to them.” And he said to him, “I will go” Then he said to him, “Go now and see about the welfare of your brothers and the welfare of the flock, and bring word back to me”*—Jacob cared about the welfare of the brothers and the flock, but not, it seems, about the welfare of Joseph, even though he knows of the brothers’ hatred of him. Jacob is blind to the effects of his actions on his sons.

— *So he sent him from the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem*—about 50 miles

**37:15-17** *A man found him, and behold, he was wandering in the field; and the man asked him, “What are you looking for?” He said, “I am looking for my brothers; please tell me where they are pasturing the flock.” Then the man said, “They have moved from here; for I heard them say, ‘Let us go to Dothan’”* [14 miles further]. *So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan*—there are three passes from the central hill country thru the Carmel mountain ridge to the Jezreel Valley: Jokneam in the west, Megiddo in the middle, and Dothan toward the east. There is a sense of how alone Joseph is traveling all this way.

**37:18** *When they saw him from a distance and before he came close to them*—for sure, that multi-colored coat would be recognized from a distance away.

— From the brothers’ point of view—*they plotted against him to put him to death*—hatred in one’s heart moves to murder in one’s actions. Jesus said Satan was a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44). Interesting—they killed the Shechemites in revenge for their sister. Now they are planning to kill their own brother!! They are murderers!! Remember—Esau planned to murder Jacob (27:41-42). Of course, reminding us of Cain who killed his brother Abel.

**37:19** *They said to one another, “Here comes this dreamer!”*—Here is their motivation. If they kill him, then his dreams will not come true! Little did they suspect that the very plans they were scheming would actually lead to the fulfillment of those dreams!!! In the end, Joseph’s response was, *“You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good”* (50:20).

**37:20** *“Now then, come and let us kill him”*—their hatred turns to crime.

- *and throw him into one of the pits*—i.e., a cistern, with smooth walls, to store water. Either steps were made into it or they used a ladder to go in and out.
- *and we will say, ‘A wild beast devoured him’*—their cover story. However, they do not actually say this. It is Jacob’s conclusion when he sees the coat with blood (v. 33).
- *Then let us see what will become of his dreams!*—again, we see their motivation—to keep the dreams from becoming reality—they will NEVER bow down to someone they hate!!!

**37:21** *But Reuben* [Leah’s first-born, the oldest brother] *heard this and rescued him out of their hands and said, “Let us not take his life”*—is he stepping up as the oldest brother? Don’t know.

**37:22** *Reuben further said to them, “Shed no blood. Throw him into this pit that is in the wilderness*—i.e., a dry pit—but, of course, he would eventually die there, too

- *but do not lay hands on him” — that he might rescue him out of their hands,*
- *to restore him to his father*—the narrator tells us what Reuben was thinking—to take Joseph back to Jacob—but the brothers did not know that, or else, for sure, they would not have listened to him

**37:23-24** *So it came about, when Joseph reached his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the varicolored tunic that was on him*—the evidence of their father’s favoritism and their hatred every time they saw it

- *and they took him and threw him* [lit. “dumped”] *into the pit.*
- *Now the pit was empty, without any water in it*—if the narrator did not mention it, we might think he drowned in the cistern of water. But still a problem: he could die there, he could escape and report back to Jacob, someone could rescue him, they still need to decide what to do...

**37:25** *Then they sat down to eat a meal. And as they raised their eyes and looked, behold, a caravan of Ishmaelites was coming from Gilead* [east side of Jordan River], *with their camels bearing aromatic gum and balm and myrrh, on their way to bring them down to Egypt*—

**37:26-27** *Judah said to his brothers, “What profit is it for us to kill our brother and cover up his blood? Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh.” And his brothers listened to him*—Judah also wanted to save Joseph’s life, but seemingly from the horror of killing their own brother, their own flesh and blood. But Judah wanted to prevent the dreams from happening, too.

**37:28** *Then some Midianite traders passed by*—some 150 years have passed since Ishmael left Abraham. Because these were Arab traders, it could be hard to distinguish them to one tribe, or the words could be interchangeable. For example, you might say a traveler is English, but they could be from England or the USA—but they are English.

- *so they pulled him up and lifted Joseph out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver*—this was a typical price of male slaves between 5 and 20 years old
- *Thus they brought Joseph into Egypt*—they thought—out of sight, out of mind, out of dreams

**37:29** Now Reuben returned to the pit, and behold, Joseph was not in the pit—he evidently was not with them when they sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites. He returned to the pit to follow his plan to rescue Joseph and take him home to Jacob (v. 21).

- We know, however, it was not Reuben who saves Joseph. It was Judah.
- *so he tore his garments*—a sign of great mourning

**37:30** He returned to his brothers and said, “The boy is not there; as for me, where am I to go?”—as the oldest brother, Jacob would hold him responsible. He does not even ask what happened to him. He just cares about what Jacob will do to him because of it.

**37:31** So they took Joseph’s tunic, and slaughtered a male goat and dipped the tunic in the blood—the coat, that symbolized Jacob’s love, now symbolizes Joseph’s death. This deception has to remind us of Jacob’s own deception to his father Isaac when he was younger (27:23). Jacob is here deceived by the blood and the garment, just as Isaac was deceived by the fur and garment.

**37:32-33** and they sent the varicolored tunic and brought it to their father and said, “We found this; please examine it to see whether it is your son’s tunic or not.”

- Then he examined it and said, “It is my son’s tunic—of course, it was made especially for Joseph. There is none else like it.
- *A wild beast has devoured him; Joseph has surely been torn to pieces!*—just what the brothers wanted him to think (v. 20).

**37:34-35** So Jacob tore his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days. Then all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. And he said, “Surely I will go down to Sheol in mourning for my son.” So his father wept for him—he would mourn for his son until he died. They physically removed Joseph from Jacob’s favoritism, but not actually, as his mourning will always remind them of who Jacob loved the most.

**37:36** Meanwhile, the Midianites sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, Pharaoh’s officer, the captain of the bodyguard—Joseph is beginning a new life in Egypt.

## Genesis 38

**38:1** And it came about at that time—when they sold Joseph to Egypt. Joseph was 17 (37:2), 30 when he started to work for Pharaoh (41:46-47), 7 years of plenty, and 2 years of famine (45:6) = ~22 years of time in this chapter. So this chapter was happening simultaneously to the time of Joseph in Egypt.

- *that Judah departed from his brothers*—he was also departing from the Covenant family
- *and visited* [lit. “pitched a tent”] *a certain Adullamite*—Adullam was about 15 miles NW of Hebron, overlooking the Elah River Valley (where David slew Goliath).
- *whose name was Hirah*—he is a neighbor to Judah’s pitched tent.



**38:2** *Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua*—how could he not know the Covenant and the stories of his father Jacob, grandfather Isaac, and great-grandfather Abraham— “Do NOT marry a Canaanite” (cursed descendant of Ham—9:25).

— *and he took her and went in to her*—v. 12, she became his wife

**An Application:** Reminds us of Eve who “saw” the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 3). And 1 John 2:16 warns us about the “lust of the eyes.” Remember the children’s song, “Be careful little eyes what you see...” Judah should not have been living with the Canaanites, to see her... For example, if you determine a certain person is a bad influence, do not be around that person.

— This is not just an isolated event, and it is important it happened right after Joseph was sold. The people of God’s covenant started intermarrying with the Canaanites (46:10). If God did not intervene by removing Joseph in preparation for the whole of Jacob’s family to go to Egypt, the corrupting influence of the Canaanites and their customs would overcome the children of Israel.

**An Application:** We cannot know what God is doing. However, it is possible God has things in our lives (sickness, some “disaster,” etc.) to remove us from whatever would take us away from following Him. What seemed a disaster when Joseph was sold, ended up protecting the Israelites and keeping them away from the Canaanites. Trust God—He has more wisdom and information than we do.

**38:3-5** *So she conceived and bore a son and he named him Er. Then she conceived again and bore a son and named him Onan. She bore still another son and named him Shelah; and it was at Chezib that she bore him*—all in 3 years.

**38:6-7** *Now Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar*—a Canaanite

— Some think Tamar was not a Canaanite. But Judah has a tent in Adullam, his friend is a Canaanite, his first wife Shua was a Canaanite, making his sons half-Canaanites, and he sends Tamar to her father’s house (not one of his relatives), and his sheep (v. 12) were in Timnah (even further into Canaan), so it would seem probable that Tamar was also a Canaanite.

— *But Er, Judah’s firstborn, was evil in the sight of the LORD, so the LORD took his life*—do not know what the evil was, but Judah did not mourn his death, and Tamar was not at fault.

**38:8** *Then Judah said to Onan* (probably 1 year younger), *“Go in to your brother’s wife, and perform your duty as a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother”*—later known as a levirate [from Latin *levir*, “husband’s brother”] marriage (such as Boaz with Ruth, and practiced in the Mosaic Law but with some restrictions—Deut 25:6).

**38:9** *Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so when he went in to his brother’s wife, he wasted his seed on the ground*—the Hebrew text emphasizes a repeated action, not just once. It is interesting that God knows what goes on in the bedroom and holds Onan responsible for what he does there!!!

— *in order not to give offspring to his brother*—with the older brother dead, the inheritance would go to the next brother in line. But if that brother had children by the first brother’s wife, then that child would get the dead brother’s inheritance.

**38:10** *But what he did was displeasing in the sight of the LORD; so He took his life also*—even though Tamar was not an Israelite, this is still the offspring of Judah, which will end if there are no more children.

**38:11** *Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, “Remain a widow in your father’s house until my son Shelah grows up”*—a lie. He has no intention of giving Shelah to Tamar, as later, when *Shelah had grown up, and she had not been given to him as a wife* (v. 14).

- *for he thought, “I am afraid that he too may die like his brothers”*—the narrator is telling us what Judah was thinking, and it seems superstitious—that either Tamar herself or marriage to Tamar has been the cause of their deaths, and he will not put his third son in danger.
- The continuation of the house of Judah is in jeopardy, yet the narrative shows that Judah does nothing to further the offspring of his own household. It is the “righteous” Tamar who is ultimately responsible for the survival of the descendants of the house of Judah.
- *So Tamar went and lived in her father’s house*—she does not argue with Judah. She retreats, submitting to what Judah desires. Because it was the sons’ fault, she should expect to one day marry Shelah and is considered betrothed to him.

**38:12-13** *Now after a considerable time Shua’s daughter, the wife of Judah, died*—his two sons die before their mother died. Judah is now a widower.

- *and when the time of mourning was ended*—mourning for those you love does not end
- Evidently, he got over her quite quickly. But Jacob said he would mourn Joseph until his own death (37:35).
- *Judah went up to his sheepshearers at Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite*—his sheep were even further west in Canaanite territory, away from his family in Hebron. Sheep-shearing was a time of celebration and much drinking (2 Sam 25:36).
- *It was told to Tamar, “Behold, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep.”*
- **38:14** *So she removed her widow’s garments and covered herself with a veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in the gateway of Enaim*— notice the verbs. If Judah would not give her to his son in marriage, Tamar would go after Judah himself!! She quickly came up with this idea. She would deliberately portray herself as a prostitute, to deceive and trap Judah. Reminding us (again) of the deception of Rebekah and Jacob (ch. 27) and of Leah and Jacob (ch. 29) and even Judah and the brothers with Joseph’s coat (ch 37).
- *which is on the road to Timnah*—later a Philistine town in the Shephelah, in the Sorek River Valley, from which Samson gets his first wife (Judges 14:1-2).
- *for she saw that Shelah had grown up, and she had not been given to him as a wife*—she understands that an injustice has been done to her. Up to this point, it seems Tamar has not even had the opportunity to conceive any children.

**38:15** *When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot*—most likely because of the effects of the celebrating clouding his judgment, as well as how she dressed and behaved

- *for she had covered her face*—like Leah did (ch. 29).

**38:16-19** *So he turned aside to her by the road, and said, “Here now, let me come in to you”*—he took the bait. He wanted to have sex with her. It has been awhile since his wife died.

- *for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law*—he kept his son from sleeping with her (due to some superstition?), for sure he would not have slept with her if he knew it was Tamar.
- *And she said, “What will you give me, that you may come in to me?”*—She is smart—she gets an ID from him, proving it is Judah. She must have noticed he had nothing but his staff and cord.
- *He said, therefore, “I will send you a young goat from the flock”*—
- *She said, moreover, “Will you give a pledge until you send it?”*
- *He said, “What pledge shall I give you?” And she said, “Your seal [a personal ID] and your cord [which threaded through the seal], and your staff that is in your hand”* [usually, for a rich man, it was carved on the top to mark its ownership]

- *So he gave them to her and went in to her*—his sexual appetite would not tolerate postponement (though he was willing to let Tamar remain childless and a widow indefinitely)
- *and she conceived by him*—as observed throughout Genesis, it is God who opens and closes the womb. Contrast Rachel, who tried to get pregnant for years, with Lot’s daughters, who get pregnant after one encounter, much like Tamar now does.
  - *Then she arose and departed* [back to her father’s house], *and removed her veil and put on her widow’s garments.*

**38:20-23** *When Judah sent the young goat by his friend the Adullamite, to receive the pledge from the woman’s hand*—trying to keep himself aloof from being with a prostitute

- *he did not find her*—Jacob’s family experienced more deception
- *He asked the men of her place, saying, “Where is the temple prostitute [trying to make it more respectable than a common whore] who was by the road at Enaim?”*
- *But they said, “There has been no temple prostitute here.”*
- *So he returned to Judah, and said, “I did not find her; and furthermore, the men of the place said, ‘There has been no temple prostitute here.’”*
- *Then Judah said, “Let her keep them, otherwise we will become a laughingstock.*
- *After all, I sent this young goat, but you did not find her”*—so he called off the search, thinking he did as much as he could to pay her. Any more would be embarrassing for him.

