**A VERY BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS**

Genesis is the book of beginnings. Its original Hebrew title was *Bereshith*, meaning “in the beginning.” What is it the beginning of? It is literally the beginning of everything by the act of a single creator God. It is from this foundation that the rest of the Bible unfolds. All other truths revealed to us by God hang upon the very first sentence of this book. Additionally, the truthfulness of the first chapter of the first book is attacked more often than most any other section of the Bible. Although this set of lessons is about the book of Genesis as a whole instead of apologetics, it is important to affirm this most basic truth. If God cannot claim the title as our Creator, then much of the Biblical story begins to fall apart.

We must also note that the Bible is an epic story of actual history. The book of Genesis is the very necessary beginning of that epic story, setting the table for everything else that will unfold. However, with what history is Genesis, and the Bible, concerned? Genesis, like the Bible, is concerned with the redemptive history of man. Man begins the Bible in perfect relationship with God in a garden and ends the Bible returning to that relationship in a city with elements of the garden in it. This epic story is concerned with nothing more than seeing God reveal His plan to return man to Himself.

Who wrote the book of Genesis and why? Many have maintained that Moses was the primary author or editor of Genesis as well as most of the Pentateuch (the Jewish first five books of the Bible). Although it is unclear when these inspired words were first put on clay tablet or papyrus, the reasoning is very clear. The book of Genesis informs the reader of the most important questions plaguing man. Why am I here? Why is the world here? Why is the world in its current state?

It contains even more detailed information for its intended audience, the very early Hebrews. It details the selection by God of their forefathers. The writing captures the beginnings of the Hebrew nation. Most importantly, it details the promises of God to the Hebrews and ultimately all people. These promises are a key thread and driving force behind the redemptive history of man. Throughout this study, I encourage you to stop and take note of what God’s promising, who is He promising it to, and find the fulfillment of this promise in later books of the Bible.

**NOTES ABOUT THIS STUDY**

This study aid is simply that, an aid. We will not go into great depth or discussion of each section as doing so would require a huge volume. I will attempt to add material that I find especially important to grasp or uncommonly known. The goal is to enlighten you the student. My hope is that this will whet your appetite for further study on this great book of the Bible. There are a great many scholarly and insightful materials available on the book. I encourage you to read the passages suggested and associated with each section. Next, read any commentary or additional information provided with the section. Finally, answer the questions that are designed to challenge your understanding of the material.

Most importantly, **please note that there is a vast difference in the Scripture you will read and the words of commentary.** The commentary is not inspired but is based on my best interpretation of the material. I encourage each of you to be noble Bereans (no clue what this is? Read Acts 17:11) and weigh whether these things are true.

**LESSON 1 – THE CREATION: “IN THE BEGINNING”**

**Reading: Gen 1:1-2:25**

**Suggested Related Passages: John 1:1-3; Job 38:4-7; Romans 1:20**

**The Beginning of Everything**

Where did we come from? Currently there are three answers that are commonly given: non-theistic evolution, theistic evolution, or special creation. Although the Bible is not a book of science, it is designed to answer this question resoundingly. Yet the answer it gives today comes under more scrutiny than at other point in all of human history. For the vast majority of human history, the assumption that God created the known universe was undisputed. This is the great challenge of our day and rattles the core of our faith.

However, as I mentioned previously, the Bible by design answers resoundingly that, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” It is from this assumption that God receives his authority. As the Creator God, He is invested with the right to do with His creation as He wills. If He is not the Creator, His authority wanes and introduces a whole new set of questions regarding our very being.

Thus, answering this question is both fundamental but also very complex. Yet, our God, Yahweh, is not a God who asks of His follower’s blind faith. He instead has given us the ability to reason and vast proofs throughout His Scriptures and in the physical world that prove the veracity of what He teaches us. Instead, God asks you personally to weigh the evidence and come to the conclusion that He is God.

**Creation**

Most of us are familiar with the actual order of creation. If you are not, certainly read these Scripture so you can be. Each day an element of our known world was created. How was the creation actually accomplished? God simply informs us that God spoke all things in existence by the power of His Word. Additionally, all things either living or non-living are brought to be *ex nihilo*, a Latin phrase meaning “out of nothing.” The writer also describes these events as having a morning and an evening concluding each day. Although these things are very hard to imagine, we should not be surprised that it would be difficult for us to conceive an event showing the raw power and infinite knowledge of our God.

God’s initial creation was perfect in every way. Additionally, God declares each day of creation to be good. The Earth is described as being self-sustaining with a mist coming out of the ground to water the Earth. It seems that this world before the flood was a very different place than the world we know today. Upon completion of all animals and the planet, God’s creation reached its penultimate in the forming of Adam from the dust of the ground. All things were made for the glory of God, but for the benefit of Adam.

**For Signs & Seasons**

There is an amazing, yet little known, bit of knowledge that would have been available to the early Hebrews, but is lost to our English versions of the Bible. In 1:14, God states that the lights of the heavens are for signs and seasons. This word “signs” is the Jewish word “oth” (pronounced: oat). The original Hebrew language was written like most languages using symbols that represented concepts. These individual letters that make up the word are: aleph, vav, tav. Aleph was similar to a picture of a bull’s head and meant, “leader”. Vav symbolized a peg or nail. Finally, tav was similar to our modern “t” or “x” and meant a sign or symbol but resembled a cross. The literal pictogram in the very first chapter of the Bible that God so eloquently painted for His people was in the very word “sign”, meaning “the leader nailed on a cross”.

What does this have to do with the lights being signs or seasons? The Hebrew nation’s calendar, both religious and civil, was based on the moons and the seasons of the year. Leviticus 23 details out the religious feasts of the children of Israel. These were literal signs or dress rehearsals for the coming of the world’s Savior. This is something we will cover in greater detail next semester when we discuss the rest of the Pentateuch.

**God’s Trinity & Characteristics in Creation of Man**

Who is God speaking with in verse 26 when he says “Let Us make…”? A partial answer can be found in John 1 referenced above in the suggested reading. God is a triune God, meaning He exists and has always existed in three parts. He is eternally relational; he has always existed in relationship with Himself. Out of this abundance of relation and love, He produced this world and relationship with humans.

Furthermore, He designed the original world to be in complete subjection to the dominion of man. What did this complete subjection look like and how did it function? We will never know. However, the current hardships we see existing in the world did not then exist. It seems from the naming of the animals in chapter 2 that all things worked together for Adam’s benefit and rule. It appears that Adam was created and truly brought to a great paradise.

Finally, the primary characteristic we see displayed by God is that of providence and generosity. God presents man with companionship, a wide open world to rule, and an abundance of food to eat. He is the God who reigns with an open hand seeking to give to His children. This is His default method of dealing with man. Remember this as it will come into question in our next lesson.

**The Garden of Eden and the two trees**

According to Scripture sometime after forming man and making him a living being, God brought Adam to the Garden paradise in the land called Eden. Where was this place and what was was it like? It seems most likely that it was something like a rainforest at the foothills of a mountain in the land of Eden. How can we know this? There are four rivers that flow out of the land of Eden, and since water always flows downhill, we can surmise that Eden was a higher place. These waters fed the garden and then the rest of the world.

Although Moses gives clues about where the garden might have been, it is foolish to try and look at a map to find it. No place as the one described in Genesis exists today. How can this be? As you most likely know and as we will study soon, a worldwide flood changed the entire face of the globe in a catastrophic event.

What was in the garden? Virtually every tree that was good for food. However, there were two special trees: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We will talk briefly about the tree of life in the following lesson, but we want to focus here on the tree of knowledge of good and evil. It seems that Adam’s only prohibition was eating of this tree. God stated that if they did eat of it they would die. Satan states in 3:5 that eating of that tree would open their eyes. Both of these statements are true.

What is the end of God’s creative efforts? He ends each day saying that His creation is good. At the conclusion of it all, He states that His creation is very good. It is complete in that it does all God required to bring glory to His own name.

**Questions:**

1. Where was God before the creation of the world? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Why did God create the world? What do the Scriptures say about this? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. How did God treat man as His creation in the beginning? What does this tell us about God’s desire for a relationship with us? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Is there any Biblical significance to the fact that God worked for six days and rested on the seventh? Is it because God needed to rest or is there a pattern that God is revealing? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. How is the creation of Woman very different than the creation of Man? What was Woman designed to do for man? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. What does it mean that Man and Women were naked but they were not ashamed? What is the writer trying to convey to us? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 2**

**Reading: Gen 3:1-24**

**Suggested Related Passages: 2 Cor 11:1-3,14; Romans 5:12-19**

**Introduction of “the serpent”**

The beginning of chapter 3 starts out with the basic assumption that reader will have some understanding of “the serpent”. It is very unfortunate that our Bible renders the Hebrew word Nachash, “serpent”. The word literally means “shining one”, and Paul gives more insight on this in 2 Cor 11:3 & 11:14 where Satan (literally our “accuser”) can transform himself as an “angel of light.” Thus, it is very unlikely that Eve saw a talking snake in the way that we have often imagined. Furthermore, the Bible clarifies this being in Revelation 20:2 calling our opponent the serpent of old.

Also, I would briefly mention that we find ourselves in the unfortunate position of falling prey to much more human invention about Satan than actual Biblical knowledge. In fact, much of what is commonly thought to be true about Satan today comes from Christian authors like John Milton instead of the Bible. While his books are classical reading, they are certainly not inspired. Be very certain that what you believe is true of our adversary comes from Scripture and not commonly held opinion, even among our own Christian circles.

**The First Lie and the First Sin**

In John 8:44, Jesus calls Satan the “father of lies.” This is true in many respects, not the least of which is chronologically true. He comes at Eve much in the same way he comes at Jesus, questioning the intent or meaning of God’s words before contradicting God directly saying, “You will not be die.” Satan’s intent is to give Adam and Eve the impression that God is stingy. Satan wants them and us to believe that God is withholding His true blessings because He is a cosmic Uncle Scrooge. As we noted in our last lesson, nothing could be further from the truth.

**Consequences of sin**

When Adam and Eve sin against God’s law for them, they immediately become aware in a way that they had not previously. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil completed its work in giving them the knowledge of the difference between God’s true goodness toward them and the presence of evil and their capacity for it (of which they have been previously completely ignorant).

Additionally, as we are well aware, their sin creates the grand conflict of the universe. As Romans 5 states, it is through this one man’s sin that we all became enemies of God. The rest of the Bible story will attempt to answer one singular question: how can the all-righteous and holy God reconcile a sinful mankind to Himself? Although we become entangled with many other questions throughout the Bible, the base story is seeking an answer to the problem unveiled in Genesis 3.

**The first Messianic promise**

As this is a brief treatment of the book of Genesis, we cannot go into great detail on the various proclamations God makes to Adam, Eve, and Satan. However, we need to focus in on verse 15. This is the first prophetic promise of a coming Messiah (the Jewish word for “Anointed One”). Also, it elaborates on the conflict between the seed of Woman and the serpent. Throughout your study of the Bible, you should be aware and look for types that refer back to the conflict between the Serpent’s seed (usually in the form of men) and the seed of Eve (the people of God).

How will this conflict end? The ultimate seed, the second Adam as referenced in Romans 5, will crush the head of the serpent. The serpent will merely bruise His heel. God is telling man and Satan from the beginning how this conflict will come to a conclusion. Although the people of God experience a great number of dark and dwindling times, the conclusion is never in doubt, even from the very beginning. Take great comfort that our God is the God who determines the end of a battle before it has even begun.

**Exodus from the Garden & Tree of Life**

The end of the chapter sees man being driven from His close relationship with God and from the garden. This is a type of exodus, a leaving or forceful eviction. God is concerned that man will live for an eternity at enmity with Him by eating of the tree of life. However, God does want man to eat from this tree and live. The tree pops up twice more prominently in Scripture. It appears figuratively in Ezekiel 47 along with life-giving water, promising a future time when men will be healed and drink and eat from its life-giving source. Finally, it’s fulfilled at the very end of Revelation when men are invited to eat from it again.

**Questions:**

1. What according to the Bible is the origin of Satan? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What reasons does the Bible give us as to why Eve ate the fruit? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why do you suppose God asks the questions He does in verse 11? Does He really not know the answer or is God trying to bring about another response from Adam and Eve? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Death is introduced in this chapter in two ways. First, in 2:17 God stated that Adam and Eve would die the day they ate of the tree. Did they truly die? How does the Bible then define this primary meaning of “death”? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Second, there is a physical death recorded in this chapter even though it is not specifically stated as such in verse 21. Why did God kill and skin an animal for their clothing? What does sin require? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. Do God’s actions in verse 21 restore His relationship with man? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
7. What is a cherubim and how long do you suppose this cherubim stayed at his post? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 3**

**Reading: 4 & 5**

**Concept of sacrifice**

Chapter 4 begins with the idea that man should give sacrifice to God. Remember that this is long before the Law of Moses is given; however, God is already instilling in man that He desires sacrifice from them. Why was Abel’s sacrifice respected and Cain’s was not? Believe it or not, but the Bible never says why. We cannot be certain it was because Abel’s was an animal and Cain’s was an offering of vegetables as is commonly stated unless God specifically stated it was to be an animal. The Old Law was full of sacrifices that were not animals.

However, we can state with certainty that Cain’s sacrifice was not accepted because the quality of his heart was not right. No sacrifice was ever respected by God that was not given in accordance with His will and with the appropriate heart. Yet it appears God still desires a relationship with Cain as He even gives Cain warning that a grievous sin is filling his heart.

**The first physical death of man & Cain’s punishment**

In a rage of covetousness, Cain reaches out his hand and kills Abel. He then attempts to cover up his murder by attempting to deceive God claiming ignorance. This murder of his brother is something that God finds to be an abomination. However, we have to remember that Abel is the first recorded physical death in the history of man. Is it possible that Cain was not fully sure what would happen to his brother? Perhaps, but it seems clear that Cain was fully aware that his actions were sinful.

Cain’s punishment is a building upon the punishment that God gave to Adam upon leaving the garden. Adam would merely have trouble bringing produce from the earth. Cain instead will not be able to get any good thing to grow. Adam was a fugitive from God’s presence in the garden. Cain will be a fugitive from all men on the face of earth. Although a righteous punishment might have required Cain’s immediate death, God places a mark upon Cain to let all men know that they should not take vengeance upon Cain for Abel’s death.

**Lineage of Cain & Seth**

Cain goes out and lives in Nod, meaning “wandering”, which is east of Eden. It appears that in this land Cain becomes a very great man, but this land to the east also seems to become an evil land. However, Jewish traditions and many other traditions as well as Scripture credit the descendants of Cain with accomplishing great feats of invention as we see in 4:16-22.

Simultaneous to the rise Cain’s lineage in this land to the east of Eden is the rise of Seth’s lineage. It is implied that Seth’s lineage was the more righteous of the two, and Jewish tradition holds to this. It is of this lineage that we see the birth of the mysterious man Enoch of whom we know very little except that God favored Enoch to the point that he was taken and did not see death. Only Elijah in addition to Enoch had the honor of not seeing a physical death.

**Questions:**

1. What is a sacrifice and what role do they play in the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Why Abel’s sacrifice accepted but Cain’s was not? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. What did God tell Cain about sin in verse 7, and what does this mean? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Why did Cain kill Abel? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Who did Cain marry and where did she come from? Does the Bible address this question? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. Where did Enoch go after God took him? Did he ascend to heaven? *(Warning: this is a difficult question, but the Bible does answer it)* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
7. What can you learn from the sin of Cain to not become a descendant of the Serpent such as the line of Cain became? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 4**

**Reading: Gen 6**

**Suggested Related Passages:**

The antediluvian (before the Flood) world must have been a fantastic world that was markedly different than our world today. Some of evidence of this may still exist to this day as we are now finding out that under the ice and snow of Antarctica, there once was a sprawling rainforest! During this time period men knew where the Garden of Eden was, men lived 900+ years, God spoke with men directly, and the world was a fresh, wide open space to be conquered. Despite the curses man received through Adam in the garden, the blessing of God were abundant everywhere.

However, in the face of these great blessings, even the “sons of God” begin to fall to sin in the world. In this context, the most likely conclusion is that the “sons of God” are descendants of Seth intermarrying with the lineage of evil Cain. The result is God declaring that man’s days will be shortened to 120 years. How should we understand this time period? Many have suggested that God is declaring that man cannot live beyond 120 years. While that may be true, his declaration won’t come true for a long period of time as even many years after the flood people continue to live beyond 120, even to the end of the book Genesis and beyond. It seems more likely to me that 120 years expire between God’s declarations in verse 3 to its completion in chapter 7.

Additionally, Genesis makes the saddest commentary on man during this time period. It is during this period that man’s thoughts were evil continually, and God was **sorry He had made man.** Imagine you had 900 years of life with a huge majority of that being young enough in body and mind to do, learn, and conquer whatever you wanted. Imagine how strong, how capable, how smart, and how great you could become if you had over 600-700 years to accomplish whatever your heart desired. We can quickly imagine how evil and violent man could become. It is a dramatic statement that the God who will ultimately send His only Son to die for man at one point felt that the best course of action was to wipe out all flesh on the face of the Earth.

However, Noah found favor in the eyes of God and was perfect in his generation. God is faithful to His promise to the serpent and to Adam to remember that ultimately a Man must come to crush the head of the serpent. This begins a long trend throughout the Bible where God leaves a remnant for Himself amongst those being judged so that He will be able to keep His promises.

How will God save Noah? It is through the construction of an ark which nearly everyone in the world knows. In fact, the story of a worldwide flood is one of the most well-known *myths* in every single culture across the face of the globe. In fact, the mystery and proof of a world-wide flood is so abundant, almost no other miraculous incident recorded in Scripture can compare. Even a simple Google search will yield thousands if not millions of pages giving evidence of this story.

While I will not go into great detail here about the details of the ark or what went into it, there are several important details I will cover in the questions below.

Lastly, I do want to consider the importance of 6:18 where God tells Noah that He will establish His covenant with Noah and his sons. Interestingly enough, God does not specify ahead of time what this covenant will be (until the next lesson). However, we can understand that God is promising a safe passage for Noah to bring him through the flood and provide for him in the new world. God is emphasizing that He is a faithful God who is covenant-maker and a covenant-keeper.

**Questions:**

1. Back up a bit to 5:28-29. What does Noah’s name mean? What should we make of the prophecy of Lamech in this passage? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. The statement of Genesis 6:3 is difficult to understand. Do some research and record some possibilities of what the 120 year period may refer to. There are several possibilities. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Verse 4 refers to the Nephilim. Who are they? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Is the world as evil today as it was in the days Noah? Are there any Scriptures that address the amount of evil in the world after the days before the Flood? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. What is a covenant? **(Very important to this book!)** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 5**

**Reading: Gen 7:1-9:29**

**Suggested Related Passages: 1 Peter 3:18-22; 2 Peter 3:1-6**

Most of you will be quite familiar with the events surrounding the flood. However, there are a number of curious observations that we might make surrounding these events. First, God reiterates why He is saving Noah: because Noah was righteous. And because of Noah’s righteousness, he saves his family of three sons, their wives, and his wife. This event, both the judgment of God on the unrighteous world and the salvation of the righteous Noah, are used multiple times in the New Testament to unveil future judgment and salvation. This event is discussed and used at length to describe the power of the gospel in 1 Peter 3:18-22. While we do not have the space here to explain all that is intended by Peter in this passage, it is important that you note the important comparison of the saving nature of baptism and being “saved through water” in 1 Peter 3:20. I strongly encourage you to think about these passages.

Second, there are a number of incidental observations that we need to make about the events surrounding the flood itself. A great amount of water is produced that covers the entire earth. Also, as in the case with a high tide, Genesis refers to the fountains of the deep being opened up as well as the windows of the heaven. This event was catastrophic on a planetary if not cosmic scale. The earth to this day still bears the scars of God’s judgment on it and radically changed the face of the globe.

Third, as was promised in the prior lesson, God unveils His covenant to the reader that He makes with Noah and with all living flesh. This covenant like all other covenants with God comes with commands, signs or symbols of the covenant, and the covenant blessings or promises. First, God commands Noah to come out of the ark and “be fruitful and multiply”, just as the command was given to Adam and Eve. Additionally, God gives Noah the flesh of every moving thing to be food, but withholds the blood of any living thing (incidentally condemning murder of man again). This becomes exponentially important as we understand the importance of blood going forward in Scripture. Second, the sign of this agreement between man and God shall be the placing of God’s personal bow in the clouds. This is a sign of momentous importance which we take for granted as nearly every time in Scripture is pictured on His throne, He is surrounded by a rainbow. Finally, the promise is made that God “will never again curse the ground… nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.” Lastly, the covenant between God and Noah is sealed with a sacrifice of every clean animal which is the custom for all covenants between man and God; they are settled by joint participation in an offering and usually a meal.

At the very end of this section in chapter nine is the story of Ham’s dishonoring his father. The primary thing to grasp from this section is the prophetic nature of Noah’s comments here. It is the descendant of Ham that becomes Egyptians and Canaanites, the very people that God will punish using the Israelites. Throughout the book of Genesis we will see a series of blessings from fathers to sons that have a prophetic nature to them ultimately unveiling the redemptive plan of God. Pay careful attention to these and see how God gives heed to the words of these patriarchs throughout human history.

**Questions:**

1. Why was Noah spared from the flood? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. How many days did it rain? How many days was the flood on the earth? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. When the waters receded, where did they go? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. How are the commands given to Noah leaving the ark similar to the commandments given to Adam originally? How are they different? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Where did the ark come to rest? Where is this mountain today? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. With what did Noah worship God coming out of the ark? What was God’s response to Noah’s worship? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
7. What does 2 Peter 3 tell us about the world’s attitude toward God’s judgment in the day of Noah? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 6**

**Reading: Gen 10:1-11:32**

Genesis 10 may seem (like many other passages of chronologies) a pointless recording of names and peoples far away that play little relevance in the major stories of the Bible. However, for the original Jewish readers, these lists were of vital importance and revealed much about the people in them. The people recorded in this chapter are the fathers of the entire ancient world. Peter Leithart in his book *A House For My Name* says that there are 70 nations that spring into existence after God commands Noah to be fruitful and multiply. Also, when the Bible is translated into English we lose the original meaning of these names which often tells us the characteristic trait of their lives. Names in the Bible carry great meaning and insight about the person.

Finally, this chapter also introduces us to two notable people amongst the names in this list. First is Nimrod, who is likely the first king the Bible mentions. He creates an empire of cities in the area where Abram will be called from and also rules the very ancient area of Babylon which is always associated with evil in the Bible. It is possible that Abram lived under the rule of Nimrod’s clan. Second, is the fairly non-descript name of Eber, the great-grandson of Shem. It is widely thought that is from his name that we get the name “Hebrew”, signifying the forefather before Abram of the Israelites.

Genesis 11 begins with the side note that the entire population of the Earth shared one language. This is not hard to imagine as all people descended from one family. Also, we cannot be absolutely certain how much time elapses from the end of chapter nine and the beginning of chapter 11, but we do know that it was within four generations of Shem who was still living at the time of the tower of Babel (see 10:25). We also know that God says in 11:6 man will be able to accomplish anything if everyone shares the same language.

Who builds the tower of Babel? Although it is certain that the chapters and verses of the Bible help us locate passages, they can also cause us to misunderstand and chop Scriptures up. In 11:2 it says, “as they journeyed from the east”; who is the they? Well it must be whoever the previous passages were talking about, a particular clan of Shem that journeyed to the land ruled by Nimrod, a descendant of Ham. The Scriptures are particularly interested in this particular clan of Shem because of who will descend from it at the end of chapter 11 (spoiler alert).

What was the tower of Babel and what was its builder’s intent? Obviously the builders want to become famous, but the more impressive feat is a misguided attempt to reach the heavens, to connect heaven and earth. In other words, in their rebellion to God’s command, they wish to storm the gates of heaven by building a grand temple that will get them there. In a bit of irony, God in 11:5 has to “come down to the see the city and the tower.” When God comes down in judgment (a term used often in Scripture), it completely reverses their effort to rebel against God’s command that they spread and fill the earth. Instead, they are more spread and more divided than ever. In an even more ironic twist, the site of this tower would be close or on the site of Babylon, meaning “gate of god”; however, the Old Testament name for Babel means “confusion or folly”.

Finally, we see more about a different clan of Shemites that produces the family of Abram who lives in the shadows of the land of the tower of Babel. There is tremendously powerful contrast between the tower of Babel and God’s promises to Abram coming chapter 12. The intent of the men of Babel was to make their name great. Instead, God promises a great name to Abram, a different Shemite. The intent of the men of Babel was to bring all men together. Instead, God promises to Abram that He will unite all men with their God again through His descendants. We will say much more about this in the coming chapters.

**Questions:**

1. Micah 5:6 mentions Nimrod many thousands of years later. What can we surmise about Nimrod from this passage and the passage in Genesis? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. To the Jews, how important were chronologies? Why were they important? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. What was the motivation to build the Tower of Babel? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Why does God reason that confusing their language is an appropriate judgment? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Describe the immediate family of Abram and who he lived with. Who is included in this chapter? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 7**

**Reading: Gen 12**

The passages in this text are amongst the most important in the Old Testament. They cannot be understated in importance as they are the driving force behind the establishment of the Israelites as the chosen people of God. This is the man who will be the father of all the faithful of God from this point forward in history. Furthermore, the events of the life of Abram become a central text for Paul in proving how we attain to righteousness before God in Romans 4 (we won’t look at this until a later lesson).

What does God promise Abram? There are three basic promises which many are familiar with, but in reality, God promises a few more things. There is first the promise a land that Abram has yet to see. This of course will be Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey, reminiscent of the Garden of Eden. Second, God promises to make a great nation of Abram. God commands Adam and Noah to be fruitful and multiply, but instead promises to make Abram fruitful. Third, God promises to make Abram’s name great and a blessing. Finally, God promises through Abram that all the families of the earth will be blessed. This of course is the “Seed” promise.

In response to God’s promises, Abram obeys and takes his family as well as slaves with him. God lead Abram and his clan into the land of Canaan which was already being settled and ruled by descendants of Ham. Initially Abram settles near Shechem, a famous Biblical locale in the middle of the Promised Land roughly 20 miles north of Jerusalem. In this place God once again repeats His promise to give his descendants the land he now sees. Abram once again responds by glorifying God through making an altar to God.

As God has now shown Abram the land that He has promised, He seems to guide Abram providentially on a tour of the Canaanite land. Abram and company travel further south toward the Negev passing through Bethel and the ancient city of Ai. Finally, a famine causes Abram to travel down to Egypt for food. Abram, fearing for his safety and believing that the Egyptians will kill him to take Sarai, informs everyone that Sarai is his sister. God in fulfillment of his promise curses the Egyptians and Pharaoh. Through that curse, Abram is enriched by Pharaoh, a further fulfillment of God’s promises. Interestingly enough, God never condemns Abram for his deception, but rather, Abram is made richer seemingly because of it.