**38:24** *Now it was about three months later*—Tamar is pregnant!!

- *that Judah was informed, “Your daughter-in-law Tamar has played the harlot*—because she was betrothed to Shelah, intercourse with anyone else would be considered adultery.
- *and behold, she is also with child by harlotry”*—clearly she has had sex and is guilty
- *Then Judah said, “Bring her out and let her be burned!”*—this is extreme. Later, under the Law, adultery was punished by stoning, not burning!

**38:25-26** *It was while she was being brought out*—she plays her trump card!!!

- *that she sent to her father-in-law, saying, “I am with child by the man to whom these things belong”*—she gets to tell her side of the story
- *And she said, “Please examine and see, whose signet ring and cords and staff are these?”*
- *Judah recognized them*—her prosecutor acknowledges that he is the guilty one, not she
- *and said, “She is more righteous than I*—because she was driven by her desire for children, while he was driven by lust
- *inasmuch as I did not give her to my son Shelah”*—he does not see himself as guilty for sleeping with a prostitute but that he is guilty for not giving his son for Rahab to marry
- *And he did not have relations with her again*—but her boys are his sons, and are the descendants of Judah in the lineage. AND Tamar is listed as one of four women in the lineage of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1)—along with Rahab, Ruth, and “her who had been the wife of Uriah.”

**38:27-30** *It came about at the time she was giving birth, that behold, there were twins in her womb*—the last twins were Jacob and Esau (25:24-26). In both cases, the baby twins compete to be born first. (It seems as though the twins replace Judah’s first two sons who died.)

- *Moreover, it took place while she was giving birth, one put out a hand, and the midwife took and tied a scarlet thread on his hand, saying, “This one came out first”*—Zerah
- *But it came about as he drew back his hand, that behold, his brother came out. Then she said, “What a breach you have made for yourself!” So he was named Perez*—as already seen in Genesis, the older serves the younger. The future generations come through Perez, not Zerah.

- *Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet thread on his hand; and he was named Zerah.* There is a significant connection with Judah’s dealing with Joseph (37:26-28). He and his brothers thought they could hinder God’s design (in the dreams) that the elder brothers would serve the younger brother Joseph. Yet in Judah’s own family, despite his attempts to hinder Tamar’s marriage, God’s will was worked out—the elder would serve the younger.
- Genesis 46:12 lists the family Jacob brought to Egypt during the famine, at the invitation of Joseph. *“The sons of Judah: Er and Onan and Shelah and Perez and Zerah (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan). And the sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul.* The third son Shelah is listed, and because Perez and Hezron come with Judah and Jacob’s clan to Egypt, it implies mother Tamar has joined the covenant people of God.
- Listing the generations of King David, Ruth 4:18-22 says, *now these are the generations of Perez: to Perez was born Hezron...to David.* In the genealogy of Jesus, Matthew 1:3-16 lists, *and to Judah were born Perez and Zerah by Tamar; and to Perez was born Hezron...to David the king...to Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.*

Through the actions of Tamar, and her determination to have children, she secured for Judah the honor of being the forefather of both King David and Jesus, the Savior of the world.

Meanwhile.....

## Genesis 39

### The Scene at Potiphar’s House

**39:1-6** *Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt*—The Ishmaelites were on the way there (37:28)

- *and Potiphar, an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the bodyguard*—important man
- *bought him from the Ishmaelites, who had taken him down there*—the Ishmaelites bought him for *“twenty shekels of silver”*—guessing they probably sold him for a profit
- *Yahweh was with Joseph, so he became a successful man. And he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian*—so the readers know—Joseph’s success was direct result of God’s doing
- *Now his master saw that Yahweh was with him and how Yahweh caused all that he did to prosper in his hand*—The name *Yahweh* occurs only in chapter 39 (vv 2, 3 [2x], 5 [2x], 21, 23 [2x], all in passages where the narrator is speaking. Then at the end, the concluding words of Joseph are, *“God brought me here”* (45:5-8; 50:17-21). So chapters 39–41 are the story of Joseph, but the narrator wants it known that it is all only because the Lord was with Joseph. This especially helps put the unfortunate events, like being sold, or going to prison, into perspective.
- *So Joseph found favor in his sight and became his personal servant*—first was care of Potiphar
- *and he made him overseer over his house*—then he also took care of this whole household
- *and all that he owned he put in his charge*—then he became in charge of everything of Potiphar’s, which would include the whole estate and all the property
- *It came about that from the time he made him overseer in his house and over all that he owned, the LORD blessed the Egyptian’s house on account of Joseph; thus the LORD’S blessing was upon all that he owned, in the house and in the field*—Potiphar himself was prospering because of Joseph being there.
- *So he left everything he owned in Joseph’s charge; and with him there he did not concern himself with anything except the food which he ate*—Potiphar completely trusted Joseph
- *Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance*—like his mother Rachel



**39:7** *It came about after these events that his master's wife looked with desire at Joseph*—(much like Jacob looked at Rachel in 29:17-18).

- *and she said, "Lie with me"*—she wants Joseph, and went after him “day after day” (v. 10). Potiphar's wife is an example of the foreign worldly women whose morals are suspect.

**39:8** *But he refused*—Whereas she had a three-word request, Joseph gives a speech.

**An Application:** as is often the case in Genesis, there is the contrast of Judah in chapter 38, who did not do the righteous thing with Tamar, and Joseph in chapter 39, who does the righteous thing. Yet, the hand of God is evident, moving the children of Israel toward His covenant.

- *and said to his master's wife, "Behold, with me here, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house"*—this would be an abuse of the great trust his master placed in him
- *and he has put all that he owns in my charge*—an amazing trust in a young man, a slave, and a foreigner
- *"There is no one greater in this house than I"*—Joseph answers to no one except Potiphar
- *and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife*—it would be a great offense against her husband
- *How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?*—it would be even a greater offense against God. Speaking to an Egyptian, he uses the word *Elohim*, rather than *Yahweh* [Lord]

**An Application:** After David slept with Uriah's wife, he wrote: *Cleanse me from my sin. ...my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned, and done what is evil in Thy sight*" (Psalm 51). All sin is against God. He is the God of righteousness. Sin may also be against people, but it is first and foremost against God. Joseph knows this.

**39:10-16** *As she spoke to Joseph day after day, he did not listen to her to lie beside her*

- *or be with her*—it is safest to not be anywhere around her, that is why it is a surprise he chooses to be alone with her.....
- *Now it happened one day that he went into the house to do his work*
- *and none of the men of the household was there inside*—he should have left right then!!
- *She caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me!"*
- *And he left his garment in her hand and fled, and went outside*—he now does the right thing—but it is too late.

**An Application:** He did the right thing, but the timing was everything. He should have fled when he realized he was alone with her. For us, Paul wrote, *"Do not give the devil an opportunity"* (Eph 4:27). Don't put yourself in a place where the devil can have that opportunity. Flee while you can.

- *When she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled outside*—an idea.....
- *she called to the men of her household and said to them*—using them as witnesses—even though (1) nothing happened and (2) they are not witnesses
- *"See, he (Potiphar) has brought in a Hebrew (a derogatory term to instill animosity) to us to make sport of us*—she says Joseph is after them, too, and blames “the boss” Potiphar. It is his fault. Joseph is after all of them (though, for sure, even in her story, sexual attraction to one woman is not the same as being after all of them), and what can one young man do to them?
- *he came in to me to lie with me, and I screamed*—she turned the whole situation around and charged Joseph as attacking her modesty in order to have revenge on him and prevent suspicion from herself—she's the hero!
- *"When he heard that I raised my voice and screamed, he left his garment beside me and fled and went outside"*—actually his garment was in her hand, but she put it beside her so she will not look to be the guilty one.

— *So she left his garment beside her until his master came home.*

**39:17** *Then she spoke to him with these words, “The Hebrew slave—NOW he is a Hebrew slave*

- *whom you brought to us—*like Adam said to God, “*The woman whom You gave to be with me...*” (Gen 3:12), she blames Potiphar for the action she is accusing Joseph of
- *came in to me to make sport of me—*she goes further, accusing Potiphar, lit., saying he acquired Joseph deliberately to harass his wife, to laugh at or even “of conjugal caresses” (BDB)
- *and as I raised my voice and screamed—*in her story, she is the hero, she resists this slave
- *he left his garment beside me and fled outside—*she sticks to her story and her evidence—keep the garment beside her, not in her hand—the brothers deceived Jacob with Joseph’s bloody coat and now Mrs. Potiphar deceives her husband with Joseph’s garment.
- *Now when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spoke to him, saying, “This is what your slave did to me”—*she adjusts the story to make the maximum impact on him. Your slave...to me!! As if Potiphar himself did it to her.
- *his anger burned—*so furious—it appears he did not even question Joseph

**39:20** *So Joseph’s master took him and put him into the jail—he was an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the bodyguard, so could easily have Joseph put in jail. And really, what choice did he have? Would he believe Joseph and not his wife? If what she said was actually true, Joseph could be executed. So his jail confinement was actually a more lenient penalty.*

- *the place where the king’s prisoners were confined—*this was not where hardened criminals were in prison. This is like the county jail instead of the penitentiary. Possibly, Potiphar was not fully convinced his wife was innocent. “The chastity of Egyptian women has been in bad repute from time immemorial” (K&D, p. 345).

**Now the scene changes to the jail—**

- *and he was there in the jail—*he is in his 20s now

**An Application:** Doing the righteous thing is not always rewarded. Sometimes, it even results in suffering. Jesus is the prime example. “*Consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart*” (Heb 12:3).

**39:21-23** *But the LORD was with Joseph and extended kindness to him—the Lord was with him no matter where he was—hated by his brothers, sold as a slave in a foreign country, now in jail*

**An Application:** Paul also wrote these encouraging words: “*I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am...I can do all things through Him who strengthens me*” (Phil 4:11-13)

- *and [the Lord] gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer—*the Lord is responsible
- *The chief jailer committed to Joseph’s charge all the prisoners who were in the jail; so that whatever was done there, he was responsible for it—*Joseph was competent to manage it all
- *The chief jailer did not supervise anything under Joseph’s charge—*
- *because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made to prosper—*Four times this chapter says the Lord was with Joseph (vv 2-3, 21, 23). Joseph is slowly moving to the place where he will reign and the brothers will bow down to him, as God foretold in the dreams. The path, however, was not something he probably would have chosen. It was training, though.

**An Application:** the history of deception so far—

- Abraham deceived Pharaoh, calling Sarah his sister (ch 12)
- Abraham deceived Abimelech calling Sarah his sister (ch 20)

- Isaac deceived Abimelech calling Rebekah his sister (ch 26)
- Rebekah and Jacob deceived Isaac (ch 27)
- Laban and Leah deceived Jacob (ch 29)
- Laban claims Jacob deceived him by secretly leaving (31:26)
- Rachel deceived Laban, concealing an idol in her saddle (ch 31)
- Jacob’s sons deceived the Shechemites (ch 34)
- Jacob’s sons deceived Jacob with Joseph’s coat (ch 37)
- Tamar deceived Judah (ch 38)
- Potiphar’s wife deceived Potiphar with Joseph’s coat (ch 39)

In the New Testament, we are told, “*Let no one in any way deceive you...*” (Rom 16:18; 1 Cor 3:18; Eph 5:6; 2 Thess 2:3; 1 John 2:26). Jesus warned, “*Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves*” (Matt 7:15). Paul wrote, “*For such men are deceitful workers, disguising himself as apostles of Christ...even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness...*” (2 Cor 11:13-15).

- What is the best defense against deception? The truth!! The more you know the truth (of God’s Word), the less likely you will be deceived.

## Genesis 40

**40:1** *Then it came about after these things*—it is not clear how long Joseph worked for Potiphar or how long he was in prison before the new prisoners arrived

- *the cupbearer*—these men were often foreigners, who in many cases became confidants and favorites of the king, such as Nehemiah in a similar position in the Persian court (Neh 1:11–2:8).
- *and the baker for the king of Egypt*—lit. more like “head of the bakers” (vv. 2-3)
- *offended their lord, the king of Egypt*—the offense is not known. And strange that they, with different jobs, both at same time offended Pharaoh. In contrast to Joseph, who was in prison for not doing something wrong, these two were in prison for doing something wrong. And Joseph worked for Potiphar (*an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the bodyguard*, 39:1), whereas the baker and cupbearer worked for Pharaoh.

**40:2-3** *Pharaoh was furious* [lit. “lost his temper”] *with his two officials, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker. So he put them in confinement in the house of the captain of the bodyguard*—whether Potiphar still held this position after the lapse of time implied in verse 1 is unknown.

- *in the jail, the same place where Joseph was imprisoned.*

**40:4** *The captain of the bodyguard put Joseph in charge of them, and he took care of them*—Joseph was not their guard, he was taking care of them, they were Pharaoh’s officials.

- *and they were in confinement for some time*—again, how much time is not known.

**40:5-7** *Then the cupbearer and the baker for the king of Egypt, who were confined in jail, both had a dream the same night, each man with his own dream and each dream with its own interpretation*—they must have told their dreams to the other. Similar but different.

- *When Joseph came to them in the morning and observed them, behold, they were dejected*—lit. “ill,” “sickly,” frustration.

— *He asked Pharaoh’s officials who were with him in confinement in his master’s house, “Why are your faces so sad today?”* Joseph’s expression of concern will ultimately lead to his release and promotion in the Egyptian court.