**Questions:**

1. Before God called Abram in Ur, did he worship or know the True God? (see Josh 24:14) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Recall in previous lessons the importance of names. What does the name Abram mean? What does Sarai’s name mean? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. The “Seed” promise is a repeat of what earlier promise? Where is it in Scripture and who was it given to there? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. The Negev is a famous Biblical location. What is this place like and where is it? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. What is Abram’s full relationship with Sarai? Hint: You may need to search other passages in Genesis to find the complete answer. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. Once in this lesson’s passages Abram obeys God in going out to a foreign land. Once in this passage Abram worships God by building him an altar. Also, Abram fails to trust God in this passage, but is still rewarded by God’s providence. What should this tell us about development of trust and faith in God? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
7. Read Hebrews 11:8-10 & Rev 21:10. What was Abram really waiting and looking for according to the Hebrew writer? Do your best to interpret what these passages mean. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 8**

**Reading: Gen 13 & 14**

**Suggested Related Passages: Hebrews 7:1-28; Psalms 110:1-4**

Chapter 13 begins with Abram being kicked out of the land of Egypt after his deception of the Pharaoh there and moving to a land in the south of Canaan known as the Negev. Abram journeys his way back up to his home before the famine that sent him to Egypt near the towns of Bethel and Ai. This area is also marked by the altar that Abram had previously made to worship Yahweh. These areas become increasingly important as the Old Testament is absolutely filled with references to the people of God desiring to find holy ground upon which they may worship their God. Therefore, it is entirely reasonable and understandable that Abram would return to an area that he knew and where he had worshipped Yahweh previously.

Additionally, the stories in this chapter are prompted by a partial fulfillment of God’s promises to Abram, to bless him and make his name great. That promise is being fulfilled as it becomes increasingly obvious that Abram is growing greatly in wealth. Not only are Abram’s possessions growing, but Lot as Abram’s nephew and current heir are growing as well. So great were their herds in addition the possessions of the Canaanites and Perizzites that the land where they dwelt together could not support them forcing strife to develop between their hired hands.

Abram seeking to have peace in his house offers Lot the choice of the land. Lot looked and saw the great land that was near the Jordan near the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. This land is described as being like the Garden of Eden in verse 10. However, the inhabitants of those cities were exceedingly wicked. How wicked must they have been in contrast to the Canaanites who dwelt everywhere else in the land! Although Lot chooses the cream of the land to dwell in, God again promises the entirety of the land to Abram and commands him to again move throughout the land to survey what will one day his descendants. After moving yet again, Abram marks his territory by building another altar to Yahweh near Hebron.

We do not know how much time passes between chapters 13 and 14. However, chapter 14 gives us some political history that fills in the details of the coming battle that will entrap Lot and his family. Chedorlaomer, a king of Persia, leads a group of kings against the city state kings of Sodom and Gomorrah as well as others. These were under tribute to Chedorlaomer for 12 years until they rebelled. Finally, Chedorlaomer and these kings return to take by force the possessions of the land which included Lot and all Lot owned.

In response, Abram takes 318 of his household servants and forms a small army to retrieve Lot. Additionally, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre, all of whom were other great men in the land, accompany Abram to go after Chedorlaomer. They defeat these armies and bring back Lot and all the possessions of the land of Sodom back its king.

Immediately following these events, a very interesting figure appears on the scene named Melchizedek. Melchizedek is presented as the dual role of king of Salem and priest of El Elyon (God the Most High). His name most closely means “the king of righteousness.” Salem is most likely thought to be Jerusalem which would have been very close to the possible battle between these kings. However, Salem also means “peace” making Melchizedek the king of peace as well. Melchizedek brings out bread and wine (the congratulatory dinner to the victor of the battle) and places a blessing upon Abram. In exchange, Abram gives a tithe of all his possessions. This indicates to us that Abram recognizes the superiority of Melchizedek.

This prompts a huge number of questions, many of which have been lost to us in history. Who was this Melchizedek really? How did he become a priest of El Elyon? Were there others worshipping the One True God in Jerusalem? How did he become so great that even Abram recognized his superiority? While we cannot truly know the answers to these questions, there is a possibility that we could recognize. It is possible that Melchizedek is none other than Shem, the son of Noah. Shem was still alive at the time and lived all the way through part of the lifetime of Isaac. Shem would then be father of roughly a third of all living men on the earth and the direct forefather of Abram. Additionally, it seems likely that Shem, because of his closeness to Noah, would have an understanding of Yahweh. While this possibility seems pleasing to answer a number of our questions, remember that it is merely a possibility and not the absolute truth revealed to us by God.

Melchizedek is a very important, albeit little understood, Biblical figure. His relationship to Abram revealed in these passages and his reign as “king of righteousness/king of peace/priest of God” is a great foreshadowing of the Christ who would serve as king and priest as well. You would do well to study the passages listed above this lesson to understand the few other places in the Bible that Melchizedek is mentioned and what role he plays in the redemptive story.

**Questions:**

1. These two chapters provide a subtle contrast between strife and peace. In chapter 13, how important is peace to Abram is his household? What is he willing to give up to have peace? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Was it sinful for Lot to choose to live in Sodom and Gomorrah? Defend your position using Scripture and reasoning from the Scripture? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. In what ways does Abram display his growing and developing faith in Yahweh in these two chapters? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Read Hebrews 7. How do you understand verse 3? What is the writer of Hebrews trying to say about Melchizedek and Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. How is Jesus a priest according to the order of Melchizedek? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 9**

**Reading: Gen 18:16-19:38**

**Suggested Related Passages: Luke 17:30-37, 2 Peter 2:4-11, Duet 29:21-24; Matt 11:20-24; Jude 5-7; Ezekiel 16:48-50**

We are going to make a slight detour and finish the string of the story relating to Lot and the end of his home in Sodom and Gomorrah. However, starting in the middle of chapter 18 requires a little explaining. God appears in the form of three beings or possibly as two changes and the Lord God Himself. These three meet with Abram (who has now had his name changed to Abraham which will use for this lesson) to reaffirm promises we will look at in our next lesson. Our study today begins in the location of Abraham’s tents at Mamre at the end of this discussion.

Abraham as good host and hospitable servant to His Lord rises to accompany them on their journey towards Sodom. We as the readers are privy to a conversation that Yahweh has within Himself to reveal to Abraham his impending judgment on the towns of the plain of Jordan who we noted last week were exceedingly wicked. Verses 17-19 are this internal conversation between the eternal Trinity of the Godhead and reveal much about Yahweh’s attitude toward His chosen family. God clearly wishes to reveal to Abraham and, just as importantly, Abraham’s descendants the upcoming righteous judgment of God and its impact on this world. This is a theme repeated in many mentions of these particular events in both Old Testament and New Testament prophecy.

Verses 20 and following through the end of the chapter contain the dialogue between Abraham and God. In examining these verses we can learn a great deal about our relationship to God and specifically how we should relate to him in our prayer lives. Although it cannot be doubted that Abraham’s great concern is for the safety of his nephew, Lot, Abraham shows in his discussion with God that his greatest concern is the name and reputation of God as a righteous judge who spares the good and judges only the wicked. In speaking both boldly and with humility, Abraham obtains the ear and favor of Yahweh who will weigh the words of Abraham in considering judgment upon the evil city.

The two angels accompanying Yahweh journey to Sodom. There they had planned to sleep in the city square which would have been common practice in those days. This should have been a safe space behind the walls of the city as hospitality was an expected virtue of everyone in that culture. However, Lot, knowing the wickedness of the men in the city, invites them to sleep under his own roof. That night the men of the city come and wish to violate the angels sexually to which Lot rebukes them and even offers his own daughters! Although this practice is deplorable, it reveals to us the great importance that providing hospitality and protection to one’s guests in that culture.

The angels reveal themselves in striking the men of the city blind and declaring that Lot should flee with his entire family in the house. Lot tries unsuccessfully to convince all of his family to leave the city. Yet, when Lot lingers, the angels provide the mercy of God by bringing them outside the city. Initially Lot is told to flee to the mountains, but pleads to go to the small city of Zoar nearby. Once they enter Zoar, the angels cause fire and brimstone to rain down from the heavens causing mass destruction and completely decimating the entire area. From this vantage point Lot’s wife looks back (perhaps longingly) toward those cities and is turned to a pillar of salt.

What happens after these events is very interesting. In verse 29, it seems apparent that God wishes to further spare Lot and drives him out of Zoar on account of Abraham’s words. Lot and his virgin daughters flee to the mountains just outside of Zoar, a desolate area now made even more desolate. There is no doubt that destruction was massive as it appears from verse 31 makes it seem to Lot’s daughters that the entire earth has been destroyed. In a desire to continue their lineage (another important concept to that culture), the daughters cause Lot to drink away his sorrow and lie with him to conceive. This act of sin conceives the beginning of two cousin nations to the Israelites, the Moabites and the Ammonites.

**Questions:**

1. In chapter 18, analyze verses 25, 27, 30, and 32. What can we learn about our approach to our God in prayer from these verses? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Hospitality to one’s guests is emphasized in both chapter 18 and chapter 19. Look at the passage from Ezekiel listed above and list the sins that God judged Sodom for. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Many look at the previous passage as justification for homosexuality as God judged them for other sins and neglects to mention *sodomy.* What other passages indicate to us that homosexuality, and certainly the acts that the men of Sodom were going to commit here, were sinful? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Read the passage above from 2 Peter and pay special attention to what it says about Lot. If you were Lot, what would you have done differently to avoid the tragedy of his life? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Read the passage from Matthew above. How evil was the generation and cities of Israel in the day of Jesus? What does Peter say in 2 Peter 2:6 that they should have learned from the example of Sodom? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. Cite some passages the talk about the future relations between the Moabites and the Ammonites and the Israelites. How large an impact can one family’s sin have on the entire future of nations? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 10**

**Reading: Gen 15:1-17:27**

**Suggested Related Passages: Romans 3:27-4:25; Gal 3:1-9;**

Chapter 15 harkens back to the events at the end of the battle of the kings which took Lot captive and resulted in the blessing from Melchizedek. God comes once again to Abram and reinforces His promises to make Abram the father of a great nation; however, Abram states the obvious that Eliezer of Damascus, a servant born in the house of Abram but not of Abram’s lineage, will inherit his entire house. However, God states that the true heir will come from the body of Abram.

What we want to note specifically is verse 6 which is used extensively in the New Testament to discuss the idea of faith. Paul uses these very events in his letter to the Romans, specifically in chapter 4, and in his letter to the Galatians in 3:6. These passages affirm and agree with God’s words here that Abram’s faith was counted to him for righteousness. Furthermore, Paul writes extensively that it is by our faith in the covenant faithfulness of God that we receive our salvation. These words of Paul deserve our careful attention, and I highly suggest that you read the passage above from Romans as it illuminates the path to your own eternal salvation and how you might receive it.

Additionally, it is also necessary to mention another sense in which this passage is used in James 2:14-26, specifically in verse 23 mentioning this passage. In these passages, James seems to convey a message that salvation is by works that would directly contradict much of Paul’s writing in the book of Romans and several other places. However, we know that the mind and word of God is not divided. While there is no possible way to give a full explanation of the harmonization of these concepts here, you should study fully these passages to understand how man might be saved. Brilliant men over many centuries have wrestled with these concepts, but we will suffice our discussion on this to say the following: no man will achieve salvation through a righteousness obtained by good works (Rom 3:20-23, 28), but God calls the faithful to live holy lives of obedience to Him (Rom 6:1-2, 12:1; James 2:14-26). As there is no other topic which deserves you careful consideration, I repeat here Paul’s words, “*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”*(Phil 2:12)

In order to show His faithfulness to His own covenant, God has Abram conduct an ancient ritual to show the serious nature of the promises. Abram cuts animals in two and places them apart on the ground. The blood would spill out between to the two halves. Kings would often conduct this ritual to indicate that they would perform as promised passing between the two halves. The significance was that if the kings did not perform their part of the covenant that they would end up cut in half like the animals they were passing between. God sends His spirit as signified by a burning torch as His symbolic passing through the animals. Note that Abram did not pass through the animals as God is making an unconditional promise to perform certain acts. However, it is Abram’s faith in God that makes him the father of all the faithful. Furthermore, in the same vision God further explains and declares that the land of Promise is the land of the Gentiles where Abram now dwells.

Following these events, Sarai realized that God was preventing her from bearing children and was very old. However, her maid, and Egyptian named Hagar, could have a child and was given to Abram to have a child. Once she did conceive a child, the Scriptures tell us that Hagar despised Sarai who laid the fault of these events at the feet of Abram. Sarai treated Hagar so harshly, that Hagar preferred to take her child and flee to the wilderness. God seeing these events unfold, comes and promises the salvation of her and her son if they would return to the house of Abram. Hagar, realizing that God had taken note of her situation, gives God a new name of worship, El Roi or the God who Sees. Additionally, the well where these events took place was named Beer Lahai Roi or the Well of the One Who Lives and Sees.