**40:8** *Then they said to him, “We have had a dream—interesting that they make both dreams, which seem so different, into one dream.*

- *And there is no one to interpret it*—they do not know of Joseph’s previous dreams
- *Then Joseph said to them, “Do not interpretations belong to God?—only God knows—He gives the dreams to illustrate and/or prophesy the truth of what will happen in the future.*
- *Tell it to me, please*—yet Joseph had a consciousness that God would tell him the interpretation

**40:9-11** *So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, “In my dream, behold, there was a vine in front of me; and on the vine were three branches. And as it was budding, its blossoms came out, and its clusters produced ripe grapes. Now Pharaoh’s cup was in my hand; so I took the grapes and squeezed them into Pharaoh’s cup, and I put the cup into Pharaoh’s hand”*—this is not to conclude that Pharaoh only drank fresh-squeezed grape juice. The making and drinking of wine is established beyond question in the earliest monuments. But the point of the dream is the destiny of the cupbearer, not what was in the cup.

**40:12-13** *Then Joseph said to him, “This is the interpretation of it: the three branches are three days; within three more days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office; and you will put Pharaoh’s cup into his hand according to your former custom when you were his cupbearer—short and sweet—in three days the cupbearer will have his job back.*

**40:14** *“Only keep me in mind when it goes well with you—Joseph is confident in his interpretation*  
— *and please do me a kindness by mentioning me to Pharaoh and get me out of this house. For I was in fact kidnapped—*not exactly what happened, but it shows Joseph’s feelings about the way his brothers had treated him.

- *from the land of the Hebrews—i.e., from where his people lived*
- *and even here I have done nothing that they should have put me into the dungeon*—in fact, he was put in there because he did the right thing (but the witness was a liar).

**40:16-17** *When the chief baker saw that he had interpreted favorably—obviously encouraged by the interpretation of the cupbearer’s dream*

- *he said to Joseph, “I also saw in my dream, and behold, there were three baskets of white bread (a term only found here, its meaning is uncertain) on my head; and in the top basket there were some of all sorts of baked food (not just bread) for Pharaoh, and the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head”*—in the cupbearer’s dream, he is again giving the cup to Pharaoh. But in the baker’s dream, he is not giving bread to Pharaoh. The birds were eating the bread. Quite different dreams.

**40:18-19** *Then Joseph answered and said, “This is its interpretation: the three baskets are three days; within three more days Pharaoh will lift up your head from you and will hang you on a tree, and the birds will eat your flesh off you”*—Joseph interpreted “birds eating them out of the basket” to be “birds will eat your flesh.” An interpretation only revealed by God to Joseph.

**40:20-22** *Thus it came about on the third day, which was Pharaoh’s birthday, that he made a feast for all his servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants.*

- *He restored the chief cupbearer to his office, and he put the cup into Pharaoh's hand;*
- *but he hanged the chief baker, just as Joseph had interpreted to them.*

**40:23** *Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him*—but significant to Joseph was that he was correctly interpreting dreams. He did not misunderstand God's revelations. He might not have understood his imprisonment, but he was encouraged in his faith in God.

Why tell the story in such great detail? Later, when Pharaoh has a dream, the butler remembered Joseph and how the two dreams came true exactly as Joseph had said. Even when the readers hear the dreams, the meanings are unknown. Joseph's dreams to his brothers sounded more obvious. The cupbearer's dream sounds less obvious, but the baker's and Pharaoh's dreams are unknown. So Joseph becomes known as the interpreter of dreams. He discerns the future events in the mysterious dreams of others that to them lie in total darkness. (Reminds us of what Daniel did years later.)

God had spoken directly to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But Joseph now represents a new kind of leadership that the readers of the Pentateuch would be called on to follow. People will need to discern the visions (and dreams) of the prophets to find out God's future dealings with His people. So Joseph becomes a prototype of all the later wisemen of Israel.

## **Genesis 41**

**41:1** *Now it happened at the end of two full years*—13 years since he was sold at 17 years of age. He comes before Pharaoh at 30 years of age (41:46), and still in jail, 2 whole years since correctly interpreting the cupbearer's and baker's dreams.

- *that Pharaoh had a dream, and behold, he was standing by the Nile.*

**41:2-4** *And lo, from the Nile there came up seven cows, sleek and fat; and they grazed in the marsh grass. Then behold, seven other cows came up after them from the Nile, ugly and gaunt, and they stood by the other cows on the bank of the Nile. The ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven sleek and fat cows.*

*Then Pharaoh awoke.*

**41:5-7** *He fell asleep and dreamed a second time; and behold, seven ears of grain came up on a single stalk, plump and good. Then behold, seven ears, thin and scorched by the east wind, sprouted up after them. The thin ears swallowed up the seven plump and full ears.*

*Then Pharaoh awoke, and behold, it was a dream*—but it seemed so vivid and real...

**41:8** *Now in the morning his spirit was troubled*—because the interpretation of the dream seems obvious. 7 good cows and ears of grain followed by 7 bad ones. But what do they represent?

- *so he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all its wise men*—a class of priests, who specialized in astrology, sacred arts, magic, etc.
- *And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them to Pharaoh*—it seems like they may have not wanted to interpret the obvious bad news or maybe Pharaoh did not accept whatever their interpretations were.

**41:9-11** *Then the chief cupbearer spoke to Pharaoh, saying, “I would make mention today of my own offenses. Pharaoh was furious with his servants, and he put me in confinement in the house of the captain of the bodyguard, both me and the chief baker. We had a dream on the same night, he and I; each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his own dream.*

**41:12-13** *“Now a Hebrew youth was with us there, a servant of the captain of the bodyguard, and we related them to him, and he interpreted our dreams for us. To each one he interpreted according to his own dream*—he seems to downplay Joseph’s insignificance, no wonder the cupbearer had forgotten to mention him earlier. Of course, being able to interpret dreams was not significant until Pharaoh had his own dream to interpret.

— *And just as he interpreted for us, so it happened; he restored me in my office, but he hanged him*—the dreams are not even described. Important was that Joseph not only interpreted them, but it happened exactly as he interpreted them.

**41:14** *Then Pharaoh sent and called for Joseph, and they hurriedly brought him out of the dungeon*—similar to when the brothers also brought him out of the pit they put him in

— *and when he had shaved himself*—later (43:32; 46:34), the brothers cannot eat with the Egyptians because as shepherds (and stinky hair), they were loathsome (word for “vomit”). The Egyptians were clean-shaven, over their entire bodies. God will use this for 400 years to keep the children of Israel from intermarrying with the Egyptians (whereas the Canaanites looked similar to the Israelites).

— *and changed his clothes*—he is being transformed from a Hebrew nobody into Egyptian Pharaoh’s right-hand man.

— *he came to Pharaoh*—not as a Hebrew slave from prison but as an interpreter of dreams

**An Application:** Joseph had to get rid of the dirt and be clean to come into Pharaoh’s presence.

How much more must we get rid of our sin to come into the presence of a righteous and holy God. But we cannot get rid of our sin. But thanks be to Jesus (2 Cor 5:21). He makes us clean.

**41:15** *Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I have had a dream, but no one can interpret it*—i.e., no human can interpret it, especially his magicians

— *and I have heard it said about you, that when you hear a dream you can interpret it*—many years later, Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar said, “*tell me the dream, that I may know that you can declare to me its interpretation*” (Dan 2:9). But Pharaoh tells Joseph the dream. How would he know if it is the correct interpretation? He already dismissed his magicians’ interpretations.

**41:16** *Joseph then answered Pharaoh, saying, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer*”—As in 40:8, Joseph is quick to say “*Do not interpretations belong to God?*”

**41:17-21** *So Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, “In my dream, behold, I was standing on the bank of the Nile; and behold, seven cows, fat and sleek came up out of the Nile, and they grazed in the marsh grass. Lo, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and gaunt, such as I had never seen for ugliness in all the land of Egypt; and the lean and ugly cows ate up the first seven fat cows. Yet when they had devoured them, it could not be detected that they had devoured them, for they were just as ugly as before. Then I awoke.*

**41:22-** *“I saw also in my dream, and behold, seven ears, full and good, came up on a single stalk; and lo, seven ears, withered, thin, and scorched by the east wind, sprouted up after them; and the thin ears swallowed the seven good ears.*

— *Then I told it to the magicians, but there was no one who could explain it to me.”*

**41:25** *Now Joseph said to Pharaoh, “Pharaoh’s dreams are one and the same—similar to Joseph’s dreams he told his brothers—two different dreams but meant the same thing*  
— *God has told to Pharaoh what He is about to do—He gives the interpretation of the dreams*  
**An Application:** This is called “prophecy.” We, too, have much prophecy of the future for us. Jesus said, “*Now I have told you before it comes to pass, that when it comes to pass, you may believe*” (John 14:29).

**41:26-27** *“The seven good cows are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years; the dreams are one and the same. The seven lean and ugly cows that came up after them are seven years, and the seven thin ears scorched by the east wind will be seven years of famine.*

**41:28** *“It is as I have spoken to Pharaoh:*

— *God has shown to Pharaoh what He is about to do—God could have just told Joseph what He was going to do, but it would stay in prison with him. By telling Pharaoh these dreams, He got Pharaoh’s attention and belief in what the God of the Hebrews was about to do.*

**41:29-31** *“Behold, seven years of great abundance are coming in all the land of Egypt—1 clause*  
*(1) and after them seven years of famine will come—after the “great abundance”*  
*(2) and all the abundance will be forgotten in the land of Egypt—abundance will be forgotten*  
*(3) and the famine will ravage the land—famine will be “complete” “exhausted”*  
*(4) So the abundance will be unknown in the land because of that subsequent famine—here he picks up on the dream, when they (ugly cows) had devoured them (fat cows), it could not be detected that they had devoured them—the abundance will not even be remembered*  
*(5) for it will be very severe—heavy, burdensome, grievous*

**41:32** *“Now as for the repeating of the dream to Pharaoh twice, it means that the matter is determined by God, and God will quickly bring it about—*

**An Application:** reminding us of the same dream Joseph told his brothers (ch 37). The repeating of the dream means the *matter is determined by God...*

**41:33** *“Now let Pharaoh look for a man discerning and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt—*  
now Joseph leaves off the interpretation to give advice as to the action Pharaoh should take as a consequence of the dreams—and do it “now.”

**41:34-37** *“Let Pharaoh take action—that God has predetermined this, it is the people’s free will responsibility to take action in light of God’s revelation.*

— *to appoint overseers in charge of the land, and let him exact a fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven years of abundance. Then let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming, and store up the grain for food in the cities under Pharaoh’s authority, and let them guard it. Let the food become as a reserve for the land for the seven years of famine which will occur in the land of Egypt, so that the land will not perish during the famine”—remember, Joseph had been well-trained in his time of overseeing Potiphar’s property and even his time in jail, overseeing the prisoners. He has wisdom in this.*

**41:37** *Now the proposal seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his servants—Joseph’s plan was good. Both Pharaoh and his servants did not know what to do in light of this revelation.*

**An Application:** Joseph also says to his brothers, “...*you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good...*” (50:20). God has more information and wisdom than we have, so we must trust Him. When God told Habakkuk about the coming Babylonian invasion, he wrote, “*I heard and my inward*

*parts trembled...and though the fields produce no food...yet I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.. The Lord God is my strength...*” (Hab 3:16-19).

**41:38-39** *Then Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find a man like this, in whom is a divine spirit?” So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has informed you of all this, there is no one so discerning and wise as you are—*God’s revelation makes a person wise.

**An Application:** So God’s revelation of the end times should make believers wise in their daily living. *“Godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance...”* (1 Tim 4:8-9).

**41:40-44** *“You shall be over my house, and according to your command all my people shall do homage; only in the throne I will be greater than you.” Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt”—*and 13 years of slavery and imprisonment in a foreign land come to an abrupt and sudden end. But Joseph seems changed, too. He has gone from an unwise teenager bragging to his brothers to an intelligent and wise man, without equal in Egypt.

— *Then Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put the gold necklace around his neck. He had him ride in his second chariot; and they proclaimed before him, “Bow the knee!” And he set him over all the land of Egypt. Moreover, Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Though I am Pharaoh, yet without your permission no one shall raise his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt”—*so Joseph reigns—part one of his dream has come true.

**41:45-46** *Then Pharaoh named Joseph Zaphenath-paneah—*it was different when God changed Abram’s and Sarai’s and Jacob’s names, indicating a relationship with Him.

— *and he gave him Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On, as his wife—*yes, she is a non-Israelite, but her children leave Egypt as Israelites, and are given an inheritance in the Land.  
— *And Joseph went forth over the land of Egypt.*

**41:46** *Now Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt—*13 years since he was sold by his brothers into slavery to Egypt.

— *And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh and went through all the land of Egypt.*

**41:47** *During the seven years of plenty the land brought forth abundantly—*the land did not just have normal crops. It over-produced. Reminding us of the manna on Friday that overproduced so none needed to be gathered on Sabbath in the wilderness (Ex 16:5).

**41:48-49** *So he gathered all the food of these seven years which occurred in the land of Egypt and placed the food in the cities; he placed in every city the food from its own surrounding fields. Thus Joseph stored up grain in great abundance like the sand of the sea, until he stopped measuring it, for it was beyond measure—*so is the fulfillment of the abundance as seen in the first part of Pharaoh’s dreams.

**41:50-52** *Now before the year of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On, bore to him. Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh, “For,” he said, “God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father’s household”—*here is where he is wrong because God is sending Joseph’s household to him!! They will fulfill the second part of his dream, bowing down to him.



- *He named the second Ephraim, “For,” he said, “God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction”*—also a prophecy as Ephraim will be the largest tribe in the northern kingdom (Deut 33:17). And Egypt will also be the land of affliction to Joseph’s family’s descendants.
- Both names express Joseph’s thankfulness to God. In one, God is praised as the One who preserves, and in the other, as the One who blesses.

**41:53-54** *When the seven years of plenty which had been in the land of Egypt came to an end, and the seven years of famine began to come, just as Joseph had said [interpreted], then there was famine in all the lands*—as God revealed in Pharaoh’s dreams

- *but in all the land of Egypt there was bread*—because they were forewarned and prepared.

**41:55-57** *So when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried out to Pharaoh for bread; and Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, you shall do.” When the famine was spread over all the face of the earth, then Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold to the Egyptians; and the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. The people of all the earth came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe in all the earth*—of course, the point was not to save the Egyptians, it was to save the children of Israel, which leads into chapter 42. The struggle between the house of Joseph and the house of Judah will begin.....

## Genesis 42

**42:1-2** *Now Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, and Jacob said to his sons, “Why are you staring at one another?” He said, “Behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down there and buy some for us from that place, so that we may live and not die.”* Though old (in his 120s), Jacob is still head of the family. The narration is assuming knowledge of chapter 41.

**42:3-4** *Then ten brothers of Joseph [reminding the readers of the relationship] went down to buy grain from Egypt. But Jacob did not send Joseph’s brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, “I am afraid that harm may befall him”*—Jacob wanted to protect Benjamin, Rachel’s only son. The twelve are divided into two groups: the ten and the two (from Rachel). These two are contrasted to Leah’s two sons Reuben and Judah.

- Maybe we wonder why all 10 went. Probably because they each had their own families to feed.
- Verses 1-4 explain exactly who came and why. The absence of Jacob (his father) and Benjamin (his brother, son of his mother) is crucial to understanding Joseph’s reaction.

**42:5** *So the sons of Israel came to buy grain among those who were coming, for the famine was in the land of Canaan also*—to the Egyptians, they were just another group from Canaan. (Remember, there were previous famines in Canaan, that made Abraham go to Egypt for food in 12:10 and God told Isaac not to go to Egypt in 26:2.)

**42:6** *Now Joseph was the ruler over the land; he was the one who sold to all the people of the land*—therefore, the brothers would need to come to him to buy, not someone else.

- *And Joseph’s brothers came and bowed down to him with their faces to the ground*—sounds like his dreams—but those included 11 brothers and his father and mother. Here are only 10 brothers and no parents.

**42:7** *When Joseph saw his brothers he recognized them, but he disguised himself to them and spoke to them harshly*—he was dressed as a royal Egyptian and he used an interpreter (v. 23), as he spoke Egyptian to them, whose language was Hebrew, and he was 17 when they last saw him and now he is 30. Joseph is the one who creates the conflict and tension throughout the narrative.

- Using a disguise is a reminder of them using Joseph’s coat as a disguise to Jacob years before.
- *And he said to them, “Where have you come from?” And they said, “From the land of Canaan, to buy food.”*

**42:8** *But Joseph had recognized his brothers, although they did not recognize him*—throughout the encounter, the readers and Joseph know who the brothers are, but they do not know Joseph.

**42:9** *Joseph remembered the dreams which he had about them*—the narrator is telling us what was in Joseph’s mind when he saw his brothers and recognized them. Some years earlier he had said that *“God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father’s household”* (41:51). Now the memories come flooding back.

- *and said to them, “You are spies; you have come to look at the undefended parts of our land”*—Joseph’s actions are motivated by his dreams of reigning and them bowing, not by what they had done to him, revenge in selling him.

**42:10-11** *Then they said to him, “No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. We are all sons of one man* [yes, including Joseph!]; *we are honest men* [you mean, except for what you did to Joseph?!], *your servants are not spies”*—spies would not all be from the same family. If caught, the family would be wiped out.

- Joseph wants to know about his father and his brother, but wonder if the brothers still hate him for his dreams, especially seeing they did actually bow down to him as in the dreams.

**42:12-13** *Yet he said to them, “No, but you have come to look at the undefended parts of our land!” But they said, “Your servants are twelve brothers in all, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and behold, the youngest is with our father today, and one is no longer alive.”* So Joseph finds out his father and his brother are still alive. Are they lying about Joseph? They do not know that he is no longer alive. Are they telling the same story as Jacob realized? There is no reason to think the Ishmaelites killed him. They’d want to make a profit selling him.

**42:14-16** *Joseph said to them, “It is as I said to you, you are spies; by this you will be tested: by the life of Pharaoh, you shall not go from this place unless your youngest brother comes here! Send one of you that he may get your brother, while you remain confined, that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you. But if not, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies.”* Now Joseph tests their feelings toward Benjamin, who had taken his place as his father’s only son from his wife Rachel. Are they going to treat him the way they treated Joseph? His first idea was to keep them all and only send one of them to get Benjamin.

**42:17-18** *So he put them all together in prison for three days*—not as punishment—3 days would not be enough. Rather, it seems to be for the brothers to contemplate what they will do.

- *Now Joseph said to them on the third day, “Do this and live, for I fear God*—Joseph’s motivation is to not slay the brothers because of suspicion that they were spies. Also, he had compassion on their families back in Canaan who needed the food, although they had left Joseph in a pit to starve.

**42:19-20** *if you are honest men, let one of your brothers be confined in your prison*—now he has changed his mind. He will only keep one of them and the rest can return to the father.

- *but as for the rest of you, go, carry grain for the famine of your households*—each brother had a family to feed
- *and bring your youngest brother to me, so your words may be verified, and you will not die.” And they did so.*

**42:21** *Then they said to one another, “Truly we are guilty concerning our brother, because we saw the distress of his soul when he pleaded with us, yet we would not listen; therefore this distress has come upon us”*—the brothers see what happened to them as a Divine retribution for what they did to their brother years ago. [We do not read earlier of Joseph’s feelings or actions when he was sold, but now we learn that he was distressed and pleaded with the brothers to not sell him, but they would not listen.]

**42:22** *Reuben answered them, saying, “Did I not tell you, ‘Do not sin against the boy’; and you would not listen? Now comes the reckoning for his blood.”* He had wanted to return Joseph to their father (37:21-22).

**42:23** *They did not know, however, that Joseph understood, for there was an interpreter between them.*

**42:24** *He turned away from them and wept*—perhaps now knowing Reuben tried to save him.

- *But when he returned to them and spoke to them, he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes*—not Reuben, the oldest who had tried to save Joseph, but Simeon who was the next in age.

**42:25-26** *Then Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain and to restore every man’s money in his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. And thus it was done for them. So they loaded their donkeys with their grain and departed from there.*

- Why did Joseph put their money back in the sacks? Was it out of kindness? Was it to make them appear as thieves? Was it to reproduce the earlier situation where they traded Joseph for money? Would they leave Simeon in prison? Joseph’s motive is unknown.

**42:27-28** *As one of them opened his sack to give his donkey fodder at the lodging place, he saw his money; and behold, it was in the mouth of his sack*—where it is obvious, not buried

- *Then he said to his brothers, “My money has been returned, and behold, it is even in my sack.” And their hearts sank, and they turned trembling to one another, saying, “What is this that God has done to us?”* —They continue to feel the guilt over what they had done to Joseph. Yet they did not look in the sacks of the other brothers.

**42:29-35** *When they came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them, saying*—this should be good! As they lied to their father before about Joseph.

- *“The man, the lord of the land, spoke harshly with us, and took us for spies of the country.*
- *“But we said to him, ‘We are honest men; we are not spies*—actually, they told about their family before they said they were honest men (v. 11).
- *‘We are twelve brothers, sons of our father; one is no longer alive, and the youngest is with our father today in the land of Canaan.’* They assume Joseph has died, like their story.
- *“The man, the lord of the land, said to us, ‘By this I will know that you are honest men: leave one of your brothers with me and take grain for the famine of your households, and go*—they

did not mention their own 3 days in jail. And they do not say Simeon is in jail. They make it sound like he is an honored guest (“*leave one of your brothers with me*”). They also do not mention Joseph’s warning about executing them if they fail to produce Benjamin (v. 20).

- ***‘But bring your youngest brother to me that I may know that you are not spies, but honest men. I will give your brother to you, and you may trade in the land’***—making it sound great—they could trade in the land—Joseph said no such thing. Also, they do not tell Jacob about the money they already found in one of the sacks.
- ***Now it came about as they were emptying their sacks, that behold, every man’s bundle of money was in his sack; and when they and their father saw their bundles of money, they were dismayed***—now they see that all of them have their money returned to their sacks, so they are all really afraid. They do not know why the money was there. Will this support Joseph’s claim they are spies?
- They were dismayed for different reasons. The brothers in essence have now sold Simeon, and their guilt over Joseph is increased (vv 21-22, 28).
- For Jacob, it is more terrible. Two strange disclosures have been quickly sprung on him: Simeon’s (dis)appearance and the moneys (re)appearance—Jacob refuses to accept them as coincidences. And he even seems to be somewhat suspect of the brothers.

**42:36** *Their father Jacob said to them, “**You have bereaved me of my children: Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and you would take Benjamin; all these things are against me**”*—Jacob sees all these as being against him, not against his sons. He equates Simeon’s fate with Joseph’s. And he says it is all the brothers’ fault!! They brought the coat with blood, they left Simeon in Egypt, and now they want to take Benjamin.

**42:37** *Then Reuben*—as the oldest, he speaks up, trying to save Benjamin, as he tried to save Joseph. He cannot say, “It’s true we did away with your favorite son and lied to you, but this time our hands are clean and our hearts are pure.” Wouldn’t that be a shock to Jacob!!!

**An Application:** As Moses wrote much later, “*...you have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out*” (Num 32:23). It will be revealed, though they try to hide it.

- *spoke to his father, saying, “You may put my two sons to death if I do not bring him back to you; put him in my care, and I will return him to you”*—glad I’m not one of his sons!!! Reuben failed to prevent the loss of Joseph (37:21-22), so how does he plan to protect Benjamin?

**42:38** *But Jacob said, “My son [of Rachel] shall not go down with you [of Leah]; for his brother is dead [Joseph], and he [Benjamin] alone is left. If harm should befall him [Benjamin] on the journey you [sons of Leah] are taking, then you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow”*—so Benjamin is as precious to Jacob as Joseph was. When Jacob saw Joseph’s bloody coat, he also said, “**Surely I will go down to Sheol in mourning for my son**” (37:35).

## Genesis 43

**43:1** *Now the famine was severe in the land*—Similar to the opening scene of chapter 42, describing the family discussion that preceded each visit to Egypt. But the dialogue is fuller in chapters 43–44. In chapter 42, it was to simply buy food. But now.....

**43:2** *So it came about when they had finished eating the grain which they had brought from Egypt*—the sacks of grain the brothers had brought back from the first trip—but no idea how long that was.

- *that their father said to them* [the brothers—a continuation of chapter 42], “*Go back, buy us a little food*”—in 42:1-2, Jacob commands them to *go down there and buy some for us from that place*. But now, he knows they want to take Benjamin, and he does not want that. So they are at an impasse.
- 43:3** *Judah spoke to him*—last time (42:37), it was Reuben. Now it is Judah. Similar to chapter 37, when both Reuben and Judah wanted to save Joseph. Reuben, though, was not on the best of terms with his father because he had slept with Bilhah (35:22), Rachel’s maid and his father’s concubine, after Rachel’s death, and Jacob has a long memory (Gen 49:4). Perhaps it is not Levi either because of the killing at Shechem (49:5-7). That leaves Judah to speak.
- *however, saying, “The man [Joseph] solemnly warned us*—to inform someone in advance
  - *‘You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you’*—they will not even be able to come into his presence to present their case if Benjamin is not with them.
- 43:4-5** “*If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food—But if you do not send him, we will not go down; for the man said to us, ‘You will not see my face unless your brother is with you’*”—not only could they not buy food, but they would not even be able to see the man in charge to ask for food. It is an impossible situation without Benjamin. Judah repeats Joseph’s warning. There is no getting around it.
- 43:6** *Then Israel said, “Why did you treat me so badly by telling the man whether you still had another brother?”*—Jacob thinks the brothers telling the man about Benjamin was to treat him (their father Jacob) badly. A personal offense to their father.
- 43:7** *But they said*—the brothers back up Judah’s claim
- “*The man questioned particularly about us and our relatives, saying, ‘Is your father still alive? Have you another brother?’ So we answered his questions. Could we possibly know that he would say, ‘Bring your brother down?’*”—42:10-16 does not record Joseph putting these questions so directly. Rather, they volunteered the information as a way to clear themselves of the charge of being spies. But they could not foresee how the conversation would develop.
- 43:8** *Judah said to his father Israel, “Send the lad*—Benjamin was still a baby/toddler when Joseph was sold at 17. He was 30 when he started working for Pharaoh. There has been 7 years of plenty and maybe 1-2 years of famine, which would make Benjamin about 20 (all estimates).
- *with me and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, we as well as you and our little ones*—Judah now appeals to Jacob as the patriarch of an extended family—it is not just him and Benjamin, but the brothers and their little children all need food.
- 43:9** “*I myself will be surety for him; you may hold me responsible for him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame before you forever*—both Reuben and Judah, who tried to save Joseph from the brothers’ evil plan, now try to guarantee the safety of Benjamin, but this time the plan was initiated by Joseph against the brothers.
- 43:10** “*For if we had not delayed, surely by now we could have returned twice*”—better translated as “we could have returned a second time,” i.e., from the trip they want to make now.
- 43:11** *Then their father Israel said to them, “If it must be so, then do this: take some of the best products of the land in your bags, and carry down to the man as a present, a little balm and a little honey, aromatic gum and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds*—similar to the specialty

foods the Ishmaelites were carrying to Egypt (37:25), who took their brother Joseph to Egypt. But now the brothers are bringing these things to rescue their brother Simeon from Egypt. These are like condiments, but they need the staple of grain to make bread. Can't live on nuts alone!!