Again, the events of this chapter play a pivotal role in the arguments Paul makes in his letter to the Galatians in chapter 4. While we do not have the time to flush out those arguments there, you should be aware that all these things happen according to the purpose of God who is working out the events of human history to His pleasing and to bring forth the Christ at the fullness of time. Thus, the seemingly unimportant events of a servant in the house of Abram who conceives a quasi-legitimate child become vastly important on the world stage a mere few hundred years later. Additionally, this entire line becomes the subject of Paul’s focus to contrast the promises to the descendants of the freewoman (Sarah) and the servant (Hagar) in comparing belief in Christ versus Judaism. Praise be to such a powerful God who works wonders in the small details of our lives in the flesh!

Finally, we must conclude with the outstanding promises of chapter 17 from God who introduces Himself to Abram this time as El Shaddai, the Almighty God. God promises this time not just to make Abram the father of a nation, but the father of many nations. Additionally, no longer will he be called Abram (Exalted Father) but he shall be known as Abraham (Father of a Multitude). God continues bestowing blessing in that kings of many nations will come from his line. And if that were not enough, now the covenant relationship will not just pass from Abraham, but will continue on to all the descendants of Abraham, even up to the present day.

What would be the sign of this covenant? What would mark these people as sanctified in the eyes of God? God of course gives the sign of circumcision, a removal of flesh to be performed on all males of the people of God upon the eighth day after their birth. This sign of cutting off or removal is also a very important doctrine throughout the Old and New Testaments. The Apostle Paul helps us to understand the true significance of circumcision by revealing the spiritual truth behind an earthly sign of the covenant. Passages such as Romans 2:25-29 reveal that the true circumcision is a cutting on the heart in the Spirit. Additionally, Colossians 2:11 further states that the true circumcision is the removal of sin which is not done with human hands. Yet, we should remember that this sign of the covenant is only an outward sign that does not gurantee the blessings of the conditional covenant with God on all future generations. This extends to us Paul tells us in Gal 3:6-9 that it is faith that makes sons of Abraham and not some outward cutting in the flesh, a doctrine that many confused in New Testament days.

Finally, after the debacle causing the birth of Ishmael, God further reveals in detail how the son of promise will come. First, God changes the name of Abraham’s wife from Sarai to Sarah (Princess). He then verifies that from Sarah’s 90+ year old body will come the offspring. Abraham laughs out of joy in his heart as opposed to unbelief like Sarah’s later laughing (as is revealed in Heb 11:11 & Romans 4:18-21) which leads to the name of this son, Isaac which we will shortly see in Scripture come to pass.

**Questions:**

1. We see in this lesson that names are of great importance in Scripture. God is given names or uses names in this passage that describe his qualities. What are they and what do they mean? What does Ishmael’s name mean and what does it signify given the events surrounding his birth? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Are the actions of Sarai and Abram regarding Hagar right or sinful or neither? Defend your answer. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Who are the descendants of Ishmael and how does this fulfill prophecy of Gen 16:12 & 17:20? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. We emphasized faithfulness to covenants on the part of God. This is a key piece of the Bible. What passages in both the New and Old Testament tell us God is the ultimate covenant keeper? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. In your own words, describe what Paul is trying to convey to the Romans in Romans 4:11 about circumcision and what it means? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 11**

**Reading: Gen 18:1-15; 20:1-22:24**

**Suggested Related Passages: Hebrews 11:17-19; James 2:21-24; John 3:16**

After the events of the prior lesson, three men appear to Abraham near his home. It is unclear if Abraham immediately recognized that these men represented angels and one of the as the Angel of the Lord. However, Abraham in contrast to the men of Sodom and Gomorrah extends a hand of hospitality to the very angels that those men will attempt to abuse. Sarah prepares a meal for them while Abraham kills a calf for them to eat. While Sarah is in the tent, these men declare to Abraham that within a year that Sarah will have a son to which she laughs in disbelief. We know she laughs in disbelief because of Yahweh’s response to Abraham. Sarah, fearing God, declares that she did not laugh knowing full well she did laugh.

We then skip ahead to chapter 20 where Abraham has now moved South again to the land of Gerar. Abraham pulls a similar stunt as he has before in claiming that Sarah was his sister, a half-truth. Why would he do such a thing? In verse 11 and following, Abraham observed from these pagan nations that they did not fear God, and assumed as he had before that they would kill him for the beauty of his 90+ year old wife. Instead of killing Abraham, Abimelech does take Sarah for himself as a potential wife or concubine but never consummated the marriage. God comes to Abimelech in a vision to warn him and to let Sarah go back to Abraham without incident. Abimelech does as God commands and returns Sarah to Abraham. Abraham in return prays to God and the curse of infertility lifts from the house of Abimelech.

After these incidents, God opens the womb of Sarah and she gives birth to Isaac which means laughter. Just as the laughter of Abraham in chapter 17 is different than the laughter of Sarah in chapter 18, here the laughter of Sarah in the birth of Isaac is juxtaposed to the laughter of Ishmael in 21:9. The word for scoffing could also be rendered laughter, a laughter that ridicules. The Scriptures say that Abraham was greatly displeased and sent Hagar and Ishmael away presumably to ensure that his house and his inheritance would not be split from the strife between these two sons. Hagar, despite having provisions for the wilderness, comes to a place once again where she believes that they will die. However, God once again provides water in the wilderness for Hagar as he had done before. This chapter goes on to reveal the Ishmael becomes an archer in the wilderness, and is the father of a great nation according to the wishes of Abraham from chapter 17 and the promise of God.

Finally, we will skip to the all familiar chapter 22 and the offering of Isaac. Abraham is instructed by God to go to the land of Moriah and offer up Isaac as a whole burnt offering to God. Abraham does as he is commanded, but without telling Isaac. Isaac, seeing all the elements for a sacrifice except for an animal, asks his father about the lamb. Abraham assures Isaac that God will provide the sacrifice. When they arrive, Abraham prepares to slay Isaac on the altar with a knife, but is stopped by the hand of God. God provides a ram for the sacrifice prompting Abraham to name the place YHWH Yireh (LORD will Provide). Again, calls out and further reinforces His blessings because of Abraham’s actions and not withholding his son.

Obviously, the parallels to God’s own giving of His only beloved Son are staggering. Even the location itself may refer to a place very near where Jesus was crucified. 2 Chronicles 3:1 refers to Mount Moriah as being the location where Jerusalem was founded by David. Abraham’s covenant faithfulness to God is mirrored and completed in Yahweh’s giving of His Son as an actual sacrifice not for any one man’s sin, but for all sin to be remitted. Hebrews 11:17-19 further reveals the rationale of Abraham in giving Isaac stating that he believed God was powerful enough to raise Isaac from the dead. God had already provided a son from deadness of Sarah’s womb in her old age. Would it be too hard for God to raise a dead Isaac from the ground?

**Questions:**

1. In chapters 20 & 21, we see that it is God who controls the birth of children. Describe how the role of childbirth is central to the book of Genesis? Why was infertility considered a terrible curse from God in those cultures? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Gen 20:7 declares that Abraham is a prophet. In what ways is Abraham a prophet? What does it mean to be a prophet of God? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. What nation(s) in the Bible come from the lineage of Ishmael? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Compare the language of Gen 22:2 and John 3:16. What items in particular are mirrored in both passages? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. What do the words of Abraham in 22:8 pre-figure? Explain your answer in detail. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. What does this event in the life of Abraham showing his faithfulness show to us about the covenant faithfulness of God? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 12**

**Reading: Gen 24-25**

**Suggested Related Passages:**

Before we dive into passages for today’s lesson, let’s briefly take a look at the highlights from Gen 22:20-23:20. We end chapter 22 with more lineage of Nahor, Abraham’s brother. This is important because it introduces us to Rebekah whom we will discuss at length in this lesson. Additionally, in chapter 23 Sarah dies at the age of 127 around the area of Hebron. Abraham up to this point had not owned any land in the Promise Land, but will buy the cave of Machpelah from Ephron the Hittite. This cave becomes an important marker for the Jewish people as it becomes the burial site for many of the family including Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Leah. Rachel is buried near Bethlehem.

These events set up for marriage of Isaac. Obviously the story of Isaac’s betrothal and marriage is very different from our modern love stories. However, these events were typical of the Jewish society and certainly typical of all families in that day. Abraham, not wishing Isaac to take a wife from the Canaanites but also not wanting Isaac to leave the land, sends his most trusted and chief servant back to the land of Nahor (his brother) in Mesopotamia. He makes him swear a most serious vow to complete the task just as Abraham had prescribed and foretold that the Angel of the Lord would go before the servant to make his task easier.

Abraham’s servant takes many camels and items of wealth representing the power and wealth of his master. Upon arriving at the area, his servant comes to a well where it would have been common for young women to come and draw water for their houses and servants. The servant prayers a faithful prayer to give a sign that God has chosen the wife for Isaac. Events play out exactly as was foretold by Abraham and prayed for by the servant.

Rebekah is ultimately chosen providentially by God to be the wife of Isaac. She is the granddaughter of Nahor making her a cousin of Isaac. Also, she is the brother of Laban who becomes a prominent figure in the relations of the house of Abraham. All in the house including Rebekah agree to go along with the servant to marry Isaac. However, before leaving a blessing is given to Rebekah in 24:60 that almost exactly mirrors a mixture of the blessings to Sarah in 17:60 and to Abraham in 22:17. Furthermore, in verses 62-67 the writer in the original Hebrew writes a subtle play on words. Isaac is meditating near the place of Beer La Roi, a well named after the God Who Sees. In verse 62, Isaac lifts up his eyes and sees Rebekah coming to him. In verse 63, Rebekah lifts up her eyes and sees Isaac coming to him. This subtle inference in the original Hebrew is to remind us that it is God who is watching the events of this family and they are seeing His promises come to fruition.

Chapter 25 begins by informing us further about the life and death of Abraham. Abraham marries a concubine named Keturah who gives birth to a number of sons. From this group of sons comes the nation of Midian from their forefather by the same name. Abraham lives to the age of 175 and is buried by Isaac and Ishmael in the cave of Machpelah. Furthermore, the Scriptures tell us a little further information on Ishmael’s life. Ishmael gives birth to 12 princes or powerful men with large camps. Ishmael lives to the age of 137 and dies.

Beginning in verse 19, the Scriptures continue down the path of the chosen family of God. Yet once again, we find that a woman who is to continue the people of God is barren. Isaac pleads with God for his wife who becomes pregnant by God opening her womb. Yet, her pregnancy is hard and God reveals in prophetic form that two nations are coming from the twin boys in her womb. Esau meaning “hairy” is born first following by Jacob who is born grabbing the heel of Esau. Jacob’s name means “supplanter” and carries the idea of “one who grabs by the heel” or “trickster”. Esau grows to be a mighty man of the field which causes his father to favor him. Jacob dwelt in the tents and was loved by his mother.

At the end of the chapter is the well-known story of Esau selling his birthright for stew that was being prepared by his brother Jacob. Esau claiming to be starving agrees to sell the right to considerable family blessings in exchange for red stew from Jacob, thus giving him the name Edom (red). It is from this event that Esau’s people get the name Edomites. Jacob causes him to swear that he will complete this transaction and Esau agrees. However, as we will see later, Esau clearly does not hold to the oath that he makes here.

**Questions:**

1. There are two prominent oaths that appear in chapter 24 and 25. One that is kept from Abraham’s servant and one that is not from Esau. How important are oaths to God? How important are oaths in the book of Genesis? Name the most important oaths and covenants we have covered thus far? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. These two chapters also center around things that happen at wells, places where people draw water. Name other prominent events that occur at or around wells in the Scriptures. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Read Hebrews 12:16. What makes Esau a profane person? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. What Old Testament book is specifically dedicated to the prophecy discussed in 25:23? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 13**

**Reading: Gen 26 & 27**

**Suggested Related Passages: Hebrews 11:20; 12:12-17**

Chapter 26 should be a very familiar story to all of us as we read through the book of Genesis. We are given a little more information into the presence of a nation that will figure prominently in the Old Testament, the Philistines. Additionally, we are now told that Abimelech is king of the Philistines in Gerar where Isaac chooses to settle. The Philistines are traditionally held to be a Greek, sea-faring people that had come to the land of Canaan. Abimelech is more of a title instead of one specific man; hence, the person in this chapter may be the same as the one in Chapter 20 or could be a descendant who also took on the title of Abimelech.

God begins by reaffirming his promises to Isaac, but warning Isaac to not return to Egypt. Thus, Isaac chooses to remain in Gerar. Isaac, just like his father, deems that the people of Gerar will look upon Rebekah and see that she is beautiful, perhaps taking her by force from him. However, Abimelech, whether the same man or not, has learned a valuable lesson from chapter 20 and sees through the deception of Isaac. He charges his people to not touch Isaac or Rebekah knowing that they are blessed people of God.

Then, once again, God chooses to greatly bless the house of Isaac and increases his possessions a hundred times. In fact, the people of the Philistines come to Isaac and urge him to leave because his house is greater than their nation-state. As part of this incident, we are again introduced to the concept of wells and the importance of life-giving water. The Philistines had stopped up the wells of Abraham, and push Isaac away from a series of wells that he digs because the Philistines fear they will lose their water sources to the mighty flocks of Isaac.

Hence, we see the dichotomy between Isaac being blessed in the land of Promise but never truly belonging in the land of Promise. This tension exists to remind the Jewish readers of this book that their forefathers tasted the goodness of the promises of God, but still had yet to lay hold of their complete fulfillment. This is a very common element of the Bible throughout both the New and Old Testaments. How does this incident end? It ends with an oath between the Philistines and Isaac and the establishment of the city of Beershebah around the well dug by Isaac named Shebah, the Well of the Oath or Well of the Seven.