**43:12** *“Take double the money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks—so 3 times the money.*

— *perhaps it was a mistake*—an optimistic possibility

**43:13** *“Take your brother [Benjamin] also, and arise, return to the man—Jacob gives his permission for Benjamin to go to Egypt with the brothers.*

**43:14** *and may God Almighty grant you compassion in the sight of the man—reminding us of his prayer to God for compassion when he was about to meet Esau (32:10-13).*

— *so that he will release to you your other brother [Simeon] and Benjamin*

— *And as for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved”*—similar to Rebekah when she heard Esau planned to murder Jacob (27:45).

**43:15** *So the men took this present, and they took double the money in their hand, and Benjamin; then they arose and went down to Egypt and stood before Joseph—an easy journey, and now they were able to see Joseph because they had Benjamin with them, as he has requested.*

**43:16-17** *When Joseph saw Benjamin with them—how emotionally pack is this word “saw”—his only brother from his mother, thinking he would never see him again.....*

— *he said to his house steward, “Bring the men into the house, and slay an animal and make ready; for the men are to dine with me at noon.” So the man did as Joseph said, and brought the men to Joseph’s house—*they see this as an overreaction to having Benjamin with them.

**43:18** *Now the men were afraid, because they were brought to Joseph’s house and they said, “It is because of the money that was returned in our sacks the first time that we are being brought in, that he may seek occasion against us and fall upon us, and take us for slaves with our donkeys”* thinking he had to do with the money in their sacks. All they wanted was a release of Simeon and fresh food supplies.

**43:19-22** *So they came near to Joseph’s house steward, and spoke to him at the entrance of the house, and said, “Oh, my lord, we indeed came down the first time to buy food, and it came about when we came to the lodging place, that we opened our sacks, and behold, each man’s money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full. So we have brought it back in our hand—*that is not what actually happened. At the lodging place, they only opened one sack (42:27). They opened the others in the presence of Jacob (42:35), but their point was that they did not steal it and have now returned it.

— *“We have also brought down other money in our hand to buy food; we do not know who put our money in our sacks”*—to show their honesty, they brought that “sack money” back as well as more money.

**43:23** *He said, “Be at ease, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks”*—the steward acknowledges the control of human affairs by a divine providence, not by his god, but the God of Israel.

— *I had your money*—a relief they would not be accused of stealing the money. But no one is taking the money back from them.

— *Then he brought Simeon out to them*—from the jail, also a relief—it is going well so far.....

**43:24** *Then the man brought the men into Joseph’s house and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys fodder* (see 18:4; 19:2; 24:32; Luke 7:44).

**43:25** *So they prepared the present—as a present, a little balm and a little honey, aromatic gum and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds*, specialty items.

— *for Joseph’s coming at noon; for they had heard that they were to eat a meal there*—the whole issue of the brothers being spies is not even mentioned again. However, can good come of this? Now the narrator goes into quite a bit of detail about this meal.

**43:26** *When Joseph came home*—the test is seeing him, not his steward

— *they brought into the house to him the present which was in their hand*—balm, honey, nuts  
— *and bowed to the ground before him*—(42:6, 9), like the dreams, but only 10 brothers before. Now there are 11, but still no parents.

**43:27** *Then he asked them about their welfare, and said, “Is your old father well, of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?”*—probably Joseph has talked to thousands of people about food in the interim of the brothers’ two trips, yet they don’t find it unusual he remembers their details.

**43:28** *They said, “Your servant our father is well; he is still alive”*—but his thoughts and even plans about his father are not revealed.

— *They bowed down in homage*—the narrator is making sure the reader understands this is the fulfillment of Joseph’s dream.

**43:29** *As he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother’s son*, up to now, the brothers are just “the men” and Joseph is “the man” but now suddenly Benjamin is called “brother” and “mother’s son.”

— *he said, “Is this your youngest brother, of whom you spoke to me?”*—but out loud he asks if Benjamin is their youngest brother

— *And he said, “May God be gracious to you, my son”*—a very family-type comment to make

**43:30** *Joseph hurried out for he was deeply stirred over his brother*—not only is he his only true brother from his mother, but Benjamin was about the same age at Joseph when he was brought to Egypt as a slave (see v. 8).

— *and he sought a place to weep; and he entered his chamber and wept there*—this action is reported to the reader but unseen by the brothers—showing there is a difference between Joseph’s public face and his private feelings. He continues to hide his true identity from his brothers.

**43:31** *Then he washed his face and came out; and he controlled himself and said, “Serve the meal”*—memory of the brothers sitting down to eat while Joseph was in the pit (37:24-25).

**43:32** *So they served him by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because the Egyptians could not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is loathsome to the Egyptians*—a word for “vomit” or “disgusting.” Also, in times past, the Hebrews (and others) would eat animals, which were sacred to the Egyptians. Another aspect is that the Egyptians were clean-shaven and smelled good. Hebrews were shepherds who also had long hair (and I’m sure smelled!).

**An Application:** This same idea is used in an spiritual sense with respect to God who cannot be in the presence of evil (Exo 8:22-26). It is why we need the righteousness of Jesus Christ to even approach God. In our sin, we are loathsome to Him. But now, *“we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus...let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean...”* (Heb 11:19-22).

**43:33** *Now they were seated before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth, and the men looked at one another in astonishment*—finally, the brothers realize and become suspicious of the situation.

**43:34** *He took portions to them from his own table*—unusual for an Egyptian ruler to do

- *but Benjamin’s portion was five times as much as any of theirs*—he had special treatment—was this a test by Joseph to see if the brothers would be as jealous of him as they were of Joseph? Or it could simply be a mark of affection for his only full brother.
- *So they feasted and drank freely with him*—if they did notice or care, it was soon forgotten in the feasting and drinking. While they are sleeping off the night’s party, the steward is putting the money back in the sacks and putting Joseph’s cup in Benjamin’s sack (44:1-2), as they leave at first light (v. 3).

## **Genesis 44**

**44:1-2** *Then he commanded his house steward, saying, “Fill the men’s sacks with food, as much as they can carry*—overabundance

- *and put each man’s money in the mouth of his sack*—as before
- *“Put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his money for the grain”*—so another test for the brothers, the cup put in Benjamin’s sack
- *And he did as Joseph had told him*—Joseph has had him do some strange things, but he did it

**44:3** *As soon as it was light, the men were sent away, they with their donkeys*—they must have been congratulating themselves on their success—they had grain, Simeon, and Benjamin and were heading home at dawn! No scolding from Jacob!

**44:4-6** *They had just gone out of the city, and were not far off, when Joseph said to his house steward, “Up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, ‘Why have you repaid evil for good?’*—a contrast in the narrative. The brothers do evil, but God and Joseph do good.

- *‘Is not this the one from which my lord drinks and which he indeed uses for divination?* Of course, they would not know that. It is obvious that Joseph does not practice divination. Rather, it is said to increase the gravity of the offense and explain why the brothers are guilty, so they would have to return. It is not a simple silver cup—it’s the purpose of it that gives it value
- *You have done wrong in doing this’*—they are charged with this evil—can’t deny evidence.
- *So he overtook them and spoke these words to them*—the money does not matter, they do not know the money is their sacks—it seems obvious they would have looked sooner after what happened the first time.

**44:7-8** *They said to him, “Why does my lord speak such words as these? Far be it from your servants to do such a thing*—the first trip, they were accused of being spies. Now they are accused of being thieves.



- **“Behold, the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks we have brought back to you from the land of Canaan**—this should be proof that they are not thieves (they obviously do not know the money is back in their sacks again).
- **How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord’s house?**—it sounds like the money would have been more valuable than a simple cup, and they did not take the money, so why would they take the cup?

**44:9 “With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord’s slaves”**—they are so convinced of their innocence. The punishment of slavery or death for theft, reminding of how the brothers treated Joseph—slavery, but no theft.

**44:10 So he said, “Now let it also be according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and the rest of you shall be innocent”**—of course, Joseph’s whole purpose is to single out Benjamin and to see if the brothers will sacrifice him as they did with Joseph.

**44:11-12 Then they hurried, each man lowered his sack to the ground, and each man opened his sack**—they quickly submit to the search, so convinced were they of their innocence

- **He searched, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest**—the tension builds (the steward knows the birth order from the seating at the meal—43:33)
- **and the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack**—reminder of earlier when Jacob ran away from Laban and the teraphim was undiscovered in Rachel’s saddle (31:32-34). Jacob had pronounced a death sentence—not realizing he was condemning his favorite wife. Now the brothers pronounced a death sentence—not realizing they were condemning Jacob’s favorite son Benjamin, the son of Jacob’s favorite wife Rachel.

**44:13 Then they tore their clothes**—when Joseph disappeared, it was only Jacob who tore his clothes (37:34), but now all the brothers do—first sign of solidarity by the brothers

- **and when each man loaded his donkey, they returned to the city**—voluntarily. They were trapped! They did not abandon Benjamin.

**44:14 When Judah and his brothers came to Joseph’s house**—Judah in charge of brothers now

- **he [Joseph] was still there**—they had left early, at first light (v. 3).
- **and they fell to the ground before him**—“fell” is different than “bowed down” in 42:6 and 43:26. It implies more of a submission to an authority.

**44:15 Joseph said to them, “What is this deed that you have done?** They have no way to demonstrate they are innocent. The evidence is against them. They can only appeal for mercy, not justice.

- **Do you not know that such a man as I can indeed practice divination?**—he can, not that he does practice divination. This just emphasizes they are powerless.

**44:16 So Judah said, “What can we say to my lord? What can we speak? And how can we justify ourselves?”** We the readers know the brothers did not take the cup. So we generalize their guilt, and read their words with a broader significance than they intend at this point. They are guilty!

- **God has found out the iniquity of your servants**—it seems in the immediate context of verse 15, they are probably claiming that Joseph through his divination has found out they are guilty. [Of course, we know it is Elohim who had caused it all to be revealed. Cannot hide sin.]
- **behold, we are my lord’s slaves, both we and the one in whose possession the cup has been found**—they want to stay with their brother, definitely not go home and face their father.

**44:17** *But he said, “Far be it from me to do this. The man in whose possession the cup has been found, he shall be my slave—Benjamin will remain a slave in Egypt*

— *but as for you, go up in peace to your father”*—as when they sold Joseph

**44:18-34** *Then Judah approached him, and said, “Oh my lord, may your servant please speak a word in my lord’s ears, and do not be angry with your servant; for you are equal to Pharaoh—*  
who can condemn and/or pardon.

— *“My lord asked his servants, saying, ‘Have you a father or a brother?’*

— *“We said to my lord, ‘We have an old father and a little child of his old age [he was old when Benjamin was born]. Now his brother is dead—again, they assume that, they do not know.*

— *so he alone is left of his mother [Rachel, who is also dead, giving birth to Benjamin], and his father loves him.’* These two sons are contrasted to Leah’s two sons: Reuben and Judah. Judah is essentially delegitimizing himself as a son and his mother Leah.

— *“Then you said to your servants, ‘Bring him down to me that I may set my eyes on him’—*  
Judah is implying that Joseph is the one to blame. He initiated the present predicament with his instructions to bring the young lad to Egypt or they could not buy any food. The brothers were only trying to follow the instructions of Joseph and then the instructions of Jacob! They are not the ones at fault here.

— *“But we said to my lord, ‘The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die’—*so if Benjamin does not return, Jacob will die, and it will be Joseph’s fault.

— *“You said to your servants, however, ‘Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you will not see my face again.’ “Thus it came about when we went up to your servant my father, we told him the words of my lord.*

— *“Our father said, ‘Go back, buy us a little food’—*had to risk sending Benjamin

— *“But we said, ‘We cannot go down. If our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we cannot see the man’s face unless our youngest brother is with us.’*

— *“Your servant my father said to us, ‘You know that my wife bore me two sons—*it seems that Jacob only considers Rachel alone as his actual wife. What about Leah? What about the other 10 brothers? Twenty-two years earlier, Judah arranged the selling of Joseph into slavery, but now he is prepared to offer himself as a slave so that the other son of Rachel can be set free.

— *and the one went out from me, and I said, “Surely he is torn in pieces,” and I have not seen him since—*Joseph hears for the first time what his father was confronted with. When he was sold, Joseph knew nothing of the bloody coat, etc. and how Jacob has mourned, thinking Joseph was not only dead, but torn to pieces by an animal.

— *‘If you take this one also from me, and harm befalls him, you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow’—*so the favoritism Jacob had for Joseph is now on Benjamin. Are the brothers jealous of Benjamin, as they were of Joseph?

— *“Now, therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad’s life,*

— *when he sees that the lad is not with us, he will die. Thus your servants will bring the gray hair of your servant our father down to Sheol in sorrow—*Judah watched the sorrow of his father Jacob when they brought Joseph’s bloody coat to him, and he does not want to see that sorrow again if Benjamin does not come home to him.

— *“For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, ‘If I do not bring him back to you, then let me bear the blame before my father forever’—*of course, they do have the blame forever for what they did to Joseph. The favoritism Jacob had for Joseph caused his

brothers to hate him, but now this same favoritism, but for Benjamin, was given as the grounds for mercy.

- ***“Now, therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers—***Judah offers to be a substitute for Benjamin.
- ***“For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me — for fear that I see the evil that would overtake my father?”***

This is not just a simple re-stating of the details. Judah mentions his father 14 times. Judah’s care of his father’s love and life seem most important to him. But for all these years, he could have eliminated Jacob’s sorrow over what he perceived was the death of Joseph. For example, Judah could have traveled to Egypt to find out what happened to Joseph. But Judah’s devotion and care about Jacob and Benjamin breaks down Joseph’s defenses.

## Genesis 45

**45:1** ***Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him—***Joseph could not hold back any longer. He wanted to reveal his true identity to his brothers.

- ***and he cried, “Have everyone go out from me.” So there was no man with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers—***this was a private, personal affair—we would assume he quit speaking Egyptian and started to speak Hebrew to them, without a translator.

**45:2** ***He wept—***twice before he wept when meeting his brothers but hid it from them (42:24; 43:30). Now his demeanor must have shaken up the brothers, a shock to them.

- ***so loudly that the Egyptians heard it—***like his house steward, those working for him
- ***and the household of Pharaoh heard of it—***even Pharaoh’s household heard of it

**45:3** ***Then Joseph said to his brothers—***Judah had painted such a terrifying picture of the impact on Jacob of the loss of his sons that Joseph was worried. Will his father continue to live?

- ***“I am Joseph!”—***one of the subjects of the story Judah just told
- ***Is my father still alive?”—***yes, he had been told twice Jacob was alive (43:27; 44:25), but he was overcome emotionally thinking his father was still living.
- ***But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence—***already they were accused of being spies, of stealing, what new trick does Joseph have for them?

**45:4** ***Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Please come closer to me”—***he was clean-shaven, like an Egyptian, and wore the clothes of a ruler. And it has been some 15 years since they saw him. They could not come closer to the ruler—they had bowed down and fell down before him. So no wonder they did not recognize him.

- ***And they came closer. And he said, “I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt—***oh, no! That is not comforting. It’s alarming!!

**45:5** ***“Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here—***with the reaction of the stolen money and the cup, they could really be worried what would happen now!!

- ***for God sent me before you—***Even in interpreting the dreams and preserving the food, Joseph did not have in mind to save his own family. But now he sees it!! Now it sees it from God’s perspective!!
- ***to preserve life—***Five times he makes the point that God sent Joseph ahead of the family to preserve them (v. 7[2x], 8[2x], 9).

**An Application:** God also sent Jesus before us to spiritually preserve life. Jesus said, “*I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly*” (John 3:16; 10:10). Pray that we will see things from God’s perspective, based on His holiness, His truth, His love, His righteousness, etc.

**An Application:** God is the ultimate author of events (Isa 10:5-6; Amos 3:6; Matt 6:26, 30). The apostles pray to the Lord “*to do whatever Thy hand and Thy plan had predestined to take place*” (Acts 4:28). It is the belief in God’s power to control affairs that underlies all intercessory prayer, for if God does not order our affairs, why pray for daily bread, healing, or peace? [WBC]

**45:6** “*For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting*—as in Pharaoh’s dreams, literally interpreted by Joseph.

**45:7** “*God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth*—to safeguard and maintain the descendants of the covenant people—the brothers were not just the children of Jacob, they were the remnant, the promised children of the covenant to Abraham. It was their identity, who they were...who Jacob (Israel) was. Much like Noah was preserving humanity in the ark. Joseph is now going to preserve the children of Israel. It’s participating with God by human free-will decisions.

— *and to keep you alive by a great deliverance*—but why the whole famine thing, couldn’t they just be preserve in the Land? No. Because they had started to intermarry with the Canaanites, so God removed them to a people who would not even sit at a table and eat with them. There over 400 years, they multiplied to over 2 million people. But how to get them all to move to Egypt? And Pharaoh and the Egyptians welcome them and give them their own land on which to live.

**An Application:** God also prophesied this to Abraham. “*God said to Abram, ‘...your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years...but afterward they will come out with many possessions*” (Gen 15:12-16). This deliverance will happen during the lifetime of Moses, the author of Genesis, 400 years after the promise to Abraham.

**45:8** “*Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God*—God sent Joseph to Egypt, as a slave, to Potiphar’s house, to being falsely accused, to jail, to interpret dreams.....

— *and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt*—by the prophecy in Pharaoh’s dreams of 7 years of plenty, 7 years of famine, and Joseph’s interpreting dreams.....the result was ruler over all the land of Egypt (41:40-44). This was so unusual that the young man (39 years old) Joseph is his chief advisor to Pharaoh

**45:9** “*Hurry and go up to my father*—return to Jacob, but not as failures in protecting Benjamin. Jacob is old. Time is running out. Is he still alive? He is heartbroken without Benjamin.

— *and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph*—notice, no mention of the brothers selling Joseph or how in the world Joseph, who was sent to Dothan to check on his brothers, ends up in Egypt  
— “*God has made me lord of all Egypt*—Jacob would hopefully recognize God’s hand in all this  
— *come down to me, do not delay*—5 more years of famine, Jacob is old.....

**45:10** “*You shall live in the land of Goshen*—where? in the northern Nile River Delta. It seems to be Joseph’s idea—it’s the most distant northern border of Egypt. No integration.

— *and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children’s children*—who? Current and future generations of Israel. They were anticipating 5 more years of famine (not the 400 years prophesied to Abraham).  
— *and your flocks and your herds and all that you have*—what? All their flocks and possessions.

- 45:11** *“There I will also provide for you, for there are still five years of famine to come, and you and your household and all that you have would be impoverished”*—long-term famine has a downward spiraling effect, as people sell their lands and possessions for food (47:13-15).
- 45:12** *“Behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see*—personal eyewitnesses — *that it is my mouth which is speaking to you*—in Hebrew, without an interpreter
- 45:13** *“Now you must tell my father of all my splendor in Egypt, and all that you have seen*—At the beginning of Genesis, God provided all that was good for Adam. Now as we near the end of Genesis, we see once again that God has provided all that was good for the children of Israel. — *and you must hurry and bring my father down here*”—rather than Jacob being the provider, Joseph will be the provider for the children of Israel. Joseph is so anxious to be re-united with his father, especially in light of the special relationship they had before he was sold. Also, to alleviate the sorrow Jacob has endured for these many years.
- 45:14** *Then he fell on his brother Benjamin’s neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck*—Benjamin was an infant when Joseph was sold, so he doesn’t really have a memory of him. Although he has been favored by his father, yet it must have been lonely among Leah’s sons.
- 45:15** *He kissed all his brothers and wept on them, and afterward his brothers talked with him*—their hatred and jealousy all gone. Do they think about Joseph’s dreams coming true?
- 45:16** *Now when the news was heard in Pharaoh’s house that Joseph’s brothers had come, it pleased Pharaoh and his servants*—not just Pharaoh, but his servants, too, were pleased.
- 45:17-18** *Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Say to your brothers, ‘Do this: load your beasts and go to the land of Canaan, and take your father and your households and come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you will eat the fat of the land’*—not only would they not try to survive the famine, but they would have “the best” and “the fat of the land.”
- 45:19-20** *“Now you are ordered, ‘Do this: take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives, and bring your father and come. ‘Do not concern yourselves with your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours”*—in case they were hesitant to leave, they do not need to worry about bringing every single thing they owned because Pharaoh would provide whatever goods they needed. Lots of decisions when moving to another country.
- 45:21** *Then the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them wagons according to the command of Pharaoh, and gave them provisions for the journey*—before they were walking with mules (42:26) but now they would have wagons to ride on and carry their stuff.
- 45:22** *To each of them he gave changes of garments, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of garments*—as at the lunch (43:34), where Benjamin is favored, the brothers are tested again. How are they going to react to the favoritism shown to Benjamin?
- 45:23** *To his father he sent as follows: ten donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain and bread and sustenance for his father on the journey*—

this would also give evidence to their father that Joseph was alive and well, and making the promise for future provision more sure.

**45:24** *So he sent his brothers away, and as they departed*—assumed Benjamin is with them  
— *he said to them, “Do not quarrel on the journey”*—it could mean to not squabble over the past. OR the term means “fear” (Ex 15:14), so it could mean to not fear robbers attacking all these supplies in the caravan. OR it could be encouraging them to not have second thoughts about returning to Egypt for fear of how they may be treated in the future.

**45:25** *Then they went up from Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to their father Jacob*—what a contrast to the other times when the brothers returned to Jacob with bad news.

**45:26-28** *They told him, saying, “Joseph is still alive, and indeed he is ruler over all the land of Egypt.” But he was stunned, for he did not believe them*—22 years he thought Joseph was dead.  
— Jacob is living in the past. His love is lavished on Benjamin, as he did with Joseph. He still regards Rachel as his only wife, and still in mourning for Joseph, and distrustful of the brothers.  
— *When they told him all the words of Joseph that he had spoken to them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived*—Yet, will the brothers have to explain to Jacob why Joseph is not killed as Jacob supposed? Do they ever confess their actions?  
— *Then Israel said, “It is enough; my son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.”*

## Genesis 46

**46:1** *So Israel set out with all that he had, and came to Beersheba* [on the southern border of Canaan, about 26 miles south of Hebron], *and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac*—where Abraham and Isaac had called on God (21:33; 26:25).

**46:2** *God spoke to Israel in visions of the night*—this is the last time God speaks to the patriarchs. The next recorded revelation from God takes place in the time of Moses.  
— *and said, “Jacob, Jacob.” And he said, “Here I am”*—He spoke to Israel, calling him “Jacob”  
— *He said, “I am God [El], the God of your father*—Isaac—which are the words when He will call on Moses (Ex 3:6).  
— *do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there*— This is new information—that the people will multiply in Egypt, not in the promised land.  
— But then God will bring them back into the land. This was a huge decision, much like Abraham’s journey from Ur (12:1-3) or Jacob’s flight to Paddan-Aram (28:1-11) or his return to Canaan (31:3-54).  
— *“I will go down with you to Egypt*—without God’s approval, it would seem like unbelief. God is not constrained to one locality. God was with Abraham in Ur, with Jacob in Haran.  
— *and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will close your eyes”*—he will come back to the land to be buried, and Joseph will be with him when he dies.  
— Jacob had a friendly invitation of Joseph and Pharaoh, combined with the famine in Canaan, but now he had permission from God to leave the land of promise to go to Egypt.

**46:5-7** *Then Jacob arose from Beersheba; and the sons of Israel carried their [aged] father Jacob and their little ones and their wives in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him.*

- *They took their livestock and their property, which they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and came to Egypt, Jacob and all his descendants with him: his sons and his grandsons with him, his daughters and his granddaughters, and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt—i.e. all the descendants who end up in Egypt.*

**46:8-15** *Now these are the names of the sons of Israel, Jacob and his sons, who went to Egypt: Reuben, Jacob's firstborn.*

- *The sons of Reuben: Hanoch and Pallu and Hezron and Carmi.*
- *The sons of Simeon: Jemuel and Jamin and Ohad and Jachin and Zohar and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman—an illustration of the promised seed intermarrying with Canaanites*
- *The sons of Levi: Gershon [ancestor of Moses and Aaron], Kohath, and Merari.*
- *The sons of Judah: Er and Onan and Shelah and Perez and Zerah (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan—2). And the sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul—born in Egypt?*
- *The sons of Issachar: Tola and Puvvah and Iob and Shimron.*
- *The sons of Zebulun: Sered and Elon and Jahleel.*
- *These are the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Paddan-aram, with his daughter Dinah; all his sons and his daughters numbered thirty-three.*

**46:16-18** *The sons of Gad: Ziphion and Haggi, Shuni and Ezbon, Eri and Arodi and Areli.*

- *The sons of Asher: Imnah and Ishvah and Ishvi and Beriah and their sister Serah. And the sons of Beriah: Heber and Malchiel.*
- *These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Leah; and she bore to Jacob these sixteen persons.*

**46:19-22** *The sons of Jacob's wife Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin.*

- *Now to Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, bore to him—+2 born in Egypt, never in Canaan (replaces Judah's two sons Er and Onan who died in Canaan)*
- *The sons of Benjamin: Bela and Becher and Ashbel, Gera and Naaman, Ehi and Rosh, Muppim and Huppim and Ard—these seem to be born in Egypt, but are counted as Jacob's descendants—i.e., all Israel was in Egypt.*
- *These are the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob; there were fourteen persons in all.*

**46:23-25** *The sons of Dan: Hushim.*

- *The sons of Naphtali: Jahzeel and Guni and Jezer and Shillem.*
- *These are the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Rachel, and she bore these to Jacob; there were seven persons in all.*

**46:26** *All the persons belonging to Jacob, who came to Egypt, his direct descendants, not including the wives of Jacob's sons, were sixty-six persons in all,*

**46:27** *and the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt were two;*

- *all the persons of the house of Jacob, who came to Egypt, were seventy*
- Also mentioned in Exodus 1:5 and Deuteronomy 10:22.

**46:28** *Now he [Jacob] sent Judah before him to Joseph—Judah is again the prominent leader. He is the one who brings Israel's descendants into the land of preservation, clearly seen in 49:8-12.*

- *to point out the way before him to Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen.*

**46:29** *Joseph prepared his chariot*—his royal ride, probably with servants  
— *and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel*—  
— *as soon as he appeared before him, he fell on his neck and wept on his neck a long time*—  
much as he wept over his brother Benjamin (45:14).

**46:30** *Then Israel said to Joseph, “Now let me die, since I have seen your face, that you are still alive”*—he could die in peace, not in mourning for Joseph (and Benjamin)

**46:31-34** *Joseph said to his brothers and to his father’s household, “I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and will say to him, ‘My brothers and my father’s household, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me*—Pharaoh made provisions for their journey (45:17-18), and now they are here.

- *and the men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of livestock; and they have brought their flocks and their herds and all that they have*’—he wants Pharaoh to know they are loathsome to the Egyptians, so perhaps they will be allowed to stay separate in Goshen.
- *“When Pharaoh calls you and says, ‘What is your occupation?’*—
- *you shall say, ‘Your servants have been keepers of livestock from our youth even until now, both we and our fathers,’ that you may live in the land of Goshen*—out at the northern edge of Egypt, it seems to be Joseph’s idea, so no integrating with Egyptians.
- *for every shepherd is loathsome to the Egyptians*—a word for “vomit” or “disgusting.” Also, in times past, the Hebrews (and others) would eat animals, which were sacred to the Egyptians. Another aspect is that the Egyptians were clean-shaven and smelled good. Hebrews were shepherds who also had long hair (and I’m sure smelled!) [43:32]. God’s purpose was to multiply but not integrate.