Just before we begin chapter 27, we are introduced to a prelude to the personality of Esau. Isaac is growing older and it has become time to bless his sons. We know that Isaac prefers Esau, but Esau as we are reminded from previous studies is a profane person who had married a native of the land, something Abraham and Isaac both would have detested. However, we also know that Jacob is also a trickster and openly struggles with God and man in ways that are unseemly for a child of God. Yet, as we played out in chapter 27 and fulfilling prophecy from chapter 25, we are reminded that God chooses who He wills to fulfill His purposes often without regard to the morality or uprightness of the men themselves. We should be reminded that God did not choose Jacob because he was holier than Esau.

We are most likely all familiar with the story of Jacob “stealing” the birthright of Esau. However, we should remember that Esau had already promised the birthright to Jacob. Yet, Rebekah connives to make Esau fulfill his vow by tricking Isaac, whose eyesight was failing, into receiving the blessing of Abraham and Isaac. This great blessing is passed in verses 27-29. However, Esau seeing that the blessing and birthright are both gone notes that his brother is deceitful just as his name suggests. He pleads with his father to grant him a blessing even if the birthright is gone. Isaac does in some way provide a prophetic blessing for Esau in verses 39-40 which indicates that Esau himself will live a good life and even tells of future events of the lineage of Esau.

However, this is not enough to satisfy Esau who then plots to kill Jacob upon the death of Isaac. Once again, Rebekah connives to save her son and provide for him. She goes to Isaac and says that Jacob needs a wife, but greatly fears that he will marry a daughter of Heth as Esau had. It is true that both Isaac and Rebekah were very displeased with Esau’s choice of companion; yet, Rebekah uses this as an opportunity to send Jacob away from the reach of Esau to be cared for by his uncle, Laban.

**Questions**

1. We know relatively little about Rebekah from the Scriptures. However, given what we see her saying and doing in this chapter, what do you feel like Jacob’s family life was like? Does some of Jacob’s behavior seem to come from his mother and what makes you say that? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. How do you suppose Jacob’s upbringing affects his ability to be a good father and good husband? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the difference between the “birthright” and the “blessing” given by the Patriarchs to their sons? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Read Hebrews 12:14-17. Esau is displayed as the kind of person who treated his birthright and blessing as something unimportant. What is the writer of Hebrews trying to compare this to in these passages writing to first century Hebrew Christians? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Hebrews 11:20 references Isaac’s blessing of Jacob. In what way do you suppose Isaac blessed Jacob by faith? What is the writer of Hebrews trying to express in this passage? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 14**

**Reading: Gen 28:1 – 31:42**

**Suggested Related Passages: John 1:49-51; Leviticus 15:25-27**

Chapter 28 begins with a further elaboration on the events of chapter 27 and further compares the actions and destinies of Esau and Jacob. You’ll remember that Rebekah, under the guise of preventing Jacob from marrying a Canaanite, wishes for Isaac to send Jacob away to be protected from Esau by Laban in the land of Padan Aram. However, before he goes, Isaac further blesses Jacob and commands him to strictly marry one of his cousins. The blessing implies what we learned at the end of chapter 27, that Isaac realizes he has been tricked by Jacob (and really Rebekah). Instead of cursing him, Isaac stands by his earlier blessing and further gives blessing that recalls back to the original promises given to Abraham.

What stands in stark contrast to this are the actions of Esau. Esau, who we have already seen is a “profane” person, chooses to indirectly punish his parents for passing the blessing on to Jacob. Esau has already married one wife of the daughters of Heth (Hittites), but now purposefully marries the daughter of Ishmael. We never know what the relationship is like between Isaac and Ishmael, but we can tell that there is still animosity between the two families as is revealed in this passage. This is quite the commentary on Esau, and we will not see him again for a number of chapters.

The last half of chapter 28 is the famous passage about Jacob’s ladder into heaven. Jacob stops at Luz and falls asleep on a stone. As he dreamed, God comes to Jacob in a vision showing angels of God coming and going from God’s Presence. He reiterates directly to Jacob the promises of Abraham and Isaac and reaffirms that He will be with Jacob. This passage again relates directly back to the Tower of Babel whose head was to be in the heavens. Yet God again is showing that He is the only one who can direct man to the true “House of God”. That house will be built by God and from people of His own choosing in a land of His own choosing. Man will not and cannot come to God through any other “gate” as they proposed to do at Babel. Appropriately, Jacob awakens and call renames the land Beth - el, or the House of El (God). Although Jacob must keep going to the land of Laban, he makes a very important vow to return to the House of God setting up an altar there.

Chapter 29 begins with a very similar refrain with Jacob arriving the land of his ancestors and stopping at a well. Who is the first woman that Jacob sees coming to the well? It is none other than his first cousin Rachel whom he promptly goes over and kisses and weeps, presumably over his good fortune. Rachel, no doubt shocked, runs home to tell Laban who is overjoyed telling Jacob something similar as what Adam declared when he saw Eve for the first time in Genesis 2.

At this point, everything appears to be perfect in the life of Jacob for seven years. Laban and Jacob agree to a contract whereby Jacob works seven years for the hand of Rachel in marriage. At the end of these seven years, a marriage feast is thrown for Jacob and Rachel except Laban slips in Leah instead of Rachel to the marriage chamber. Jacob, seeing that he is now on the end of another man’s deception, confronts Laban who promises Rachel to Jacob as well after a week’s honeymoon with Leah. Yet, Jacob stays with Laban another seven years to serve in his house as a herdsman.

Again, another familiar refrain enters the story. It is God who controls the births and lives of men. Gen 29:31 states very directly that God chooses to make Rachel barren and Leah fruitful simply because Leah is unloved. Jacob even acknowledges this to his frustrated wife Rachel in 30:2. It is through this competition between Leah and her servant Zilpah and Rachel and her servant Bilhah that we end up with the 12 forefathers of the tribes of Israel. Leah’s children are as follows: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, and later Issachar, Zebulun, and Dinah. Billhah’s children that are credited to the line of Rachel are Dan and Naphtali. Zilpah’s children that are credited to the line of Leah are Gad and Asher. Finally, God declares that is time for Rachel to bear children and she bears Joseph (later she will bear Benjamin as well). Each of these children’s names has a specific meaning that usually relates to the specific conflict in the house of Jacob.

The remainder of today’s lesson revolves around a dispute in the family business. Jacob and Laban, both trickster and deceivers, engage in ways of defrauding each other. Essentially, Jacob knows that God continues to bless all that is given to him, but continues to do what he can to take what is best away from the herds of Laban and into his own herds (see 30:34-43). On the other hand, Laban continues to change the compensation of Jacob in an attempt to keep the best for his own family and his own sons. Finally, God commands Jacob to honor his vow and return to the land of Bethel. Jacob obediently obeys and confides in his wives what is happening, but they choose to move the entire camp without telling Laban anything.

Laban was three day’s journey away and pursued Jacob in anger. However, God had forewarned Laban to not harm or even speak evil concerning Jacob. Additionally, Laban’s household gods were missing which Rachel had stolen. Eventually, Laban and his men overtake the company of Jacob confronting him about leaving suddenly and taking the household gods. Rachel successfully conceals the household gods of Laban, and Jacob proceeds to rail against the abuses of Laban. Yet, Jacob acknowledges that without God’s good hand upon his life, Laban would have badly mistreated and sent Jacob away without anything, perhaps even taking his wives away from him.

**Questions:**

1. Who or what is the true Jacob’s ladder in the New Testament? What passage tells you this? What do you suppose this means in light of how this same terminology is used in Gen 28? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Write down the names and meanings of each of the sons of Jacob. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. God controls the timing and births of all men everywhere, but certainly in this case. In order to teach this lesson to the descendants, God commands something very specific of the Israelites regarding firstborns. What is it and to whom or what does it apply? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. There is a very odd passage in 30:34-42. Do some research or Internet searches to see if you can uncover what Jacob was attempting to do in these passages. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Rachel steals the household gods. What does this tell us about the theology of the household of Jacob? Also, Rachel sits on them claiming to be at her monthly time of impurity. What does this tell us about the gods in that bag? Leviticus 15:25-27 would specifically address this situation assuming that Rachel would not have been stoned for having false gods. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 15**

**Reading: Gen 31:43 - 35:29**

**Suggested Related Passages:**

*Today’s lesson in particular covers a lot of ground and several important events in the lives of Jacob and his sons. As always, it is very important to read the Scriptures to get a more full understanding of the events.*

In our previous lesson, we ended with Laban chasing hard after Jacob. Upon catching Jacob and his entire company, there was a dispute between Laban and Jacob over many things. This dispute is resolved in a very interesting and revealing fashion at the end of chapter 31. Ironically, 31:49 is often used in greeting cards for friends, but nothing could be further from the circumstances that surround this chapter. Laban and Jacob enter into a covenant relationship that is very similar to many other Old Testament covenants, particularly the covenant making events that occur around Sinai. There are conditions, responsibilities, an altar, sacrifices, and a sacrificial meal that takes place all at a mountain, exactly like the giving of the Law at Sinai. Additionally, this vow and covenant is very serious as they call upon the God of Abraham and the “Fear of Isaac” to enforce the provisions of the covenant.

Chapter 32 begins in a very interesting way mentioning that as Jacob is making his way back to the Promised Land, he encounters a camp of angels of God who speak with Jacob. Jacob names the place, Mahanaim, which essentially means “two camps” possibly referring to his own camp and the camp of the angels. What exactly they spoke about is unclear; however, it becomes obvious that Jacob’s greatest concern is seeing the face of Esau. When we last saw Esau, he was threatening murder against Jacob. Messengers from the camp of Jacob find out that Esau is headed their direction with 400 men from the place that Esau undoubtedly rules, Mount Seir and Edom.

Jacob, the greater trickster, now uses his wits to come up with a plan to resolve the anger that Esau may still bear against him. First, Jacob arranges for large successive herds and servants to pass before him and his family as gifts to Esau. Second, Jacob divides his family into two distinct camps with the intent that if one is attacked, the other may escape. Third, Jacob prays to Yahweh to protect him. This is very important in the progression of this passage as it reveals that Jacob is learning more and more to trust in the God of Bethel. It’s also important to remember that Jacob is on his way to fulfill his vow made to Yahweh at Bethel. Therefore, Jacob remembers both from this vow and from the blessing that Yahweh also has an obligation to protect Jacob and his family as he calls to God’s remembrance in verse 12.

However, Jacob stays behind the camps in the place before crossing the brook of Jabbok. In the night, a “man”, who is undoubtedly the Angel of the Lord, comes to wrestle with Jacob and the conflict lasts all night. A great many details are left out of this story, but the results are very important. At daybreak, the Angel knows that He will not prevail and injures Jacob’s hip. Yet, Jacob will not let him leave unless a blessing is given. The Angel gives Jacob the new name Israel because of his struggles with both man and God. Traditionally, this name means struggles with God. However, there are other shades of meaning such as “prevailing with God”, “ruler of God”, or “God rules” (from the very close verb *sarar*). While all of these have a slightly different shad of meaning, all appropriate to the line of Jacob and ultimately the story of salvation. In any case, Jacob understands at last that he has wrestled with God and names the place Penuel, meaning that Jacob had seen the face of God and lived.

Chapter 33 is relatively straightforward in its recording of the events. Esau’s reaction is one of a long-lost, loving brother who is greatly pleased to see his brother Jacob. He even rejects the presents of Jacob, but instead greatly desires for Jacob to come back with him to Seir. However, Jacob journeys initially to the land of Succoth, meaning a “booth” or “tabernacle”. Jacob then moves to Shechem and buys land amongst the Canaanites there. Additionally, he erects an altar to Yahweh that Jacob names El Elohe Israel meaning God, the God of Israel.

However, it is not long before one of the uglier incidents in the entire book of Genesis occurs. Hamor, the ruler of the city state that would later be known as Shechem, has a son named Shechem who rapes Dinah, the daughter of Leah. Shechem greatly desires her and wishes for their relationship to be made legitimate through marriage. Hamor and Shechem both plead with Jacob and Dinah’s brothers to allow this request in exchange for any dowry they might suggest. Additionally, they reasoned that Jacob’s great family should intermarry with their daughters thereby enriching the city of Shechem. Dinah’s brothers (most likely in particular Simeon and Levi) suggest that they will only agree to this if all the males of the city are circumcised. Obviously this would be a hard sell to all the city, but Hamor and Shechem reason with the men that their entire city would be enriched by marrying into such a prosperous family. Perhaps their possessions would even come to belong to these Canaanites in the near future. The men consent, but on the third day of their healing, Simeon and Levi come through the entire city and kill all the males.

Sometime after these events, God reminds Jacob that he is to fulfill his previous vow at Bethel. Again, we see a very similar scenario to the Israelites approaching Sinai. Jacob cleanses his house of all impurity including false gods that may have been among them as they journey to approach the God of Bethel. Again, God comes down to visit Jacob confirming his name change to Israel and repeating previous great promises. After God confirms his promises, Jacob pours out drink and oil offerings on a stone altar to God in worship of El Elohe Israel.

Finally, today’s lesson ends with births and deaths. Deborah, Rebekah’s maiden, dies at Bethel and they bury her under a tree. Additionally, just outside of Bethel, Rachel goes into labor with Benjamin, but dies in the process of giving birth. Interestingly, Rachel names the child Ben-Oni which means “son of sorrow”, but Israel changes his name to Benjamin meaning “son of my right-hand”. As an aside, the Bible just mentions casually in 35:22 that Rueben, the firstborn, lay with Billah which was the maidservant of Rachel turned into Israel’s concubine. Although not much is said about this instance here, this is a sign of great disrespect to Israel and becomes a reason that Israel will both curse and bless Rueben later on. Finally, Isaac dies at the age of 180 and is buried by Esau and Israel.