## **Genesis 47**

**47:1** *Then Joseph went in and told Pharaoh*—as he said he would (46:31-32).

- *and said, “My father and my brothers and their flocks and their herds and all that they have, have come out of the land of Canaan; and behold, they are in the land of Goshen”*—planting the idea that perhaps they may be allowed to stay there.

**47:2-6** *He took five men from among his brothers and presented them to Pharaoh*—do not know which five.

- *Then Pharaoh said to his brothers, “What is your occupation?” So they said to Pharaoh, “Your servants are shepherds, both we and our fathers.”*
- *They said to Pharaoh, “We have come to sojourn in the land, for there is no pasture for your servants’ flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Now, therefore, please let your servants live in the land of Goshen.”*
- *Then Pharaoh said to Joseph* [not to the brothers], *“Your father and your brothers have come to you.*
- *“The land of Egypt is at your disposal; settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land, let them live in the land of Goshen* [Joseph’s plan worked!!] very generous on Pharaoh’s part—reminding us of Joseph’s own rise to power (41:41). So Joseph’s fortune was duplicated in the fortune of his brothers.
- *and if you know any capable men among them, then put them in charge of my livestock*”—It’s known that Rameses III is said to have 3,264 men, mostly foreigners, to take care of his herds



- 47:7** *Then Joseph brought his father Jacob and presented him to Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh*—as we learned in the Melchizedek story—the greater blesses the lesser (Heb 7:7).
- *Pharaoh said to Jacob, “How many years have you lived?”*
  - *So Jacob said to Pharaoh, “The years of my sojourning are one hundred and thirty; few and unpleasant have been the years of my life*—he will live in Egypt 17 years, and die at 147 years (47:28). Jacob’s flight to Haran away from his family, the deception of his wedding night, his bondage to Laban, the rape of his daughter, his favorite wife’s death, and his favorite son’s apparent death—just to name a few unpleasant things!!
  - *nor have they attained the years that my fathers lived during the days of their sojourning*”—Abraham lived 175 years (25:7), Isaac 180 years (35:28).
  - *And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from his presence*—Jacob who in his youth cheated to obtain a blessing is now the source of blessing, not just to his family but to all the families of the earth (as God told Abraham in Genesis 12:2-3). Of course, the most immediate blessing was Joseph’s rescue of Egypt from the effects of the famine (47:11-27).
- 47:11-12** *So Joseph settled his father and his brothers and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses [the city close to Goshen, Ex 1:14; 12:37], as Pharaoh had ordered.*
- *Joseph provided his father and his brothers and all his father’s household with food, according to their little ones*—they were not in the land, but they were well-taken-cared for
- 47:13-20** *Now there was no food in all the land, because the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished because of the famine*—as per the second part of Pharaoh’s dreams—severe in both Canaan and Egypt
- *Joseph gathered all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan for the grain which they bought, and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh’s house.*
  - *When the money was all spent in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, “Give us food, for why should we die in your presence? For our money is gone.”*
  - *Then Joseph said, “Give up your livestock, and I will give you food for your livestock, since your money is gone.”*
  - *So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them food in exchange for the horses [first mention of horses in the Bible] and the flocks and the herds and the donkeys; and he fed them with food in exchange for all their livestock that year.*
  - *When that year was ended, they came to him the next year and said to him, “We will not hide from my lord that our money is all spent, and the cattle are my lord’s. There is nothing left for my lord except our bodies and our lands.*
  - *“Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for food, and we and our land will be slaves to Pharaoh. So give us seed, that we may live and not die, and that the land may not be desolate”*—slaves sounds harsh, but now their food supply was Pharaoh’s responsibility, not their own.
  - *So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, for every Egyptian sold his field, because the famine was severe upon them. Thus the land became Pharaoh’s.*
- 47:21-** *As for the people, he removed them to the cities from one end of Egypt’s border to the other*—distributing the people to where the grain and fields were.
- *Only the land of the priests he did not buy, for the priests had an allotment from Pharaoh, and they lived off the allotment which Pharaoh gave them. Therefore, they did not sell their land.*

- *Then Joseph said to the people, “Behold, I have today bought you and your land for Pharaoh; now, here is seed for you, and you may sow the land—now Pharaoh’s responsibility*
- *“At the harvest you shall give a fifth to Pharaoh, and four-fifths shall be your own for seed of the field and for your food and for those of your households and as food for your little ones.”*
- *So they said, “You have saved our lives!—the people were thankful. Joseph saved their lives!!*
- *Let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh’s slaves.”*
- *Joseph made it a statute concerning the land of Egypt valid to this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth; only the land of the priests did not become Pharaoh’s, i.e. 20% tax*

**47:27** *Now Israel lived in the land of Egypt, in Goshen, and they acquired property in it and were fruitful and became very numerous—started with 70 but will end with ~2 million.*

- 47:28** *Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years—so the famine is over, and Joseph’s position in Egypt has been well-established, so now the writer moves to the last days of Jacob. Interesting that he lived in Egypt the same number of years when Joseph was sold to Egypt.*
- *so the length of Jacob’s life was one hundred and forty-seven years—*

**47:29-31** *When the time for Israel to die drew near, he called his son Joseph and said to him,*

- *“Please, if I have found favor in your sight, place now your hand under my thigh—as Abraham had his servant do who went to look for a wife for Isaac (24:1-9).*
- *and deal with me in kindness and faithfulness. Please do not bury me in Egypt—46:3-4*
- *but when I lie down with my fathers, you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place” —the cave at Machpelah in Hebron which Abraham had purchased (ch 23), where Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Leah are buried (49:29-33).*
- *And he said, “I will do as you have said.”*
- *He said, “Swear to me.” So he swore to him. Then Israel bowed in worship at the head of the bed—death draws the eyes upward...*

## **Genesis 48**

**48:1** *Now it came about after these things that Joseph was told, “Behold, your father is sick.” So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim with him—contrasted to 27:1-4 where Isaac summoned only Esau, not both brothers.*

**48:2** *When it was told to Jacob, “Behold, your son Joseph has come to you,” Israel collected his strength and sat up in the bed.*

**48:3-4** *Then Jacob said to Joseph, “God Almighty appeared to me at Luz [Bethel] in the land of Canaan and blessed me—when he returned to Canaan after 20 years in exile (35:9-13).*

- *and He said to me, ‘Behold, I will make you fruitful and numerous, and I will make you a company of peoples, and will give this land to your descendants after you for an everlasting possession’ (35:11-12)—Canaan is the land of promise, not Egypt*

**48:5** *“Now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine—essentially adopting them, equal with his own sons*

- *Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine—already mentioning Ephraim, the youngest, before Manasseh, the older, and the one normally thought to be the rightful heir. In later texts, these two tribes become synonymous with the northern kingdom of Israel, which was in opposition to the southern kingdom of Judah.*

— *as Reuben and Simeon are*—Leah’s two oldest sons, his first-born sons (29:32-33).

**An Application:** Jacob is talking here of inheriting the land, and Joseph will get double the other brothers. During the time of the Judges, Ephraim became the leader of the northern 10 tribes, and its name became known as “Israel.”

**48:6** *“But your offspring that have been born after them shall be yours; they shall be called by the names of their brothers in their inheritance*—we do not know of any other sons born to Joseph, but if they were, they would be incorporated into the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh.

**48:7** *“Now as for me, when I came from Paddan (Laban’s), Rachel died, to my sorrow, in the land of Canaan on the journey, when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)”* (35:16-20)—as mentioned in ch 35, Rachel was not buried in Bethlehem (as the modern tomb indicates), but in the territory that would some 400 years later be the area of the tribe of Benjamin (where she died giving birth to him). Jacob is speaking of the death of Joseph’s mother, a connection that results in Joseph having a double blessing.

**48:8-10** *When Israel saw Joseph’s sons, he said, “Who are these?”*—he was nearly blind (v. 10), similar to his father Isaac in 27:1.

- *Joseph said to his father, “They are my sons, whom God has given me here.” So he said, “Bring them to me, please, that I may bless them”*—these two are not mentioned in chapter 49, so the blessing here adds to the chapter 49 blessings of the other brothers.
- *Now the eyes of Israel were so dim from age that he could not see*—blind—this is pointed out as Joseph thought it was the reason Jacob gave the main blessing to the younger, because he could not see that he was the younger.
- *Then Joseph brought them close to him [Jacob], and he [Jacob] kissed them and embraced them.* Joseph is anxious to get the blessing on his sons before Jacob dies, especially if it is a double blessing (v. 5).

Note: This key word “blessing,” is used nineteen times in 27:1–28:9 and nine times in chaps. 48–49 out of a total of thirty-seven times in the life of Jacob (chaps. 27–50) [WBC]. It is the third promise of the Abrahamic Covenant: land, seed, and blessing (12:1-3).

**48:11-12** *Israel said to Joseph, “I never expected to see your face*—he thought Joseph was dead

- *and behold, God has let me see your children as well*—beyond his hope
- *Then Joseph took them from his knees, and bowed with his face to the ground*—a greeting of great honor, seeking favor (24:52; 33:3; 42:6; 43:26).

**48:13-14** *Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel’s left, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel’s right, and brought them close to him*—Manasseh, the elder, to Jacob’s right hand, to receive the greater blessing, and Ephraim to Jacob’s left hand, to receive the lesser blessing.

- *But Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh’s head, crossing his hands, although Manasseh was the firstborn*—the right hand—as seen over and over in the narrative, the younger son was chosen to carry the line of blessing (see also Deut 11:29; Ps 110:1; Matt 25:33; Heb 1:3).

**48:15-16** *He blessed Joseph [their equality], and said, “The God before whom my fathers Abraham [grandfather] and Isaac [father] walked*—lived their life in the presence of God

- *The God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day*—who also guided Jacob (as the Israelites were shepherds, this has a lot of meaning for them)

- *The angel who has redeemed me from all evil*—singular “angel” referring to God Himself, who rescued him from his uncle (31:42) and from his brother Esau (ch 32–33).
- *Bless the lads; And may my name live on in them, And the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac*—both in the Bible and in Jewish history, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob’s names live on.
- *And may they grow into a multitude* [lit. “multiply like fish”] *in the midst of the earth*—in spite of the exiles, the dispersion, and the scattering throughout the world—the Jews multiply

**48:17-19** *When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on Ephraim’s head* = greater

- *it displeased* [lit. “powerful anger”] *him; and he grasped* [firm hold] *his father’s hand to remove it from Ephraim’s head to Manasseh’s head*—probably thinking in Jacob’s blindness he made a mistake
- *Joseph said to his father, “Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn. Place your right hand on his head”*—Joseph tried to reverse the blessing, as Esau had tried years ago, when his own father Isaac was almost blind (27:34-36). But blessings are irreversible (Num 23:20)
- *But his father refused and said, “I know, my son, I know*—Jacob knew what he was doing. He was blessing according to the divine plan, not according to normal custom.
- *He* [Manasseh] *also will become a people and he also will be great*—become “a people”
- *However, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations*—as Jacob, himself the younger brother whom God had blessed. Years later, Ephraim became the leading tribe of the Northern Kingdom, much superior to the tribe of Manasseh, as Jacob had predicted. He will “become a multitude of nations” (17:4-6).
- In his blessing, Jacob linked the past Abraham, Isaac, and himself, with the future blessing. All based on the Abrahamic Covenant. God keeps His word!!

**48:20** *He blessed them that day, saying, “By you Israel will pronounce blessing, saying, ‘May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh!’” Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh*—he says it several times so there is no mistake in his intention.

**48:21-22** *Then Israel said to Joseph, “Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you, and bring you back to the land of your fathers. “I give you one portion more than your brothers, which I took [he owns Shechem (33:18-19), where he and Joseph are buried, where he dug a well (John 4:4-5)] from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow (only mentioned here)”*—Jacob’s faith and confidence that the descendants will return to the land of the covenant promise (but it will not happen for over 400 years). God created a famine to move them to Egypt—what will He do to get them out of Egypt?!?!? Hmm...For that, we must read Moses’ great next book: The Exodus.

## Genesis 49

**49:1-2** *Then Jacob summoned his sons and said, “Assemble yourselves that I may tell you what will befall you in the days to come*—most likely when they leave Egypt to go back to Canaan in 400 years. However, the future of Israel must include the Millennial Kingdom, with Jesus the Messiah reigning as King. He is the future of Israel!! The blessing is at the same time prophecy, grounded in the promises and revelations of God. The future development of their tribes was discerned by Jacob in the characters and actions of his sons.

- *“Gather together and hear, O sons of Jacob; And listen to Israel your father.*

## Sons of Leah

49:3-4 ***“Reuben, you are my firstborn; My might and the beginning of my strength—his position — Preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power—the potential was there: dignity and power — Uncontrolled as [lit. bubbling] water, you shall not have preeminence, Because you went up to your father’s bed; Then you defiled it — he went up to my couch”***—he had sex with Bilhah (Rachel’s maid, Jacob’s concubine) after Rachel’s death (35:22). Jacob does not mention it at the time, although he knows about it, but he did not forget. Reuben loses his status because of his behavior. Three times, for emphasis: *you went up...you defiled it...he went up*. Perhaps Jacob turns to the group to say the last phrase ***“he went up.”*** No prophet, judge, or king came from this tribe. Joseph, the firstborn of Rachel, will overcome Reuben, firstborn of Leah.