**Questions:**

1. Today’s lesson begins with a covenant being made between Jacob and Laban and a covenant being remembered between Jacob & God. In both cases, altars are an integral part of of the vow. Why do you think this is? What other covenants are sealed with an offering at an altar to God? How is this same typology used in the New Testament offering for us as Christians? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What lessons can we learn from Jacob about dealing with man and God? How should we understand the idea that Jacob “wrestled with God” and still received a blessing? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you some brief research about the name of Israel. What various shades of meaning do you think God intended in giving this name to Jacob? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Read Romans 2:28-29, 9:6-8 and Hebrews 8:10-12. Since the New Testament clearly declares Christians to carry the name of the True Israel and we carry that name, how does knowing what this name affect your understanding of your relationship to the “God of Israel”? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 16**

**Reading: Gen 36 & 37**

**Suggested Related Passages:**

Most all of the events of today’s lesson will take place in chapter 37. Chapter 36 is almost entirely genealogies of Esau and his descendants. The writer of Genesis is trying to close out the story of Esau before moving down the main line of the story of the descendants of Israel, specifically through the events of the life of Joseph. Although we do not value these passages very much, the original readers and Israelites would have placed great importance on these lists. The names and their meanings often tell the stories of their lives and characters without going into great detail about who these men were or what they did. Furthermore, we see the fulfillment of God’s promises to Abraham that nations and kings will come from his line.

As we know, Esau married into the Canaanite nations and the Hittite nation. Five sons are born to Esau in the land of Canaan, but then he takes his family and moves to the land of Mount Seir which was in the south of the Promised Land. Esau also bears the name Edom and his descendants take on this name. They defeat the Horites who had been dwelling in this land and were giants according to Duet 2:21-22 by the hand of God. Finally, we should note that an Amalek is mentioned here, but it is not the forefather of the nation of Amalekites. That nation already existed in Genesis 14 at the time of Abraham.

Chapter 37 begins by stating that we are going to further the story of Jacob’s line as it comes through the life of Joseph. Joseph was the youngest of the children (except for Benjamin) and born of Rachel, Jacob’s true love. Joseph was loved the most by his father most likely for many reasons. First, he was born of Rachel. Second, all of Jacob’s other sons have shown a tendency toward evil deeds. Rueben slept Billah as was mentioned in our previous lesson. Simeon and Levi murdered a whole town in revenge. Judah committed acts of adultery and harlotry with Canannite women as we will see in Genesis 38. (You should note that these events most likely occur before the events of chapter 37). Here in Genesis 37, we see that Joseph brings back a report of evil deeds being done by the sons of Jacob’s concubines which are Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. Finally, it becomes very apparent that Joseph was blessed with a far superior character and abilities that his brothers.

Because of this great love and most likely because of his abilities, Joseph is given a “coat of many colors” by his father. Whether or not that coat was actually multi-colored is the subject of some debate. However, the coat was definitely a more royal garment that indicated Joseph was given a place of management over his brothers. At this show of preference, Joseph’s brothers begin to hate Joseph even more fervently than they had in the past.

Additionally, at this time Joseph has two prophetic dreams showing the future through metaphors. First, Joseph dreams of sheaves (possibly of wheat) bound up in a field. Each sheaf represented a brother, and all of the brother’s sheaves bowed to Joseph’s sheaf. Joseph has another dream about the stars of the heavens and the sun and moon bow this time Joseph directly. After telling these dreams, Joseph’s brothers hate him more and he is rebuked by his father; however, Jacob remembered this dream as he knew it could be prophetic if Joseph was speaking the truth.

At some future time, Jacob dispatches Joseph to go and give a report on the dealings of his brothers as they are tending the sheep away from their home. Eventually Joseph finds his brothers, but as they see him coming from a distance a far off, they plot to kill him out of envy. Rueben hears of this plan and convinces his brothers to instead through Joseph into deep pit with the intention of pulling him out of the pit later. As Joseph draws near, they strip him of the coat and drop him into this deep pit with no water. The brothers than casually sit nearby to eat a meal.

As the brothers are eating a meal, Ishmaelite traders on their way to Egypt pass by. Judah reasons with his brothers that they will gain nothing from killing Joseph. Instead, they should sell Joseph to these traders and gain a little profit. They do trade him for 20 pieces of silver, but all this happens without the knowledge of Rueben. Rueben is greatly distraught and feels responsible for the well-being of Joseph. The rest of the brothers conspire to bring the coat of Joseph shredded and covered in blood to Jacob so that he might believe that Joseph was killed by a wild animal. Jacob is so distraught that he refuses to be comforted and declares that he will go down to his grave mourning for his lost son.

**Questions:**

1. What reason(s) do you suppose caused Jacob loved Joseph more than his other brothers? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What was the significance of the coat of many colors? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. What was Jacob’s response to hearing of Joseph’s second dream? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. When the brothers saw Joseph coming, what was the initial plan? Who changed their mind and why? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. How did the brothers deceive Jacob about what had happened to Joseph? What was Joseph’s reaction to this news? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. What is the sin of envy? How does envy play a role in the story of Joseph? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 17**

**Reading: Gen 39**

*We are briefly skipping over the events of chapter 38 to continue following the line of events concerning Joseph’s trials. Chapter 38 most likely happens chronologically before the events of this chapter but long after the events of chapter 37.*

Chapter 39 begins with Joseph’s arrival in Egypt. Once there, he is sold into the hand of a powerful man in the service of the Pharaoh named Potiphar. Potiphar is listed in the Bible as being the captain of the guard. Little is known for certain which Pharaoh or which officer this was in history; however, it is clear that God is placing Joseph in an opportunity that will allow Him to fulfill his purpose for Joseph. Joseph is noticed by Potiphar as being a successful man, one whose work was blessed by the Lord. Potiphar reasons that Joseph is both successful and trustworthy and places the entirety of his house under the control of Joseph. In fact, Potiphar so implicitly trusted Joseph that he did not even know where his meals came from except that they came from the care of Joseph. Perhaps this is a bit of foreshadowing of the fact that some years later, Joseph will be entrusted with feeding all of Egypt.

However, the Lord has greater plans for Joseph than to simply be successful in the house of Potiphar. Before rising to the position of prominence and providence God intends, Joseph must endure more trials at the height of his success with Potiphar. Potiphar’s wife, seeing an attractive man who is great in his work, lusts after Joseph and makes her intentions known to the young Joseph.

In the entire Bible, this temptation and response is widely regarded as a great example worthy to be studied in how the child of God conducts themselves in such a difficult and trying time. After all, Joseph is far from home and in the prime of his life. Here is an attractive woman who clearly wants to commit sexual sins with Joseph. Additionally, Joseph could reason that his God had betrayed him, sending him far away to Egypt. His father believes he is dead. He has been betrayed by his brothers. Why would he not finally indulge himself?

How can we address such a direct attack by Satan? What can we say to combat such extreme situations? We see in the first exchange in verses 8 & 9 Joseph’s response to such a difficult temptation. Joseph lists two reasons why he cannot engage in an act of fornication and adultery. First, Joseph reasons that Potiphar, his employer, has trusted him implicitly with everything and that would include keeping himself from his wife. Although he is a top slave, he is still a Hebrew slave in the land of Egyptians. Yet, Joseph clearly cares for his master. Second, Joseph reasons with this pagan woman that he should not sin against the One True God of heaven. Clearly Joseph’s mind was decided before this temptation presented itself as to how he would conduct himself while a slave in Potiphar’s house.

Even though Joseph is emphatic in his denial of the temptation, Potiphar’s wife continues to make the offer daily in her house. Although the offer stands and there is plenty of opportunity to take advantage, Joseph continues to deny until she catches him by the garment. Joseph literally flees sexual immorality, leaving his coat in her hand. This gives Potiphar’s wife an excellent alibi to accuse Joseph of attempted rape. Potiphar is greatly angered and casts Joseph into the king’s prison, no doubt a terrible place of suffering. It is likely that Joseph was original destined to die with no hope in this prison.

Yet, once again we are reminded that the Lord has greater plans for Joseph. He will not allow him to rot in prison. Once again, the Lord grants some opportunity to show the prison guard that Joseph is a great man who can be trusted and is successful. This prisoner becomes in charge of the entire prison while being a prisoner himself, something that almost defies understanding or explanation. Yet again, another important man trusts all of his affairs implicitly to Joseph’s care. The Lord made everything under the hand of Joseph to prosper.

**Questions:**

1. What are the two reasons that Potiphar noticed Joseph? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Joseph was faithful and reliant upon God. God granted him success at the work of his hands. Does God make any such guarantee for us today? If someone is not successful at work or school, can we surmise that they are not a faithful Christian? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. If Joseph had indulged his sexual appetite here, how might have the events of his life been different? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. What can you learn personally from Joseph’s response that will help you to deal with very difficult sexual temptations? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. What is Paul’s advice on dealing with sexual sin in 1 Cor 6:18? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. Essentially, what does Potiphar’s wife accuse Joseph of? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
7. What does Joseph teach us about dealing with unjustified, difficult situations in our life that are not fault of our own? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 18**

**Reading: Gen 38**

*We will now briefly leave Joseph in prison to return to a story about Judah. As mentioned previously, this story most likely occurs earlier from a historical perspective.*

Today’s story focuses on Judah. You will recall that Judah is to be the tribe of the kings of David and ultimately the Great King of Israel, Jesus. You will also recall that most all of Jacob’s sons committed great acts of wickedness with the exception of Joseph. Judah is no exception; however, God still chooses Judah to be the line of descent through which the ultimate blessings promised to the Patriarchs will flow. Keep that in mind as we study the character of Judah himself.

Judah, many years after Joseph had been sold into slavery and was in Egypt, married a Canaanite woman named Shua. Together they had three sons named Er, Onan, and Shelah. As Er grew, he became of marrying age and Judah sought for him a wife. Er was given Tamar as a wife; however, Er was exceedingly wicked and God killed him. Ancient customs that predated the Law gave provision for the nearest of kin to marry the widow and give a lineage to the man who was dead. The firstborn son would be considered a child of dead man while all subsequent children would be presumed to be of the nearest kin. Thus, wanting to fulfill these requirements and not allow Er’s lineage to fail, Judah directs Onan to have sexual relations with Tamar. Onan does so but emits on the ground to not allow a descendant of Er to be born. God is also displeased with Onan’s abuse of this provision and kills him.

Tamar is now a widow with no husband or nearest of kin. The next in line is Shelah, but Judah tells Tamar that Shelah is too young to be given to her as a husband. She is to wait as a widow under the protection and care of Judah until such a time that Judah would give Shelah to her in marriage. However, Judah was frightened that Shelah would commit a similar evil act and God would kill him as well. Thus, Judah neglected Tamar and did not give her a husband, and she had no children to take care of her in her older age.

After these events, Shua dies and Judah seeks to be comforted while going to Timnah to shear his sheep. Tamar goes before Judah and attires herself as a harlot with a covered face. Judah sees her and asks to have sexual relations with her in exchange for payment of a young goat. As Judah evidently did not have the payment with him, Tamar got his signet, cord, and staff as pledge. These would be items that are unique to Judah who no doubt was wealthy coming from the house of Jacob. Additionally, Judah would be incentivized to return with payment in order to get these very important items back.

Once the act was completed, Tamar returned home and put on her garments of widowhood. Judah attempted to return with payment as promised, but could not find the “harlot” he was looking for in the town of Timnah. In three months’ time, it was becoming obvious that Tamar was pregnant. Judah instructs his servants to bring her out to be burned. However, she produces the items that Judah had given the “harlot” indicating to Judah was the father of the child. Judah acknowledges that Tamar’s actions are “more righteous” than his own as he had held back Shelah out of fear.

Tamar later gives birth and it is found that she is to have twins. One child, Zerah, has his hand come out first, but then pulls it back in. However, before Zerah can pull his hand back in, a midwife attaches a scarlet thread to his hand. Then, Perez is born first. Perez means one who breaks through after the comments of Tamar in verse 29. Zerah is then born next with the scarlet hand tied around his hand that the midwife had attached to identify the firstborn. Interestingly enough, it is through these evil deeds and strange occurrences that lineage of Jesus comes. Jesus is a descendant of Judah through his union with Tamar through Perez.

**Questions:**

1. What were the three items that Judah gave a pledge for his payment? Describe the purpose or meaning behind each one. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. How can we describe the character of Judah in this chapter? Can you identify with Judah at all in both struggling with doing the right and wrong things? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. All of these events occur before the giving of the Law. Yet, what things in this chapter make it apparent that the characters in this story understood what God desired for them to do? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. What do you make of Judah’s statement in verse 26 indicating that Tamar was more righteous than Judah? Were either righteous? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 19**

**Reading: Gen 40 & 41**

**Suggested Related Passages: Rom 8:18-28**

In chapter 40, we again pick up some familiar elements of the story of Joseph. Joseph is still in the prison of the Pharaoh. You will remember that the captain of the guard had placed Joseph essentially in charge of the prison. In a short time period, both the baker and cup bearer of Pharaoh had displeased him. Pharaoh put them both in prison which put them in Joseph’s care. While in imprisoned, both these men had dreams on the same night that greatly troubled them. As members of the royal court, they most likely would have known or had access to Egypt’s sorcerers and seers who would have interpreted dreams like these. Joseph, seeing that they were greatly troubled, inquired of their dreams stating that his God is the God who gives dreams their meanings.

The cup bearer proclaimed his dream of a vine with three branches. The branches bore grapes that were pressed into wine which he then gave to Pharaoh. This dream mirrors very closely what would have been one of the chief duties of the cup bearer in service of royalty. Joseph foretells the underlying prophecy in this dream by stating that in three days’ time, the cup bearer would be restored to his post. He charged the cup bearer to not forget him in prison as he was a Hebrew who had done no wrong.

The baker, seeing that the cup bearer’s dream had a positive interpretation, also explained his dream. In the baker’s dream three baskets of bread were on his head and in the top basket were delicacies that the baker would have normally prepared for Pharaoh. However, the birds come and eat the food from this basket. Joseph, no doubt with a heavy heart, foretells that in the same three day period the baker would be hung and the birds would pick the flesh from his corpse.

All of these events prove to come true in three days’ time. Pharaoh, in celebration of his birthday did exactly as Joseph had foretold in regards to both men. However, the cupbearer neglected to mention Joseph to Pharaoh. Joseph continued in the prison undoubtedly with his hopes of escaping gashed by no mention from Pharaoh’s house about his possible release. Yet, we know from the upcoming chapter that while Joseph’s short term hopes for release, he does not lose hope in his God.

After two years, Pharaoh then receives a troubling dream as well. He dreams of seven fat cows coming up from the Nile followed by seven sickly and lean cows as well. The sick cows ate the fat cows. Also, Pharaoh dreamed almost the exact dream but this time with heads of grain growing on their stalks. Pharaoh was extremely troubled by the dream. No one was found in the Pharaoh’s court who could interpret the dream; however, after two full years, the cup bearer remembers Joseph.

Joseph is immediately called up out of the prison and made to look presentable in the court of the Pharaoh. Pharaoh inquires of Joseph, but Joseph again rightly puts the ability to interpret dreams in the hands of God. After explaining the parable in detail to Joseph, Joseph declares that God has allowed Pharaoh to know what is about to happen. There will be seven years of very plentiful harvest in the land followed by seven years of very terrible famine throughout the lands. Additionally, Joseph goes on to make a policy recommendation to Pharaoh that a very wise man be set over the agriculture of the land of Egypt to store up for these lean years. This would be enforced through a 20% tax on all the produce of the land for the next seven years. Additionally, he recommends that certain cities be established as store cities for the collected food.

Pharaoh sees that the Spirit of God is in Joseph. All of the recommendations of Joseph, who up to this point had been a slave, seemed like excellent suggestions in the sight of the royal court. Pharaoh declares Joseph second in command over all of Egypt. Additionally, Joseph is given a wife who is the daughter of an Egyptian priest who bears him two sons, Manasseh (forgetting) and Ephraim (fruitful). Joseph’s plans were of great success, and he greatly enriches Egypt as all the surrounding countries come to buy grain from the great storehouses in Egypt.

These events take place over the course of roughly 12 to 13 years in the prime of Joseph’s life. Although we see Joseph wrongly accused and persecuted severely, we see that God’s Spirit does not depart from Joseph. Additionally, we see that Joseph never loses faith or hope in his God. Instead, Joseph in all of his successes and the bearing of his children gives praise to God for his care for him in these difficult years. Joseph is amongst the greatest of the faithful children of God we have recorded in the Bible. However, even at this point, Joseph does not realize how important his position will become on the unfolding narrative of bringing about the nation of Israel and ultimately a Messiah.

**Questions:**

1. We have seen a number of occurrences now where God has spoken through a dream (Jacob’s ladder, Joseph’s dreams, Pharaoh’s dreams, etc.). Why does God choose this method? Read Num 12:1-8. What does this passage say about God’s message when given through a dream, particularly as it is contrasted with another method in verse 8? What is the superiority of how God speaks with us today as seen in Hebrews 1:1-3? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. List at least three qualities of Joseph that make him a great servant of God. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Joseph is a story of God working in a man’s life to promote His Own Will. Have you ever seen God working in your life? Are you ever unsure of what God is doing with your life? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Romans 8:28 is often pulled out of context and used alone, yet it seems to have direct application to life of Joseph. What elements of the passage from Rom 8:18-28 apply directly to the life of Joseph? What can we learn from this? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 20**

**Reading: Gen 42:1-43:25**

Today’s lesson begins exactly where 41:57 left off, with all the countries of that part of the world coming to Egypt to buy grain. This effectively made Joseph one of the most powerful men in the world as he controlled a major portion of the food supply for the entire area. Additionally, we will see that God continues to control the events of man to bring about His plan of bringing about a chosen nation for Abraham. Sometimes this includes bringing good men to power like Joseph, or sometimes it means striking the earth with famine. However, both should remind us that God is working to bring about His will.

Jacob sends his nine sons (all except for Benjamin) down to Egypt to buy grain for their families. Scripture says explicitly that Jacob feared for Benjamin. Upon reaching Egypt, the brothers see Joseph face to face and bowed before him. Joseph recognized them immediately but the brothers did not recognize Joseph. Joseph immediately begins to interrogate his brothers as though they were spies from Canaan remembering that this was the beginning of the fulfillment of his dreams as a young boy. The brothers are imprisoned despite their protests for three days. As a test, Joseph imprisons Simeon in the dungeon until they bring back Benjamin but agrees to send them home with their grain. Rueben berates his brothers understanding that this punishment had come upon them for their treatment of Joseph in front of Joseph himself. However, they supposed Joseph to be an Egyptian and to not understand their native language. But Joseph did understand and had to even leave them because he began to weep.

On their way home to Jacob, one of the brothers opened up the sack of grain to feed his donkey when the money he had used to pay for it fell out of the sack. Joseph had directed all of their money to be returned to them and put in their sacks. Upon returning home, they informed Jacob of the events of Egypt and why Simeon had not returned with them. They also opened their sacks to find the money returned to them. The brothers asked for Benjamin to be brought to Egypt to rescue Simeon, but Jacob refused for fear of losing him. Finally, Rueben offers Jacob to kill his own two sons if they do not return with Benjamin. Still, Jacob relents from allowing this to happen.

However, the famine, being of God’s design, did not relent and eventually they ran out of grain for their families. Judah and Jacob begin to reason with each other. Jacob blames the brothers for telling Joseph of their family at all which he believes will bring about the death of Benjamin. Yet, Judah answers that they could not have possibly known how these events would have unfolded. Additionally, Judah makes a similar agreement to what Reuben had sworn. Judah says that he will be the bond for the life of Benjamin. Benjamin’s blood will be upon the head of Judah forever, and if they had not delayed for so long, Simeon and the grain would have already returned to Jacob. Jacob agrees to this plan reluctantly. However, he directs the brothers to not only bring enough money for their grain, but to double their money to pay back from the previous trip. Perhaps this had been an oversight. Also, he sends a gift of fruits and spices to Joseph.

Joseph sees the brothers all coming with Benjamin from afar. A dinner is prepared for them to eat with Joseph at his house. However, the brothers are extremely afraid because they believe that Joseph intends to enslave them all. They come to the servant of Joseph’s house and inform him of the error of the first trip regarding the money. The servant informs them to not be afraid as it was of God and the God of Jacob that this has happened. Additionally, the servant of the house brings out Simeon to the brothers, and they prepare to make their present to Joseph as he comes to eat in the house with them.

**Questions:**

1. Joseph both acts harshly and weeps for joy out of seeing his brothers. What should we make of the actions of Joseph in regards to his brothers? Are they good or evil? Defend your answer. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What does the Bible say when it comes to revenge and vengeance? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Rueben’s comments in 42:22 echo back to 37:21-22. Who requires blood from their hand? What exactly does that mean? Is this principle of requiring blood still in effect in the New Testament? What New Testament Scriptures tell us about this principle? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. It is interesting that Joseph’s brothers continue to describe themselves as honest men. Were they actually “honest men”? Why? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Again, we see that God is in control of all events in the world of man. Does God still control the events or our world today? Do you think God causes both good things and bad things to occur in our world today? Are there any Scriptures that speak to this? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 21**

**Reading: Gen 43:26-Gen 45:15**

Joseph enters his house in Egypt where his brothers have been anxiously waiting to provide him with a present to prove they are honest men and not spies. Again, they bow down before him. Joseph inquires about their father, if he is well. They say that he is and present to him their present bowing again. When Joseph sees Benjamin, he gives him a blessing and is so overcome with emotion for his blood brother that he immediately leaves and weeps in his inner chamber. The servants of the house place each brother at the table according to their age which astonished the brothers as they should have no knowledge of exactly what the birth order would be. Yet, Benjamin was given five times the portion of any other.

After they had eaten, Joseph commands that they be given as much grain as they can possibly carry. Also, their money was returned to them in the mouth of their sacks without their knowledge. Benjamin’s sack was also loaded with Joseph’s personal silver cup from which he drank. It apparently was believed in Egypt that Joseph received the power to foretell the future from drinking from this silver cup. After going a ways out, Joseph commanded his servants to follow hard after his brothers and accuse them of stealing these items. Additionally, the one whose bag contained the silver cup would return alone to Joseph’s slave, but the rest could return to their father.

Upon a search from the firstborn to the last, it is of course discovered that Benjamin’s bag has the cup. Though only Benjamin was coerced to going back to Egypt, all of the brothers return to Egypt. Judah speaks with Joseph stating that God has found out their iniquity and they should all be slaves in his house. However, Joseph refuses this offer commanding them all to return to their father. Judah then relates his vow to Jacob guaranteeing the safety of Benjamin, the story they had told to Jacob concerning Joseph, and offering himself as a slave instead.

At this proclamation of their guilt and evil as well as the clearly changed heart of Judah in exchanging his own life for Joseph’s full brother, he bursts out with emotion and declares that everyone should his court. Joseph finally makes known his true identity to his brothers who are now once again even more afraid to draw near to him. However, Joseph explains in detail the hand of God in their actions and the continuing famine. Additionally, Joseph makes plans for all the tribe of Israel to move to the choice land of Goshen where they will be taken care of by the hand of Joseph himself. Upon hearing all these proclamations of Joseph, the brothers are stunned and reunite tearfully with Joseph.

**Questions:**

1. What is divination? Was Joseph really engaging in divination or was something else going on? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Judah is becoming a more prominent figure in the midst of this story with Joseph going back to the author’s decision to put his story in chapter 38. How do we see the character of Joseph changing in this lesson? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. What is guilt and what does the Bible say about guilt’s impact on people? How do we see guilt affecting the actions of the brothers in these past couple of lessons? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Gen 45:5 among other Bible passages can be difficult to understand. Does God cause people to sin? Was it because of God or because of the evil of the brothers that Joseph was brought to Egypt? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Study the land of Goshen. What was this area of Egypt like and where was it? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 22**

**Reading: Gen 45:16 – 46:34**

Last lesson ended with the tearful reunion of Joseph and his brothers, but things are about to get even better for the family of Israel. Pharaoh hears of this news that Joseph has been reunited with his family and gives orders for carts to be given to help them move from Canaan to the best of the land of Egypt. Additionally, each brother was given clothing and Benjamin was given 300 pieces of silver and five changes of clothing. Donkeys and bread were given from the journey and they are encouraged to hurry back to Egypt.

Jacob sees them returning with this great number of goods and provisions. They declare to him the emotional news that not only is Joseph alive, but he is the ruler of Egypt. The news is so good that Jacob cannot even bring himself to believe in it. However, after the irrefutable proof of the provisions and wealth they carry out, Jacob consoles himself and agrees to go down to Egypt and see Joseph before he dies.

On the way, Jacob stops in Beersheba to offer a sacrifice to God, possibly for these great blessings that God has bestowed so late in Jacob’s life. However, Jacob is also leaving the Promised Land, and there is also the possibility that Jacob wants to consult with God about whether these events are truly from Him. Yahweh appears and reassures Jacob that he should go down to Egypt. There God will make a great nation of the descendants of Israel. Furthermore, God will call these descendants up out of the land of Egypt. Finally, Yahweh assures Israel that Joseph will be there next to his deathbed and will close his eyes.

With this final blessing from God, Jacob takes his entire company and loads up on the wagons and drives his great herds and flocks south toward Egypt. The sons and daughters that were born to Jacob through the line of Leah were 33 people all together. The sons of Zilpah, the servant of Leah, were 16 people all together. The sons of Rachel’s lineage that came to Egypt including the sons born to Joseph who were already in Egypt were 14 people. The sons of Bilhah, the servant of Rachel, were 7 people. All told, there were 70 people that came down to Egypt that were of the chosen line of Abraham. Although the number of peoples and nations that could claim Abraham as their father was much larger, it is this relatively smaller group of 70 that God is bringing down to Egypt to cultivate into a people for Himself.

Jacob sends out Judah ahead of their party to meet with Joseph and guide the way to the land of Goshen. Joseph rushes out to meet his entire family on his chariot and another great reunion is recorded in Scripture. Joseph instructs his brothers to tell Pharaoh that they are all keepers of livestock and to answer Pharaoh exactly in that manner. Furthermore, Joseph reveals to his father and brothers that shepherds are repulsive to the Egyptians, but in the land of Goshen, they will be separated off from the rest of the Egyptian population.