49:5-7 ***“Simeon and Levi are brothers—emphasizing they were united in attacking Shechem — Their swords are implements of violence (the attack in chapter 34). Although the next oldest sons, they disqualified themselves. — Let my soul not enter into their council; Let not my glory be united with their assembly; Because in their anger they slew men, And in their self-will they lamed oxen. — Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; And their wrath, for it is cruel. — I will disperse them in Jacob—their punishment was to be scattered, no more uniting — And scatter them in Israel.”*** The Levites ended up having 48 cities scattered throughout the other tribes, not given its own tribal territory. Simeon was a small tribe and within Judah but was eventually absorbed into Judah, losing its identity.

— But this curse is turned into a blessing under Moses, a Levite, and the Levites producing the Aaronic priesthood. Perhaps because they did not receive an inheritance, they were qualified (in a sense) to become Levites/priests, who would minister to all the tribes. If they had their own tribal area, they would not be able to minister equally to all the tribes.

49:8-12 ***“Judah, your brothers shall praise you—all of Israel will praise the tribe of Judah — Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies—conquering them — Your father’s sons shall bow down to you—as they had bowed down to Joseph — Judah is a lion’s whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, And as a lion, who dares rouse him up?—Lions are mentioned over 100 times in the OT and were common in Israel in Bible times. They became rare and in 1950 only a few are left. King David was the ruler from the tribe of Judah. When Jesus takes the tribulation scroll from the hands of God the Father in heaven, He is called “the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah” (Rev 5:5). — The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet—Judah is the royal tribe, on the throne. The Davidic kings of Judah, eventually Jesus, King of Kings. — Until Shiloh comes—the word “Shiloh,” found in some English versions, is simply an untranslated form of the Hebrew expression meaning “one to whom it [the scepter] belongs.” It is not a name as such, nor is it to be associated with the site of the tabernacle in the days of Samuel (1 Sam 1:3). — And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples—for sure, this describes a ruler—whether King David or the Messiah. — He ties his foal to the vine, And his donkey’s colt to the choice vine—prosperity, the choicest of vines used for tethering animals — He washes his garments in wine, And his robes in the blood of grapes—wine as common as wash water***

— *His eyes are ~~dull~~ [“darker than wine”] ~~from~~ wine, And his teeth white [whiter than] ~~from~~ milk*—Heb. a description of color, not drunkenness

**An Application:** Later prophets used this imagery to portray the reign of the coming Messiah (Isaiah 63:1-6). Revelation 19:11, 13, 15 describes the Second Coming of Jesus.

**49:13** “*Zebulun will dwell at the seashore; And he shall be a haven for ships, And his flank shall be toward Sidon* [Phoenicia]—in the north, the area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Sea of Galilee (Josh 19:10-16). Though it did not touch the sea, it was enriched through sea trade.

**49:14-15** “*Issachar is a strong donkey, Lying down between the sheepfolds*—stubborn? Lazy?

— *When he saw that a resting place was good And that the land was pleasant, He bowed his shoulder to bear burdens, And became a slave at forced labor*—will settle in a fertile part of the country, in the Jezreel Valley, and there will be enslaved by its neighbors.

#### Son of Bilhah

**49:16-17** “*Dan shall judge his people, As one of the tribes of Israel*—Samson, a judge in Israel.

— *Dan shall be a serpent in the way, A horned snake in the path, That bites the horse’s heels, So that his rider falls backward*—small, but like a deadly snake. A small tribe who failed to conquer the Philistines so migrated north to the unsuspecting town of Laish, where they slew all the peaceful people (Judges 17–18).

**49:18** “*For Your salvation I wait, O LORD*—Jacob’s statement—possibly looking for God to deliver the descendants of the 12 tribes.

#### Sons of Zilpah

**49:19** “*As for Gad, raiders shall raid him, But he will raid at their heels*—a frontier tribe near the Jordan River. They were famous for their military ability (1 Chr 5:18; 12:8).

**49:20** “*As for Asher, his food shall be rich, And he will yield royal dainties*—settled in the fertile strip of land running north from the Carmel Ridge (Josh 19:24-31). They lived alongside the Canaanites and Phoenicians. Unclear whether this is a compliment or a rebuke or simply a comment on Asher’s affluence.

#### Son of Bilhah

**49:21** “*Naphtali is a doe let loose, [He gives beautiful words?]*—they settled west of the upper Jordan Valley by Lake Huleh, Hazor, and the Sea of Galilee (Josh 19:32-39). Like a doe, they would be a free mountain people. Unknown what “beautiful words” means.

#### Sons of Rachel

**49:22-26** *Joseph is a fruitful bough, A fruitful bough by a spring; Its branches run over a wall.*

— *The archers bitterly attacked him, And shot at him and harassed him;*

— *But his bow remained firm, And his arms were agile, From the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob (From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel),*

— *From the God of your father who helps you, And by the Almighty who blesses you*

— *With blessings of heaven above, Blessings of the deep that lies beneath, Blessings of the breasts and of the womb.*

— *The blessings of your father Have surpassed the blessings of my ancestors Up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; May they be on the head of Joseph, And on the crown of the head of the one distinguished among his brothers.* Of course, Joseph received a double inheritance for his sons Ephraim and Manasseh, the future Northern Kingdom.

**49:27** *“Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; In the morning he devours the prey, And in the evening he divides the spoil”*—Judges tells of Ehud the Benjaminite who delivered Israel from the Moabites (3:15–30), of Benjamin’s participation in the war against Sisera (5:14), and of their savagery at Gibeah, prompting a civil war (chaps. 19–21). And it was from Benjamin that Saul and his able warrior son Jonathan came (1 Sam 10–14).

- 49:28-33** *All these are the twelve tribes of Israel*—makes the point that this has to do with the 12 tribes of Israel, not just the 12 brothers. This is the first mention of “tribes” in the Bible.
- *and this is what their father said to them when he blessed them. He blessed them, every one with the blessing appropriate to him*—because each one of them was different.
  - *Then he charged them and said to them, “I am about to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought along with the field from Ephron the Hittite for a burial site*—Jacob did not want to be buried in Egypt. Take his body back to the land of promise. He just foretold the tribes’ future in the land of Canaan, and he wants his body there, too (47:29-31; 48:21-22). God had told Jacob that Joseph would be with him when he died and his body there brought back to Canaan (46:4).
  - *“There they buried Abraham and his wife Sarah, there they buried Isaac and his wife (and Jacob’s mother) Rebekah, and there I buried Leah (Jacob’s first wife, the mother of six of his sons) —This is the only time the burial place of Rebekah and Leah is mentioned. It is the burial place of the patriarchs—of which there are only three: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.*
  - *the field and the cave that is in it, purchased from the sons of Heth”* (ch 23)—he legally owned it as a burial ground
  - *When Jacob finished charging his sons, he drew his feet into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people*—147 years old (47:28), 17 years after he had come to Egypt.

## Genesis 50

**50:1** *Then Joseph fell on his father’s face, and wept over him and kissed him*—the great bond of love between Jacob and Joseph has come to an end.

**50:2-3** *Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel*—i.e. mummification was a long and complex process, which included removing the brain and internal organs (Egyptians usually put them in containers called canopic jars, placing them near the body), filling the body space with spices, soaking the body in potassium nitrate (salt), and wrapping it in linen bandages.

- *Now forty days were required for it, for such is the period required for embalming. And the Egyptians wept for him seventy days*, which probably included the 40 days.

**50:4-6** *When the days of mourning for him were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, “If now I have found favor in your sight, please speak to Pharaoh, saying, ‘My father made me swear, saying, “Behold, I am about to die; in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me”*—Jacob had already prepared a tomb.

- *Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father*—Joseph’s death is also recorded, but Jacob’s burial is more important. The promised land is the land of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the patriarchs. Joseph was not one of the patriarchs.
- *Then I will return*—important to Pharaoh—Joseph was not abandoning Pharaoh or Egypt

— *Pharaoh said, “Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear.”*

**50:7** *So Joseph went up to bury his father, and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his household and all the elders of the land of Egypt*—showed the great respect they had for Joseph

— *and all the household of Joseph and his brothers and his father’s household; they left only their little ones and their flocks and their herds in the land of Goshen*—assurance they would return.

— *There also went up with him both chariots and horsemen; and it was a very great company*—they had brought wagons for food last time, but chariots and horsemen were intimidating!! They did not take the direct route north through Gaza, but went around the bottom and up the east side of the Dead Sea. It could be a political reason or maybe because that king’s highway more accommodated them. It is unknown why.

**50:10-13** *When they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan*—Early church father Eusebius put this area near Jericho in the Jordan valley.

— *they lamented there with a very great and sorrowful lamentation; and he observed seven days mourning for his father. Now when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, “This is a grievous mourning for the Egyptians.” Therefore it was named Abel-mizraim, which is beyond the Jordan. Thus his sons did for him as he had charged them;*

— *for his sons carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre, which Abraham had bought along with the field for a burial site from Ephron the Hittite*—it seems that the Egyptians went to this border [*beyond Jordan*] and stopped and only Jacob’s sons went on to the burial site in Canaan.

— This is the first and only time Joseph has been back in his homeland in 39 years (in Egypt 22 years before Jacob moved there, and Jacob lived there 17 years)—until his burial, 400 years later. It is the fourth trip the brothers make back and forth to Egypt.

**50:14** *After he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers, and all who had gone up with him to bury his father*—as they said (v. 5), they returned to Pharaoh.

**50:15** *When Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, “What if Joseph bears a grudge against us*—like Esau had planned (27:41) to do to Jacob.

— *and pays us back in full for all the wrong which we did to him!”*—here they acknowledge their own guilt as in 42:21-22, and that they deserved to be punished.

**50:16-18** *So they sent a message to Joseph*—they sent an intermediary, did not come in person

— *saying, “Your father charged before he died, saying*—there is no way to know if Jacob actually said this to them. Did Jacob know about their selling Joseph as a slave? Don’t know.

— *‘Thus you shall say to Joseph, “Please forgive, I beg you, the transgression of your brothers and their sin*—so they were claiming their father Jacob wanted Joseph to forgive the brothers

— *for they did you wrong”*—they did mean evil against Joseph, for sure.

— *And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father*—now the brothers themselves admit wrong in asking for forgiveness

— *And Joseph wept when they spoke to him*—“He weeps because they think they need a mediator, because they are afraid of him, because they ascribe to him the attitude of v 15, because he hears his father’s voice, because he recalls his youth persecuted by their hate, and because it is they



who remind him of this through their submissiveness. These his last tears are really their tears”  
[Wenham, WBC]

- ***Then his brothers also came and fell down before him and said, “Behold, we are your servants”***—this time they were not bowing to him, as in the dreams, but were falling down before him, as a sign of their sincerity and repentance.

**An Application:** A good idea if asking for forgiveness to have evidence of that request, something more tangible than words. Something to show your sincerity. The brothers fell down and offered to be slaves to the one they sold to be a slave.

**50:19** ***But Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for am I in God’s place?”***—all sin is against God (Ps 51), and all judgment is in His hands. Not our job! We cannot possibly know all that is involved in order to make a judgment.

**An Application:** We are not judges. Only God is a Judge. Only He knows all that is involved in the sin. Only Jesus can pay for that sin. We may help the person to make right decisions, but cannot judge for wrong decisions.

**50:20** ***“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good—***God has only sinners to work with. And usually sinners intend to do evil. It is their free-will decision. But God in His sovereignty is bringing about His plan, which by definition is good. He is good.

- ***in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.***

**An Application:** Joseph was blessed to see God’s result in preserving many people alive. Don’t count on seeing what God intends. He is working His plan. Maybe we will know something, maybe we won’t. It’s where we have to trust Him for what is in our lives.

**50:21** ***“So therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.” So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them—***

**An Application:** Can we speak kindly and comfort those who have done wrong to us? It goes to our character. Romans 12:14-21, ***“Bless those who persecute you...Never pay back evil for evil to anyone...never take your own revenge...Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”*** Joseph was an overcomer!!!!

**50:22** ***Now Joseph stayed in Egypt, he and his father’s household—***all the children of Israel. There was no more disunity and division. There was complete reconciliation, not through arbitration but through inner transformation of those who hated, for which Joseph had waited and now in brotherly love acknowledges.

- ***and Joseph lived one hundred and ten years—***Joseph was brought to Egypt at 17 years old, comes before Pharaoh at 30 years old. His brothers come there when is about 39 (7 years of plenty plus maybe 2 years of famine). Jacob lives 17 years in Egypt and dies when Joseph is 56. So Joseph lives 54 years after their reconciliation—nearly half his life.

**50:23** ***Joseph saw the third generation of Ephraim’s sons—***Joseph was married at 31, two sons before he was 37 (41:50), so Ephraim in his 36<sup>th</sup> year, grandsons by 56 or 60, great-grandsons at 78 or so, easily great-great-grandsons by 110.

- ***also the sons of Machir, the son of Manasseh—***see 1 Chronicles 7:14-17
- ***were born on Joseph’s knees—***place of comfort and love

**50:24** ***Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die, but God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob”***—Joseph is confident that God who promised will provide according to His promise.

**50:25** *Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, “God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones up from here”*—like his father Jacob, Joseph wants his bones taken out of Egypt and buried in the promised land. The brothers could promise, but it would be a promise they hand down to their descendants. When the Israelites entered and conquered the promised land under Joshua (over 400 years later), *Now they buried the bones of Joseph, which the sons of Israel brought up from Egypt, at Shechem, in the piece of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of money [Gen 33:19]; and they became the inheritance of Joseph’s sons (Joshua 24:32), in the territory of his son.*

**50:26** *So Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten years*—Abraham lived to be 175 (25:7); Isaac lived to 180 (35:28); and Jacob 147 (47:28).

— *he was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt*—waiting to go back to the Land of Promise. It is the only time a coffin is mentioned in the Old Testament.

So the book of Genesis closes with the promise of the land yet unfulfilled but with the expectation that God will take care of them and bring them up from the land of Egypt and to the land He promised the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), which becomes the focus of the next book of Exodus.