**Questions:**

1. What does Pharaoh propose to do for Joseph’s family? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What is the response of Jacob to the news of Joseph? What convinced Jacob that this was true? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Where was Jacob living at this time? Where did Jacob go to before coming to Egypt? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. What is the meaning in verse 4 where God promises Jacob that Joseph will “put his hands on your eyes”? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Joseph makes plans to introduce his family to Pharaoh. What is Joseph’s plan? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 23**

**Reading: Gen 47**

Today’s lesson begins with the continuation of the instructions that Joseph gave to his brothers regarding their occupation. Joseph chooses five of his brothers to come before Pharaoh to answer questions about their occupation. Pharaoh declares that they should live in Goshen as Joseph had advised. Also, Pharaoh declared that choice men amongst his family should be in charge of the flocks and herds of Pharaoh himself in the land as well.

Jacob then comes before Pharaoh himself and Jacob blesses Pharaoh. This is a very telling sign of the greatness of the house of Jacob and the respect for which the Pharaoh had for the man who raised a son such as Joseph. Upon inquiry, Jacob declares that he is 130 years old and that his life has not been to the quality of his forefathers. This saying occurs in verse 9 and reveals the true inner thoughts of Jacob. Perhaps in this verse we see more of Jacob’s own thoughts on his name being Israel (go back a few lessons if you cannot remember what this means).

However, times continue to get harder in the land of Egypt and Canaan because of the famine. In fact, the Scriptures say that all of the money of the land of Egypt and Canaan now belonged to the hand of Pharaoh as people had bought bread from the storehouses. With the people out of money, they now turned to Joseph for a new answer. Joseph reasoned that they should give of their livestock and herds for which Joseph would give them bread in return.

However, following that year, the people had sold off all the livestock they had. Joseph agreed to take their lands and the people themselves as servants of Pharaoh in exchange for bread and seed to sow on the ground. Additionally, a tax was enacted that at harvest time, 20% of the harvest would belong to the Pharaoh. Only the priests of Egypt were excluded from this tax as they fed from the portion that Pharaoh gave to them in Egypt. The people were extremely grateful to Joseph for having saved their lives and worked out provisions for them to continue to live in the land.

Israel continues to live in the land of Goshen for another 17 years. At the old age of 147, he called Joseph near to him to make a solemn oath. He requests that his body would not be buried in the land of Egypt, but would instead be returned to the cave of Macpelah where the Patriarchs were buried. Joseph swears to the solemn vow of Jacob, and Jacob begins to make preparations for his death.

**Questions:**

1. Who did Joseph present to Pharaoh, and what did they report to Pharaoh? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What request did these men make to Pharaoh? What was Pharaoh’s request back to these men? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. What commentary does Jacob make about his own life in verse 9? What is Jacob saying about his years? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. What was the tax system that Joseph implemented in the land of Egypt? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Why were the priests of Egypt treated differently than the rest of the people? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. How did Joseph’s actions change the entire economy of ancient Egypt? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 24**

**Reading: Gen 48:1 – 49:28**

Today’s lesson begins as a continuation of Jacob making preparations to die. In our modern culture, we would like gather family lawyers and counselor to draw up documents about how our possessions are to be divided up. However, in that culture and specifically with the house of Israel, there was a great blessing to be bestowed in addition to physical blessings. Also, the words of Jacob (like the words of Isaac and Abraham before) are prophetic and carry the force of God’s Hand behind them. They are important to look at to understand the futures of this people.

Jacob, being very old and sick, is visited by Joseph with his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim. Jacob recounts the story of Yahweh’s appearance to him at Bethel promising to make him a great nation. Jacob then proclaims that Manasseh and Ephraim shall be considered of Israel directly giving Joseph a double portion amongst the inheritance. Any further offspring that Joseph has would be called by Joseph’s name. Thus, this paves the way for Manasseh and Ephraim to be considered tribes amongst the tribes of Israel as opposed to one tribe of Joseph with two clans in that tribe.

Joseph then presents his sons to Jacob to receive his blessing, and what follows is very similar to the incident between Isaac, Jacob, and Esau. Jacob thanks God that not only has He allowed Jacob to see the face of Joseph, but He has allowed Jacob to see the face of his grandchildren through Joseph. Joseph then presents his children with Manasseh, the firstborn, to go to Jacob’s right hand and Ephraim to go to Jacob’s left hand. However, Jacob undoubtedly being guided by God’s direction reverses this order and places the stronger right hand upon the head of Ephraim. Then he places a blessing upon them that will grant the name of Israel upon them.

However, Joseph is displeased that Jacob obviously reversed the blessing from his firstborn to his second born. Joseph attempts to stop the ceremony and even put Jacob’s hand upon Manasseh’s head believing Jacob to be possibly confused. Jacob proclaims that both of these children will grow into great tribes but the younger shall grow greater than older (see Num 1:33-35). This sets Ephraim before Manasseh in the birth order and order of blessing. Finally, Jacob declares to Joseph that God will bring his family out of Egypt and back to the land of promise. Additionally, Joseph was given an additional portion that is not explicitly explained here. However, it could be that John 4:5 explains that it is a plot of ground near Samaria that is given specifically to Joseph.

In Chapter 49, we see the blessing of all the sons of Israel. However, this blessing like the previous blessings is more a prophetic vision. In fact, Jacob says the he will proclaim what will happen to them in the last days. But what are these last days? In this case, these are the latter days of the Jewish people as a nation. That bears itself it out in the prophecies unveiled. We will not be able to examine all the prophecies in detail, but some have greater meaning than others to the unfolding of God’s people.

* Rueben’s blessing is mixed as he is the firstborn; however, he dishonored his father by sleeping with his concubine, Billah. This occurs back in Gen 35:22.
* Simeon and Levi’s blessing is actually more of a cursing. Jacob proclaims that they will be scattered amongst their brothers for their acts of cruelty, particularly to the town of Shechem. This becomes true as Simeon’s lands are ultimately absorbed in the land of Judah and the Levites are spread throughout the land. Additionally, Simeon begins the wilderness wanderings being the third largest tribe but ends up the smallest tribe at the end of Numbers
* Zebulun is blessed and the location of his future lands is foretold as being toward the north and between the Sea of the Mediterranean and the Sea of Galilee.
* Issachar’s blessing is a bit more cryptic. However, Issachar does grow to be a very large tribe that settles to the north on the Jordan and Galilean Sea. It is likely what Jacob describes is a general laziness of that tribe that causes them to be enslaved often as they are near the northern border.
* Dan’s blessing is another puzzle. Dan does produce a prominent judge to which this might be referring, Samson. However, Dan is also described as a serpent by the way. Dan’s tribe produces one of the uglier stories in the Bible beginning in Judges 18 that introduces idol worship to the land of Israel. Also, Dan would be the center of idol worship under Jeroboam. At the end of Dan’s blessing, Jacob calls out for Yahweh’s salvation using the Hebrew word “yeshuwah”, very close to the name of Jesus and calling for Jesus.
* Gad, whose name means a “troop”, is cursed stating that raiders will trample him; however, Gad will triumph over them in the end. Gad was often the subject of many such raids as they bordered the eastern side of Israel beyond the Jordan.
* Asher was apparently abundantly blessed, and this blessing most likely referred to their choice lands. Asher was given a larger allotment on the Mediterranean Sea to the north that produced luxury items in addition to bread.
* Naphtali, is also given a short but excellent blessing. Their lands border the lands of Asher to the east and extend down to the area around the Sea of Galilee. It is primarily in this area and the area of Zebulun that Jesus does a great deal of his teaching.
* Benjamin’s tribe is well known for its fierceness in later times and produces people like Ehud, King Saul, and Saul of Tarsus. Their cruelty and ferocity is documented in Judges 19-20.

We have left out two blessings that we will address last, that of Judah and Joseph. These two are more extensive and key in the prophetic words of Jacob.

* Joseph’s blessing seems to be a direct reflection of Joseph’s personal life as much as a prophetic blessing of his tribes. Jacob relates the way his brothers have hated him, but that God’s hands have made Joseph strong and fruitful. Additionally, Jacob in this blessing uses five different names for Yahweh including: The Mighty God of Jacob, The Shepherd, The Stone of Israel, The God of your Father, and The Almighty. Furthermore, it seems that Jacob has finally understood how greatly he has been blessed despite the fact that for a good portion of his life, Jacob has lived life in dishonor. This blessing that has fallen on Jacob will fall upon the head of Joseph as a crown over his brothers.
* Judah’s character was not always a great as we have seen in previous chapters. Yet it appears that in later years, Judah had begun to understand the sinfulness of his ways previously and conducted himself honorably in dealing with Jacob and Joseph. From the opening line, it appears that Judah had become praiseworthy amongst his brothers. Additionally, Jacob uses the terms lion, scepter, and lawgiver to proclaim that the ultimate blessing of the Messiah (Hebrew word for “Anointed One”) would come from the tribe of Judah and that the obedience of the true Israel will be upon him. Yet, even before this ultimate fulfillment it would be some 640 years when David would rule and his line would not fail to rule. Finally, his lands would be the land of wine growing and grape growing which is the fulfillment of the final words of this prophecy.

**Questions:**

1. What “scandal” occurs with the blessing of Joseph’s sons? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Whose children did Manasseh and Ephraim become for legal purposes as a result of Jacob’s blessing? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. What was the potential additional blessing for Joseph from Jacob in John 4 referenced above? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Which brother’s blessing actually is more of a cursing when prophesying about their future? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. What are the key points of the blessing on Judah? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 25**

**Reading: Gen 49:29 – Gen 50:26**

The end of Genesis 49 picks up after the blessing of Jacob’s sons where he places a similar burden on all the sons of Israel that Jacob had previously only placed on Joseph in chapter 48. He gives a brief recount of how the cave Macpelah came to be the possession of their family in the land, and also notes that his ancestors are also all buried there. It is interesting that Rachel is not buried there, but Leah is buried there. This gives us some indication of the hurry to bury Rachel who died in childbirth not near this location.

Additionally, Genesis records for us that Joseph was greatly saddened over the death of his father. The advancements of the ancient Egyptians allowed them to embalm Jacob which would permit a lengthy trip to bury Jacob per his request. The text also records for us that even the Egyptians mourned the loss of Jacob for a fully 70 days. At the end of this time Joseph approaches Pharaoh with a request to bury his father in the land of Canaan which is granted in a fabulous fashion. Not only did the elders of the house of Israel go up into the land, but also the leaders of the land of Egypt in chariots so that there was a very great gathering to mourn the loss of Jacob. This funeral procession lasted in the land for seven full days. The inhabitants of the land saw the procession and even renamed a threshing floor nearby after the mourning of Egyptians.

Although the Jacob’s sons had been reunited for some time, the brothers began to worry that now their father was dead Joseph would seek revenge for their evil deeds. This no doubt was commonplace in many royal families in all cultures including those we see in the Bible. In fact, this is exactly the plot of Esau against Jacob earlier. The brothers instruct messengers to go to Joseph to tell him that Jacob had asked Joseph to forgive his brothers for their evil. Whether or not this is factually true or an attempt by the brothers to manipulate Joseph is unclear. Certainly Jacob would have made the admonition to Joseph to forgive his brothers. Additionally, the brothers come and bow their faces before Joseph proclaiming to be servants of Joseph.

However, Joseph’s words that follow in verses 19-21 are words of great response. First, Joseph tells them to get rid of the fear that is produced from guilt of prior sin. Second, Joseph immediately recognizes that he is not in the place of God, one who takes vengeance and portions out justice for evil deeds done to him. Third, with the added perspective of time, Joseph is able to now see how all the evil things that had occurred in his life really served the greater purpose of saving a huge number of people including his own family. He could not have possibly known that these same actions would bring about a safe place for his family of 70 to grow into a massive nation. Finally, he returns good for evil in continuing to care for their families for the rest of his life.

The book of Genesis closes on the death of Joseph. Joseph lives to the age of 110, and on his deathbed reminds his children and grandchildren that the land of Egypt is not their home. They will ultimately be called out by God to return to their Promised Land. Additionally, Joseph gives similar instructions as Jacob had given to bury his bones in the Land to rest there amongst his people.

In closing the book of Genesis, we have seen a radical leap forward in history, both secular and redemptive history. Joseph in particular is a great ending and completion to the book. In the beginning of the book we saw sons of God who are unable to keep themselves from the temptations of the daughters of men. Joseph is a son of God who resists Potiphar’s wife. Adam is charged as the first man to subdue and rule the earth. Joseph, the last Adam *in the book*, rules and subdues a vast empire of Egypt. In fact, Joseph is more a reflection of the coming last Adam (see Romans 5) that rules not to serve himself, but to save and to feed a starving world.

**Questions:**

1. We see great concern here from both Jacob and Joseph at the end of their lives to call upon their families to remember that God had made promises of another Land. Why do you think that would be? What was the danger of forgetting that promise? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. In bringing Genesis to a close, name a few covenants that God had made with man and whether they are now complete, being completed, or still waiting to be completed. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Joseph might well be known in the history books for his rise to political and social prominence. But what spiritual attribute of Joseph do you think summarizes the way he lived his life? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Examine 50:19-21 again as we did in the lesson. Find New Testament passages that would commend each aspect of Joseph’s response to his brothers concerns:
	1. Do not be afraid of prior repented sins. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (NT Passage)
	2. Do not take vengeance for yourself. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (NT Passage)
	3. God works out His plan for the good of His people. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (NT Passage)
	4. Return good works for evil deeds. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (NT Passage)

*Hint: In most cases, there are numerous correct answers!*